



Review Article

Islamic Bioethics and Secular Bioethics and Interaction between them*

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article history:

Received: 21 October 2020

Revised: 04 November 2020

Accepted: 11 December 2020

Available online: 19 January 2021

Keywords:

Bioethics

Islam

Philosophy of Ethics

Secularism

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* This paper is the translated version of the previously published papers in Persian language (Farsi) in *Bioethics Journal (Quarterly)*.

ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: Nowadays, we are observing the increasing development of sciences, particularly biological sciences and medicine. In the Muslim world, the ethical requirements of such scientific developments are taken into account without paying sufficient attention to their indigenous and Islamic aspects. Even international institutions are not properly informed of the need for the religious aspects of bioethical discourse in Muslim countries. Hence, this study attempts to address the differences in the ideologies of these two ethical theories.

Materials and Methods: In this review article, the keywords "bioethics", "Islam", "secularism", "philosophy of ethics", "ideology differences" and "ethical theories in secularism" were searched in PubMed, SID, and Google Scholar databases and the relevant literature was determined and analyzed.

Ethical Considerations: Honesty and integrity were taken into consideration in searching, analyzing, and reporting the texts.

Findings: Of the appropriate methods in analyzing the texts, one is the comparative study between the ideological and meta-ethical foundations of Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics, some of which are: the differences in the belief in the origin of existence and the Creator of existence; differences in the attitudes towards the totality of existence; differences in the views of the materialistic existence and the laws governing it. In addition, there exist anthropological differences in these two ethical theories, among which we can refer to the differences in the attitudes towards the creation of human beings, the differences in the attitudes towards the dimensions of human existence, and life after death. Finally, we can also refer to the meta-ethical differences between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics, including the difference in moral ontology, the difference in ethical epistemology, ethical semantics, as well as several similarities between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics that are mostly normative.

Conclusion: Accepting the differences and similarities can be found as a present reality to begin a constructive bilateral dialogue and to introduce the fundamentals of Islamic bioethics.

Cite this article as: Abbasi M, Shamsi Gooshki E. Islamic Bioethics and Secular Bioethics and Interaction between them. *Bioeth Health Law J.* 2021; 1:1-10 (e3). <http://doi.org/10.22037/bhl.v1i1.38127>

Introduction

Research on bioethics in developing countries, including Islamic countries, has not been taken into account as it deserves. Until recently, the problems related to bioethics in the Islamic world were taken into account without paying sufficient attention to their indigenous and Islamic aspects. Even now, international institutions

are not properly informed of the religious nature of bioethical discourse (1,2). They do not heed the fact that they need to take the religious aspects of bioethics in these countries more seriously for the optimal use of the benefits which dealing with bioethics may have for the Muslim nations.

Undoubtedly, a comparative study between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics requires a deep reflection on the ideological and philosophical

foundations of each of them. However, the problem that may arise in this context is that no single view can be regarded as the dominant and the unitary Islamic view (3,4), just as the same problem can be found in the spectrum of secular ethical traditions (5).

What is referred to in this article as Islam is a monotheistic religion which has many principles in common with the other Abrahamic religions such as Christianity and Judaism, which beliefs in 'The One God', the Prophet Muhammad as a prophet of God and the founder of the religion, life after death, and the Quran as a holy book revealed to Prophet Muhammad by God (6). On the other hand, the word secularism, first used in the nineteenth century, refers to thinking that sees the world only from the perspective of empirical facts. In other words, secularism considers different dimensions of human development (from the physical aspect to the ethical dimension) dependent upon the materialistic tools; this human-centered view is more welcome by those who think of religious ideas as insufficient or unreliable (2).

