

BIOETHICS

**A Comparative Study of its
Concepts, Issues and Approaches**

2nd Edition

ABDUREZAK A. HASHI



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IIUM Press

Gombak • 2018

First Print, 2014
Second Edition, 2018
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(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Abdurezak Abdulahi Hashi

BIOETHICS : A Comparative Study of its Concepts, Issues and
Approaches / Abdulrezak A. Hashi.-2nd Edition.

ISBN 978-967-491-007-5

1. Medical ethics--Religious aspects--Islam.
 2. Bioethics--Religious aspects--Islam.
 3. Government publications--Malaysia. I. Title.
- 174.2

Published in Malaysia by
IIUM Press
International Islamic University Malaysia
P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Printed by:
ATTIN PRESS SDN. BHD.
No. 8, Jalan Perindustrian PP4
Taman Perindustrian Putra Permai
Bandar Putra Permai
43300 Seri Kembangan, Selangor



This work is dedicated to my mother
HUBI ADAM SHAFAT



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Introduction

2nd edition

Bioethics is an important and rapidly growing subject of our time. Since the early writings of bioethics in 1920s, when the word bioethics was coined by Fritz Jahr, who described it as an “imperative” field,¹ as well as the writings of American biologists, Van Rensseler Potter, who in the early 1970s highlighted further the importance of bioethics,² the academic works that are set to address foundations and principles of this field had increased in number and volume. For it seeks to establish equilibrium between the needs of advancing modern breakthroughs in the field of biomedicine and the requirements of ethic, scholars in this field highlighted bioethics as a “bridge to the future”, as well as a “science of survival”. This is so because, bioethics functions as an intersection of biology, ecology, medicine and moral values, and addresses moral issues of scientific researches and practices in the fields of biomedicine and biotechnology. With the observable advances in the application of technology in biology and life sciences, there are genuine concerns about the relationship between life sciences, technology, medicine, law, moral values and philosophy. The bottom line of bioethics is the endeavour of ensuring to develop morally guided biosciences; wherein scientific discovers in this area are advanced into greater height, without risking the sanctity of life, now and the future.

This work, *Bioethics: A Comparative Study of Its Concepts, Issues and Approaches*, uses the comparative method and addresses foundations, history, scope, codes, issues and approaches of bioethics. It attempts to address this field in a comparative manner, with an observable emphasis on the Islamic ethical and jurisprudential views on given bioethical issues and practices. The 1st edition of this book was published in 2015, which since then received an encouraging demand for its copies from students, researchers of biosciences and healthcare providers, as well as related readers from the public. IIUM bookshop and IIUM press informed me that copies of the 1st edition of this book have been sold out, and the book is now out of stock, with some demands for its copies. Taking this as an encouraging feedback, the author feels honored to share the updated 2nd edition of the book with its readers.

¹ Lolos, F., *Bioethics and Animal Research: A Personal Perspective and a Note on the Contribution of Fritz Jahr*. Biol Res. 2008; 41(1):119-23.

² Van Rensseler Potter., *Bioethics: Bridge to the Future*, (Prentice Hall, 1971).

My gratitude and appreciations are, above all, due to Allah (*s. w. t.*), for His grace and guidance in all times, particularly during the course of this humble work. I also wish to express my appreciation and thanks to those, students, researchers, healthcare providers and lecturers, whose comments and discussions have enriched the subject matters of this book. My heartfelt appreciations are also extended to IIUM Press and Research Management Center of the International Islamic University Malaysia, for sponsoring the publication of this work again. Indeed, without their support and encouragement, the publication of this work would have probably never been achieved. May Allah (*s. w. t.*), reward them all, and accept our good deeds.

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Introduction

1st edition

Since antiquity, ethical discussions on medical practices have occurred in the field of medicine and health care. Under the umbrella of physician and healing morality, medical practitioners of early Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek and Chinese civilizations were aware of the moral duties of their profession. Though medical ethics is as old as the medical profession, bioethics did not appear as an independent field until modern times. Bioethics has emerged as an imperative field which has its subject in the stock of knowledge. Besides traditional ethical concerns of healing practices, bioethics includes a variety of issues ranging from enhancing body appearance, such as cosmetic surgery, to issues of environmental protection. As an academic discipline, bioethics primarily covers three fields; medical ethics, animal ethics and environmental ethics. Medical ethics addresses moral issues related to the doctor-patient relationship, while animal ethics focuses on measures of life preservation, whilst the main concern of environmental ethics is to protect the natural environment and its resources. Each of these fields has its own scope and subject; however the issues, concepts and approaches, as well as, moral considerations of these three fields are significantly overlapping. It is true that, traditionally, medical ethics was mainly dominated by issues related to the doctor-patient relationship; however, the moral problems of modern biomedical, as well as, biotechnological practices such as abortion, birth control, xenotransplantation, cloning, cosmetic surgery, stem cell research, genetically modified food, animal experimentation, have required new moral solutions which fall beyond the boundaries of traditional medical ethics. Thus, besides addressing traditional concerns of health and therapeutic treatments, bioethics is also concerned about the moral questions on human life, death, dignity and creativity, as well as, the role of religious beliefs in human innovations and moral values, liability, justice, standards and professional practices of modern scientific breakthroughs.

