

Medical Ethics in Perspective of Islamic Teachings

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Abstract

Summary: Islam as a universal religion, presents a comprehensive and practical system of ethics for the entire humanity in every field of life. Medical ethics is one of the most important components of this extensive ethics system. Islamic medical ethics is the approach of dealing with and handling the healthcare practice and process according to the Islamic moral system and legislative sources (primarily 'The Quran' and 'Hadith'). It is also adopted and promoted by several international organizations. Islamic ethics endorses the basic principles of biomedical ethics, i.e. Beneficence, non-maleficence, confidentiality, justice, truth-telling, autonomy and informed consent, which have been mainly derived from the "Hippocratic Oath", with some additions and modifications. Moreover, Islamic teachings present some additional moral values over these basic ethical principles. The present manuscript aims to concisely highlight the evolution and history of bio-medical ethics, briefly describe its basic concepts and focus on the influence of teachings, principles and characteristics of Islam on this important aspect of medical practice. In the end, some important relevant topics such as the general responsibilities of the doctor, protection of life, legal status of treatment and status of treatment with prohibited substances, in the light of Islam, are also discussed briefly.

Keywords: Medical ethics, Hippocratic Oath, basic principles of ethics, Islamic perspective.

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1. Introduction

Allah Almighty has made human beings a beautiful masterpiece of His creative power and sent His chosen servants to every nation as Prophets and Messengers (Peace be upon them) to guide them. At the end of a series of prophets (Peace be upon them), He sent the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as the universal and the last prophet for all nations to come with His final book of guidance, 'The Holy Quran'. All these Prophets (peace be upon them) gave very useful and valuable teachings and instructions to their respective people about various aspects of life in the light of the revelation of the Creator of the universe for their survival and well-being. The wise people of the nations accepted them with firm faith, practised them with real zeal and benefitted from them in their lives. One of the most important areas of those glorious teachings used to be ethics. Compared to other Prophets (Peace be upon them), the last Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him) received a distinction, because Allah Almighty awarded him the highest status in fulfilling all kinds of moral principles. Moreover, Allah Almighty bestowed the responsibility of the practice and spread of these ethical values to the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Therefore, Islam provides a complete system of ethics that is very

practical and useful for the entire humanity and all times to come in every field of life and Muslims are held responsible for continuing the task of the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), i.e. practice and transmission of ethical and moral values to whole mankind.

One of the most important components of this comprehensive system of morality is medical ethics, which has been explained in detail in many ways in the Holy Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The present article aims to highlight the very basic concepts of medical ethics and to explain how these are narrated in Islamic education.

2. Discussion

History and Evolution of Medical Ethics:

Before explaining Islamic perspectives of medical ethics, it seems fruitful to review the importance and Historical background of medical ethics:

A. International organizations and medical ethics.

The importance of medical ethics can be estimated from the fact that these ethical values are discussed by many famous international organizations and forums. Among them are WHO, UNESCO and the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS). These organizations have held many international conferences, and have defined various principles of biomedical ethics and modes and curricula

for its teaching to medical students and doctors. Besides these forums, the role of the Islamic Organization of Medical Sciences (IOMS) is worth mentioning, which has recently organized several international conferences, symposia and workshops on the Islamic International Constitution of Health and Medical Ethics.

B. Medical ethics and its oath, development and history. The subject of medical ethics has been involved in the field of medicine in one form or another since ancient times and a formal oath was taken to observe it. A brief history and chronological review of its evolution will help clarify the subject.

1. 'Hippocratic oath'.

The 'Father of Medicine', Hippocrates (460-375 BC), used to take a pledge from the newly qualifying physicians, named the 'Hippocratic Oath', which is one of the oldest medical covenants in history. The oath contains the teaching of moral values linked to medicine.¹

2. Ayurveda and Jewish medical ethics.

Similarly, the affidavits of Ayurveda (Ancient Indian Medicine) and Jewish medical ethics are available in history or medical books.

For example, Charaka Samhita, a Sanskrit text on Ayurveda, contains a section on the code of ethics for Physicians and nurses, attributing "moral as well as scientific authority to the healer".²

3. Ethical principles defined by Muslim physicians in middle-ages:

Muslim doctors, in the middle ages, have also mentioned the ethical principles to be followed during medical practice. A famous Muslim physician of that time is Abu Bakr Al-Razi, known in the West as Rhazes (865-925 AD).

In his famous book "Akhlāq-al-Tabīb", i.e. 'ethics of the physician' Al-Razi focuses on a number of important ethical concerns, to include: Doctors should continue updating their medical knowledge and keep on gaining experience (Competency), should not disclose secrets of patients (Confidentiality), respect the confidentiality of patients, close his eyes on watching at the patient's private parts, if the examination of the patient's any private organ is necessary should uncover only that part (Good moral character), avoid arrogance and be polite (Humbleness), pay attention to the poor, perform equally in treating the rich and the poor (Justice and equality), trusting in Allah and treat patients for the sake of Allah (Sincerity), keep the record of patient's health (Follow up), modify patient's nutrition relevant to illness, talk to patient directly without a mediator and be available when needed (Patient doctor relationship), avoid drinking alcohol and use of narcotics (Prevent

medication errors), be patient if people are not satisfied because some diseases take more time to heal and some are incurable, sometimes people blame doctors because of their ignorance about illness.³ These are a few examples of some lessons from the classical book of Al-Razi on medical ethics.

4. "Physician's Oath" presented by the International Medical Association in Geneva in 1948:

When the International Medical Association was formed in Geneva in 1948, it also approved a 'Physician's Oath'.

5. "Oath of a Muslim Physician" formed by the Islamic Medical Association of North America. Islamic Medical Association of North America also compiled and presented 'The Oath of a Muslim Physician' in 1977.

6. "Oath of Muslim Physician" was presented IOMS conference in Kuwait in 1981.

An International Conference of IOMS (Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences) was held in Kuwait in 1981, and the 'Oath of Muslim Physician' was presented in it.

7. "Oath by a Registered Medical or Dental Practitioner", in Code of Medical Ethics, Pakistan Medical & Dental Council.

This council also declared and compiled a very comprehensive oath for registered medical or dental practitioners, in which many ethical declarations and moral promises are read and admitted.⁴

II. Medical Ethics and Islamic Teachings.

In each sub-section below basic principles of Medical Ethics, which are mentioned in the 'Hippocratic Oath' and other oaths and codes of conduct containing the teaching of moral values linked to medicine are briefly mentioned first and then Islamic teachings relevant to them described:

a. Beneficence.

The term beneficence denotes benevolence, kindness, generosity, love and humanity. This principle emphasizes the importance of promoting well-being and goodness for patients. Physicians must act in ways that benefit their patients, i.e. treat their illness and promote health.

In the Holy Qur'an, saving a human life has been declared equal to saving the entire humanity. The guidance from Allah Almighty is: "Whoever kills somebody not in revenge for a person murdered, nor (as a penalty) for dispersion chaos on the earth, is as if he has murdered the complete humanity, and whoever protects the life of an individual is as if he has saved the life of the whole of humanity."⁵

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) gave many teachings in this regard. He is reported to have said: "He who does not show kindness to people, Allah will not

show pity to him.”⁶ He also said, “The dearly loved of people to Allah is the person who is the most beneficial to persons.”⁷

b. Non-Maleficence.

This principle emphasizes the importance of avoiding harm and preventing unnecessary suffering. Physicians have a duty not to cause hurt and to act in the best interest of their patients. The principle of non-maleficence supports a wide diversity of more specific moral rules. Distinctive examples include: (i) “Don’t kill anybody.” (ii) “Don’t cause pain or distress to others.” (iii) “Don’t harm others.” If the consequences of an action have both good and bad outcomes, then taking the side that alleviates suffering and harm should be preferred.

In the Holy Qur’an, it has been described in the light of an important aspect of religion as follows: “Allah Almighty does not obligate anyone beyond his capacity,”⁸ i.e. by His kindness and mercy He does not overburden His slaves and the same He desires from His slaves as well in dealing with others. In another verse, Allah Almighty narrated “And those who hurt Muslim men and women, without them doing anything (wrong), have loaded themselves with false allegation and clear evil,”⁹ which applies to all fields of religion, including medical ethics.

Likewise, the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said: “There should be neither hurting nor responding destruction,”¹⁰ i.e. it is not permissible (initially) to harm anyone, nor to harm in return”. On another occasion the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said, “You have been emitted to make things relaxed (for the people) and you have not been delegated to make things problematic for them.”¹¹

In the light of these teachings, it can be said that the purpose of all medical activities is to benefit the patients, to relieve the sufferings, to remove the diseases they are suffering from and the diseases they are afraid of. While achieving this goal, the aim of doctors, hospitals, diagnostic centres and pharmaceutical companies should be to ensure that patients are not given unnecessary drugs, if cheap and low-cost drugs can work, then expensive drugs should not be prescribed and so on.

c. Confidentiality.

