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Islamic Concept of Nature from Biological Perspective

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According to the naturalists of the current era, the difference between Natural and Unnatural will remain disputed and its definitions will remain variable. There is a possibility that the things we are considering natural nowadays, may be considered unnatural when we find their negative impact on society or the environment and reciprocally, we may consider an unnatural thing as natural when its harmful aspects may be cured or become unavoidable links in an ecological system. Therefore, currently, we cannot fix a parameter to define nature. Therefore, several parameters are determined by different philosophies, disciplines and religions that may include good or evil, usefulness, average standard, quality at birth, human non-interference, the pre-existing standard of nature etc. Many parameters to determine nature exist at present and will continue to increase its number. The article will try to find the Islamic concept of nature, as Muslims constitute a large population of the world and the Islamic concept of naturalism can't be ignored while making global decisions. Being theoretical research, it is based on the Islamic concept of nature so, Islamic literature is used as background data for research and tried to find the real basis of the Islamic concept of biological nature.

Keywords: Nature, Biological Nature, Genetic Nature, Islamic Naturalism, Creation of God.

The arguments of naturalists about biological evolution are based on nature. Now let's decide what is nature. The reality of Nature is suspicious in itself. Different naturalists take it according to their taste, point of view, religion or philosophy. There are internal and external contradictions in determining the reality of nature, which make the process of legislation complex. Not only global forums but also most religions emphasize the protection of nature. Naturalists are not against the use of rational in legislation because they believe that rational existed with the birth of man, so man has used rational enthusiastically to improve his environment, although they believe that the systematic

process of logical reasoning was developed later on, so it is not given much importance in the legislature by naturalists. When they come to the 'purpose', they consider human well-being as the ultimate goal. This is why they talk about human rights. Later on, some naturalists, such as Henry Salt, spoke of the natural rights of animals, claiming for them (animals) to have the same rights as humans.¹

Rousseau considers some aspects as a part of nature like behaviour, abilities of organisms, their natural life, the environment in which they live, and the divine power that guides living beings. Here it is obvious that he is influenced by the religious doctrine of Christianity that God protects the creatures. The major difference between the naturalism of Russo and Thomas Hobbes is that Hobbes says nature is a war of all against all, and man is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'². But Rousseau does not admit this, in his view, the nature of the man (presented here) is distorted, which is distorted during the evolution of human society. Therefore, human nature should not be considered a social condition³. In contrast, Islam considers the Divine standard of creation as 'nature' and deviation from this Divine standard is a deviation from nature. Here, if we look at the dialectic materialism wrapped in the definition of nature of Hobbes, then humans should be allowed to make genetic changes in animals for their benefit, which in turn can harm animals but benefit humans, but according to Rousseau, it cannot be allowed, because the man himself cannot accept such cruel laws because of his inborn aptitude for sympathy⁴.

According to the naturalists, the only reason for all sufferings of humanity is its opposition to nature, as it becomes closer to nature, it will become more sovereign and freer of sufferings and diseases. It was a bitter reaction against the mechanical slavery of humans to the rapid industrial development that emerged after the European revolution. Rousseau begins his famous book *Émile* with these words:

"Coming from the hand of the Author of all things, everything is good; in the hands of man, everything degenerates. The man obliges one soil to nourish the productions of another, one tree to bear the fruits of another; he mingles and confounds climates, elements, seasons; he mutilates his dog, his horse, his slave. He overturns everything, disfigures everything; he loves deformity, monsters; he desires that nothing should be as nature made it, not even man himself. To please him, man must be broken in like a horse; man must be adapted to man's fashion, like a tree in his garden."⁵

This shows that Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory on nature is very strict and would have not allowed any progress as we see in this world nowadays. With this concept of Rousseau man would be a civilized savage wandering in the forests in search of food. But Rousseau himself did not allow this principle to be followed so strictly. Rousseau's theory influenced a large number of people, even being a naturalist became a fashion, but these naturalists, like Rousseau himself, could not fully adopt his philosophy of nature. Even today, we find a small group following this concept of naturalism, like the Amish people of the USA, even naturalists of the day may not fully accept it, because such a strict definition of nature will push humans to prehistoric human societies. It is not difficult to conclude from Rousseau's words that changes in living organisms, whether in humans, in animals, or in plants, would not be acceptable.

