Human Dignity; the Final Word on the Religious Ideas and Moral Thinking

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ABSTRACT

Inherent dignity is one of the great qualities of human and fundamental rights of all human beings, so that no condition makes it conditional. In this respect, there are many beneficial discussions in teachings of the divine religions and especially on the life giving school of Islam, a sample of which can be downgraded as follows, so that human being has been turned into an unprecedented position in terms of inspiration of the Divine Spirit and consequently, many blessings have been brought about for him through attaining such sublime position. Of course, all Muslims and the Worlds have been tasked with safeguarding this inherent dignity. The inherent dignity of human is a universal and innate rule which cannot be imitated. The necessity of observations of this important effect has also been reflected in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. To expand inclusion of this rule in the international arena, the need to safeguard human dignity has been reiterated and crystallized in documents such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Declaration on Human Genome, Declaration of Helsinki, International Declaration of Bioethics, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) Human rights, etc.

KEYWORDS: Human Dignity, Divine Religions, Man, Islam, Bioethics, International Documents

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Human dignity which has been used with much emphasis in the Islamic culture is of the values that should be taken seriously.

In psychology and Islamic education, this meaning should be taken into consideration and should also be analyzed. Human dignity protects many of divine and human values. Paying due attention to the human dignity and safeguarding its privacy is of the hefty duties of the Muslims. Human dignity must have lofty position in the Islamic society and religious culture. [Ahmadi, 2000, P. 108]

Human dignity also has an important role in maintaining social order. Human society requires military, which relying upon it, human
relations are preserved and move towards perfection.

The authorities should think to regulate human relations in it i.e. human dignity and should build a strong military and ruling on it. Raising people’s dignity in society and introducing it by any people to others is one of the cases that can regulate human relations. The human, who respects his dignity, will attempt to keep it and will respect dignity of others in order to safeguard his dignity. If a person lacked the said qualities, i.e. dignity, and/or if a person does not consider himself worthy, he can be the source of many problems for other people of the society as well. [Ahmadi, 2000, P. 109]

The nature of human dignity is one of the issues which have been taken into consideration at this time by the scientific and philosophical schools and each school has commented in this respect based on its philosophical basis. [Mohammadpour Dehkordi, Akbarian, A’vani, 2009, P. 12]

Some people consider nature of natures for human being but some others deny these types of discussions principally. On the other hand, some people imagine it as self-made illusion with regard to the origin of human dignity but in contrast, the large number of people considers it as external, respectable, and unchangeable reality. [Bagheri, 2007, P. 182]

The inherent dignity of human is a concept that all people at least agree it theoretically. Since such concepts are universal and innate which is shared between all human beings, its universal acceptance can be used for the human materials. In this article, in addition to a brief discussion of the meaning, concept and limits of human dignity, we have examined the issue from perspective of the Abrahamic religions and international law and bioethics and some of the international regulations.

It is important to note that this article does not attempt a comparative study of human dignity in Islam or Christianity and/or the rights of Iran and other countries, because, it looks like that concept and limits of this issue in worldview of Islam and Christianity and humanist ideas are sometimes very different and its details are beyond the scope of this article. Thus, in the present article, this concept has been discussed between the Abrahamic religions and different communities.

1. The Concept of Human Dignity and Its Scope
1.1. The Concept of Human Dignity

Literally, dignity is meant bow and pay homage. It has been said: “نکورُم فلان عما يشمّ انا تبَّورِ” و “آکرم عن الشمانات” [Lesan al-Arab, 512/12, as quoted by Bagheri, 2007, P. 183]

In Farsi, we should put several words together in order to make sense of this word precisely. [Javadi Amoli, 2004, P. 12]

In religious term, dignity is the general name and if this word i.e. dignity is used with regard to God, it is meant reward and God’s bounty to His servants, and if it is used with regard to the human, it is meant good ethics and conducts which appears from the human being. [Majma’ al-Bahreyn, 153/6, as quoted by Bagheri, 2007, P. 183]

Ragheb in book entitled “Materia” said: “If generosity is attributed to God, it means apparent benevolence and blessing of God, and if generosity is attributed to human being, it means his good ethics and conducts, because,
dignity is the way of specific existence which is merely related to the Almighty God in particular. According to Farahidy and Zabidi in Al-Eyn and Taj al-Aroos, “Dignity” is the name of “Ekram” which is used instead of it such as obedience which is used instead of “Eta’at” obedience.

