Assessing Eugenic Theory and Clarification of Its Moral Methods and Procedures through Religious Texts

تقييم نظرية تحسين النسل و شرح أساليبها و نهجها الأخلاقي استنادا إلي النصوص الدينية

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Abstract

The subject of this study is investigating eugenic or genetic improvement as one of the most important contemporary issues of practical ethnics. Statement of the problem is as the following: is promoting genetic structure of human race possible through genetic engineering and storage of sperms of men with outstanding features in sperm banks and implanting them into the uterus of women on large scale either naturally or through artificial insemination? Improving the quality of human race and eliminating or reducing genetic defects through control of behavioral and biological changes in the human genome, it's being good or evil and morally and religiously acceptable, is an important issue that should be explored.

The main objective of this descriptive-analytical study is, in addition to critical investigation of immoral genetic evolution, presenting a new

outlook of the comprehensive religion of Islam to achieve a clean and well-educated generation and remove the defects and genetic shortcomings to acquire an ideal society. The most important result of this research is that Islam confirms genetic engineering through different methods and, even, presents several recommendations in this regard. Ignoring moral principles, identity crisis, reinforcing racism, fall of genetic knowledge, possibility of mental and psychological problems, ignoring will power, and political and social abuses are most important critiques of genetic engineering which is done through controlling and changing human gnomes.

Key words: genetic engineering, genetic modification, behavior control, simulation, moral principles, crisis

Introduction

Eugenic or genetic engineering and genetic controls for improving the generation is an important issue of practical ethical issues; the negative or modifying eugenic, such as the removal of the apparent chromosome irregularities and positive or structural eugenic, such as the allocation of genetic structure of the individual to one special talent (Palmer 1388: 303). Questions that must be answered are: Can we have special privileged generation through engineering and genetic manipulation? Can we justify and apply the procedure for medical and non-medical benefits as they are applicable to plants and? What is Islam's perspective in regard with genetic controls? The most important question in this article is the goodness or badness of creating change in human genome. Investigating genome control to have an improved human race is not limited to medical sciences; the innovative aspect of this study is implementing religious verses and tradition within genetic science. The correction of defects caused by the generation of gene transfer and lack of mental and physical health is created and is having a privileged expression of the need for paper. Therefore, this study aims at proving the following hypothesis:

- Using illegal and religiously unaccepted tools and methods to fulfill the goal of reforming the generations is prohibited.
- Observing and implementing Islam's unique recommendations is the safest channel to fulfill the above objective.
- Many verses and religious sayings support smart, brave, creative simulation of human race.

Background of the discussion

The term 'eugenic' was first used by Francis Galton, a geneticist in late 19th century. This term had racial and class bias at the beginning; i.e. Its goal was to provide more opportunities for superior races to overcome lower races. His interpretation in this regard is:

Perhaps it is terrible that the strong drive the weak out; however, what is more terrifying is that the weak, depressed and unworthy, expel those who more deserve the stages of life from the scene…. Let's encourage the creation of races and generations that are more deserving of the invention and are compatible with a superior civilization and do not prevent the entrance of the strong because of false emotions (Galton 1870: 343). Then this theory was reinforced by some and criticized by others. By 1952, Crick and Watson believed that mankind is in a state of gradual genetic degradation which can be stopped by eugenic of species. They believe the discovery of DNA makes direct modification of genes and reduction of genetic defects possible through genetic surgery. In fact, Watson adopted this theory from Russian physiologist's conditioning theory.

Analytical discussion

Eugenic is one of the versions of behaviorism attributed to John B. Watson. Behaviorism includes psychological and biological behaviorism. In psychological behaviorism, behavior can be predicted and controlled through causal principles. According to Watson and his followers, human beings function in a disciplined universe and their behaviors are formed based on causal processes which are recognizable, manageable, and controllable. (Palmer 1388: 287)

What Watson meant by causal processes were environment and heredity as determining factors behind human behavior. He named the influence of environment on behavior as 'conditioning'. (Watson 1919: 82)