While many traditional and conservative Muslim scholars have rejected the secular ethical discourse (7), some Muslim scholars fully accept the secular bioethics and take no religious and indigenous basis into account for the modern bioethics. The latter group, at best, presents some indigenous and religious requirements in their comments, but they do not have adequate knowledge and expertise to provide the issues in modern bioethics with religious legitimacy (8-11). In addition, they do not see this of sufficient importance, and they cannot fundamentally explain the Islamic bioethics instead of simply blind imitation of secular bioethics. Of course, a necessary condition here is that Islamic bioethics experts attempt to properly explain and present the theoretical and philosophical bases, practical requirements, and the principles and basic rules of Islamic bioethics in the cultural context of the Islamic world in the contemporary era. To achieve this goal, some detailed studies must be carried out beyond addressing the jurisprudential opinions about areas of discussion, and differences and similarities are considered and scrutinized from a meta-ethical and philosophical point of view. However, the problem acknowledged by a lot of contemporary Islamic thinkers is that even though the foundations of 'Ijtihad' in Islamic jurisprudence are primarily based on some ethical principles such as the rule of "no harm" or the principle of "public interest" (4,12), ethical considerations are gradually

blurred in the background of the process of jurisprudential rulings deduction (6). These critical thinkers believe that today's assessment of the ethical issues involved in Islamic jurisprudential traditions is more of a legal review than of an ethical review.³ Numerous articles written by Muslim writers, which have attempted to show that some contemporary biomedical ethics- like the principles of respect for autonomy, beneficence, not harm, and justice, which constitute the basic framework of addressing the secular bioethics- can accommodate the accepted norms of the Islamic jurisprudential and discourse traditions (8,-11), had just juxtaposed the four above-mentioned principles with what the authors of the present article think of as the corresponding principles in Islamic thought (13). Their descriptive approach cannot be considered as a serious effort to analyze the meta-ethical and discourse bioethics and its potential impact on jurisprudence and Ijtihad on issues related to bioscience and medicine, and technology from an Islamic perspective. One of the main objectives of this article is to present Islamic bioethics by comparing it with secular bioethics- the dominant view at the international level today and the most common form of addressing the topics and issues related to bioethics in many countries, especially western countries which, under the shelter of using new information technologies, are aiming to globalize themselves through using these principles as part of the events that are happening in the globalization process (14, 15).

This important point should be noted that the current experience of bioethics and medical ethics in Iran has made addressing this issue very important and sensitive since a new experience is formed in contemporary Iran due to the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic. Thanks to the combination of the ethical, religious, and political issues and the role of this doctrine in managing the community, reaching a precise and comprehensive explanation that meets the needs of the society in the field of bioethics is inevitable. Hence, the present study, through a comparison-contrast view, examines the points of difference and similarities between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics principles using a philosophical approach in three parts.

Ethical Considerations

Honesty and integrity were taken into consideration in searching, analyzing, and reporting the texts.

Materials and Methods

In this review article, the keywords "bioethics", "Islam", "secularism", "philosophy of ethics", "ideology differences", and "ethical theories in secularism" were searched in PubMed, SID, and Google Scholar databases and the relevant literature was determined and analyzed.

Findings

Part I: The points of difference in ideology and anthropology

In explaining the dissimilarities and the points of difference between secular bioethics and Islamic bioethics, it can be said that Islamic bioethics has substantial inherent differences with secular bioethics from different aspects. One of the most fundamental points of difference between the two is their different ideology, and another difference is in their anthropology, which both constitute the main macro and fundamental differences between the two notions, and are the sources of such other differences as the differences in meta-ethics, examining the ethical, ontological, epistemological, and semantic propositions and actions in the realm of philosophy of the ethics. In this section, the points of difference between these two approaches will be discussed.

1. The differences in ideology

The most important factor instigating the differences between different thoughts is how these thoughts see the world in the broad sense of the word. Answers to such questions as: “where does existence come from and where does it go?”, “what does it consist of?”, and “how is the relationship among its components determined?” shape the main framework of the thinking, and is the indicator of its differences with other theories. In this section, we will refer to fundamental and macro differences between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics, in response to the above questions.

