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The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

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Abstract

Human cloning has emerged as a new and innovative technology in the reproductive and therapeutic science in the recent past. So far it has not been practiced over human beings but owing to its huge potential and possible scope, it has attracted the attention of not only the masses (particularly the infertile couples and LGBTQs etc) but the other stakeholders including the religious scholars from worlds' prominent religions have given their views on this technology in order to guide their followers. This paper examines and reviews the religious points of view on human cloning. For this purpose, three Semitic religions in the world i-e Judaism, Christianity, and Islām have been examined. As far as Islam is concerned, this portion has been divided into two broad sections elaborating the Shī'ah and Sunnī schools' opinions. Being an innovative topic, the religious teachings do not address it directly hence the injunctions related to the reproduction are most relevant to it. Three Semitic religions have been examined from the perspective of admissibility or non-admissibility of human cloning, the rationale behind the verdict on human cloning and the possible solutions to the issues and problems faced by the followers in the case of acceptance or rejection of this biomedical technology. Most of the religions emphasize over adaptability of the natural mode of reproduction only, where male and female genders contribute to the reproductive cycle. The Semitic religions reject the reproductive cloning generally. The religious experts need to conduct more focused and updated research before coming to any conclusion about the permissibility or non-permissibility of this technique.

Keywords: Human Cloning, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Shī'ah, Sunnī.

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Introduction

This paper studies the position of human cloning in the light of the teachings of world's Semitic religions. The religious sector has also been concerned about it just like other stakeholders, including the scientists, the legislators, the ethicists and medical practitioners. The purpose of this research is to clarify and elaborate human cloning for the followers of the world's Semitic religions, so if ever, it is practiced over humans its' position and status is known.

Human cloning can be broadly categorized into two major types reproductive and therapeutic. Embryo cloning, research cloning or the therapeutic cloning is more related to the treatment of different diseases and their diagnosis like cancer and hereditary diseases as well as the transplantation of different body organs. Reproductive cloning alludes to human conceptive technique to create a hereditary duplicate of an existing individual.

The majority of policy makers, bioeticists, religious scholars, scientists, and national and international authoritarian bodies favor a prohibition of cloning. The difference basically, arises in their opinion over therapeutic cloning and stem cell research.¹ So, this research is focused to the logics and criteria observed by three Semitic religions while evaluating human cloning from theological, jurisprudential and practical perspectives.

The divine religions, particularly base their rulings on the holy scripts and commandments. Despite the fact that none of the religions have direct rulings on the issue, but broader subjects dealing with it such as the family and reproduction sectors cover it from their perspectives. This research is also focused on evaluation of the place and importance of the scientific innovations and advancements in the fields of reproductive and familial health. An evaluation has also been extended to analyze the religious injunctions on the subject of reproduction, indicating for example, that Islām gives a great importance to the use of the scientific advancements and developments in the health and reproductive sectors and sets forth a strict standard for the approval of any assisted reproductive technique to be acceptable like non-involvement of the third party in the process. Judaism presents a combination of strict and flexible views in this regard

¹ Bagher Larijani, and Farzaneh Zahedi, "Islamic Perspective on Human Cloning and Stem Cell Research," *Transplantation Proceedings* 7, no. 31 (2004): 3188–3189.

yet offers a huge concern and criticism from the opponents and observers that it might be misused by the Israel for growth of Jew population.

Christianity does not allow it without certain limitations, yet the critics fear its manipulation and distorted use of the Christian population of the world who own power, money and scientific influence in this regard.

Literature Review

Being a novel issue human cloning has not been discussed in any divine scripture. For this reason the direct evidences from the basic or the Holy Scriptures inferring to the topics of reproduction and evolution of life have been quoted for a deep and comprehensive analytical study. The most relevant literature on examination of human cloning in perspective of world's Semitic religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islām) has been analyzed in this study. For the purpose of Islāmic viewpoint the major schools i-e both the Shī'ah and Sunnī schools' opinions have been set forth while discussing the most reliable literature in this regard.

A comprehensive research article "The competition for worldviews: Values, information, and public support for stem cell research" by Matthew C. Nisbet² examines the role of awareness and knowledge in the promotion of scientific technologies like cloning and paving way for its acceptability. Further quotes and opinions by different priests have been illustrated where most of them reject human cloning being unnatural method of reproduction.

"The Ethics of Human Cloning" edited by John Woodward³ is a detailed book presenting opinions both at favor and against human cloning. A number of articles throwing a light on both sides of coin have been added in this book where the relationship between the science and religion and religious positions on human cloning has been discussed. Although Judaism and Christianity have been discussed at length, but a brief discussion on the views of the other religions in this regard is also made and the different types of cloning are also analyzed in the light of religious teachings.

² Matthew C. Nisbet, "The Competition for Worldviews: Values, Information, and Public Support for Stem Cell Research," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 17, no. 1 (2005): 90-112.

³ John Woodward, *The Ethics of Human Cloning* (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2005), 10.

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

Another important book “Cloning human beings: Religious perspectives on human cloning” by Courtney S Campbell⁴ presents a valuable debate on human cloning from a religious viewpoint. This book starts the discussion on human cloning with the concept of reproduction and its scientific and social implications. Later the new assisted reproductive techniques are discussed. A normative analysis is presented elaborating few notable objections over human cloning where it has been criticized by the religious, scientific or social circles.

“Spiritual psychotherapy” by T. Byram Karasu⁵ is a significant research article presenting the spiritual aspect affected by the technology of human cloning. The most distinguished part of this research article is that where it evaluates this technology in the light of spiritual teachings. It illustrates how the religions emphasize over the inner enlightenment and purification hence reject if anything collides with them no matter it is human cloning or any other scientific technology.

A well written book “Human cloning: An Islāmic study on its permissibility and implications” by Ayatollah Sheikh Muhammad Hussain al-Ansari⁶ presents Islāmic views on human cloning from the Shī‘ah school of Islāmic jurisprudence’s perspective. This book starts with the importance of science and technology and later the concept and technology of cloning is elaborated. It states that non-human cloning is allowed in all its shapes and forms on the basis of the principle of “lawfulness” but Shī‘ah scholars do not come with a consensus over the topic of human cloning. This book rejects the social and moral objections raised by the Sunnī schools on human cloning technique on the basis of different rationale presented, but a strong recommendation is made to avoid such a technique as it is unnecessary and may join some unlawful or prohibited acts.

Research Methodology

This paper examines and analyzes the Semitic religions’ points of view on human cloning. For this purpose the analytical and comparative research methodologies have

⁴Courtney S. Campbell, *Cloning human beings: Religious Perspectives on Human Cloning* (Oregon State University: National Bioethics Advisory Commission, 1997), 34.

⁵T. Byram Karasu, "Spiritual Psychotherapy," *American journal of psychotherapy* 53, no. 2 (1999): 143-149.

⁶Ayatollah Sheikh Muḥammad Hussein Al-Ansari, *Human Cloning: An Islāmic Study on its Permissibility and Implications* (Iraq: Al-Ansari Foundation, n.d.), 12.

been applied. Three major religions in world i-e Judaism, Christianity and Islām have been critically evaluated and examined by applying the analytical and comparative methodologies. Basic sources pertaining to these religions in the form of religious scriptures and texts have been analyzed at first, Bresheit (The Genesis) has been studied to explore the religious teachings of the Judaism, the Bible has been referred for the teachings of Christianity and the Holy Qur'ān has been explored for the teachings of Islām on the topics of reproduction and family life. Later the writings of the most renowned scholars from every religion have been scrutinized. For this purpose more than 100 articles and books have been read. The analysis of the teachings of the Semitic religions on the topic has also been made by understanding the rationale behind them regarding the reproduction and progeny, the reproductive laws and the socio-religious circumstances.

The following religions will be analyzed in this regard.