Physicians are supposed to keep the information of the patient regarding his illness secret, and not disclose it to anybody without the patient’s consent. Whereas, in the best interest of the patient he can share with other physicians or consultants. Sometimes doctors have to disclose the information when ordering laboratory investigations or specific tests but must avoid discussing patients’ problems with their family members or in social crowds. However, there are obvious exceptions

to this rule, such as medico-legal cases (e.g. gun-shot wound reporting), communicable diseases (e.g. HIV disease notification) and genetic counselling (Discussion with relatives), etc.¹²

Allah Almighty says in ‘Quran Karim’, “Do they not know that Allah is aware of what they hide and what they expose?”¹³ In another place Allah Taala says, “Whether you keep your talk undisclosed or loudly, He knows well what lies in the hearts”.¹⁴ It means Allah Almighty warns people to disclose secrets as he does not like it.

The Prophet of Allah Almighty (Peace be upon him) said, “Whoever shields (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah Almighty will cover (his mistakes) for him in this world and the world Hereafter,”¹⁵ i.e. the individual who covers up a Muslim (does not unveil his secret), will be shielded with a shutter by Allah Almighty on the Day of Judgment”. Moreover, Allama Muhammad Noor Syed writes: The Prophet (Peace be upon him) gave special attention to teaching children the habit of securing the secrets because then they can play a healthier part in their present and future lives. Likewise, it can protect them from greediness and make them play a vital role in the safety of society and its growth.¹⁶

d. Justice.

Medical Ethics includes a clause that the physician would do justice, fairness and equality. Justice and kindness are the basis of Islamic teachings. It is narrated in ‘Quran Karim’, “Allah directs to do justice and to adopt good conduct and to give relatives (their due rights), and prevents dishonourable acts, evil deeds and unfair attitude,”¹⁷ i.e. Allah Taala orders everyone to be just and kind and forbid from sins and discrimination in justice. Allah Taala made all the Prophets (peace be upon them) bound by it. Thus, He said: “Indeed, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and with them, We sent down the Scripture and the balance of justice’ so that people may administer justice.”¹⁸

Even with the enemies, justice has been ordered. The guidance from Allah Almighty is, “O you who believe! Stand out inflexibly for Allah and be just spectators and let not the animosity and disgust of others make you sidestep justice. Be just: that is closer to pioussness, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Aware of what you act.”¹⁹

Likewise, Abdullah ibn Amr reported: The Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him) said, “Verily, those who were just will be upon stages of light in the presence of Allah, near the right hand of the Generous, the Glorious, and both of His sides are honourable. They are those who accomplished justice in their judgments, with their relatives, and in all that they did.”²⁰ Therefore, a doctor should help every patient regardless of religion, colour, race and social position.

e. Truth-telling.

Truth-telling is an important factor in the patient-doctor relationship and in its absence, the patient loses trust in the doctor. The patient has the right to know about the course and results of his illness and its treatment. However, the doctor must be aware of the preferences of the patient. Earlier, most of the physicians used to avoid informing their patients about the illness or treatment. Currently, most of the physicians prefer to disclose the information to patients. This is because of an overall educational and social advancement. The benefit of telling the truth regarding a serious illness provides the patient a chance to complete important tasks, such as advising family and financial affairs, division of assets and performance of religious and spiritual reparations.¹²

f. Autonomy.

The word autonomy is made from the Greek word 'autonomous', Autos 'self' and nomos 'law', i.e. 'having own laws', or right or condition of self-government. Other similar words are self-rule, freedom, independence, sovereignty and self-determination. Thus, autonomy in medicine may be defined as "the right of capable matures to make informed judgements about their medicinal care" and as a principle patient's written approval is acquired before any examination or treatment takes place.²¹

For a long time in history patient-doctor relationship was similar to that of a father/mother to a child (Paternalism), perhaps because of the overwhelming practice of beneficence and giving it priority over autonomy. Parents may influence their child in several ways, such as ignoring his/her wishes, nondisclosure of illness, deception and coercion, etc., and considering what is best for their child.²²

During the 2nd half of the 20th century, the domain of autonomy was more patient-oriented and described as "A mature patient who grieves from no mental inability has an entire right to select whether to consensus to curative treatment. This right of choice is not restricted to choices which others might regard as sensible. It exists whether causes for making choice are cogent, illogical, unfamiliar or even non-existent."²³ This concept of autonomy has its limitations and is not applicable in many situations, e.g. patient is too ill, too old, or has little knowledge of the illness and its outcomes.