Another form of conditioning is achieved through bio-behavioral control and is called 'genetic engineering' or Eugenics which aims at improving genetic structures. As it was mentioned earlier, eugenics is of two types: positive and negative. Positive eugenics necessitates planned intercourse of superior males and females to reform genetic store and create new hereditary talents for future generations. Herman Muller, a specialist in this field, proposed sperm bank. Sperm of selected men are collected, freezed, and stored and inoculated into chosen women. This approach greatly improves genetic race of human beings and creates or

reinforces traits such as empathy, cooperation, intellectual ability, courage, honesty, morality, artistic and eloquence talent (Muller 1967: 445). According to him, A man can have thousands of children; parthenogenesis (through simulation) will probably be [possible soon; we will even be able to create kids through genetic manipulation; but we have to discard old beliefs about notions such as father, mother, and family. (Fletcher 1971: 783)

Negative eugenics is a kind of genetic therapy which can cure disability or illness genes; abortion and sterilization are included in this category as well. In this method, defects and shortcomings can be predicted and stifled through obtaining cells from the amniotic fluid that surrounds the fetus.

Is genetic eugenics morally right?

According to the proponents of this theory, moral justification of eugenics is possible through theories of teleological philosophers and their criterion of active value. Some moral philosophers, like Joseph Fletcher, who agree with the above comment, do not see any contradictions with the moral imperatives; according to them, needs, not rights, have moral stabilizers. Law gives priority to rights, but humanistic perspective prioritizes needs; so, if human right is in conflict with needs, the later should prevail. Therefore, if preventive medical care can apply genetic controls to protect humans against disease or defect to improve such issues, rights are to be discarded. If research on embryos and embryonic tissues is necessary for the acquisition of medical and equipment props and prevention of genetic disasters, even if it entails abandonment of some ground principle, too much strictness is irrelevant. (Palmer 1388: 306-7)

Therefore this view gives priority to needs when they are in conflict with rights or moral values. Their view considers the risk of contamination of human genes in case of reproduction through reproductive organs; this can be problematic for generations. It is possible to top general fertility through proliferation of healthy people and elevation of positive factors and to prevent growth and spread of possible problems and diseases through laboratory reproduction.

They equate active value criterion with the rate of profit, pleasure, or welfare. Maximal utilitarian believes that if improvement of special talent through simulation or genetic engineering results in most good for most people, then designing humanoid or modified human, as half-animal half-artificial creatures, through bio-engineering is justified.

Fletcher states that: "I support simulation of brave soldiers or high rank scholars through genetic engineering as long as it results in the creation and adjustment of elite groups who can enhance welfare of society" (1971: 781). As a result good or bad criterion is satisfaction of the needs of people, enhancing profits and prosperity of society.

Critical analysis of this view

The ultimate point of teleological theory is that the most determining factor for the accuracy or falsity, goodness or badness of an action are the needs of human society, welfare, and satisfaction of people. Defenders of this view are asked whether it does not generate possibility of dictatorial and tyrannical regimes; Fletcher's answer to this question is 'no'. He believes that not only genetic controls do not result in tyrannical regimes, but they must also negate the possibility, because establishment of authoritarian government proceeds genetic controls, and the resulting abuse is more political than biological (ibid: 782). For him, genetic control is a biological issue and should not be confused with political matters. But is there a meaningful connection between the two? Is possible necessary connection one of primacy and posterity? It seems that first: there is no reason neither for a necessary connection nor for primacy and posterity of the two; second, race modification can originate in anti-ethical apartheid ideas which have nothing to with political matters.

According to consequentialists, if the result is good, the deed is good as well, but if the result is bad, the deed is bad, too. What is to be done if the result is good for some but bad for others? Consequentialists present majority criterion; i.e. if the result is good for most people, then the action is morally justified. Minority consequentialists believe that is the result is good for a special group, such as scholars or proponents of particular parties, the deed is morally justified. How do these theoreticians justify the problems this result causes for others? People who are less capable, intelligent, beautiful, brave, and all those who lack outstanding attributes are ignored; variety of traits is limited; grounds for intellectual growth and more attempts to improve future becomes meaningless. Every individual defect, failure, or disaster presents multiple advancement opportunities. If we can create humans free from defects and shortcoming through laboratory-formulated procedures, no gaps for further efforts are felt and left. Many contexts for the flourishment of moral virtues, such as altruism, empathy, solidarity, and cooperation rise out of existing disputes. This does not mean that genetic

diseases and defects must remain untreated or uncared for; rather it implies that efforts to harmonize generations through laboratory methods and ignoring collective tastes and interests and maneuvering on particular types and highlighting specific features in the price of ignoring the will of the public destroy the possibility of progress. In short, negative consequences of this approach are:

- Similarity of people born out of this method increases and this, in turn, reduces the evolutionary benefits of genetic diversity.
- Features which are chosen are considered to be valuable for society, such as beauty or courage; however, it is not clear whether these features remain of value for future generations the same way features included in Muller's initial list differed with those included in his later list. He listed Marx, Lenin, and Sun Yat-sen as valuable donors initially, but changed them to Einstein and Lincoln later on.
- One of the critiques against negative eugenics is that to what extent prevention program can be expanded. Can we conclude that low-intelligence people should not marry or they should be sterilized? Can a general rule based on which biological defects are recognized and abortions allowed be issued for total population? Isn't it a violation of private affairs? These are moral dilemma which must be clarified and explained.
- Ignoring a number of people under the pretext of securing welfare for more is an outrageous violation of moral principles.
- Fletcher believes that a man can have thousands of children, but he does not where and how they are to be treated. Sometimes, a long-run plan of parents for training their children end in failure. Will callous governmental rules be able to fulfill training mission? Have orphanages and other community centers been able to do so?
- Beliefs and moral principles disappear. They insist on changing traditional notions of father, mother, and family. In a world here passionate affairs of the parents to observe moral principles and teaching their children remain sometimes inconclusive, how would morality and observation of moral rules be in a world without sympathy of parents?
- Social pressures to adjust with genetic engineering increase since any one would claim better generation for the slightest excuse.
- It would be difficult to harness abortion and any one with the slightest reason or the illusion of defect will claim her fetus aborted

in the wake of a better generation; this includes embryos that suffer treatable defects.

- What are meant by defects that must be modified and what is meant by a better generation? Who determines what is good and what is bad; as one of the geneticists stated, whose will and decision determines the rotation of the wheel of genetics? Government? Mother? The one who donates sperm? The person who rents the womb? Suppose that person prefers blonde hair, the other likes mathematical talent, another one prefers a consummate musical talent. Which one is better: dark or light color?
- Fall of fingerprinting and genetic knowledge, political abuses, artistic and spiritual, contradictions with principles of religions, unpredictable diseases, crime as a result of the similarity among people, and racism are the most common problems that arise out of change in human genomes (Jafari 1381: 107). Allameh Jafari, about the permissibility or impermissibility of the advancement of science states that "If we can cut an innocent person with most excruciating tortures into pieces for the advancement of science in order to discover a mysterious case about an excruciating death, we have licensed the murder of thousands of people. Is this acceptable? He considers this death of human beings". (ibid: 108)

Study and analysis of eugenics through psychological problems

In psychological behaviorism, behavior can be predicted and controlled through causal principles. According to Watson and his followers, human beings function in a disciplined universe and their behaviors are formed based on causal processes which are recognizable, manageable, and controllable (Palmer 1388: 287). What Watson meant by causal processes were environment and heredity as determining factors behind human behavior. He named the influence of environment on behavior as 'conditioning'. Heredity is inheriting body and some other physical features. But all behaviors, such as driving, problem solving, and falling in love, are definitely changeable through environment. This is one of Watson's most famous quotations: "give me a number of healthy children and let me raise them in my own world. I will guarantee that any one of them, randomly chosen, can be trained and educated to become the best specialist in any field you want; doctor, lawyer, artist, even beggar and robber". (1925: 82)

Analysis

The impact of heredity and environment on the formation of human character is irrefutable. Prophet Mohammad, about the importance of the impact of the education, states that "each child is born with a pure nature until he is made Jew, Christian, or Magi by his parents (Tabarsi, 1372, 8; 474)". So, the role of parents in the growth and health of children and emergence of and educated generation is of heavy color. But is it possible to ignore human freedom? Is an individual choceless in his moral, personal, scientific features the same way he has no choice in selecting the color of eyes or skin? Michael Palmer presents a good interpretation in this regard: this theory holds that man, like every other creature, functions according to causal principle in this universe. Humans are considered less as autonomous subjects than complicated pieces of machinery which are totally at the mercy of heredity and environment and thoroughly predictable. (Palmer 1388: 263)