Judaism⁷

No clear rules deal with human cloning under the Jewish law. Just like any other divine religion, reproduction is supposed to be done by joining of the male and female under the Jewish law. The Jewish law emphasizes on the teachings of the Torah, which highlight that originally all men and women were: “One being” but separated by God later on. A man and woman get back at their actual position when they marry. The Torah commands them to be “Fruitful and multiply.”⁸

According to their belief, the male and female beings were blessed by the God and He addressed to them in words: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”⁹ Similarly, at another place: “Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.”¹⁰ The state of California intended to prepare a road map to formulate and regulate the legislation and policies on human cloning. For this purpose the Santa Clara University organized a discussion “California Cloning: A Dialogue on State Regulation”

⁷ Orthodox Judaism and the Modernists have been examined to highlight the religious teachings of Judaism on human cloning

⁸ Genesis9:01

⁹ Genesis 1:28

¹⁰ Genesis 2:24

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

on October 12, 2001. Owing to this objective the distinguished experts in law, science, ethics and religion participated. An eminent expert in the Jewish law, Laurie Zoloth opined on human reproductive cloning in the following words:¹¹

The availability of such technology would make human life too easily commodified, putting the emphasis more on achieving a copy of the self than on the crucial parental act of creating a stranger to whom you would give your life. The Jewish ethicists vary considerably in their views about reproductive cloning; there is fairly broad agreement that stem cell research is justified.¹²

Her views were based on the following four well-known and celebrated Jewish traditions: An embryo and a human person do not share the same status.

Seeking cure is a commandment or an order to be followed by the Jew community. A vast liberty and authorization is sanctioned for the purpose of education and learning. The world is imperfect and incomplete and there is a great room for human contribution and participation in order to make it complete and full.¹³ Rabbi Edward Reichman, an assistant professor at Yeshiva University Einstein opines that:

Jewish law is squarely on the side of medical research that has potential to save and preserve life. As a result, Jewish scholars are generally among the most vocal religious leaders in support of therapeutic cloning in as much as they can benefit the world, especially medicine. We do not necessarily perceive all advances as stepping on God's toes.¹⁴

It is worth mentioning that one of the most noninterventionist contemporary research areas in the world i-e embryonic stem cell (ESC) research has been approved and endorsed by Israel. Most of the Jewish religious scholars allow human cloning and similar research considering them non-problematic according to their religious teachings. According to the critics "discourse to Israeli cells" is actually a "demographic threat", which persuades them to choose the option of reproduction by cloning too. It is appropriate to say that by virtue of this act it is likely to happen that the number of non-Jews Jewish population in Israel will be greater than the Jewish population. The Israeli

¹¹ Daniel Eisenberg, "Stem Cell Research in Jewish Law," *Jewish Law Articles* (2001): 1.

¹² Karasu, "Spiritual Psychotherapy," 149.

¹³ Sally Lehrman, "Undifferentiated Ethics," *Scientific American* 303, no. 3 (2010): 18.

¹⁴ World Health Organization. "Development of a Regional Position on Human Cloning." EM/RC51/INF.DOC.11, (2004), 3.

bioethics discourse is based upon self-governing of individuals by following the principle of “thinkable and sayable” standards. Thus, they do not rely on governmental institutions for decision making, but they prefer to assign this task to the original stakeholders.¹⁵

An important joint statement by the Union of Orthodox Jewish congregations of America and the Rabbinical Council of America states: “If cloning technology research advances our ability to heal humans with greater success, it ought to be pursued since it does not require or encourage the destruction of life in the process.”¹⁶

Evaluation of the above mentioned views makes it clear that Judaism holds a positive and affirmative stance on human reproductive cloning but at the same time this stance can look dangerous when most of the world religions and nations are against the permissibility of the human reproductive cloning. It is vital to be mentioned that there is a fundamental and basic tenet of Judaism, which can turn any such method of reproduction permissible or allowed, i-e: “God wants human beings to use all of their capacities to improve the health of others.”¹⁷

The Jewish law does not give the status of a human being to an embryo. Owing to this fact therapeutic cloning is considered to be permissible under Judaism in which technique the stem cells are extracted from the embryos. Considering the great potential and possible advantages of therapeutic cloning the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and Rabbinical Council of America recommended and allowed it while issuing a policy statement. They expressed their intention in the following words:

The Torah commands us to treat and cure the ill and to defeat disease wherever possible; to do this is to be the Creator’s partner in safeguarding the created.

The traditional Jewish perspective thus emphasizes that maximizing the potential to save and heal human life is an integral part of valuing human life.¹⁸

However, this flexible view cannot be attributed to the orthodox Jewish clerics who reject the reproductive cloning on the basis of two main objections. First is the affect

¹⁵ Barbara Brainsick, “Negotiating Life: The Regulation of Human Cloning and Embryonic Stem Cell Research in Israel,” *Social Studies of Science* 36, no. 2 (2006):175.

¹⁶ Giovanni Frazzetto, “Embryos, Cells and God: Different Religious Beliefs Have Little Consensus on Controversial Issues Such as Cloning and Stem-Cell Research.” *EMBO Reports* 5, no. 6 (2004): 553.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ William A. Galston, “Catholics, Jews & Stem Cells,” *Commonweal* 132, no. 10 (2005): 13.

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

caused to the familial relationships of a clone and second is to turn the human beings to commodities when the desired characteristics are selected for height, physical strength, intelligence or any other attribute.¹⁹

It may be concluded that even the reproductive cloning is not disapproved by all Jews. Rabbi Michael Broyde for instance, has extended his favor to the reproductive cloning, he quotes:

In sum, one is inclined to state that *Halacha* i-e Jewish law and custom views cloning as far less than the ideal way to reproduce people however, when no other method is available it would appear that Jewish law accepts that having children through cloning is perhaps a *Mitzvah* (blessing) in a number of circumstances and is morally neutral in a number of other circumstances.²⁰

Christianity²¹

The Roman Catholicism and Evangelical Christianity are of the view that every fertilized ovum holds the status of a human being just like any other legal person possessing all human rights because according to them the soul crosses the threshold of the body right at the time of conception. On the basis of this connotation, they further argue that if the cloned zygotes would die after a few cell divisions it will be equivalent to a loss of human "Baby." Consequently, even the very idea of therapeutic cloning is also prohibited by the strictest group in this regard. The moderate groups permit it only on the condition that it would be assured that the clone would also acquire "soul" like the zygote, if not, it would amount to the killing of a human person.²²

Albert Jonsen, a Catholic bioethicist makes a historical analysis of the development and evolution of the Catholic views about the other medical techniques at the time of their invention and relate it with the concept of cloning. He explains that even the concept of organ transplantation faced criticism and opposition at the time of emergence considering it to be an infringement of an important principle applied in the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Woodward, *The Ethics of Human Cloning*, 100.

²¹ The Roman Catholicism, Evangelical (Protestant Christianity), Greek Orthodox Church (Eastern Orthodox Theology) and the Russian Orthodox Church have been studied to explore the religious teachings of Christianity on human cloning.

²² Paul G. Shiels, et al, "Analysis of Telomere Lengths in Cloned Sheep," *Nature* 399, no. 6734 (1999): 316.

medical science, “First, do no harm” owing to the involvement of the mutilation of the human body. But with the passage of time such rigidity started to be softened owing to the consideration given to the concepts of charity and care for others paving a way to make the act of organ transplantation as accepted and approved. While relating this example to cloning, he predicts that it will also be accepted one day and will be practiced.²³

The Protestant views on the subject are different from the Catholic Church on many grounds. For instance, according to Suzanne Holland, an expert on Religious and Social Ethics, a differentiation between therapeutic and reproductive cloning cannot be made hence this difference may lead further to different opinions on permissibility and non-permissibility of either type. Likewise, she is not in favor of a ban on human cloning and opines that even the reproductive cloning should be allowed as the last option for the infertile couples. She further argues that such a ban would be justified in the case of the groups and companies intending to carry out reproductive cloning, as they will bring a great restlessness and chaos in the society otherwise.²⁴

The Roman Catholic Church holds no difference between the two important and most significant types of human cloning and this reason leaves no possibility of a diverse opinion on the subject hence forbidding all types of human cloning adamantly. Owing to such an opinion, this church favors the opposition against the human cloning in legal and political circles all over the world. As stated above, this church opines that it is the time of conception itself from where human life begins, any subsequent destruction of life after conception would amount to murder, no matter such an act has been done for the purpose of therapeutic cloning.²⁵

While expressing the official argument of the Roman Catholic Church on the issue of human rights, integrity and modern techniques of reproduction, John Paul II said:

The most fundamental of human rights. Abortion, euthanasia, [and] human cloning . . . risk reducing the human person to a mere object. When all moral criteria are removed, scientific research involving the sources of life becomes a denial of the being and the dignity of the person. These techniques, insofar as

²³ World Health Organization, “Development of a Regional Position on Human Cloning”, 03.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ John H. Evans, “Religion and Human Cloning: An Exploratory Analysis of The First Available Opinion Data,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 4 (2002): 750.