1.1. The differences in belief in the origin of existence

Perhaps the most influential and most fundamental difference between secular thoughts and Islamic thoughts is in their beliefs in the Creator and the origin of existence.¹⁶ Secular thoughts are a spectrum of ideas, all of which prove the validity of human capabilities in planning for individual and social life. Proponents of this thought, even if they believe in the existence of God, think of human beings as leading his life independently of God, and are intentionally or unintentionally experiencing a paradox because believing in God on the one hand and crediting full validity to human power, on the other hand, are mutually exclusive. Secular thought cannot logically have an answer about the origin of existence; i.e., if it desires to recognize the existence as limited to what is materialistic, the existence ought to come into existence out of itself, which is a “vicious circle” since it is logically unacceptable. And hence, when approaching the borders of the world, secular thought fails to respond to key questions and leaves them to other sciences that, per se, result from the scientific pluralism arising from scientific secularism. Islamic bioethics, in contrast, believing in the One God, who is the Creator of the entire existence and its Organizer, takes the presence of this great Creator in all aspects of human life, including moral life, into account.

In this thinking, God's commands are considered as the source of normativity, The One God is the Creator and the Owner of the universe, and all beings, in creation and survival, are completely dependent upon Him.

1.2. The difference in the attitudes towards the totality of the existence

The secular thought view of the world is limited only to the tangible material world and considers no

authenticity for another world besides this material world because secular thinking does not consider anything out of the experience world as authentic, and does not accept it. Even if sometimes some secular thinkers accept another world based on some intellectual reasons (i.e., if they are not materialists), they do not see it associated with the material world and do not perceive the two world events as influencing each other. Therefore, it is clear that secular thought does not recognize life after death, and even if it does not reject it, it believes that its relationship is interrupted with material world events. That is the thing that “exists” and we can talk about inter-subjectively is the world around us, which can be realized through different senses and human intellectual faculties the realities of which we acknowledge, and there is no other thing about which we can verifiably talk. Any other propositions uttered are just our imaginations, fantasies, or delusions. In this respect, secular thought, which is a new reading of the past materialize and anti-religious ideas, is not only against the Abrahamic religions (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity), but also questions such other religions and oriental thoughts as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, which typically consider non-material and non-experimental properties for the world.

Morally, believing in life after death has a huge impact on human society as far as many modern secular thinkers have also affirmed that religions have historically been a moral bearing.

1.3. The differences in viewing the material world

Secular thought views of the properties and causes of the world around us are limited to what it can tangibly perceive in nature. It has a naturalistic view of the world around us, relies on the human experience for explaining the universe, and recognizes whatever that is beyond human experience as lacking authenticity. To broaden this range of experience, it sometimes accepts intuitive experiences. This is even though in Islamic thought, all that occurs in the world outside the mind (the material world) is not natural and experimental. The laws governing the material world are not just experimental laws of action and reaction; rather, a form of supernaturalism also governs the material world. This merely experimental view of the world can be found in various sources of bioethics so that some authors see the origin of morality as quite experimental, and believe that common morality is

the result of human historical experience and that universal moral norms, like other norms, are rooted in human experiential learning which has been transferred from generation to generation and community to community (17).

In fact, by linking a common morality to a common human experience, these authors try to clothe completely immaterial dimensions of human life (morality) with an experience vesture (18, 19). Perhaps some may believe that this issue has been raised in a descriptive framework, but the fact that secular thought is normatively in the framework of human experience, and as secular thought itself maintains, as soon as it transcends the real and tangible experience, it enters the realm of “imagination”, not “verification”; and recognizes whatever might be experienced in the future as a probable imagination.