Modification of generation from the perspective of verses and hadiths

Simulation is religiously prohibited, morally unacceptable, and legally banned. Allameh Jafari states that if simulation through manipulating human genome distorts basic human principles, it is definitely prohibited and must be acted against. If genetic deeds damage physical, mental, and psychological aspects, it is undoubtedly prohibited (1381: 109). Eugenics or genetic modification is illegal and prohibited, if carried out through following methods: collection and storage of sperms of educated and privileged men and inseminating them either artificially or in laboratory into the uterus of chosen women; it is not morally prohibited if aforementioned disorders are not possible and logical methods are performed to activate insemination. Some Islamic religious texts include advices and assurances the observation of which results in eugenics and since they are religiously sanctioned, no moral objection is allowed; however, if some religiously supported proposals are not observed, it might result in racial degeneration and is prone to moral objection. These advices include the following issues: spouse selection, nourishments of mothers during pregnancy, paying attention to moral virtues and staying away from vices, observing religiously permissible or impermissible creed, hints on intercourse and marital life all of which can result in having healthier children. Following section elaborates on some of these points.

1. Precision in spouse selection and paying attention to the role of genetic traits

Prophet Mohammad emphasizes the role of genetic issues and heredity in spouse selection; he stated that paying attention to the place in which you put your fetus because gene is of great influence (Majidi Khansari, 1385; 325). Another hadith of his mentions this philosophy again: "Marry virtues families, for hidden gene plays essential role in human beings"(Ibn al-Athir jazari, 1367, 1; 345) . Blood vessel was taken to be synonym with genes in these hadiths and was considered to be the channel for transition of hereditary human attributes. Imam Ali stated that a person with a virtuous family root remains virtues in presence and absence and always follows morally acceptable deeds. Prophet Mohammad said that a father who marries his daughter to and adulterous man has cut her generation (Tabarsi, 1412; 204). He, again, said that "Do not marry your daughter to a wine-drinker (Borujerdi, 1386, 25; 230)". Imam Sadegh said: "A woman who sleeps with her vinolent husband has done numerous sins and a child born out of such an intercourse is evil and God does not accept this women repentance, unless the husband dies or their marriage is over"(ibid, 236). Marriage with stupid women is not sanctioned as well; Prophet Mohammad stated that: "Avoid marrying stupid women, for their company brings dishonor" (Ravandi kashani, 13).

Holy Quran introduces parents as the most key element in the formation of their children's characters; it also foregrounds the role of marriage in the expansion of human race and the role of attention in marriage as mentioned in Mary chapter: "O' sister of Aaron! The father was not a man of evil, nor the mother a woman unchaste" ((Maryam; 28). It also states: "And Noah, said: "O' my lord! Leave not of the unbelievers a single one on earth. For if though dust leave any one of them, they will but mislead the devotees and they will breed none but wicked ungrateful ones" (Noah chapter 26-27). As these verses clearly state, parents and specially mothers play the most crucial role in the formation of the children characters. God, about the role of parents, states that: "From the land that is clean and good, by the will of its cherisher, springs up products after its kind; but from the land that is bad, springs up but that which is niggardly; thus do we explain the signs by various symbols to those who are grateful" (Aaraf, chapter 58). Clean land refers to good parents and products mean children. Therefore, paying attention to moral virtues is inseparable in spouse selection.

2. The role of nourishment in pregnancy and after birth in the body and the mind of children.
   Pregnancy is of considerable importance in the formation of the body and mind of the child. Islam issues several creeds to ensure physical and emotional nourishment of the mothers during pregnancy for better growth, more beauty and reason of the child. Parents should keep in mind that blood and bone of their children are fruits of their feedings. Embryo is an inseparable part of mother's body and feeds on her. Prophet Mohammad states that: "Train your children from the bellies of the mothers by giving them morally permissible foods" (Movahedi, 1386; 245), a point which have been emphasized in many hadiths. According to Imam Sadegh, religiously permissible food miss affects generations (Majlesi, 1402, 19; 89). Prophet Mohammad stated that: "Feed pregnant women with dates to have virtuous children" (Tabarsi, 1384; 87). He sliced his pear and gave it to Jafar Ebn Abitalb and said: "Feeding children with pear make skin shine and morals intact". He said "Feed pregnant women with fruit to have kind children" (Qomi, 1416, 2; 446). He introduces quince as influential in children's beauty" (Tabarsi, 1384; 87).
3. The impact of parent's behavior on children during pregnancy
   According to Islam, mother's clothes and its color, her coming and going, visits of relatives result in enrichment of generations. If mother prays, goes to religious places and rituals, recites Quran, and performs religious requirements and creeds during pregnancy, the child will be mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy and strong. Parents' sins affect children's body and mind and increases their propensity and capacity for religiously impermissible actions.