Sometimes Seculars, with such a typical concept of nature, argue to justify human activities to improve crops and animals, so they need to keep the difference between antagonism to nature and conquering nature. Man has been striving for the betterment of

nature for thousands of years on the base of his knowledge, experience and research and these efforts which resulted in getting better pets, food and crops cannot be unnatural. Another argument is that it is human nature to keep his efforts in the direction of improvement, if progress stops it is against the nature of humans. Human nature tries to improve its environment and natural forces by sophisticating culture and surroundings. This is human nature which is the cause of human identity.

From the Islamic point of view, we see that Allah Almighty has guided us about nature and its immutability, but He has not mentioned the nature of living organisms or modification in living organisms. Now the question is, do we have the moral liberty to change God's created universe? Its strict application has deprived many communities (especially religious communities) of civilization and high-quality services. In axiology, the debate of natural, unnatural and supernatural sprouts from it. Characters like Hayye Bin Yaqzan brought up in complete isolation from the civilized world i.e. in the lap of nature, in the philosophical literature, successfully attained the high standard of moral values like truth, reality and beauty. In the same way, we also find philosophers like Rousseau who strongly dislike change in nature. Some pragmatists and consequentialists see the only material benefit in every change. On this basis, Mu'taz al-Khatib thinks that the subject of Genome's study is related to the philosophy of ethics, medical ethics, biological ethics, social ethics and Islamic jurisprudence⁶. That is why the WHO has given importance not only to the opinion of the public and medical experts but also to the religious leaders⁷. That is why this organization (WHO) often participates in the conferences of institutes of collective Ijtihad (Islamic Jurisprudence) regarding genethics as an observer. In any case, making an international decision in this respect without the consent of any class or religion cannot be considered an astute decision.

Before learning the Islamic point of view about nature, it is important to consider the use of this word in Arabic religious and non-religious literature, because the use of words cannot be entirely independent of their meanings.

The etymology of the word fiṭr (فطر) in Arabic, is to start, to begin, to create from the beginning. That is why breakfast is called Fuṭur (فطور), and the first meal after fasting is called ifṭār (إفطار). The meaning of the adjective Fāṭir فَاطِر is also taken in the sense of creation, as فَطَرَ اللهُ الْعَالَمَ: خَلَقَهُ (fatār Allah ala'lama: khalāqāh) God hath created the universe as His creature. In the same way, the meaning of cutting lengthwise is also found in it, as in Arabic فَطَرَ الخَشَبَ: شَقَّهُ (faṭar al-khashaba: shaqahu) that the Faṭr of wood is to tear it longitudinally. Ifṭār (إفطار) of fasting can also mean breaking the fast. That is why Ftr means the creation of every being on the first day of its birth/creation. Therefore, for human beings, the philosophers have used the words of 'sound nature' (Fiṭratu-Salīma) which means the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, so that man may reach the distinction and decision between truth and falsehood. Whereas the religion of Islam uses it only for the sake of sound nature that God has concentrated in man from the knowledge of faith or 'sound nature' which is not contaminated with any imperfection, which he has instilled in man through knowledge of faith⁸.

According to Imam Raghīb Isfahani, its real meaning is to tear something to length (for the first time). As someone says, 'Faṭr fulānun kazā faṭrā' someone has torn something longitudinally. As in Qurā'n we see:

هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ⁹

“Do you see any rifts”? Here, fuṭūr means disruption, rift or crack¹⁰.

The word was originally coined to refer to the germination of a seed that sprouted from the ground by tearing it, which later led to the birth of living organisms by tearing the womb of the mother, which ultimately reached the creation of everything. When the meaning of creation became clear, the philosophers used it for the sake of 'sound nature' to distinguish it from moral defects and ethical imperfections. This led to the use of nature for innate and essential beauties. That is why the process of tearing the flesh of gums by teeth to appear is called fiṭr, as Ibn Manzoor, a famous Arabic lexicologist, has explained.¹¹ In the Qur'an, Allah Almighty says:

فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ¹²

“Allah Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth”.

