

Therefore it is urgent, now, to develop effective moral and ethical guidelines before human cloning becomes a reality that can never be reversed.

I had been watching the advancement and latest news about cloning since 1997, so I approached to the Early Islamic sources and the latest sources of Islam to find the right opinion of the Muslim Scholars about this new and recent advancement of science and genetics technology.

I contacted the Muslim Scholars of the Muslim World and the Islamic Research Centers of the world and I got good material on the issue, which I published in a shape of a book named as " Cloning, A project of Human Production " The Book was compiled for the religious side and the students of the local religious institutions, to enable them to understand this current issue. so its language is Urdu.

The interested persons can get the Book and read the Islamic point of view in-detail through this Book.

The Book is available with Fazli Sons Urdu Bazaar, Karachi.

مبارکباد

مجلہ فقہ اسلامی کی اشاعت کے آغاز پر جناب پروفیسر ڈاکٹر نور احمد شاہتاہ صاحب کو دلی مبارکباد پیش کرتے ہیں۔ راولپنڈی میں مجلہ فقہ اسلامی اور ڈاکٹر شاہتاہ صاحب کی تمام تالیفات ہمارے ہاں دستیاب ہیں۔

مکتبہ ضیائیہ بوہڑ بازار نزولال حویلی، راولپنڈی

بینکوں کے ذریعہ

زکوٰۃ کی کٹوتی کی شرعی حیثیت

جناب ڈاکٹر نور احمد شاہتاہ صاحب کی نئی تالیف منظر عام پر آچکی ہے۔

﴿اسکالر زکوٰۃ کی حیثیت﴾

"To produce successful clones, scientists proposed taking such developed adult cells and reversing their genetic programming in order to stimulate them to produce new (infant) animals -- or, humans. And this is exactly what they achieved with the news-making birth of Dolly."

But how does Islam look upon this pioneering scientific development? How does one approach such extraordinary human achievements as a person of faith?

Islam teaches that God, Allah, is supreme Creator of ALL -- the entire Universe, the life of all beings, and every law governing creation. Humans, on the other hand, do not invent or create anything on their own -- but they do discover. They discover what has already existed since the beginning of Creation, and Islam encourages such scientific curiosity, considering it an integral part of the faith.

Take cloning, as a controversial case in point. It is a process of humans discovering the What and How of the makeup of cells, and the previously undiscovered ability of these cells to reproduce themselves in ways other than the one with which we are all familiar. Thus, according to Islam, cloning does fall within God's natural laws and it has simply taken humans all these years to begin unlocking its mysteries.

Cloning is indeed a major discovery -- just like the discovery that we can make amazingly sophisticated microchips, from a lowly material called sand. The natural laws and properties inherent in sand, through God's providence, made the human achievement of microchips possible, but it took until 1948 for scientists to discover this. Other examples include the discovery of how to split the atom, unleashing the enormous power and potential of nuclear energy.

But fundamental questions remain. Have these discoveries enhanced our human well-being, physically, mentally and spiritually? Is the world now a more peaceful place than it was before nuclear fission, microchip technology and . . . cloning? Haven't we misused (or threatened to misuse) most of the major discoveries and scientific advancements we've achieved? Haven't most of them gone to benefit only the rich and powerful?

Thus, from an Islamic perspective cloning -- like any other discovery - can be regarded as a positive or negative achievement. It all depends on how this new knowledge is applied and what safeguards can be established against its potential misuse.

The beginning steps toward Full human cloning.

By Dr. Noor Ahmed Shahtaaz

* February 23, 1997: In Scotland, the first successful cloning experiment results in the birth of a lamb named Dolly.

* July 22, 1998: A team of scientists in Hawaii produces 22 mice, seven of which are clones-of-clones, created from the cells of a single mouse

* December 9, 1998: In Japan, eight calves -- four of which die during birth -- are cloned from a single cow

• December 16, 1998: In South Korea, researchers who combined an egg and cell from single donor produce the first stages of an embryo.

All of these startling news bulletins sound like science fiction, but they are reality -- just the beginning steps toward full human cloning.

After the birth of Dolly, the first cloned sheep, a National Ethics Commission was established in the U.S. It quickly urged a three- to five-year moratorium on human cloning research, but the recommendation was not approved. Today, most scientists believe that human cloning is going to happen, sooner or later, whether we like it or not. Until the advent of Dolly, scientists widely believed that the cloning of complete animal or human adults was biologically impossible. Even though it has long been known that every cell in the body shares the same genetic material, it was thought that adult cells are the end result of a gradual process of differentiation that begins right in the womb. This means simply that a brain cell remains a brain cell, a heart cell remains a heart cell, and so on.

Dr. Muhammad Elmasry is a Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Waterloo and author of the handbook, "1,000 Questions on Islam." He is National President of the Canadian Islamic Congress. In an article published by Ambition, he says: