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ISLAMIC LIMITATIONS IN COSMETIC AND PLASTIC SURGERY

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Abstract: The market for aesthetic and medical procedures has experienced a substantial increase as people strive to improve their looks or correct abnormalities. Yet, within the framework of Islamic beliefs, these methods are bound by particular restrictions and ethical concerns. This paper examines the Islamic viewpoint of aesthetic and reconstructive surgery, with a specific emphasis on the theology and jurisprudential principles that determine its permission. The doctrines of Islam, principally based on the Qur'an and Hadith, highlight the sacredness of the human form as it is created by Allah (SWT) and the significance of preserving its inherent condition. As a result, Islamic thinkers distinguish among surgeries that are considered medically essential and those done just for cosmetic purposes. The study emphasizes that procedures intended to correct congenital disorders or injuries are commonly deemed acceptable, since they adhere to the ideals of requesting medical attention and upholding the rights of individuals. On the other hand, choice procedures for the purpose of improving appearance are usually subject to more rigorous examination and are generally avoided unless they cause serious emotional distress or social damage. The analysis also explores the ethical implications related to intents and the possible outcomes of modifying one's physical characteristics, highlighting the importance of operations being justified by significant advantages rather than simple pride. This dissertation seeks to give a thorough comprehension of the religious constraints put on reconstructive and reconstructive surgeries within the Islamic faith, providing insights into the equilibrium between medical progress and religious observance. Through the analysis of different viewpoints, the research adds to the wider discussion on medical morality in Islamic settings, advocating for an elegant approach to modern medical procedures.

Keywords: aesthetic and reconstructive surgery, Islamic Limitations

1. Introduction

The expression "unique" in the setting of cosmetic procedures is derived from the Greek phrase "plastikos," that signifies the action of molding or shaping. Surgery called plastic surgery involves the procedures of repairing, rebuilding, or altering the human body. Plastic surgery is divided into two separate categories: aesthetic procedures and surgical reconstruction. The procedure of cosmetic surgery is intended to improve the patient's psychological appearance without correcting any physical abnormalities or ailments. The procedure of reconstructive surgery seeks to rectify functional shortcomings resulting from trauma, incidents, diseases, and birth defects.¹ An often overlooked aspect in the realm of medical aesthetics is the impact of someone's faith on their cultural heritage (Kurz, 2024). Cosmetic doctors now have not enough funding to effectively meet the requirements of their religion customers. Specific concerns regarding particular clients should be addressed with an individual's personal faith counselor (Bergin, 2019).

In modern culture, there is a widespread use of cosmetics and plastic surgery procedures as people want to improve their looks and correct any inherited or picked up abnormalities. Although these processes have many advantages, they also give rise to substantial legal, societal, and spiritual considerations. Islamic scholars engage in complex religious and jurisprudential discussions over legality and restrictions of aesthetic and medical procedures within the Islamic system. Islamic teachings, based on the Qur'an and Hadith, highlight the need of conserving Allah's (SWT) natural creations and upholding the health of one's body. As a result, researchers and spiritual figures have established clear rules to distinguish acceptable types of medical assistance from those that are regarded unacceptable or forbidden. These recommendations often focus on the motives for the operation, the essentiality of the method, and its influence on an individual's welfare and overall state of being (Sen, 2018). This summary aims to examine the core ideas that form the basis of Islamic viewpoints on cosmetics and aesthetic surgery. It aims to establish a basis for comprehending the societal restrictions placed on these procedures. Within Islamic legislation, surgical procedures is categorized by Muslim Jurists under two distinct groups: a) Permissible plastic surgery. b) Forbidden cosmetic treatment. Islamic law, sometimes referred to as the Shariah is based on two main sources: the Qur'an, which is regarded as the holy scripture of all Muslims, and the Sunna, which contains the revelations and acts of the Prophet Muhammad. Over the course of history, the Sunni denomination of Islam has formulated the Shari'ah, a set of religious laws that require the use of "Ijmaa" (common ground among all qualified legal professionals after the Prophet's demise) and "Qiyas" (reasoning by analogy) in situations where the Quran or Sunna do not provide clear guidance (Bashayreh, 2022). As a result, four prominent Sunni traditions of legal have

been established. In relevant cases, we also consider the principles of "Maslaha" (open to the public purpose) and "Urf" (specific usual custom).