Fiṭr means to bring something into existence from non-existence, to create it for the first time, therefore nature means the creation, the method of creation or law of God by which He brings something into existence from non-existence.

In another verse Allah says:

فِطْرَتِ الْاٰنْسَانِ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِحٰكْمِ اللّٰهِ

فَطَّرَ اللّٰهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِحٰكْمِ اللّٰهِ¹³

“The nature designed by Allah on which He has created the mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation.”

This shows that Allah Almighty has created human beings from non-existence like other creatures and this is called the divine law of nature. As Ibn-e-Manzoor says:

“Al- Fiṭr is the beginning and the invention, there is also the state of nature, as in the words jalsa and rakbah and it means that it is born on instinct and nature¹⁴.”

This shows that nature is a state of creation. from this point of view, nature can be good or bad, but when nature is seen collectively, we will find it always on goodness and soundness, as deviation from good is rare while good is published and general; that is why the system of the universe remains intact. If evil becomes common then the system of the universe will be disrupted.

The same concept has been narrated by the early interpreter of the Qur'an, Abdullah bin Abbas, he says:

“I did not know the meaning of 'Fāṭir al-Samāwāt wa al-ard,' until two Arabs fought in front of me about a well and one said 'anā faṭartuhā' i.e. I have dug it for the first time.”¹⁵

In the same way, the first milk that is obtained from the breast of an animal is called fuṭra (Colostrum).

As the word instinct is also used for nature, it implies that the instinct of every living thing is due to the manifestation of its nature, such as the instinct of flying animals, to fly, is found in their offspring. The natural ability to swim is found in the offspring of animals living in water, the movement of the lips to suckle, and to find the breast to drink milk as soon as they are born in mammals, are all innate things which are called animal predispositions. Therefore, it is not natural for a rabbit to swim in the water like a fish and survive in the water or for a fish to climb a tree.

What is the real meaning of the verse of Holy Qurā'n:

لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِحٰكْمِ اللّٰهِ¹⁶

“There is no change in Allah's creation.”

From the prehistoric era, man has been trying to change the characteristics of living organisms. We see that man is capable of bringing change in the characteristics of living organisms then why Qurā'n says that there is no change in the creation of God; in the

same way, curing diseases is also a process of bringing change in living beings. The question is whether these changes made by man should be considered natural changes or not. Sometimes man himself is overwhelmed by his low-level desires or by following the path of Satan and thus causes corruption in the creation of God for which the Shari'a gives a system of punishments to avoid it. Thus, we have to know what are the human desires or objectives behind the biological changes. And to what extent these desires are polluted by Satan and Nafs-e-Ammara?

Certainly, no conscious being can deem the attempts to deviate from nature and create turmoil in land and sea, so what is the meaning of this verse? This verse is not a declarative sentence but is an imperative sentence, that conveys the order that man should refrain from changing the creation of God. Now the question arises what is included in the alteration of creation and what is not included in it? We find many injunctions in the Qur'an and Sunnah that help us to understand this matter, and we have to consider these injunctions to decide its limits and boundaries to know the interrelationship between genetic mutations and nature.

Absolute Nature, Sound Nature and Distorted Nature:

It is not precise to take nature merely in the sense of absolute nature and creation of God, so the philosophers say that good nature becomes a standard for us because many verses of the Qur'an point out that humans sometimes tend to leave sound nature and the path of righteousness.

Innal insāna khuliqa haloo'aā. Izā massahush sharru jazoo'aā. إِذَا - إِذَا

مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا - 17

“Indeed man is created weak in courage, very upset when touched by evil.”

Innahoo kāna zalooman jahoolā. 18 إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

“Indeed man is unjust (to himself), unaware (of the end).”

Qutilal-insānu mā akfarah. 19 قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ.

“Damned is the man! How ungrateful he is!”

Wa kānal insānu 'ajoolā. 20 وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا

“And man is so hasty.”

Wa kānal insānu aksara sha' in jadalā. 21 وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

“But out of all creation, man is most disputing.”

Fa-izā huwa khaṣīmum mubīn. 22 فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ

“Then suddenly he stood as an open adversary (to Us).”