Of statement of Ragheb Esfahani on the “Materia”, it becomes clear that quality of generosity, when is attributed to God, is a noun which talks about the gratuities of the Lord and when it is attributed to the human being, it reveals good ethics and behavior of human being as well.

Generally, each noble thing is described within the framework of its gender with the quality of benevolent. With regard to the honor and reverence, Ragheb said: “Honor and Reverence is meant that a benefit is reached to the human being with no difficulty and/or whatever reaches the human being, it is a valued and precious thing. [Salimi Zare’, Ghazizadeh, 2007, P. 70]

In this article, the meaning which is contemplated from dignity in the mystical literature, is not considered. [Poshtdar, Abbaspour Khormaloo, 2009, P. 60]

Some authors have defined the human dignity as follows: “Human dignity refers to the intrinsic value of human beings regardless of age, sex, mental and physical ability, and religion, ethnic or social origin. The intrinsic term implies that such dignity is not based on a feature or a specific capacity of individuals; rather, it is based solely on human institution, because dignity cannot be granted or retracted and imagination of any degree is not deserved to it.”

Verse 70 of Esra’a Sura is the sole verse of the Holy Quran which has explicitly addressed the issue of human dignity. In this Sura, the objective of reverence is to assign grace and dignity to the property. In other words, reverence is self respect which is not related to others; rather, the revered person is concerned in order to obtain dignity and honor. [Sadeghpour, 2007, P. 53]

“Dignity” is the English equivalent of the Persian word “Karamat” which is derived from Latin “dignita” means “worthy of reverence or respect for the state”. [Longman dictionary, 2003, P. 115]

Dignity in its general sense indicates the existence of special quality in its carriers including human and nonhuman which causes his superiority and privilege to others. This sense of dignity has transverse aspect and may be acquisitioned and declined but when dignity is attributed to human being, it is meant denying the cross privileges and about the sanctity of every human being that enjoys it. This meaning is of inherent dignity of human which is neither obtained nor exhausted.

With due observance to the abovementioned subjects, the following cases can be stated summarily:

1. Dignity is the name of “Ekram” and is sometimes used instead. 2. Semantic essence of dignity is the reward of someone or something. Sometimes, granting a valued thing like rain from the cloud and sometimes like fruits from the tree and sometimes, kindness of a thing to the creature from the Almighty God. 3. What belongs to the “Ekram” is a valued thing. ٍوکرّ فئرّ فئُففلیفبشبهفلش ن هفنوصففبشلکُ».
4. It goes without saying that dignity in our common language is sometimes added to the subject, (Divine dignity) and sometimes is added to the object (human dignity) [Salimi Zare', Ghazizadeh, 2007, P. 70 – 71]

The latter meaning is the meaning discussed in this paper which has granted from the Almighty God to the human.

1.2. Importance of Human Dignity

Undoubtedly, the highest volume of research after the human rights is related to the human dignity statistically. Presently, several titles of specialized magazine are published in the world in the field of human dignity and many works are authored and supplied within the framework of book, thesis, article, etc. [some of authors, Bita, P. 112]

Dignity, Human, and his position are important issues of the contemporary era, in which, its interpretation and clarification in terms of religious resources especially the Holy Book and consequently, attaining strategies to materialize its objective is inevitable in today human life. The dignity which has the divine and celestial origin and is regarded as the first attributes of God. The dignity, if its objective is materialized in every human being, which can immunize one from immoral behaviors and vices. In this respect, Hazrat Ali (AS) said: “If each individual enjoyed self-dignity and also holy soul, lusts, and ugly things will be worthless and fruitless in view of him. [Mo’addab, 2007, P. 137]