2. Islamic Concepts of Health and Disease

Introducing variations in culture and religion makes it more difficult to manage disease. Christianity exerts a substantial influence on persons' own viewpoints, beliefs, and convictions to medicine within any given society. Additionally, it influences the nature of the medical interventions patients are provided with. In the past few decades, there has been an increasing need within both science and medicine to better understand the influence of spirituality on health. Healthcare providers in many countries often face the difficulty of treating individuals whose views and actions towards medical conditions may differ greatly from their own perspectives (Harvey, 2017). Muslims constitute one of the communities presenting this challenge. Islam has not just a metaphysical legacy but also a sociological aspect. Shari'a, commonly referred to as holy law, largely centers upon five fundamental goals preserving life, upholding freedom of religion, supporting academic endeavors, maintaining personal respect and respect for others, and defending property. The principles and regulations governing conduct in Islam are established based on the teachings contained in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Abbas, 2021).

The concept of sacred law is an all-encompassing entity that covers all aspect of existence for humans (Olukayode, 2018). Beings like ourselves are the highest achievement of civilization. They have the abilities of cognition, volition, and duties, which include the responsibility and control over other living creatures, the environment, and their private welfare. God plays a crucial role in religious traditions related to health. These systems provide an exhaustive structure to address the physiological, spiritual in nature, mental in nature and ecological problems of people and their societies. The understanding of the beginnings, the natural world, reason, repercussions, and treatment of health and disease is greatly shaped by deep connections to Islam and its rich past. These characteristics also impact the contact involving the doctor and their traditionalist patients who maintains steadfast religious convictions (Scharffs, 2017).

The earth, together with all the advantages granted by creation or sciences, is considered as divine treasures that must be equitably divided to prevent anybody from suffering from starvation, to offer relief from illness when a cure exists, and to prevent the exploitation of the granted talents. Islam, according to its religious instructions, affirms the concept of divine predestination, which states that God has predestined every occurrence, whether they are favorable or unfavorable, from the dawn of time. This encompasses all types of activities, which could involve compliance or defiance, demonstrations of faith or unbelief, encounters with illness or well-

being, ownership of riches or destitution, and even things pertaining to the passage of time . Muslims derive great strength from their belief in predestined when faced with extreme hardships. However, it is a substantial matter that impacts not just Islam however also Christian. Theologians from both perspectives have been involved in a protracted and continuing discourse over the presence or absence of human agency and free will in decision-making (Junker-Kenny, 2020).

The majority of modern Muslim philosophers maintain the view that God has predetermined every detail, as evidenced by. Nevertheless, Islam incorporates two contradictory concepts: destiny and judgment. The doctrine of predestined posits that all events and outcomes are predestined, but the theory of screening indicates the presence of spontaneity, which challenges the notion of damnation (Kame, 2021).

Muslims understand that disease, pain, and death are integral components of life and considered a test from God (Ahaddour, 2018). Major diseases frequently point to divine assistance, while birth defects are regarded as a way to assess one's resilience and faith in a greater being. The process is a cleansing ordeal, completely without any curse, penalty, or display of the wrath of God. It is essential to understand that in Islam, contradictions do not negate each other. Both the concepts of providence and free agency are considered equal legitimate. Although the concept of "evaluating" is present, individual will is always subject to God's will. Consequently, the appraisal of a believer's faith is reduced to scrutinizing their compliance with accepted norms, rather than evaluating their ability to autonomously distinguish what is true and authentic. This explains why Muslims frequently use the term "Insha Allah," which translates to "if God wills." This is also the reason why sickness, error, passing away, or fortunate events are ascribed to God (Greig, 2019).

Conversely, well-educated Muslims that receive instruction in contemporary disciplines place a higher emphasis on personal accountability. They often maintain the conviction that disease or suffering is primarily attributed to human stupidity or laziness. Their conviction is that humanity should actively confront sickness rather than simply recognizing it as their predetermined fate, since they believe it is God's will. Although most Muslims appreciate modern medicine and are motivated to pursue medical care, the belief in destiny may lead certain people to abstain from medication or even avoid obtaining medical treatment entirely (Muishout, 2022). In addition, older adults, particularly those with strong cultural and religious opinions, may show some reluctance in adjusting to modern international standards and practices that are perceived as "new".