In these verses, attributes such as low morale, nervousness, cruelty, ignorance, ungratefulness, hasty, and quarrelsome cannot be attached to a balanced human being, therefore they are considered as part of a distorted nature and this distortion is not by birth or by nature. Man learns these mischiefs from the environment and bad company, but physical distortion can be by birth. As it is explained in the hadith every child is born according to the nature of Islam, his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian,

just as the children of animals are born healthy; have you ever seen their bodies mutilated²³? In this hadith, both spiritual and physical defects are jointly described and it is said that natural deviation can be spiritual as well as physical.

In general, the word absolute creation will also include distorted nature, but no rational person will accept it, however, sound creation is considered as natural. On the other hand, it is also wrong to consider the highest qualities as natural and below average as unnatural. For example, if the tallest person is eight feet tall, it does not mean that it would become a natural standard now considered to be, as in the field of eugenics. This extremist attitude is also against the spirit of Islam as well as common sense itself. Instead, nature determines the average range of characteristics, that is present in the majority of species, however diversity of characteristics is acceptable within the prescribed range.

This range of diversity is determined by the genetic pool of a species, and the presence of alternative traits, in a large population is not considered against nature as this diversity enables living beings to adapt to the environment. This diversity in living beings is the cause of beauty, goodness and variety in nature. From this point of view, there should be no categorical difference in the determination of human and animal nature, but this can only be true in terms of physical nature because the supreme qualities of cognition, consciousness, reasoning and logic are in human beings while animals have a very small proportion of it. Therefore, deviating from cognition and rational logic will be considered unnatural only in human beings not in animals although the terms mad cow and mad dog are commonly used. It is possible for an animal to adopt a very violent behaviour due to external or internal stimuli, whereas this type of behaviour is not commonly found in other animals of that species, the causes of which are usually physical or environmental. If there is a change in temperament due to physiological changes, it can be termed as unnatural change, whereas change due to environmental factors will be considered natural as it helps animals adapt themselves to the environment.

Natural degeneration is like the spread of viruses and bacteria that cannot be considered natural but need to be treated, as well as many psychiatric disorders such as homosexuality, self-indulgence, gender role confusion, etc. are unnatural tendencies and Shari'a imposes punishments on some such deviations. Now the genes responsible for these natural deviations are also being discovered, and it is possible to overcome these outrageous desires through genetic mutations. At present, monasteries and mystics are being approached for the treatment of spiritual ailments and exercises are being conducted to control these ailments.

According to the Islamic view of the creation of the universe, it becomes clear that Allah Almighty did not create anything in vain and created all the creatures for the service of humans. Man is also allowed and encouraged to conquer the universe and discover laws of nature for his own and other living beings' well-being. Along with this, the prohibition of change in the creation of God is also clearly found in the Qur'an and Hadith. On the other hand, Islam allows animals to be slaughtered for food by declaring them halal, which shows that it is right to sacrifice a lowly thing for higher purposes, and here the status of animals is inferior to human life. But this practice is also commanded to be carried out efficiently so, torturing animals is strongly condemned in Islam. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind the difference between real and unreal moral values, and we should not create problems for humanity by creating unnatural moral values. To develop unfeasible values for animals, like the followers of Jainism do, will make human life difficult and it can't be justified. If slaughtering animals for food is permitted then using animals for human treatment and therapeutic research will also be allowed by Islamic Law.

Concerning the change in the specific characteristics of an animal, it can be truly said that in human history man has been changing the natural characteristics of different animals such as Animal castration, taming dogs and horses etc. From the hadith, it has been proved that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sacrificed a castrated ram²⁴. By these hadiths we conclude that Sharia allows us to change some natural traits of animals then speculating on it, it should be allowed to change the traits by making genetic changes, but at the same time, there are some hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in which the animals' castration is forbidden. It is forbidden to castrate camels, bulls, goats and horses in a hadith narrated by A'bdullah Ibn-e-U' mar²⁵. According to traditional practice, the characteristics of animals did not change from generation to generation, but genetic mutations have the potential to be passed on from generation to generation, so this change encompasses a difference between permanent and temporary change. The Shari'a dislikes temporary change without any motive, how can it allow permanent changes that pass from generation to generation, and can potentially harm this organism? However genetic modification for a specific trait in a few animals of a species, which may not harm all the species in future, may be permitted with the condition that this change may not pass from generation to generation.

It is argued that biological changes can be dangerous, while the fact is that sometimes dangerous changes occur naturally, however, nature prevents itself by updating itself or by eliminating dangerous changes. Biological mutations pose a threat to the development of monsters, or to harmful organisms that could pose a threat to humans and other species. One difference is likely to be that genetically modified animals tend to survive more than congenital defective animals. This is because such a big congenital defect commonly results in the death of an organism or case of a mild or moderate defect, that organism may survive but it does not affect its entire species or endanger other species.

This raises another question: Does man have the authority to control the evolutionary process? The process of evolution, as Darwin claims, is the slowest natural way in which the best organisms of each generation survive (the law of survival of the fittest) but the current scientific techniques (without refuting this claim) accelerate it through biological changes. There have been some successes in gaining control over the speed and scale of the changes that have led to the creation of intermediate and sub-species of different species to complete missing links, not only to test the theory of evolution but also to determine whether those species ever existed. Were these sub-species able to sustain their life and reproduce? How did it become possible for this type of genetic mutation to occur naturally? Through this theory, it is also possible to see how genetic defects occur. What are the causes of these defects? How is it possible to treat these genetic defects? How do the best organisms out of defected organisms become successful in reproducing naturally and thus cause evaluation? The development of genetics has opened up many new debates for humans and closed many old topics of discussion.

Another question arises, "Does man keep the authority to make such biological changes in living beings?" In this regard, naturalists, and religious people generally oppose it, but modernists and utilitarians not only support it but also strongly advocate to benefit from it.

Along with this, an important question is; Is it the demand of man being subordinate to Allah or anthropocentrism to have the authority to change the living beings and their characteristics? Are we allowed to try to produce characteristics that we like? Or is it appropriate to change their genes just to satisfy their passion for research? Of course, there may be a long debate with an opposing point of view. Islam does not consider it appropriate to change the creation of God, however, it does allow the disposition of God's

created creatures to such an extent that it may become more beneficial to human beings and their species with no major change in its genetic makeup.

Before understanding the concept of nature in Islam, it will be useful to know some of the commandments of Islam, which will help us to understand the Islamic concept of 'nature'. The Holy Prophet had commanded to trim the nails, under shave and pluck the hair from the armpits. Even the five things that are explicitly called nature in the Islamic tradition are: clipping the nails, trimming the moustaches, plucking the armpit hair, shaving the pubic hair, and circumcision²⁶. In the same way, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) encouraged people to trim their beards and make them beautiful by dyeing them²⁷. On the other hand, it is forbidden to dye one's beard with black colour²⁸. The commentators of hadith tried to combine both contradicting hadiths by clarifying that dyeing a beard with black colour is forbidden while dyeing other than black colour is appreciable²⁹. Contrary to Islam, in Sikhism, all these acts are forbidden for the followers, except trimming nails. Cleanliness, civility and culture demand that these acts should be compulsory and these should not be left to their natural state. The growth of hair and nails is the process of body repair, but their trimming and dyeing is the process of beauty that is appreciated by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), it indicates that these acts are not against nature.

In the same way, everyone is born naked by nature, but he is commanded to wear clothes. The rules of covering the body in Islam are stricter than other religions. In the same way, clean dress, using scent, and cleanliness before salat are demanded by Sharia. Cleanliness of the streets or launching a campaign to kill dogs (by the Prophet (PBUH) to kill black dogs³⁰, to control their population), was also to maintain the natural balance between living organisms so that human beings would not be harmed by them. Similarly, farming (as mentioned in the Qur'an itself), and the cultivation of crops have been attributed to

Allah Almighty³¹. The process of crop production, cultivation and artificial pollination in date orchards are also based on the fact that Sharia demands to modify and improve the wild characteristics of crops. Thus, modification in crops for food enrichment and enhancement has become appreciable in Sharia³². All these commandments show that Sharia does not check the process of improvement of the environment in the name of the protection of nature it encompasses enrichment, beauty and development.

Sometimes we find commandments of sharia for the restoration to nature and birth soundness, just as, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) granted permission to Arfaja (a companion of the Prophet) to use a nose of silver and later on permitted him for golden nose, after the cutting of his nose³³. In the same way, a Sahabi used the teeth of a goat instead of his broken teeth. (Here the cutting of the nose or the breaking of the teeth was a deviation from the birth soundness, that can be remedied by such acts.)

Sometimes Prophet (PBUH) ordered them to avoid acts which upset the balance of life, like, he (PBUH) declared monasticism forbidden, but when some Sahaba became overindulged in business affairs, they were suggested to remember Allah to maintain balance. Likewise, despite the general urge to give alms and charity, when some of his companions came to give their whole property in alms, he (PBUH) did not accept the wealth of the companions except very close companions (like Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umar Farooq, Uthman Ghani, etc.)³⁴. Despite the urge to fast and perform Nawafil, he declared continuous fasting to be disliked and also disliked to perform Nawafil all night long³⁵. Such incidents indicate that the spirit of Islamic law is to maintain balance and moderation and to refrain the followers from becoming extremists. Therefore, if this principle is taken into account in the context of living modification techniques, then it

will be the responsibility of the jurists or researchers to determine the extremes and the average standard. Despite unconditional permission to do so, (if permitted) extremism will be undesirable and if more glitches are incorporated with it, it may be forbidden for external reasons.

We also find many Sharia injunctions in which birth characteristics and natural appearance of living beings are protected and deviation from it is detested, such as the command of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to grow a beard for men and to dislike shaving³⁶, even though the delegation of the Magi was non-Muslim, and non-Muslims are not bound to the personal law of sharia. That is why Muslim jurists and commentators of hadith had interpreted the beard as a part of nature, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) wanted the Magis to follow nature as it was common for all humans. Similarly, when some of the Companions expressed their intention to be castrated, the Prophet (peace be upon him) strictly forbade it³⁷. It has been ordered to fast, get married or marry a slave woman instead of losing one's ability to reproduce, as the ability of sexual activity is natural and deviation from nature is not allowed. That is why the jurists (as narrated from 'Abdullah ibn' Umar) consider it unwanted (Makrooh) to dismiss during intercourse³⁸, even though it is permitted in the hadith since that permission exists with special conditions and the process of reproduction is natural, so this ability should be maintained. In the same way, animals have the natural ability to reproduce and sharia wants to maintain it, but sometimes they are castrated, this permission is incorporated with some benefits, like castration in goats, ram etc. increases the quality and taste of meat, so, it is permitted; on the other hand, castration of camel, bull or horse is only loss of the natural ability of reproduction and have no other benefit, therefore sharia forbade doing so with them³⁹. Therefore Ibn 'Umar also forbade the castration of camels and said that castration of cattle is like cutting the organs of living beings⁴⁰ (Muthla مثله). These examples help us to understand the concept of Shari'a about nature. Therefore, the majority of scholars consider it unconditionally right to castrate animals⁴¹ but the situation of human beings is different so, the objective and natural ability both should be taken into consideration while making decisions. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever kills a slave, we will kill him. Whoever cuts off his limb, we will cut off his limb, and whoever castrates him, we will castrate him."⁴²

In the field of eugenics, enrichment and modification of nature are important to determine the status of man. The view of Judaism is that Allah has created man in its image and has made him a participant in the process of improving things. Yet in Judaism, there are many injunctions for human beings which forbid a man from doing many things, such as the injunction of Kil'ayin which forbids the interbreeding of crops and animals⁴³. Similarly, according to kosher orders, the inclusion of non-kosher genes in kosher is not allowed (debatable), or the protection of life is necessary under halakha law⁴⁴. Christianity is on the other end of the spectrum because of the notion that man is an inherited sinner and can't improve the creation, and whenever he tries to improve the creation, he will cause calamity and destroy nature. That is why they are convinced to limit the role of man and consider man to be practically like to be inferior to other creatures because there is no concept of inherited sin in other creatures. In contrast, Islam denies that man was created in the image of God, that God is transcendent, and that it is not right for human beings to be partners with God. According to him, his rule is subject to the conquest of the universe, therefore Allah had made man as his vicegerent and caliph, not his partner. The absence of the concept of hereditary sin, like Christianity, has admitted that man can make both

right and wrong decisions, so he will be held accountable and will suffer in this world and the hereafter for his doings. As Allah Almighty says:

Zaharal fasādu fil barri wal baḥri bimā kasabat aydinnāsi. ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ

أَيْدِي النَّاسِ⁴⁵

"Calamities have appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned."

Change in Allah's creation and nature:

The first argument of the opponents of changing nature is that it is a change in the creation of Allah, that is not allowed. According to them, every living organism has its natural status and its role is fixed in the universe, any change in its body may disrupt this role, to a high or low extent. These characteristics have been established by God at the time of the creation of the universe and there is a possibility of gradual natural change in them so that these characteristics may also change according to the changing circumstances so that human beings and other animals can protect their lives. However, in ecology, this imbalance is considered temporary because if life sustains it will create a new balance and a new ecological system is formed. But despite this, there occurs a change in nature that will damage it, the consequences of which have to be borne by living organisms. The religion of Islam is very sensitive in the matter of change in creation, that is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared plucking eyebrows, creating gaps in teeth, and getting tattoos on the body as a change in the creation of Allah and forbade it. Qur'an declares it a sinful act as is claimed by Satan:

"And I will lead them astray, and I will tempt them with false hopes, and I will command them, whereby they shall slit the ears of cattle, and I will command them, whereby they shall alter the creation of Allah. Whoever takes Satan for a friend, instead of Allah, incurs an obvious loss."⁴⁶

What does it mean to change the creation here? According to some scholars, it is to declare halal (Permitted) as haram (forbidden) and haram as halal, in support of which verse 30 of Surah Al-Rum of the Holy Qurā'n is presented.

"So, set your face to the Faith uprightly, this (faith) being the nature designed by Allah on which He has created mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the straight faith, but most of the people do not know."⁴⁷

In this verse, only the upright religion and straight faith (Allah's commands) have been declared as nature, and for human beings, obedience has been declared as the criterion of being close to nature. Allah has termed this divine nature as creation and rejected the possibility of change in it and said that most people do not know the real nature of 'nature'. This means that the real nature is the injunctions of halal (permitted) and haram (forbidden) and the people who follow it are not the ones to change it but it is a change in nature to change halal and haram of sharia reciprocally. The tearing of the ears of the animals mentioned in verse 119 of Surah An-Nisa is not a change per creation but disobedience to the command of change per creation which was not to tyrannize and abuse animals in the name of idols. If this were the case, things like halter or rein and marking on the back of animals would also be considered as a change in nature, but it is allowed in sharia.

If we try to find the cause (Illat) of the hadith which forbids plucking the hair, making tattoos and creating gaps in the teeth, according to Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's view its cause is cheating, trickery and deception. He says:

There is deception and cheating in it, therefore it is forbidden⁴⁸.

Ibn al-Jawzi's view is that apparent physical change is haram⁴⁹. The same reason we see in the black dyeing of the beard. There are three kinds of possibilities, one is that it was the style of corrupt women at that time, the other is that it was a ploy of women to deceive men, and the third is that it is a change in the creation of God⁵⁰. The question is whether is it correct to assume genetic change is a physical change. We consider the three causes one by one. The first reason is that there is trickery and deceit, so in the case of genetic changes the situation is completely reversed genetic modification is done to cure or alleviate the disease which is hidden from all and may cause deceit, its treatment will check the path of deceit and cheat. The second reason, that it is an outward change in the organs of the body, has also influenced the situation, that genetic changes are not outward and apparent changes but inward changes. The third reason is that it was the mark of corrupt women, so it was forbidden. Till now genetic changes could not get the fame of identity of sinful persons. If these modifications become a brand of sinful people, this will be done secretly, and a secret thing does not have the potential to become a reason until it becomes obvious to the majority. An analysis of these causes shows that it is not at all correct to argue from this hadith that genetic changes are prohibited. Similarly, the organ and the gene cannot be compared. On the one hand, there is a strong argument for the originality of permitted, while on the other hand, there is a conjecture which has no strong association with the cause, which makes this conjecture very weak, so the aspect of the originality of permit should be considered valid.

