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# Can Global Bioethics Benefit From Islamic Jurisprudential Principles?

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## Abstract

Contemporary bioethical debates in the West are often polarized between secular liberal and conservative Christian perspectives, leaving limited space for cultural viewpoints rooted in non-Western traditions such as those of Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam and various African value systems. Secular liberalism's emphasis on individual autonomy often clashes with the communitarian and family-centred ethics prevalent in many Asian and African societies (i.e., the Global South). Meanwhile, certain conservative Christian positions, such as blanket opposition to embryo-based stem cell research or abortion even in cases of rape, are increasingly being challenged, including within Western contexts, for their perceived inflexibility and impracticality. Historical trends suggest that rigid ideological frameworks may lose relevance over time, underscoring the need for a more inclusive and pragmatic model of global bioethics. This article examines the potential contribution of fiqh, the science of interpreting Islamic revealed texts, and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (the higher objectives of Islamic law) to the discourse of global bioethics. It explores the intersection of Universalism and Realism in Islamic thought and discusses how Shari'ah conceptualizes human life and the strategies for its protection, particularly through the principle of the Preservation of Life (ḥifz al-nafs) as a central objective. Furthermore, it analyses the role of maṣlaḥah (public interest), the function of Islamic legal maxims as a roadmap to achieving ethical goals, and the centrality of family and community in Islamic ethics. These themes are considered in contrast to the

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