Muslims are obligated to demonstrate restraint and balance in all facets of life, particularly those related to health (Bahmani, 2018). Disease as well as

wellness are regarded as components of a seamless continuum of being. Illness is regarded as an event that functions as a method to purify and synchronize someone on the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual planes. It is received with patience and humble request. Death is commonly understood as a journey or quest to meet the eternal. Hate is an inappropriate response. However, it is important to patients to avoid adopting a pessimistic mindset and they are highly encouraged, if not required, to seek medical treatment. It is crucial to acknowledge that pursuing medical therapy should not be perceived as contradictory to one's faith in depending on divine intervention for health. Indeed, Allah is the creator of both the affliction and its cure. Hence, partake in permitted matters, O devotees of Allah, while abstaining from engaging in anything that is forbidden. Treatments are permissible as long as they do not include prohibited components like as pork or alcoholic beverages (Pauzi, 2019). The recorded sayings delivered by the Prophets are authoritative in that manner.

Nevertheless, Islamic law has a distinct ruling for situations that are exempted due to need. Essential needs take precedence over restrictions. Unlawful components may be permitted if they are necessary for preserving lives or if they are prescribed by a reputable Muslim doctor, and if there are no lawful alternatives available. Some have even determined that illicit products may be administered parenterally or applied topically (McLean, 2017).

In addition, the process of "transformation" involves changing a material into another material with completely new features and characteristics. This process allows compounds that are now prohibited by law to be converted into goods that are legally permitted. The Holy Qur'an achieves its therapeutic and health-enhancing impact through legal regulations that prohibit risky lifestyles and behaviors, while emphasizing behaviors that promote well-being (such as moderate eating, abstaining from cigarettes, alcohol, and other psychoactive substances, regular exercise, prayers, fasting, ablution and bathing, breastfeeding, and various other injunctions). It offers comprehensive guidelines and regulations to assist persons in managing their daily activities. Additionally, it possesses inherent healing abilities, serving as a source of healing and compassion for those who have faith. Regardless, prayer continues to be the means of deliverance in both states of well-being and illness (Balogun, 2021)

3. Islamic Bioethics

Ethics is a subfield of applied philosophy that aims to determine the correct and incorrect, the virtuous and immoral behaviors in a certain situation (Chiu, 2017). Bioethics is a discipline that provides solutions to the ethical dilemmas that arise in the conduct of medical and biological science. It can be considered a quasi-social science. The four ethical principles, specifically "respect for autonomy," "justice," "beneficence," and "nonmaleficence," have

long been in existence and serve as the guiding principles for ethical conduct in human cultures. These concepts are universally applicable to any culture and community, including Islamic traditional societies (Singagerda, 2020).

Regardless of this broad statement, the recognition of views, attitudes, and conceptual frameworks is crucial and rooted in tradition (Sovacool, 2017). Islamic bioethics is a branch of Islamic law (Sharia) that draws its principles from the Qur'an (holy book) as well as the Hadith and Sunnah (the words and actions of the Prophet). The sacred book is considered to be the timeless divine message of God that was disclosed to the Prophet. The authenticity of the Hadith and Sunna is widely acknowledged. The Shi'a branch of Islam has, in certain instances, created its own interpretations, technique, and authority structures. However, overall, its bioethical rules do not significantly diverge from the viewpoints held by the Sunni branch. Bioethical discussion is inherently intertwined with religion, highlighting the interconnectedness between the physical and mental aspects of existence, the material and spiritual realms, and the domains of ethics and law (Ryff, 2021).

The Qur'an, Hadith, and Sunnah provide explicit and specific ethical principles on numerous medical matters. Prevention is a central focus in Islamic bioethics. Nevertheless, in cases where prevention is ineffective, it offers instructions not only for the physician, but additionally for the patient. It also emphasizes the importance of treating the patient with respect and compassion, and acknowledges the significance of addressing the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the sickness experience. However, it is important for physicians to recognize their responsibility to provide healing while also realizing that God is the ultimate source of healing. In Islam, it is acknowledged that every element of creation has a purpose and was not created without reason (Williams, 2020).

Islam distinguishes that there is unknown in the creation that was created for naught. “And know that We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that in between them in mere idle play” (21:16)

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَٰعِبِينَ

Furthermore, a key focus in the Qur'an is that God had confidence in Adam and believed that humanity is capable of and will attain righteousness on earth. In addition, God bestowed upon humanity wisdom that was not shared with other beings, for the betterment of all mankind, irrespective of race, color, or socioeconomic standing (Sulaiman, 2021). The information we obtain is facilitated by the assistance, direction, and volition of God. According to this statement, God possesses complete knowledge of both the visible and concealed aspects of human existence. In contrast, humans are only capable of acquiring knowledge that God permits them to obtain.