2. The differences in anthropology

Although the view on the human being, as a key feature in an ideology, is not as salient as existence, it provides us with a more tangible and more accessible indicator based on which we can begin to explain thinking or a school of thought. On the other hand, given that the purpose of this study is expressing the differences between Islamic thinking and secular thinking, particularly addressing their differences concerning bioethics, and that the argument of ethics is put into action when it comes to human existence; the way each school sees morality has a significant impact on the school's definition of morality. When we are talking about existence in its macro sense, we can procrastinate not speak of the human being as one of its components (although at the time of speaking, we have assumed the human existence); however, it is futile to talk about ethics without considering human existence. Hence, notwithstanding the differences between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics are rooted in their ideological and ontological differences, such differences are clearer and more intuitive when we know how each school sees the human being. Broadly speaking, it can be said that the Islamic view or secular view on the human being is a product of Islam's or secularism's view of the whole existence, which was addressed in the previous part.

2.1. The differences in attitudes towards the creation of human beings

Secular thought knows human beings like any other part of the material world that is formed through the

course of the interplay between the forces in nature, and that is a being as the result of the evolution of nature. This is where, by accepting natural selection, secularism intentionally or unintentionally justifies and accepts the removal of the weakest by nature. In an apparent contradiction, nevertheless, secular bioethics is at the forefront of supporting the rights of vulnerable groups, sick and deformed people, or animal rights to the extent that different international ethical codes have frequently referred to it. Nonetheless, this kind of view of human beings, by its nature, involves a contradiction between the theory of natural selection on the one hand and the protection of vulnerable groups on the other, considering each of which as immoral entails a lot of conflicts and effects. The paradox of secular ethics in dealing with the moral status of the beings and the practical use of this comparison does not end here. For instance, while secular ethics superficially believe in further and more accurate support for the most vulnerable people, such as people with mental retardation, children, and pregnant women, compared to healthy adult humans, in an apparent paradox, when the use of animals in biomedical science research comes in, it takes less care of the animals that are more evolved and recommends that these types of animals such as chimpanzees, as compared to other animals like frogs, should be used with more sensitivity. This means while maintaining the same anthropocentric position, which states that the closer an animal in the chain of human evolution is to human, the more it must be supported, secular ethics draws upon the issue of vulnerability as a criterion for receiving additional support (for human beings), and refers to being “not evolved” as a characteristic of a descended moral status for other creatures than human being (20, 21). This is while in Islamic bioethics, the dignity of human beings has been awarded to them by an existing independent of them and other creatures (God). Certainly, without believing in the origin of human beings' creation, this contradiction that we call the “paradox of dignity” is not solvable. This means that, on the one hand, human beings like any other beings are the product of evolution; and, on the other hand, the human being has placed dignity above other beings for his own. Secular anthropology cannot answer this question that if, say, in the course of human evolution a being was made much more evolved than a human being, what would be the final fate of this self-styled dignity in the face of this given being?

2.2. The differences in attitudes to aspects of human existence and the life after death

From a secularist point of view, the human being is a physical identity. Although this thinking aims to explain all the facts of human life using experimental science, facing some dead ends, today it considers another identity for human beings- which includes the emotional, psychological, and cognitive aspects- to be able to explain some undeniable facts about human.

Of course, the secularist point of view tries to base the same above-mentioned emotional, psychological, and cognitive suppositions on the materialistic interplay of actions .

On the other hand, in Islamic bioethics, in addition to physical and mental aspects, human has a spiritual dimension that is the basis of human existence. This dimension is in permanent interaction with other aspects and somehow incorporates the other aspects. In Islamic morality, the dimension of the human spirit is recognized as “incorporeal”, and is out of the circle of the experimental material world, and is the means of human conjunction with his Creator .

Belief in life after death has a profound effect on the attitude towards the issue of bioethics. For instance, if a person continuously does something that increases environmental pollution, this environmental pollution is considered reprehensible in Islamic bioethics even after his/her death and will have negative effects on a person's soul and his destiny, and the story does not end with his death. In fact, by accepting life after death, not only do human beings become immortal, all their actions become somehow immortal. An individual, being informed of the lasting effects of his/her actions, will care more about his/her deeds as he knows that his actions will always remain with him/her and he or she would have no way to separate them from him/herself .

Part II: The points of difference in Meta-ethics

Meta-ethics, which is the most abstract and philosophical part of ethics (17,22), involves analysis of language, and the concepts and methods of reasoning in ethics. For example, the meanings of such terms as right, duty, virtue, ethics, and accountability are discussed in moral semantics. In addition, meta-ethics involves epistemological issues in the realm of ethics, which include the logic governing the argument patterns in ethics, how to testify or falsify the moral propositions, and how to

testify or falsify they're being educative. Meta-ethics tries to answer, if there are any, the questions regarding the presence or absence of ethical style attributes such as good and evil, dos and don'ts, and how to determine such attributes. These are the topics that are addressed in the context of moral ontology. In addition to these three major parts in meta-ethics, questions such as partiality, subjectivity, or objectivity of moral propositions are the topics discussed in meta-ethics .

By this definition, it is obvious that there are many differences between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics from ontological, epistemological, and semantic aspects, which will be tackled in the following section:

1. Differences in moral ontology

In short, it can be said that the presence or absence of such thin moral properties as good and evil, dos and don'ts, and so forth, and how to determine such attributes, if there are any, are discussed in the moral ontology .

As already noted, secular ethics, and consequently secular bioethics, include a range of theories that believe in the authenticity of human force in managing their lives. The moral ontology of some of these theories is empty; that is, some secular schools- such as moral nihilism, moral prescriptivism, and moral emotivism- believe that from an ontological perspective, it is by no means possible to express some real moral propositions. They believe in a kind of systematic error in commonsensical human intuitions, which is why they consider all moral propositions as false (22,25-28). However, there are some among secular moralists who believe in moral realism (29, 30) i.e., they believe in thin moral properties in one way or another, believing that moral matters have a counterpart and a signified outside moral propositions and that they can be achieved independently of moral agents. Just like the naturalists- who believe that moral precepts are some sorts of experimental laws, and sometimes reducible to such natural realities as pleasure-reductionists like J. Bentham are included in this category. Another group of secular realists and intuitionists like G. E. Moore believe that moral properties have a point of abstraction, but they do not have counterparts and that they are of a secondary quality like “similarity.”

In contrast to these secular moral attitudes (whether realistic or anti-realistic), Islamic bioethics, according to the assumptions discussed above,

refers to a kind of realism called supernaturalism. This means that moral characteristics exist independently of our beliefs, but not as naturalists or intuitivism say. Rather, these characteristics are with God; i.e., the origin of their existence is the One God. The philosophical equivalent of the school of Islamic bioethics is the “divine order”, in which the will of God is the source of normativity and this origin of normativity is the main point of philosophical distinction between Islamic ethics and secular ethics.

2. Differences in moral epistemology

Most of the schools that are anti-realistic in the moral ontology are non-cognitivist in the realm of cognition. They believe that moral precepts imply a non-cognitive status, that they cannot be testified or falsified, and that they are not educative. One of the important foundations of some secular thoughts is rationalism. In fact, for all secular thinkers, recognition of moral precepts and their epistemological authority does not require reference to the scriptures, and for ethical programming and to testify or falsify the moral propositions, we need to refer to the human intellect instead of these scriptures. Of course, as noted, not all secular philosophical schools are based on the human intellectual faculties; some are based on intuition, which they recognize as a product of the non-argumentative faculty of their intellect. Although the word secular was primarily used for the thought that was against the faith in the validity of the ideas of the church, we will explain that .

Believers in secular scientism consider human knowledge as so empowering that it can solve all the problems of human life, and can testify the epistemological authority and the truth or falsity of all the propositions, including moral propositions, through experience. The culmination of this thinking is visible in the theory of “logical positivism”, based on which only what is true that its truth can be proved by experience (22).

The logical outcome of secularist rationalism, scientism, and empiricism is nothing but “humanism”. The phenomenon of “humanism” is the natural outcome of giving full credit to the human existence force; which in combination with other indicators of the modern world has led to “individualism”, which has had a substantial effect on Western societies .