Currently, to overcome these confusions, it is mostly agreed that two conditions are necessary for autonomy, i.e. 'liberty' (or independence) in making decisions and 'capacity' (or capability) for intentional action or decision. In the previous concept, the second component had been ignored. Whereas, the current view is that the

patient has the right to be well informed and be capable of making decisions about his/her treatment.²⁴

However, if the patient is lacking capacity, i.e. is incapable of a deciding for any reason, the physician may rely on the next of kin and the typical order of priority is a spouse, an adult child, a parent, and then possibly other relative or even a close friend. If an agreement on an ethically and legally sound resolution cannot be reached, the doctor may consult the hospital/institution ethics committee. But in an emergency, it is the responsibility of the physician to decide and then involve honesty and justice.²⁵

Islamic bioethics gives importance to both components of autonomy, i.e. 'liberty' (or independence) in making decisions and 'capacity' (or capability) to decide. Regarding 'liberty', Islam supports this perspective and declares that "There is no force in Faith [acceptance of the religion]. The correct way has become distinct from the wrong,"²⁶ i.e. each individual has the option to accept Islam or refuse it, while the right path has been clearly explained and made evident. That means Islam respects autonomy. When it is respected in the acceptance of Islam, it should be respected for decision-making for treatment as well, of course when the patient is capable of doing so. Regarding 'capacity' in the light of Islamic teachings, the patient has the right to be well educated and informed to decide his/her cure and treatment. In case the patient is not capable then the family has to play its role in the decision-making process as discussed above.

However, in critical situations when the patient and family both lack the capacity then it becomes the obligation of the physician. Because Islam interprets this matter as responsibility and duty. Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said, "Surely! Every one of you is a guardian and is answerable for his responsibilities",²⁷ Similarly, a physician will also be asked about responsibility, attitudes, competency, sincerity, and judgments toward the treatment of patients under his care.

g. Informed consent.

The necessities of informed permission for a medical or operating procedure, or for study, are that the patient or subject (i) is capable of knowing and deciding, (ii) gets a full discovery of disease, treatment or investigation (iii) understands the discovery, (iv) acts willingly, and (v) consents to the offered action. Incompetent (non-autonomous) patients and formerly capable (autonomous), but presently unskilled patients, due to increased severity of disease, would need a substitute decision-maker. In a non-autonomous patient, the replacement can use either a substituted decision

standard (i.e., what the patient would demand in this situation and not what the substitute would wish), or a best interests standard (i.e., what would bring the maximum net advantage to the patient by considering threats and benefits).¹²

Informed consent is a practical form of autonomy. Therefore, the same Islamic principles apply to informed consent as to autonomy.

III. Protection of life is the main objective of Islamic (Sharia) law.

Islamic scholars and jurists explain these moral values by including them as one of the five purposes of the entire Sharia under the purpose of preservation of life. Those five purposes of the Sharia are the protection of life, safeguarding of wealth, protection of Religion, protection of intellect and preservation of race. Thus, according to Sharia, human life is sanctified.

The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) once said: "I occasionally observe the fast and also leave them (the fast) at further times, and nightstand up for the prayer and also have a nap. Listen! Your physique has a right over you, (similarly) your eyes have a right over you and (also) your spouse has a right over you."²⁸

In another Hadith, it is narrated that, "Salman (Allah be pleased from him) said to Abu Ad-Darda (Allah be pleased from him), 'Your Lord has a right on you, and your soul (also) has a right on you; and your family (too) has a right on you; so you should deliver the rights of all those who have a right on you'. Later on Abu Ad-Darda (Allah be pleased from him) visited the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and stated that to him. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said Salman has spoken the truth."²⁹

This means that just as the rights of others are established on a person, the right to protect his own life is also established on him. Therefore, he/she can neither harm his own life nor be harmful to the lives of other people. Treatment is a branch of this principle of sanctity of life. Its purpose is to protect life itself. Therefore, when a person is suffering from a disease, he should make every possible effort to treat it. Negligence should never be taken in this matter. This responsibility of providing treatment is on him about himself as well as about his family and dependents. There is no nuclear difference in the two cases. This is also life and that is also life and he has been made the guarantor of the safety of both. So in both cases, he must fulfill this responsibility. Muslim doctors and physicians are also obliged to adopt the correct course of action in light of the objectives of Sharia and the basic teachings of the religion.