We believe that prophets and Imams have been gifted with these privileges, as we pray for those of clean and enact birth and say 'I testify that your nature is of light and you were formed in clean uterus far from dirt and evil'(Tusi, 1407,6; 114). Therefore, family background directly affects formation of characters. Holy Mary, when exiled from the company, took shelter in God's company and strived for ethics and virtue: "Relate in the book the story of Maryam, when she withdrew from her family to a place in East. She placed a screen from them; then we sent her our angle and he appeared before her as a man in all respects". (Maryam, 16-17)

As it is understood from interpretations like Noor, Mary's seclusion was done to achieve virtue and purification and resulted in a child, Jesus, to whom all earth bowed in honor (Qaraati, 1383, 7; 253).

Another verse mentions Mary's chastity as the core element for the upbringing of Jesus. "And Mary the daughter of Imam, who guarded her chastity; and we breathed into her body of our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of his Revelations and was one of the devout servants" (Prohibition chapter 12). Prophet Mohammad stated that: "unfortunate or fortunate is born out of the mother's womb" (Arusi Hoveizi, 1415, 2; 18). Imam Sadegh says that: "A child's face is formed when it is four months old in the mother's womb; then the angle is addressed to look into the mother's eye and register luck and good fortune for the child" (Feyd Kashani, 1415, 1; 316). Falsafi, the deceased scholar, states that: "It can be said that half of a person's luck is with him from the mother's womb and the other half is achieved through training and environment". According to different researches, an embryo is thoroughly influenced by the mother's emotional status at the age of four months. The impact of environmental and psychological stimuli on the embryo is so deep that many creeds have been issued on the howness of the intercourse between couples. Followings are some advices recommended by Prophet Mohammad to Imam Ali which might be of help for others as well.

- O' Ali! Don't mate with your wife at the beginning, middle, and end of month, for plague, madness, and stupidity will afflict her and the child.
- O' Ali! Don't mate with your wife in the afternoon, for a child formed out of such intercourse will have malformed eyes, and the devil is interested in malformed eyes.
- O' Ali! Don't talk while mating, for a child formed out of such intercourse might be dumb. Avert your eyes from your wife's sexual organs, for if you do so, your child might be blind.
- O' Ali! Don't mate with your wife during the Feast of sacrifice, for your child might have six or four fingers.
- O' Ali! Don't mate with your wife under a fruitful tree, for your child might become murderer or killer.
- O' Ali! Don't mate with your wife in sunshine, unless there is a protective curtain to cover you, for your child might live in bad luck, misfortune, and poverty.
- O' Ali! Don't mate with your wife in the middle of Sha'ban, for your child might have bad omen. Do not mate with your wife two days before her menstruation, for your child might be ruthless and cruel and bring death to a group of people.

- O' Ali! Don't mate with your wife on the roof, for a child born out of such a relationship might be hypocrite and deceitful (Ibn Babawaih, 1413, 3; 552).