In Islamic epistemology, intellect, although having a special status to the degree that intellect and religion are known as a concomitant, cannot guide

mankind to prosperity alone. Rather, it can induce genuine moral knowledge only when it is in the framework of the revealed teachings.

3. Semantic differences

Secular schools define notions of morality independent of religion. In Islamic bioethics schools, however, the definition of concepts and moral properties are carried out in the framework of religion.

In other words, morality relies on religion in its most basic relationship, which is the semantic relationship. From this perspective, to understand such concepts as good and evil, one needs to refer to scriptures (22).

4. Other distinctions between the two ethical approaches

In this section, we will briefly refer to some minor but important differences that better define the distinctions between secular bioethics and Islamic bioethics:

4.1. Secular ethics is individualistic. This moral character, nevertheless, is not just due to its philosophical origins and sources; other diverse factors, including the social and political events of the last two centuries, have been influential in the formation of secular ethics in the Western individualist society. This is while Islamic bioethics, taking the individual and his rights into account, is more attentive to the interests of the community, as compared with secular ethics.

4.2. As already noted, secular ethics encompasses a range of theories that, although they all have something in common, cannot be codified in a single theory. This is even though many Western great theorists, including I. Kant, J. S. Mill, and D. Ross, tried to codify the conventional moral intuitions in the form of a theory, taking into account some right-making features- like duty, pleasure, and happiness, as well as Prima Facie Duty, and so forth. Nevertheless, they did not succeed. This led to moral pluralism which is one of the characteristics of secular bioethics. On the contrary, Islamic bioethics, which is based on the principle of monotheism, stays safe from this kind of pluralism. Although it cannot be claimed only that there is just one version of Islamic ethics, it can be said that all the available versions have something in common which provides them with an Islamic identity and encompasses all the right-

making features in secular ethics. For instance, the word ‘virtue’ which is used in the literature of Islamic ethics incorporates deontology (emphasis on your actions), consequentialism (emphasis on the results of the actions), and virtue ethics (emphasis on the moral agent). This means that in the definition of the ethical practice based on Islamic ethics, all of the above-mentioned issues should be taken into account.

4.3. In secular bioethics, due to multiple sources of knowledge, ethical theories, and right-making features, moral precepts cannot easily be issued, and at best we can have some moral recommendations. This means that secular ethics cannot speak from a position of total validity, and always has to be cautionary since it is based on human resources which are logically fallible. The validity of Islamic moral precepts, however, is divine, and it can go beyond a recommendation to take the form of a final judgment .

Part III: The similarities between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics

1. Intellect as the source of recognition and moral knowledge

Despite mentioning the differences between secular bioethics and Islamic bioethics, we referred to the main differences in the degree of validity of intellect as a source of knowledge in these two approaches. We said that in some schools of secular bioethics intellect is the only independent and authoritative source for identifying the moral validity or invalidity while in Islamic bioethics intellect can only broadly recognize the moral validity or invalidity and it needs revelation. Notwithstanding this difference, the other side of the coin, the use of intellect as a source, should also be noticed.³¹ Just like secular bioethics, Islamic bioethics also accepts intellect as an important source.⁴ Since Islamic bioethics is discourse ethics and revelation-based, and given that based on the jurisprudential rule of intellect and religion concomitance, intellect is an important source of inference in Islamic jurisprudence, it is also considered an important source in revelation-based ethics. In this respect, Islamic bioethics resembles secular bioethics although there is a difference in the degree of validity of intellect as a source of knowledge in these two approaches.

2. Nature and common moral norms

What is known as the common moral ethics in modern literature of ethics reflects the fact that all ethical schools have a common ground that includes some ethical practices and standards to which all people are committed.¹⁷ A simple example is the value of honesty, loyalty, and gratitude in every culture and all the ethical schools. Therefore, as Islamic bioethics has some beliefs in common with other schools, it also has a common ground with secular bioethics.

Islamic bioethics asserts that common morality is the reason for being of the same source, which is the human beings’ god-seeking nature, and that what has been the result of several centuries of secular moral experience is nothing but an extremist pluralism.