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

they involve the manipulation and destruction of human embryos, are not morally acceptable, even when their proposed goal is good in itself. What is technically possible is not for that reason alone morally admissible.²⁶

Likewise, Father Vsevolod Chaplin, archpriest of the Russian Orthodox Church sees no reason to allow human cloning and does not consider even a single possible situation adequate enough to be considered for the permissibility of it. He expresses that any such act like human reproductive cloning can never be considered permissible amid to fear and perception that such an act would amount to an attempt to create, form or make human beings in man's image rather than the image of God. He illustrates that:

If human clones are bred for the egotistical reason of giving one person a second, a third, a hundred or more lives, then a profound moral crisis arises. What sort of person would it be, knowing that he, of all people, was somebody's copy?²⁷

A Parish priest of Greek Orthodox Church presents his views in the words:

As an Orthodox Christian, I speak out in opposition to any attempt to clone a human being because humans are supposed to be created by acts of love between two people, not through the manipulation of cells in acts that are ultimately about self-love.²⁸

The Protestants differ on the subject with a great degree of disagreement. It becomes clear on an investigation that in general, the Protestants too do not approve any form of human cloning. However, such a strict and conformist opinion is not held by the liberal Protestant circles on the issue of human cloning. D. James Kennedy opined about the human cloning: "Cloning is unethical and immoral and shows a complete disregard for the sanctity of human life."²⁹

²⁶ Ohara, N., "Ethical Consideration of Experimentation Using Living Human Embryos: The Catholic Church's Position on Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research And Human Cloning," *Clinical and Experimental Obstetrics & Gynecology* 30, no. 2-3 (2003): 80.

²⁷ Nisbet, "The Competition for Worldviews," 100.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁹ Woodward, *The Ethics of Human Clonin*, 40.

Islāmic Stance on Human Cloning³⁰

While discussing the Islāmic stance on human cloning, two sets of opinions are important and distinguished; the Sunnī and Shī‘ah verdicts. The Sunnī viewpoint is most commonly known, but the opinion of the Shī‘ah school is not well-known to the common man. The Twelver Shi‘ah sect is reviewed in this regard and a brief analysis of both of the schools (Shī‘ah and Sunnī) is highlighted hereunder.

Difference between Sunnī and Shī‘ah Verdicts on Cloning

The Shī‘ah and Sunnī jurists have diverse opinions on evaluation of the logic behind the permitting or disallowing human cloning. Sunnī legal scholar condemn cloning on the grounds, for example, playing God or meddling in God’s will, annihilating the harmony and calmness of earth, degrading the paradigm and conventions of society, upsetting the decent variety standard and harming the convictions of feeble personalities and hearts. At that point Sunnī law specialists express their perspectives and decisions by giving Fatāwā or passing the goals and assertions.

But on the other hand the Shī‘ah jurists criticize the Sunnī jurists and clergy for blocking the ways for the common man to evaluate, think and consider and take any decision themselves when they give the authoritative statements themselves declaring the subject totally prohibited, in their ignorance and rigidity.³¹

Yet, the Shī‘ah scholars censure the Sunnī jurists for obstructing the ways for the common men to ponder and consider and they take all choices themselves when they give the definitive articulations proclaiming the subject completely precluded considering their obliviousness and unbending nature.

They further argue that such a trend is obviously unfortunate as it tends to close every means of discussion, criticism and innovation for the followers. On the other hand only some of the Sunnī jurists allow or permit human cloning, but only at the time of dire need and emergency like in the case of infertile couples. They also put the condition that it must be guaranteed that the technology is definitely safe and fit to be used on the human beings.³²

³⁰ The teachings of Islām from the perspective of Shī‘ah sect are evaluated first, later they are compared with the teachings of the Sunnī school.

³¹ SM Mohaghegh Damad, “Human Cloning from the Viewpoint of Fiqh and Ethics,” *Iranian Journal of Medical Law* 1, no. 1 (2012): 11.