IV. General responsibilities of the doctor in the light of Islam

From a religious point of view, in the light of Islamic teachings, there are some restrictions, responsibilities and duties imposed on the doctor. It is important and mandatory for health care professionals to keep in mind and practice them. That is not only a requirement of their religion and faith but also mandatory for the dignity and respect of the profession.

1. It is necessary that a doctor should make goodwill towards the patients as his motto. Tamim al-Dari (Allah be pleased from him) reported: The true Prophet of Allah almighty (Peace be upon him) said, "Religion is sincere well-wishing." We said, "To whom?" The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, "(well-wishing) To Allah, His Book, His Prophet, the rulers of the Muslims, and their public."³⁰

2. If advice is sought from him he should give the right advice, considering it as a trust. Abu Huraira narrated: The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), said, "One who is consulted is in a position of trust."³¹

3. Whatever benefit and goodness the doctor likes for himself, he should do the same for others. Anas bin Malik (Allah be pleased with him) has reported that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "None of you will have faith until you like for your brother what you like for yourself."³²

4. Islam does not allow treatment without expertise in the art of medicine. If a fake or inexperienced doctor does so and the patient suffers some harm, loses his life, or loses an organ, he/she will be held responsible for that, because The Prophet (Peace be upon him), said, "Whoever applies medication without any prior awareness and expertise of medicine will be held responsible."³³

5. The physician is bound to protect the patient's secrets and not to divulge them to anyone else (i.e. confidentiality). The respect for confidentiality has been discussed above.

6. It is obligatory for the physician not to give poison or any harmful medicine to the patient (Non-Maleficence). Similarly, a Muslim physician should not treat the patient with alcohol or any forbidden substance under normal circumstances, unless there is no other way to save the life of the patient.

7. Euthanasia (Mercy killing) is not permitted in Islam in any way. Life is given as trust by Allah Taala. So no person, his relatives, or a doctor has the right to take his life. No person or patient, because of severe pain or suffering, can terminate his life or ask the physician or anybody else to do so. The topic has been described in section III.

8. Under normal circumstances, the doctor should not give any contraceptive medicine, nor attempt an

abortion. He can do this only when the patient has become pregnant and it is known that the fetus is a defective creation and is not capable of leading a normal life.

9. A man can treat a woman and a woman can treat a man. However, loneliness should be avoided in this case, i.e. the doctor must have a helper or an assistant with him. The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) has said, "Whoever has the faith in Allah and the day hereafter, let him not be isolated with an unrelated woman without her guardian, in case Satan be the third of them."³⁴

Moreover, the doctor should not expose the patient unnecessarily. Open only as much part of the body as is essential.

10. The doctor should be selfless and sincere to the patient. Do only as many tests as are necessary before treatment and avoid unneeded tests. Similarly, prescribe only essential and cheaper medicines as far as possible. If possible treat with medicines, the doctor should not recommend unnecessary operation.

11. The doctor should be clean, healthy, good-looking, wear good clothes and possess good moral character and manners. He/she should greet the patient with a smiling face, and talk politely while inquiring about his condition. No matter how serious a patient's illness may be, the doctor must give him hope of recovery.

V. Virtues and manners of visiting the patient.

Medical ethics includes visiting and treating patients. Simply visiting the patients with relatives, neighbours and friends is highly rewarding. According to the saying of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) "Whoever visits and inquire the patient, or visits his brother in Allah, a caller calls out: May you have heavens and livelihood be decent, and may you reside in an adobe in Heaven."³⁵

In another narration The Prophet (Peace be upon him) declared the visit and inquiry of the ill person as the visit of Allah almighty because the visitor would have found Allah with him.³⁶

Hazrat Ali bin Abu Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that he listened to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) saying, "When a Muslim inquire a patient Muslim in the morning, as a reward, seventy thousand angels constantly pray for him till evening. If he visits him in the dusk, seventy thousand angels continuously pray for him till the dawn; and he will have (his share of) reaped fruits in Paradise."³⁷

Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "There are five rights that a Muslim owes to his brother Muslim, one of them is inquiring about the sick ones".³⁸

While in the manners of visiting, some scholars are of the view in the light of the teachings of the Prophet (Peace be upon Him) that one should not visit more repeatedly and for a long time, so that it will not become troublesome for the patient or the family. However, it varies according to the circumstances because some persons may be beloved to the patient and it may be unbearable for him if he does not see them frequently or he wants them to sit and stay with him for a long time.