God “knows all that lies open before men and all that is hidden from them, whereas they cannot attain any knowledge except that which He wills them to attain” (2:255).

بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۗ

4. Islamic view of Plastic surgery

There is a balance and perfection in the creation and in nature that must not be ignored: “He Who created the seven heavens one above another: No want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of Allah Most Gracious. So turn thy vision again, do you see any flaw?” (67:3)

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفْوُوتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ

Current Muslim scholars generally concur that plastic surgery is permissible in cases of genuine necessity, such as the correction of congenital abnormalities (e.g., removing an extra finger) or the treatment of problems resulting from illness, traffic accidents, burns, and similar causes (Loue, 2020). This perspective pertains to reconstructive plastic surgery. This regulation is derived from an occurrence in which the Prophet (Peace be upon Him) (PBUH) permitted a friend named Arfajah ibn Saad, who had his nose severed in a battle, to wear a golden prosthetic nose. In addition, performing these treatments is not intended to engage in what is known as "taghyir khalq Allah" (altering God's creation), which is the primary reason why numerous scholars prohibit various forms of contemporary plastic surgery. The primary rationale for permitting such surgeries is to eliminate injury and alleviate the physical and psychological distress experienced by the individual in question (Rothrock, 2022).

The rationale for medical intervention is based on the concept that any injury, if it happens, should be alleviated. A medical procedure that causes an injury of equal severity as a side effect should not be used to alleviate an existing injury. The decision on this should be made by a reliable specialist. This matter is within the jurisdiction of the principle that states: (one hurt should not be remedied by another injury). The motivation to get plastic surgery stems from discontentment with imperfections and the resulting awkward physical appearance. Therefore, the use of technology to eliminate or rectify imperfections does not contradict or alter the creation of God (Shatzer, 2019).

The objective of doing surgery on congenital deformities is to restore the normal physical appearance, alleviate psychological distress or shame, and regain proper functionality (Constantian, 2019). These objectives do not entail altering the "fitra" (original human essence), but rather returning it to its state before to the injury. Performing a surgical procedure to determine the actual gender of an individual who seems to be a hermaphrodite is not a modification of human nature, but rather an effort to restore the modified structure, which has been affected by hormonal or chromosomal damage, to its typical form

and function. These operations also aim to maintain or repair the ability to reproduce. Likewise, the presence of scars resulting from skin disorders, accidents, or burns can cause both physical and psychological distress and damage. In Islam, individuals with malformations are permitted to correct them through surgical procedures (AHMAD TARMIDZI, 2019).

“We created Man in the most perfect form” (95:4).

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

Various biomaterials, either on their own or in conjunction with cultured biological products, have been developed to address the limited availability of autologous donor tissue or to enhance the healing process in various surgical fields, including abdominal and plastic surgery. A significant portion of these biomaterials are derived from pigs. Islam unequivocally prohibits the consumption or utilization of pork or any derivatives thereof. When faced with life-threatening disorders or serious diseases, it is acceptable to utilize items derived from pigs if alternative materials that are not produced from pigs are not accessible. In this scenario, the utilization of items obtained from pigs is deemed necessary and permissible (Lassaletta, 2019).

5. Cosmetic (Aesthetic) surgery

The pursuit of beauty is highly emphasized by Islam as a primary focus. According to the Prophetic hadith, it is stated that God possesses beauty and has a preference for beauty (Fahm, 2020). Thus, the act of hiring additional beauticians is typically legal. Furthermore, according to numerous traditional jurists, pursuing aesthetic enhancements in one's physical appearance might serve as a means to alleviate psychological distress and tension. The principle of Islam is to eliminate any form of pain, whether it is physical or psychological, as stated by the universal rule "Harm should be removed."

Under Islamic principles, the practice of beautification to correct a significantly malformed body part is generally allowed, as long as it serves a legitimate purpose (Fatima, 2023). Alternatively, several academics argue that cosmetic operations stem from the materialistic ideology embraced by Western society, which places a strong emphasis on the physical body and its needs. The increased popularity of Hollywood or sport stars can be attributed to the standards set by them and the media. Individuals who prioritize physical appearance over spiritual well-being engage in excessive efforts to enhance and alter their bodies, needlessly modifying what has been naturally formed by a higher power. In doing so, they subject themselves to physical discomfort, torment, and financial extravagance. Islam unequivocally forbids the act of mutilating the human body. Cosmetic surgery can be viewed as a purposeful act of self-harm, as it accurately describes the outcome when certain cosmetic procedures are unsuccessful (Disman, 2023).