When self-dignity is crystallized in the human being wholly or partly, the society will also fill with the dignity, based on which, the human community will be turned into the divine and heavenly society, the society that every thoughtful human being is interested in moving towards the dignity and perfection. Under such circumstances, the environment will be filled with justice and equity and people from all walks of life will resort to this land from across the world. [Sane’i, 1997, P. 62]

1.3. Types of Human Dignity

Some thinkers believe that there are three types of dignity: 1. Divine dignity which is naturally related to the angels, Throne of God, and carriers of the Throne. 2. Natural dignity which is related to the natural organisms. So, the Almighty God recollects plants with the quality of dignity and says: “أولم يروى إلى الأرض كم لاعتماد فيها من كل روح كريم” [Sho’ara, 7/26] 3. Lofty dignity of the human which is resulted from the combination of nature and supernatural and obtained from the divine dignity and natural dignity. [Javadi Amoli, Bita, P. 327]

Two species of human dignity is expressed in the Holy Quran: in some part of verses of the Holy Book, dignity and venerability of human being and his superiority to other creatures have been expressed. [Esra’a, 70, Mo’menoun 14, Tin 14, Loghman 2]

In some verses, human has been criticized and his vicious behavior has been reiterated in the Book. [Nesa 28, Me’raj 16, Ebrahim 34, Ahzab 72, A’raf 179 and Tin 5] [Sadeghpour 2007, P. 53 – 54]

We should bear in mind that human being has two types of dignities which are discussed briefly in below:

A) Inherent Dignity

The inherent dignity is meant that the Almighty God has created human being who has enjoyed more facilities and advantages than
some other creatures in terms of body configuration. In other words, human being has been created better than other creatures systematically. However, human being enjoys more wealth and capital. (Ramezani, Bita, P. 56)

These types of facilities indicate that the Almighty God has paid due attention to the human species and all human beings can take advantage of the divine blessings.

So, no one should boast each other for the blessings as bestowed by the Almighty God to the human being. Verses such as Verse 4 of Tin Sura (أَلَيْكَ خُلُقُ النَّاسِ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ) and Verse No. 14 of Mo’menoun Sura (بِمَ أَنْفَسَتُوا خُلُقًا أَخْرَ فِي النَّارِ وَالْبَحْرِ) and Verse No. 70 of Esra’a Sura (لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا بِنِي آدمَ وَحِمَلْنَا هُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ) and several verses which have reiterated conquering the world of creation, etc. indicate developmental and inherent dignity of human species. The inherent dignity has been materialized in two physical and spiritual forms: the apparent reverence such as standing, walking, eating and drinking with hand, power of writing, moderation of temperament, mastery of nature, provision of subsistence, etc. which have been reiterated by some commentators while spiritual reverence of human to wisdom, which many of apparent reverences are originated from it, has preferred to other animals.

This blessing, which the greatest and most popular is blessing of the God, implies the human to distinguish right and wrong, good and evil, correction and corruption and good and bad. This blessing comes from the evolution of human life. Each of these two reverences includes all the human beings. Not only color, race and tribe, etc. does not affect it, but also true excellence criteria such as faith, science, Jihad, etc. have not any role in this respect. Hence, the Holy Quran has introduced all children of Adam (AS) subject of this reverence and said: (وَ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا بِنِي آدمَ)

Then, human beings are subject to the compulsory tribute. [Javadi Amoli, Abdollah, Adab, Favorites, P. 272 – 273, as quoted by Sadeghpour, 2007, P. 54-55]