According to Mufti Muhammad Shafi, to create is a natural ability of Allah Almighty which Allah Almighty has blessed every individual. Although this ability can be dusty with sins, misguidance and immoralities, which are unnatural as soon as he meditates, he will return to his original natural ability⁵¹. According to the hadith every child is said to be born in Islam but their parents make him Jews, Magi or Christians⁵². As far as the meaning of 'there is no change in it' it becomes clear that this is the natural ability to accept a right that remains forever, even in case of becoming misguided. However genetic modification in animals can even alter their natural abilities. For example, genetically modified bacteria produce human insulin, in the same way, it is possible to eliminate the tendency of diseases or drug addiction through gene therapy in humans. Concerning the treatment of human beings, it can be explained that the natural requirement and demand of nature in human beings is that they should be healthy, and deviation from health and the average standard of human qualities that is causing any disease or disorder should be cured and this treatment will be a return to the nature but making a genetic change that would take it away from the average standard of health or average human qualities would be unnatural. The jurists have unanimously termed tattooing as an unnatural change in creation, but they have provided detail on plucking the hair of the eyebrows that if this hair is such as to cause disgrace to the human body or make the women look like the men, there is the probability of eliminating it. The reason is that it leads to a return to nature. In the same way, any genetic modification in human beings that would lead them to cruelty and injustice change their human characteristics or make them sick is forbidden. Shah Wali Ullah Dehlavi has described that every species, has two kinds of natural traits, one is apparent (physical traits, such as colour, shape, weight, sound, etc.) and the second is potential traits (like consciousness, searching for food, working capacity and self-defence etc.)⁵³ The Qur'an has guided us to these traits:

“He (Musa) said, Our Lord is the One who gave everything its due shape, then guided it.”⁵⁴

Here shape is meant physical features while guidance is potential abilities.

Islam, being the religion of nature, means that man should live his life on the golden principle of balance and moderation. Achieving this natural equilibrium is the fundamental goal of Shari'a. The existence of equilibrium in biological systems is also an important natural principle. To achieve this goal, genetic changes will not be prohibited. Therefore, if a disease occurs as a result of an unnatural diet, it will be natural to obtain medicines for its treatment through genetic engineering. It is also natural to try to counteract pollution by producing microorganisms as a result of genetic modification to decompose pesticides, organic and inorganic compounds, and various types of pollutants. Similarly, when an unnatural lifestyle causes damage to human organs, artificially preparing and transplanting human organs is an attempt to remedy this unnatural disorder which would be considered desirable, but arrangements must be made to protect the rest of the species from these unnatural changes, otherwise, these living modified organisms may become a threat to the ecosystem. Therefore, experiments of terminating genes are unavoidable to stop living modified organisms' activities, after completion of the work.

The process of biological changes is unnatural, but a standard of natural characteristics already exists for all living things. To deviate or exceed this standard of nature is a deviation from nature, it is likely to harm the ecosystem, human beings and animals, as a result, these changes should not be allowed. A standard should be set for the naturalness of every trait of every living thing. For example, what is the natural limit of a person's average minimum and maximum height, less than this and more than that should be considered as unnatural and it should be allowed to achieve standard height by medical means. But under the influence of low-level and deviated desires, efforts to achieve excessive length or short stature, genetic modification (or medical treatment) should be morally, legally and ethically forbidden.

Conclusion:

It is not right to make any biological change in such natural behaviour, that is essential for the protection of that animal, (e.g., reproduction, sense of distress, etc.). It is also against nature to combine the genes of more than one species to form a new one, that has the characteristics of both. The purpose of the creation of every living thing has been already determined by the Creator of the universe. There is no limit to our desires. Controlling these low-level desires ensures the protection of the rights of all living organisms.

Therefore, the Shari'ah concept of nature will continue to enhance based on different standards and development of research, whether the difference is based on good or evil, or based on usefulness and harmfulness, or based on moderation and transgression, or based on originality of creation, or based on wild relatives of species or based on any other standard that is not opposed by Sharia. The possibility of change in the definition and concept of nature, the way of Ijtihad (diligence) will be open for further investigation and research. So, it will be necessary for a jurist to be aware of the latest research in the field of biology, as a result, he will be aware of the changes in the meaning of nature or its interpretation, but it should be based on the welfare of humanity and not the low-level desires of a few persons.

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