Thus, bioethics functions as an intersection of biology, ecology, medicine and moral values, and addresses moral issues of scientific researches and practices in the fields of biomedicine and biotechnology. The rationale of bioethics is that, with the observable advances in the application of technology in biology and life sciences, there are genuine concerns about the relationship between life sciences, technology, medicine, law, moral values and philosophy. Among the basic questions of bioethics are, whether or not breakthroughs in science and technology should be led by the mode of maximizing the achievements of what

we “can”, or breakthroughs in science and technology should be led by the attitude of doing only what “ought” to be achieved, rather than what “can” be achieved? In other words balancing between what “ought” to be done and what “can” done in life sciences, particularly in biosciences, form the basic subject of bioethics. This is so because, while scientific research is characterized by the motive of expending man’s scientific knowledge, there are genuine concerns about the implications of science and technology in life, particularly in the fields of biomedicine and biotechnology. To address these concerns, there are those among the scientific community who hold the view that regardless of the implications of science and technology, we ought to let the scientists do their job and thus expand our scope of knowledge. In contrast there are scientists and ethicists who argue that in the face of scientific expansion the “sanctity” of life should be protected, in such a way that man of science ought to discover the sciences that benefit the sanctity of life. Human life is sacred, says this group, therefore, we ought to handle it within ethical premises. Hence, pro-scientific scholars argue that scientific progress and technological advances should be left to the scientists; in the sense that what “can” be done scientifically should not be limited by what “ought” to be done. In contrast, pro-ethical opinion states that, scientific advances in biomedicine and biotechnology are leading humanity to an evil end, and according to this group, in order to protect humanity from the looming danger posed by modern practices of biomedicine and biotechnology, scientific progress in the field of biology should not only be placed under strict observation, but certain techniques in biomedical practices should also be prevented.

This book uses the comparative method and addresses the above mentioned moral concerns, and other related moral issues of the biomedical and biotechnological practices. It also addresses the history and approaches, as well as, the scope of bioethics. The subject of this book is divided into volumes; the first volume, which is the current volume, focuses on the moral foundations, concepts approaches of bioethics, as well as moral implications and issues of biomedical practices, such as organ transplantation, contraception, abortion euthanasia, and artificial insemination and test tube babies. The second volume emphasizes on moral and legal issues of biotechnology, food technology, plant sciences and moral issues of conservation and environmental protection. Apart from the introduction and the conclusion, the current volume consists of 11 chapters; the first chapter offers an introductory discussion on the understanding of Islamic ethics, while the second chapter is closely related to the first chapter and addresses distinguishing features of the Islamic moral philosophy, based on which biomedical issues are evaluated from the Islamic perspective. Chapter

three provides a comparative analysis on the definition, history and approaches of bioethics. Chapter four puts forth the Islamic understanding of bioethics. In addition, chapter five highlights the relationship between the objectives of the *shari'ah* (the Islamic Divine Law) and bioethics; in this chapter the role of *fiqh* maxims to determine bioethical issues are unveiled. Chapter six focuses on organ transplantation and lifesaving issues, while chapter seven addresses contraception and the morality of the preservation of life. Moral issues of life-taking such as abortion and euthanasia are illustrated in chapter eight and nine, while chapter ten and chapter eleven offer an overview about the morality of life initiation, such as artificial insemination and test tube babies, as well as moral discussions about human cloning and genetic engineering. The second volume of this book, which is expected to be completed soon, also consists of similar number of chapters, the details of which are outlined in the said volume.

With this comparative analysis of bioethics, the writer hopes that this book will form an introduction to this rapidly growing field; a gateway for the beginners and students of this field, to enter the detailed discussions and analysis that are found in the immense books and other academic works of bioethics.

May the Almighty, Allah (*s. w. t.*), accept this work as a humble contribution to the field of knowledge, and forgive me for all my shortcomings.

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March, 2014

BIOETHICS

A Comparative Study of its Concepts, Issues and Approaches

This book, *Bioethics: A comparative Study of its Concepts, Issues and Approaches*, addresses moral and ethical issues related to contemporary biomedical and biotechnological practices. It also addresses the history and approaches, as well as, the scope of the field of bioethics. Besides illustrating the moral foundations, concepts and approaches of bioethics, this book elucidates the moral implications and issues of biomedical practices such as organ transplantation, contraception, abortion, euthanasia, cloning, artificial insemination and test tube babies.

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ISBN 978-967-491-007-5



9 789674 910075

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Fax: +603 6196 4862 / 6196 6298

E-mail: iiumbookshop@iium.edu.my

Website: <http://iium.edu.my/bookshop>