B) Acquired Dignity

The acquired dignity is meant to achieve the perfections which human being obtains in the light of virtue, faith, good deeds. This kind of dignity is emanated from the human effort and is criterion of human values and proximity to the Almighty God. With this type of dignity, superiority of a human to another one can be distinguished. [Sadeghpour, 2007, P. 55]

All humans have the potential to achieve this perfection and dignity, but some of them achieve it and some others cannot achieve it. Hierarchical difference, which comes from the virtue, has been reiterated in the Holy Quran: (انَّ اَكِمِمَ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ اَيُّهَا الْيَهُودُ) [Hojarat, 13/49]

This type of dignity differs from the inherent dignity of human. The latter one was the dignity that all humans can take advantage of it and cannot be considered as criterion of rating humans. Hence, criterion of difference of humans’ rating from one another should be completely voluntary in order to obtain it through relying upon effort, endeavor and effort of the humans. As the Holy Quran said: (إِنِّي سَعِیدُ لَمْ يَسْتَعِفَ) [Salimi Zare’, Ghazizadeh, 2007, P. 72]
I.4. Range of Human Dignity

If human intellect is affected by the faith, piety, and good deeds, then, this human can achieve such merit to move towards developmental and true path of the Almighty God. Under such circumstances, the merited human can approach himself to the divine source that even angels have not approached themselves to such powerful source as the human can reach.

This soul, which has set aside the vices of the Nature of the Universe and has purified him from all vices and sins, is called the soul of reverence and dignity. Therefore, range of human dignity is not focused on the very inherent and developmental dignity, rather, it is so vast that can include extreme of the acquired dignity as well. The Almighty God gives lesson of dignity to human beings. Moreover, God has determined virtue as the luggage of the dignity path, because, virtue is the source of dignity and there is not certain extent for the virtue. So, the Almighty God in Taghabon Sura, Verse No. 16, said: “فألفها الله ما استطعتم”

That is to say that God has provided the source of one’s dignity based on his affordability. Be virtuous and the dignity of human being is so high that angels can prostrate before him. [Hajar, 30/15]

If human failed to make angels to prostrate him, at least he was greed and appreciated. Under such circumstance, angels will welcome him and will open the door of paradise to him as well. سلام عليكم طيتم فادخلوها خالدين [Zomar, 73/39]

So, dignity is not enough, because, virtue, which is basis of dignity, is not limited. [Sadeghpour, 2007, P. 55-56]

But however, the discussion of human dignity in this paper is related to the inherent of human and the rank which this creature has in the Genesis, not the rank which is acquired with the beliefs and practices.

Making effort to acquire a superior rank before the Almighty God implies developmental position of the human. Generally speaking, human being, thanks to his or her qualities and nature, is superior to other creatures (at least in the universe of substance and nature) and has supremacy over them.

Such superiority of children of human beings to other creatures will follow important results, some of which will be discussed as follows:

One of these questions is that: “The Almighty God has bestowed a grandeur position for Hazrat Adam (AS) and endeared him in His nature. Has the God bestowed such grandeur and dignity to generation after Adam (AS)?

We can conclude from the verses of the Holy Quran that such inherent dignity of human does not belong to Hazrat Adam (AS). For instance, the speech of devil is as follows: هو الذي كرم على [Hajar, 30/15]

Namely, I turned down your request and disobeyed to prostrate the creature that you ordered me to prostrate him. Then, I was expelled from the paradise but I will astray his offspring. The following holy verse is used: “Hazrat Adam (AS) is not merely considered as the holy one, rather, the position of humanity is considered as holy and if everyone gained this status, he will be endeared. Verses 7 to 9 of Sajdeh (Prostration) can be used in this re-
spect that children of Adam (AS) enjoyed the Divine Spirit:

لذیف حسافکّفئیءفخلقهفوفبد  فخلرّ ف  ضنسرّشعف رّاف رّذا ثمف
جعّفنسلهف افسا لةف اف شءف اذا ثمفسو هفوفنفرّ فلذرّهف رّافکوحرّه
[Sajdeh, 9-7/32]

Although the bloating spirit has been attributed to the Adam (AS) in these holy verses, the issue of generation has been put forward before the issue of imparted spirit is posed and has said: “Man is originally from mud. The generation of human is from sweet and tested water. That is to say that generation of Adam (AS) benefits from the divine spirit the same as Adam (AS) and the very Divine Spirit is the source of dignity of Adam and generation of Adam (AS).