³² Ibid.

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

The Shī'ah jurists also reject few other objections to human cloning raised by the Suuni jurists such as denoting the technique of cloning a disadvantageous change detrimental to the natural reproduction and birth process set by Allāh S.W.T, naming such an act as an act of evil and of forbidden nature and treating cloning as a temptation and inducement of devil aimed to the distort the acts and deeds of human beings.³³The following four categories can classify the views of the Shī'ah scholars on human cloning:

The total sanction of human cloning: According to the opinion of the one group of the jurists and scholars human cloning is permissible altogether. This group supports full permissibility of the cloning technique considering the fact that no clear Sharī'ah injunctions disallows cloning. Hence it would be considered as permissible on the basis of the principle of "permissibility" as there is non-availability of any specific or clear legislation or the evidence on its prohibition.³⁴

Limited permission on human cloning: The second group of Shī'ah law experts allow human cloning only at the restricted level. This group forwards the logic behind such a sanction and limited permission that if it is not banned at larger scale and allowed at the smaller scale, it will definitely cause troubles, difficulties and problems for the greater part of the society. It should be dealt as a private matter between the spouses only and everyone should not be allowed to perform it. Such a view is expressed by a Shī'ah jurist Professor Hassan Javāheri in the words: "There is no problem on cloning happening in nature, but it is not legal to be undertaken at large scale."³⁵

Secondary sanctity of human cloning: Few Shī'ah Jurists are of the view that even though cloning must be rejected because practicing it may give birth to many other harms, troubles and concerns even though primarily it is not prohibited. This reason makes it to be included in secondary prohibition. When human cloning is performed in the laboratories, such an act would be prone to the inevitable viciousness such as meddling in the natural system.³⁶

³³ Moosavi SKH and Panahizadeh M., *An Approach to Ethical Fundamental and Interpretation of Human Cloning and its Relationship with Jurisprudence*, 2nd Congress on Review of Islāmic Regulations in Medicine, 2013, 348-390.

³⁴ Damad, "Human Cloning from the Viewpoint of Fiqh and Ethics," 11.

³⁵ Kiarash Aramesh and Soroush Dabbagh, "An Islāmic View to Stem Cell Research and Cloning: Iran's Experience," *The American Journal of Bioethics* 7, no. 2 (2007): 62.

³⁶ Nabavizadeh, Mehrabani, Vahedi and Manafi, "Cloning: Issues in Iran," 42.

But it is important to mention the opinion of an eminent Shī'ah jurist Ayatullah Yoosef Sānei who is one of those holding a relatively strict view unlikely most of the Shī'ah jurists, is of the opinion that the cloned children do not enjoy and possess the same respect and rights like those born out of a natural process of reproduction. Such an act would involve the moral and ethical, legal and social corruption hence cannot be allowed.³⁷

Further, he proposes that there must be a serious action against the practitioners or any other party involved whosoever tries to carry out or disseminate this technique. He puts an emphasis that this issue must be handled by the legislative and executive authorities with iron hands. He tends to allow cloning only in the cases of desperate and genuine need where it is helpful from a human health perspective for instance therapeutic cloning for the purpose of organ production.

Ultimate prohibition of human cloning: According to this opinion all forms of human cloning are prohibited and never be declared lawful or legitimate.³⁸

They present same objections to this technique as brought up by the Sunnī jurists such as; declaring cloning as an act which is a lucid interference in Allāh S.W.T's creation and rejecting it on the basis of the logical and religious principles attributing non-possession of the body by the human beings themselves so they can not allow such experimentation on their bodies/cells.

Though there is a variety of the opinions in the Shī'ah school of Islāmic jurisprudence, yet despite the four categories and types of the disagreements, human cloning is rejected by the most of the Shī'ah jurists just like the majority of Sunnī jurist.³⁹

They weigh the harms attached to human cloning with the possible benefits and draw the conclusion that the disadvantages and possible harms attached to this technique like abuse, deception and threat to human dignity and a threat to "the principle of no harm", a ban or stoppage over its practice is suggested by them unless all objectionable aspects are clarified. It must also be considered that the benefits of this process must be more than the possible risks and reservations involved in or after carrying out the process.⁴⁰

³⁷ Damad, "Human Cloning from the Viewpoint of Fiqh and Ethics," 09.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Nabavizadeh, Vahedi and Manafi, "Cloning: Issues in Iran," 43.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

An eminent Shī'ah religious scholar Ayatollah As-Sayyed Muḥammad Saeed Al-Hakim from Iraq nullifies the notion that Sharī'ah makes the observance of the usual course of reproduction only as there is no evidence to it, in his opinion. He opines further that a child may be reproduced outside a family circle too. In order to justify and support his argument, he forwards the examples of the birth of the Prophet Adam (A.S) and Prophet 'Eīsa(A.S) which did not follow a routine course of reproduction.⁴¹

Further, he rejects the idea of declaring cloning as prohibited considering that it will open a door to be misused by the criminals when they will replace themselves with their own clones by the logic that Sharī'ah does not prohibit the making or selling of any instrument which can be used by the criminals to commit any offense. He compares cloning with the cosmetic surgery that when that medical technology can be used by the criminals for bad motives but we cannot put a ban on it.⁴²

He adds moral and ethical justifications as well to support his views on cloning. In his opinion, if society is civilized and well groomed no scientific advancement and innovation is bad, same is the case with cloning.⁴³ But he advises to be careful in the use and application of cloning if it can hamper the usual arrangement or order and decorum of the universe.⁴⁴

Another Shī'ah Iraqi scholar Ayatullah Sheikh Muḥammad Hussain Al-Ansari gives his pinion in the words:

Most Shiite scholars consider non-human cloning to be permissible; they base their ruling on the principle of lawfulness. However, there is no common view amongst Shī'ah scholars with regard to human cloning. Some of them totally prohibit it, some accept and promote it, and between the two extremes lays a big variety of opinions and rulings. Their differences are based on their interpretations of the principles of faith and their understanding of the science behind those scientific processes.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Shī'ah verdict: Jurisprudence of Human Cloning. <http://www.ayatollahalansari.org/english/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Human-Cloning-by-Ayatollah-Muhammad-Hussein-Al-Ansari.pdf>, accessed on 5 January 2017.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Al-Ansari, *Human Cloning*, 14.

Ayatullah Al-Ansari forwards a recommendation further by saying that: “If we accept that everything is Allāh S.W.T’s creation, then we have blocked ourselves and if we say otherwise then there is room for discussion. I do not believe that the first notion is intended, as most of what the human is doing in terms of crimes, disasters, and deception is not Allāh S.W.T’s creation but rather human made; even humans can affect Allāh S.W.T’s creation.”⁴⁶

He compares the bad intentions of the scientists with the act of Satan and supports his opinion by quoting the following verse from the Qur’ān:

I will mislead them, and I will create in them false desires; I will order them to slit the ears of cattle, and to deface the (fair) nature created by Allāh. Whoever, forsaking Allāh, takes Satan for a friend, hath of a surety suffered a loss that is manifest.⁴⁷

Al-Ansari elaborates that Islām bestows a great sanctity to the unborn child and this can be observed even at the time when a divorcee is said to observe the waiting period of three months in order to make her eligible to remarry. This view is supported by the *Qur’ānic* injunction (Al- *Qur’ān* 02:228) where the waiting period of the divorced woman has been mentioned as three months in order to confirm if the woman is pregnant or not. This has been made compulsory for the believing women to observe their waiting period and not hide if they have anything in their wombs. This way has been taught to examine and determine if that woman is pregnant or not, so that if she is pregnant the rights of that unborn child related to his parentage and lineage are not infringed. *Further*, he is of the view that any change in the creation of Allāh S.W.T is certainly playing with His creation and it amounts to tampering with it. He further elaborates that any such change is a change in the “fitrah” actually. The following verse has been referred by him in this regard:

So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith: (establish) Allāh’s handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allāh. That is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ghaly, "Human cloning: The New Phenomenon," 9.