3. Virtue, moral agent, and altruism

The fervent re-emergence of virtue ethics- which is rooted in Aristotelian ethics^{32,33}, and related to Islamic practical ethics- is based on the care-based ethics which is rooted in feministic approaches towards ethics.^{34,35} It is a historical answer to the rigid and justice-oriented modern ethics and altruistic ethics that is rooted in Judaism.³⁶ Although all these ethics claim to be secular and separated from religion and attempt to offer themselves to the community consistent with the rational principles, it is obvious that such concepts like virtue, emphasizing the moral agent instead of ethical action, care, altruism, and sacrifice- which constitute the main foundations of these attitudes and ethical schools- are all derived from religious literature, and all of these are key concepts can be used as a common ground between secular bioethics- which is in our opinion is not that secular- and religion-based bioethics, especially Islamic bioethics: a common ground which is not as a result of Islamic bioethics secularization, but as a result of returning of human thinking track to religion-based ethics.

4. Methods of deducing the moral propositions

Another similarity between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics is in their methodology in the deduction of Islamic jurisprudence propositions and secular ethical propositions. In particular, some secular schools have an authentic approach towards ethics such as those based on the four-principle approach, and some other schools consider a right-making feature like duty, outcome, or pleasure as their diagnostic criteria for moral action, and then try to deduce the duties or principles through such

mechanisms as specification and balancing. This is almost like what has been used in the history of jurisprudence to interpret the religious precepts and Islamic ethics based on the principles of jurisprudence.

5. Considering the human rights values

Including human rights in secular ethics is another point that is similar to Islamic ethics. The kind of human rights in secular ethics in which all human beings are considered equal, and is based on the principle of justice, is rooted in such Kantian thoughts as the “golden rule” or “categorical imperative”. Despite some differences in instances and scope with the Islamic human rights, it accepts the principle of equality and freedom for all human beings of all colors, races, and languages, which is explicitly mentioned in the Holy Quran.

Conclusions

While bioethics in its new form, which is typically based on philosophical theories, has a long and brilliant historical record in the Islamic world, particularly in various forms of medical ethics and professional morality⁴¹, it is considered a new field so that no serious effort has been made in the field of theoretical ethics to explain the Islamic bioethics meta-ethically and ontological, epistemological, and semantic foundations and principles of Islamic bioethics are unexplained⁴². The mere use of secular bioethics to solve the problems and issues in Islamic countries cannot bring fruitful results; and, generally, due to incongruence of secular views with the prevailing culture of Muslim societies, it sometimes leads to hidden and obvious conflicts and paradoxes that are sometimes highly complex and complicated⁴¹. Another event that has happened in the meantime is the passive approach taken by the Islamic bioethics custodian institutions towards the emerging issues. In other words, due to the lack of a rich philosophical and theoretical background, dealing with moral issues of the day, particularly in biosciences and medical ethics, is merely limited to some normative statements most of which are rooted in secular meta-ethics. Unfortunately, bioethics within the world of Islam today is following secular bioethics.

Since it is believed that Islam in its broad sense is capable of offering a comprehensive theory of ethics to manage society, it can be argued that providing such a theory will to some extent encompass the secular bioethics which constitutes the epistemology of today's world moral discourse.

The condition for that is the ability of Muslim experts and scholars in the religious fields and academic communities and identifying the various components of the desired comprehensive theory. This cannot be achieved without an increased number of studies and research especially carried out on the normative similarities and meta-ethical differences between Islamic bioethics and secular bioethics.

It should be noted at the end that despite all the differences, believing in a common ground is the only way to begin a serious dialogue among the scientific centers of the Islamic world and other national and international institutions in charge of bioethics as well as religion-based ethical schools, the result of all of which will be human beings' comprehensive development, their achieving prosperity, and maintaining the human dignity in all its dimensions.

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by a grant from the Medical Ethics and Law Research Center, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest.

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