Since the Almighty God has bestowed this spirit to the human, He has said: “فیبارک الله احسن الخالقین” [Mo’menoun Sura, 14/23]

So, it can be concluded that type of human is benevolent and his dignity is only because of human spirit. That is to say that firstly, human dignity is in the position of humanity and secondly, such dignity is not specific to Hazrat Adam (AS), rather, it is for all human beings. [Sadeghpour, 2007, P. 57]

Indeed, such contemplation of children of human being and area of their dignity would be as the best protector of their dignity. [Bita, P. 145]

Accordingly, some enlightened jurists consider inherent cleanliness of all human beings with the logical and mystical interpretation of collection of traditions, verses and Nabavi tradition. [Hosseini Tehrani, 1425, P. 156-162]

2. Human dignity from the Perspective of Divine Religions

2.1. Human Dignity from Jewish Perspective

Posing the issue of Jewish ethics will lead to numerous problems. Some of these issues are integral and inherent part of any ethical school and some others are unique to the Jewish ethics. Some Jewish scholars believe that Jewish ethics is basically independent and separate from Kant’s logic and ethics but some others believe that Jewish ethics is/was completely dependent on the Kant’s ethics. According to them, the degree of importance of individuals to the ethical behaviors is dependent on the degree of their valuation from the human nature. In Jewish rites and rituals, it is believed that human has been created divinely. [Journey of Genesis, 27:1]

The quality of judgment and their evaluation from nature of human is dependent on the way of their judgment to the Divine Essence. In Judaism, the moral theme of creating human as God has brought about two subjects: firstly, specific ethical rules such as “Love your fellowman as you want to be behaved in good manner.” [Lavian, 18:19]

Because, he has been created like you in the form of God. Secondly, the common and comprehensive content of Torah, the issue which is completely apparent and vivid especially with regard to ancient Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc. [Kelner, 2003, P. 236 & 240-246]

Since human has been created in the form of God, if he wants to attain the highest rank of perfection and self-recognition, he should try to make himself similar to the God. This meaning can be considered as the basis and the most important cornerstone of Torah Ethical Principle i.e. Imitating God.
The abovementioned ethical principles have been emphasized in some verses of Torah, some of which are mentioned in below:

“All of you are holy. As your Lord, I am holy as well.” [Lavian, 2:19]

“The Lord has appointed you for the humans that are holy before Him provided that to execute His orders and to step in His right path.” [Tasineh, 9:29]

In these verses, there are two explicit orders. The first one is the holiness and cleanness of human because of holiness of God and the other is the necessity of stepping the right path in the way of God and obeying Him [Kelner, 2003, P. 241]

Eventually, it seems that human is endeared thanks to the sublime sanctity which Jewish rituals consider for him.

2.2. Human Dignity from the Perspective of Christianity

The roots of Christian ethics can be found in Torah and then in teachings of Jesus (AS) in first four visits of the New Testament. Other Christian moral teachings can be sought in the tablets that Moses (AS) found them in Horeb (Sinai) Mount.

Undoubtedly, the Holy Writ is the important current resources of Christian ethics but today, interpretive parts of the Holy Writ (bible) should also be referred in order to study Christian Ethics.