While we visit an ill person we should pray for his good health. Whenever the Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him) visited a sick person, he would say, "La ba's, tahirun insha' Allah [which means: (No harm), don't worry (it will be a) refining (from evils) if Allah wills]."³⁹

The visitor should say nice words to cheer him up and keep his feelings high. The Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him) said: "When you visit an ailing person, provide him hopefulness for a long life. This will not prevent anything, but will delight the patient and give him relief." He (PBUH) also recommended the visitors to say "No harm (Do not worry) It will be a source of cleansing (you) of sins (evils), with Allah's willing."⁴⁰

The doctor will get a dual reward, i.e. for visiting the patient and for the treatment, provided that he visits and treats with good intentions and with the spirit of serving the people. Saying comfort to the patient helps reduce the suffering, which is an example of charity and worship. If the doctor works only to collect money from the patient, then it is unfair to call it a service. Since treating patients is a great service to humanity Islam has given complete guidance in this respect and has particularly defined the needs, qualities, responsibilities and the social status of the doctors.

VI. Legal status of treatment

Regarding medical treatment, the Islamic Jurisprudence Board has unanimously said that "Treatment is permissible and recommended in principle", because there is advice related to the treatment of patients from the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him).

In the Holy Qur'an, as mentioned above also, it is narrated that saving the life of a person is like saving the life of whole humanity. With the advancement in the knowledge of medicine and with differences in people's circumstances, the modes of treatment keep on changing. It is the responsibility of the patient or his/her guardians to seek the best treatment and the responsibility of the doctor to adopt the most suitable remedy available at that time. If there is an infection and there is a risk of spreading the effect of the disease to other people, it is obligatory to get it treated.

In Islamic Shari'ah, protecting life and arranging treatment for it falls under the category of duties or obligations, so avoiding it without excuse is prohibited. But if the matter goes beyond the treatment to just maintaining the breath, or if it turns to artificial methods apart from the natural methods of treatment, then it is the discretion of the patient or his/her guardians to accept them or to avoid them. Maintaining life in this way is not a religious or moral imperative.

A particular example in this regard is maintaining the breath with a ventilator, whereas, the brain death of the patient has occurred and declared. Virtually, there is no hope of recovery. Then keeping the patient breathing with a ventilator and retained in the hospital (especially a private hospital) to earn money for that 'service' is perhaps highly unethical. Therefore, as soon as brain death occurs and the patient is declared dead it becomes the property of Allah, Almighty, and must be properly buried.

VII. Treatment using prohibited remedies or substances
Medical ethics have also been clarified in Islamic teachings regarding treatment. First of all, the importance and wisdom of treatment is explained. Thus, it is in 'Sahih Muslim' that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "There is a medicine for every disease, so when proper remedy for the disease is provided the person gets well by the mercy of Allah, the Almighty."⁴¹

Similarly, it is in 'Sahih Bukhari' that the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said: "Allah Almighty has not sent down any disease for which He has not sent down a cure."⁴² The consensus of Islamic scholars is that treatment with forbidden items is prohibited.

In 'Sahih Bukhari' it is narrated from Hazrat Abdullah bin Masoud that "Allah did not make your healing in those things which are forbidden for you"⁴³

However, like other laws, there are exceptions due to which the general Islamic rule gives relaxation in certain situations. The jurists have derived this principle from the basic concept of the Shari'ah that "necessities justify prohibitions."⁴⁴

As Allah Almighty said in the Holy Quran, "He has only forbidden and prohibited for you dead animal meat, (flowing) blood, the flesh of pig and that upon which a name of someone other than 'Allah' has been raised. Then, whoever is bound by intense need, neither pursuing pleasure (disobeying) nor repeating, there is no sin on him. Verily, Allah is the Most Merciful, Very forgiving."⁴⁵

From these Islamic teachings, the principle of medical ethics regarding treatment using forbidden and prohibited items is clear that there is a justification for

using such prohibited items in treatment when the need is severe, they are taken only as much as is necessary, and no alternate is available. Because human life is precious in the eyes of Allah Almighty and saving it is equally important. May Allah grant us all the opportunities to follow the Islamic teachings.

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