Cosmetic surgery is considered impermissible when its objective is to enhance the appearance of a normal physical structure in order to promote self-esteem or increase attractiveness (Maheshwari, 2022). Examples of such procedures are breast augmentation, stomach tucks (abdominoplasty), and face lifts. The Qur'an and Hadith have explicitly denounced this type of surgery as it involves tampering with the innate design bestowed by God onto individuals without a legitimate justification. The primary objective of these surgical procedures is only aesthetic enhancement, which is not a sufficient justification on its own for allowing them. The Prophet (PBUH) cursed those women who pluck their eyebrows and file their teeth for the sole aim of beautification, as it goes against the natural creation of God.

Consequently, it is illegal for a Muslim surgeon to do surgery only for the purpose of enhancing someone's aesthetic appeal or improving their physical appearance. Engaging in a cosmetic procedure with malicious intents is strictly forbidden. For instance, surgeries performed for the purpose of deceiving others, such as individuals undergoing face lifts to appear younger in order to trick a potential spouse, or surgeries conducted to alter the appearance of criminals with the aim of evading identification. Sex reassignment surgery, sometimes known as sex change, is strictly forbidden. Nevertheless, procedures to determine the gender in instances of pseudo hermaphroditism are allowed (Babu, 2022).

Several experts argue that it is necessary to evaluate each form of cosmetic surgery separately, since each procedure has its unique characteristics and underlying reasons. These factors should serve as the foundation for determining the appropriate legal judgment (Fischhoff, 2020). The reason behind many contemporary plastic operations is not solely driven by the desire for superficial beautification. Alternatively, there may be alternative justifications for their actions, which can classify them as *hajiyyat* (necessities) or even *dharuriyyat* (essentials), both of which can legitimize what is otherwise considered unlawful. For instance, breast augmentation is not allowed when the breasts are of normal size and there is no genuine need for cosmetic surgery on them. However, it may be allowed in certain situations where the breasts are excessively large, causing significant psychological and physical distress to the individual. Similarly, abdominoplasty procedures are considered acceptable when they are performed for medical purposes, such as preventing severe illnesses, or for the purpose of returning a woman's significantly enlarged abdomen to its original form after several pregnancies and childbirth (Nelson-Piercy, 2020).

The legal responsibility in cosmetic surgery differs significantly from general norms of professionalism due to the different objectives in cosmetic surgery compared to typical therapeutic goals. The cosmetic surgeon may not come across a "patient", but rather a "healthy individual" who is pursuing

aesthetic enhancement (Kueny, 2020). Surgeons should ensure that patients are adequately informed about the anticipated and possible risks and complications of a surgical procedure, as the outcomes may not always align with the patients' expectations.

6. Islamic Fiqh Academy Resolution on Plastic Surgery

The Organization of Islamic Conferences' Islamic Fiqh Academy (OIC-IFA) is a highly influential group that engages in Islamic ethico-legal discussions (Mohiuddin, 2020). It convenes scholars of Islam and medicine to address bioethical challenges encountered in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies. In 2007, the International Islamic Fiqh Academy deliberated on the matter of plastic surgery and subsequently released the following resolution:

- (1) Performing plastic surgery is allowed when it is aimed at restoring the original shape of body organs as intended by God.
- (2) This includes altering one's appearance to meet personal desires or conform to societal norms, as long as it is not done with the intention of deceiving or manipulating justice. Examples of permissible procedures include changing the shape of the face, nose, eyes, lips, or cheeks through enlargement or reduction.
- (3) Body weight can be decreased using medically permitted methods, such as surgery (liposuction), if obesity presents a medical issue and no alternative options are available, as long as there is no harm involved.
- (4) Surgical or injectable methods are not allowed for wrinkle removal, except in cases of medical need and without causing harm.

7. Conclusion

In Islam, plastic surgery is allowed for medical purposes, specifically for treating diseases and preserving the functionality of body organs. Undergoing cosmetic surgery only for the goal of enhancing one's beauty or improving one's appearance is not allowed, as it involves modifying God's creation without a proper justification. Cosmetic surgery will only be allowed in cases where it is medically necessary due to a health condition or physical deformity.

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