The pillars of the Christian Ethics have been arranged in seven titles, four titles of which include natural values while the other three cases are of the theological values that are materialized under the special auspices of the Divine. The natural values (piety, moderation, courage, and justice) dates back to the philosophical doctrines of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Christian ethics scholars such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas have considered these four principles as rational. Christianity has also added three other theological principles to the mentioned four natural values, including Faith, Hope, and Love. [Holy Writ, First Part of Sura 13, Verse No. 13, as quoted by Bita, 2003, P. 14]

Although the term of human dignity was more common in the Age of Enlightenment, its concept has deep rooted in the philosophical schools and religious traditions. Christianity knows basis of human dignity in the theory of “Imago Dei.” In the Verse No. 26 of the first book of emergence of Torah, it is read: “God created human according to his or her form.”

According to Thomas Aquinas, Christian Philosopher, this form is meant that human benefits from single soul, blessing, wisdom, intellect, and free will which empower him to love God and recognize Him directly. The other root of the human dignity is this that the very human is ordered to establish heavenly relationship with the Almighty God. That is to say that there is a special divine providence to all walks of human beings that is not true with regard to the infrared creatures. Since the Almighty God has set life of everyone according to His Providence, none of creature (whether king or government) or any other human group is allowed to incur any damage to this rule and system. Generally, no one can utilize other humans in order to attain objectives according to the God’s Providence. [Norris Clarke as quoted by Sadeghi, 2006, P. 121-122]

In some case such as human simulation, most objections have been expressed by a
group of Christian scholars, because, they believe that all humans have dignity but simulation will lead to the desecration of this dignity, because, simulated or cloned humans are considered as reflection of existing humans. [Bita, 2002, P. 37]

The Vatican termed generation of the first cloned baby as a type of brutal belief which lacks moral and human principles. [Pour-Ghahremani, 2004, P. 113]

Catholicism and Catholic rituals stubbornly opposed with the implementation of some genetics engineering achievements on the human and consider it as violation of human dignity.

The possibility of using technique of Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) or simulating (cloning) on the human is the most prevalent achievements of this arena. The Catholic Church terms using this technique, under any title such as medical or human simulation, fully contradicted with the main teachings of the Holy Writ and Christian Ethics. Violation of human dignity has been introduced as the most important behind opposition of Catholicism with the human simulation. These forms will be placed based on anthropological approach of the Catholicism on the position of human in the Universe. As we observed in the Story of Creation, human is similar to the Almighty God in terms of face and differs from the other creatures and the nature is under his domination, because he is similar to the Almighty God.

The unique and special status of human is placed special emphasis in various Christian texts. For example, Pope John Paul II in treasise on the Life in Bible concludes that human has supremacy over the nature and such supremacy and domination is because of the reason that he has been created by God and is similar to Him in many aspects and human life is necessary. [Esami, 2005, P. 85]

Of course, a great number of Christian religious scholars have considered it as a threat against human dignity and have called for its ban. [Esami, 2005, P. 55-56]

Jacques Chirac and Francois Mitterrand, former French presidents, termed human simulation (cloning) as a criminal act and called for its ban across the world.

They i.e. Jacques Chirac and Francois Mitterrand condemned this act against human dignity and prestige. Generally, they believed that cloning is a criminal act which should be barred across the world. Even, George Bush, former U.S. president, has termed human simulating as a wrong act. [Khorrami, 2003, P. 168]

2.3. Human Dignity from Perspective of Islam

In Islamic resources, human dignity has been recognized and emphasized explicitly. The Holy Quran says explicitly:

وَلقد كَرَّمَهُم بَنِي آدم وَحَفَلَاهُم فِي الْبَرَّ وَ الْبَحْرِ وَ رَفَعَهُم مِن الْأَطْنَابِ وَ فَضَّلَاهُم عَلَى كُثُرٍ مِّن كَلِّ خَلِیفَةٍ