⁴⁷ Al-Qur’ān 04:119

⁴⁸ Al-Qur’ān 30:30

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

He deduces that the actual interpretation of this verse throws light on the fact that every act which alters Allāh S.W.T's creation or makes an attempt to it is false and fictitious and obviously an act of Satan.⁴⁹

Comparison

- Judaism presents the most lenient and flexible view on the subject of human cloning by allowing all types of it provided they are not harmful for the people or society at large in comparison to Islām and Christianity.
- The Christianity differs on the issue of the status of the embryo with Islām and Judaism as Islām and Judaism do not hold the view that the soul enters the body at the time of conception; hence they allow the research on embryo for useful purposes.
- Most of the Muslim scholars allow therapeutic cloning and prohibit the reproductive cloning only considering the wide range of the benefits offered by this technique including the organ transplantation and diagnosis and cure of fatal diseases like Cancer etc. The religious experts in Christianity and Judaism do not make a noticeable differentiation between these types of cloning.
- The Orthodox view of these Semitic religions rejects reproductive cloning considering its possible damaging consequences.
- Islām does not believe in inflicting un-necessary harm to human life no matter human embryo, this is one of the logics behind the prohibition of unwanted research in reproductive sector. But Judaism encourages anything to make life perfect and complete, no matter it is joined by the human contribution and participation.
- The involvement of any third party in the reproductive procedure (e.g ARTs) is enough to declare it prohibited under the Sharī'ah by the majority of Muslim scholars but the experts of Christianity and Judaism do not necessarily prohibit any such method hence paving a way for the admissibility of cloning.
- Islām motivates it's the followers to grow and multiply but unlike the Judaism and Christianity it does not recommend to adopt any possible way to it unless it

⁴⁹ Al-Ansari, *Human Cloning: An Islāmic Study*, 16.

is fully complied by the Sharī‘ah. Multiplicity is encouraged in Islām but with permissible methods.

Conclusion

It is exciting to mention that the religious scholars belonging to the major religions have been striving hard to clarify the position of human cloning according to their respective religions in order to frame a detailed format to be followed by the future generations. Following conclusions can be drawn from this piece of research:

1. The Catholic and Protestant Churches of Christianity hold different views from each other on the subject of cloning.
2. Considering the zygotes full human beings, the Roman Catholics compare the loss of zygotes with the loss of human “Baby.” Even the idea of therapeutic cloning is prohibited by the strictest group of the Roman Catholics.
3. The Protestants do not make a difference between therapeutic and reproductive types of cloning though, but the most conservative group among them prohibits all types of human cloning.
4. Jewish religious scholars are generally in support of therapeutic cloning as they base their opinion on the belief that it is beneficial in nature.
5. According to the orthodox Jewish teachings an embryo does not share status of a man hence there is room for experimentation in this regard.
6. Jews support every assisted reproductive technique like cloning as they consider seeking of cure a commandment. According to Judaism cloning can be performed to complete the process of life and achieve the ends of fulfilment and knowledge.
7. Muslim jurists differ on the subject of human cloning from the procedural, jurisprudential and medical viewpoints. But most of them do not allow it.
8. The Shī‘ah jurists extend their opinion to the total permissibility from the total prohibition to the limited permissibility of it. They also base the prohibition on different logical and jurisprudential dimensions from the Sunnī jurists.

Recommendations

The topic of human cloning can be entertained under the covers of pure jurisprudential, religious, bio-medical and ethical kinds of researches. Hence it invites

The Issue of Human Cloning: A Review in Semitic Religions' Context

many types of recommendations and proposals. Few of the important recommendations in this regard can be such as:

The religious scholars need to strive more in order to define the status of sperms and eggs, unborn child right after inception i-e at the primary stage and at the later stages of the pregnancy. All associated and linked issues with cloning must be explored for the better understanding of the concept of cloning. Only this way, things can be more understandable for the followers. The primary and basic sources of the rulings in any religion must be consulted no matter even if they give an indirect inference.

The opinions of the scientists and the medical practitioners are also important in this regard. There must be joint sittings of the religious scholars with them in order to have reliable and scientifically correct opinion along with the religious points of view. The religious views must be communicated to the general public or the common followers as most of the times such innovative issues are not known by the common men/followers.

The positive and reliable role of media can play the crucial role for the transmission and communication of the religious views on the issues like human cloning. Negative propagation of the religious views belonging to a particular religion by the non-followers of those religions must be discouraged.

The scientific research must be subject to ethical reviews and checks for the general acceptability before presenting them for the religious viewpoint.

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