Ma'moon Abbasi asked some Islam scholars about the most cardinal sin. They answer was murder. He asked Imam Reza the same question and Imam said "The most outrageous sin, in my idea, is incest, for a murdered kills a single person nut an incestuous one murders a whole generation" (Deilami, 1412, 1; 71). Also, Imam Sadegh as asked whether it is religiously permissible for a woman whose child is illegitimate to breastfeed him; the answer was like this: "Not only the woman's milk is rotten, but if the legitimate child is a girl, her milk is rotten too" (Feyd, 3; 94). Such an outrageous and ugly crime destroys the foundation of the family, the connection between father and son, and prepares children for all kinds of vices and crimes. This hadith describes the depth of the impact of parent's behavior on the formation of their children. "According to Kerner, abnormality of a child is because of two things: either fetus but the environment is bad, or fetus is bad and the environment is good. Most structural and physical defects, such as abnormal feet and lips, and even mongolism, which were thought to be hereditary, are now considered result of the shortage of oxygen in the environment" (Amini 1376, 1: 151). According to psychologists, children are capable of establishing connection with the outside world as embryos. Findings of various researches how that children express their need for connection with the outside world in the mother's womb; consequently, children with whom their mother spoke during their embryonic period bond more easily and befriend with less difficulty (Afrooz 1382: 62-66). So, mothers must consider their pregnancy as the first year of their child's life and consider all opportunities for training and education; for mothers have to know that their children's future depends on their behavior and their emotions to a large extent.

Problems and hardships make environment full of tension and this, in turn, distorts mother's emotional status and, as a result, the child is directly and quickly affected; this tension might even cause the child to get too short-tempered during life. If a mother is happy with her pregnancy and expresses such feelings freely, she will have a healthy child; however, if another mother hates pregnancy and considers it an obligation from the part of the husband, she will have a child affected by such negative emotions (Shoari nejad, 1378; 50-51). Therefore, observing physical and mental hygiene by the parents is an effective way for having a healthy, educated, ad intellectual generation.

Conclusion

Eugenics, through controlling and changing human genome, is an important issue in practical ethics which was first presented by Francis Galton in late 19th century. Positive eugenics involves selecting a group of people with special talents and a new generation without defect is created either naturally or through laboratory-oriented methods. Negative eugenics focuses on treating genes which cause disease, most occasionally ending in abortion. In addition to presenting various critiques on this perspective, a new method, which is accepted and advised by Islamic creed, was expressed and its branches clarified; these branches include precision in spouse selection and paying attention to the role of genetic traits, the role of nourishment in pregnancy and after birth in the body and the mind of children, and the impact of parent's behavior on children during pregnancy. An important privilege of the later method is that it is free from the shortcomings of genetic eugenics, shortcomings such as abortion, identity crisis, excessive similarity of human beings, and decrease of genetic diversity.

الملخص:

موضوع المقال هذا هو التحقيق في سباق أو تحسين الجيل و إحدي القضايا الهامة للأخلاقيات التطبيقية في العصر الحاضر. السؤال المطروح هنا هو هذا هل يمكن تعزيز البنية الوراثية البشرية من خلال الهندسة الوراثية و تخزين مني الرجال ذوو ميزات بارزة في بنك المني وغرسه في رحم النساء على المستوى الواسعة، بشكل طبيعي أو التلقيح الاصطناعي و المختبّر. التحدث عن كيفية تحسين النسل و الدفع أو تقليل أنواع العيوب الوراثية من خلال السيطرة السلوكية البيولوجية و خلق التغييرات في الجينوم البشري و الحسن و قبح الأخلاقي و الديني المسألة الهامة التي يجب أن تدرس و تناقش. هدف الدراسة الرئيسي الذي تم علي المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، بينما يقوم بتحليل نقدي حول التحول الجيني بطريقة غير أخلاقية، نظرة مختلفة يمتلكها دين الإسلام للحصول علي الأجيال المطهرة و المتعلمة و القضاء على القصور و العيوب الوراثية و تحقيق مجتمع مثالي. أهم النتيجة التي حصلت عليها هذه الدراسة هي أنً دين الإسلام يؤيد الهندسة الوراثية بطرق مختلفة و لديه العديد من التوصيات في هذا الصدد. تجاهل الأصول الأخلاقية، أزمة الهوية، تعزيز العنصرية، سقوط الإدراك الجيني، احتمال الاضطرابات النفسية، تجاهل الاختيار، الإساءة السياسية والاجتماعية من أهم انتقادات تتجه نحو الهندسة الوراثية بطريقة السيطرة والتغيير في الجينوم البشري.

الكلمات الرئيسية : الهندسة الوراثية ، تحسين النسل ، مراقبة السلوك ، المحاكاة ، الأصول الأخلاقية ، الأزمة .

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