Esra’a Sura, Verse No. 70

Commentators of of Mosahhaf al-Sharif such as Allameh Tabatabaei (Ra) reiterated that Bani Adam in this verse is meant human gender, regardless of particular dignities and mental and spiritual greatness, which has bestowed and devoted to some human. So, this verse includes all pagans and infidels. Each of the two words of detail and reverence observes a pack of divine blessings that has been granted to the human. The Almighty God has bestowed wisdom and intellect to the human and
such intellect has not been granted to any other creature, based on which, human can distinguish good from evil and also beneficial from harmful. [Tabatabaei, 1991, Vol. 13, P. 261-263]

So, all human individuals should recognize such dignity and prestige for each other as a right and should oblige themselves to the right as well. [Ja’fari, 1991, P. 280]

Human is master and server of the earth and is undertaken the key and first role in the Holy Quran. Everything which exists on the earth belongs to him and any change on the earth is happened according to his will. Such distinction makes the human to be endeared and respected than all material objects.

The Holy Quran knows his body structure as the best body structure of the Creation and said: [Tin Sura, 4/95]

The Almighty God has created all the blessings on earth for him and has placed him as His representative and successor on the earth: [Baqara Sura, 30/2]

However, the Almighty God has bestowed particular dignity and unprecedented position to the human from among all creatures of the world and said: [Esra’a, 70/17]

Human (man) is the caliph of God on the earth and has been tasked with flourishing the trust that God has placed in his body and soul. Human enjoys unlimited capacity and infinite talent and intends to reach infinities. [Sadeghpour, 2007, P. 53]

In Islamic texts, human soul is regarded as a precious object and good ethics has been considered as an object which is compatible with this precious object. The vicious conduct and ethics has been considered as an object which is disproportionate with this precious object and devaluates it. In this interpretation, human has been considered as high valued capital which is himself and human is said that be careful of yourself in order not to lose your dignity and prestige.

Human should consider that the “self (ego)” is an exquisite and valued capital.

In his letter addressed to Imam Hasan (AS), Amir al-Mu’minin Ali (AS) said: “Endear and respect your ego and if you lost your ego, you will be turned into the real loser. [Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 14]

Elsewhere in his remarks, Imam Ali (AS) said: ‘Dear son, do not lose your ego under any circumstances. Ego i.e. your humanity is the sole gem and if you exchange your ego with something else, be sure that you will incur serious damage.

Human has a reality in the heart of his nature which is principally called as his real nature. This is the same nature which the Holy Quran interprets: فَاذا سُوٍيَتْ وَتَفْتَحُتْ فِيهِ بِمُرْحَبٍ [Hajar, 29/15]

That is to say that nature and reality of human is not from the type of material and nature rather it is from the divine, kingdom and power type. Generally, main reality of human nature is of the other type. Literally, “ego” is meant pay due attention i.e. to perceive or understand reality of humanity. When human focuses on it, he will find it as pure truth, because, his essence is the essence of truth and does not consistent with the falsehood and unreality. Therefore, paying attention to the “I” as a person that I am living right now in front of other people or mystics say “I” as a body and what is the tone: eating and sleeping, sexual lusts and whatever which
is related to the earthly life of the same body. (Yes, according to the “I” that is as alien and obscene and) should be viewed as the enemy. But the “I” which has been reminded as self-esteem, ego strength, self-dignity, self-respect and freedom of ego, do not exist anymore in the forms of “I” and “We”.

He is the same essence of the God’s divine that exists in anyone and there is no need to be learnt from others. The Holy Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad (S) considered nurturing and establishing dignity and self-esteem in them as the basis of growth and correction of Islamic Ummah and was always emphasizing dignity in behavior, speech, acts. [Farhadian, Bita, P. 11]

In this respect, Imam Hadi (AS) said: “If everyone downgrades his ego, do not stand safe from his evil.” [Tohf al-Oghoul, P. 512, as quoted by Moayednia, Bita, P. 751]

If everyone refers to his essence, he will certainly see that some traits are consistent with him and will see some traits and qualities beyond his personality as well. [Bagheri, 2007, P. 187]

So, there is not any contradiction and conflict between these two interpretations. We have been ordered to purify our soul on one hand and soul has been introduced like this form on the other hand. [Vasael al-Shia, 123/11]

Consider your soul as an enemy and struggle to fight with the soul. On the other hand, it is said that know your soul, respect your soul and endear it, safeguard dignity of soul. It is the noble gem of humanity which is a truth and everyone owns such divine blessing. [Bagheri, 2007, P. 187]

With His power and under His auspices, the Almighty God considered the nature and essence of the first human as yeast.

So, children of Adam (AS) enjoyed one characteristic among other creatures of the universe and due to the said characteristic, they have attained sublime dignity from other world creatures. [Allameh Tabatabaei, 1991, Vol. 13, P. 215]

Imam Ali (AS) introduces the value of human as lofty and noble. In view of Imam Ali (AS), human value is so high that even the whole world cannot set price for it.

Moreover, presenting strategies of leading the society towards prosperity and dignity, in a letter addressed to the Egyptian ruler, Malik al-Ashtar, Imam Ali (AS) orders him to safeguard dignity of humans (whether Muslim and Non-Muslims) excellently. Elsewhere in his remarks, Imam Ali (AS) recommends Malik al-Ashtar: “Behave with other people in good manner as you want others to behave with you in good manner. Practice kindness and compassion with people and call them in good manner. Be kind and friends with others. Do not try to take advantage of them for some seasons, because, people have been classified into two groups: a group of them is your religious brothers while the other group has been created like you. (Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter 53)

Generally speaking, citizenship rights have been reiterated and emphasized by Imam Ali (AS) in legal discussions as well. [Salehi, 2011, P. 219-220]

Undermining human dignity is major concern of religious scholars. [Mo’adikah, Bita, P. 12].
From perspective of Islam, human owns a sublime personality and dignity which has placed him at the highest status among other phenomena of the universe. The Almighty God in the Holy Quran said: “

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا بَنَي آدَمُ وَخَلَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيَابِ وَقَشَدْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كُلِّ مَثَلٍ خَلَقْنَا فَضْلًا

We endeared and honored children of Adam and carried them on the sea and shore and granted them with the Halal provisions. So, we gave them supremacy to many other creatures that we have created.” [Esra’a, 70]

In another verse, the Almighty God said: “

خَلَقْنَا البَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي أَخْسَسْ نَقْوِمٍ

“We created human beings in the best form possible with good conducts.” [Tin Sura, 4]

In another verse, the Almighty God said: “

قَدْ خَلَقْنَا النَّاسَ فِي أَخْسَسِ

“God is great and blessed and is the best creators.” [Mo’menoun, Verse 14]

In another verse, the Almighty God has pointed to this subject that human being owes all these grandeur and greatness to the blessing of will and option that the Universe has bestowed upon him. If human being leads the option to the right path, he can reach to the highest status of the human dignity and perfection. In other words, if human being failed to lead the option to the right path, he will incur irreparable loss. Under such circumstances, the following verse verifies him:

ثَمَّ رُفِّقَاهَا رَفِّقَتْهَا إِنَّمَا لَهَا آلِهَةُ مَعَ الْمَلَأِ

Of the dignity verse in the Glorious Quran (Al-Esra’, Verse 7) and other religious teachings, it is inferred that dignity and merit of respect, initial state, is natural and indestructible status of every human being and everyone has tasked with legal and ethical duties. According to the religious interpretation, since every human has been entitled to safeguard right of his living, no one can ignore right of his dignity and respect. [Mohaghegh Damad, 2007, P. 28-29]

Eventually, from religious perspective of Islam, all human beings have innate and inherent dignity and it seems necessary that they should safeguard their self-esteem and dignity and others should observe this divinely right. So, human should be considered beyond a purely biological animal, because, human in the system of creation has sublime status and should be guided towards path of development and proximity to the ultimate objective of the creation. According to this principle, all aspects of medical especially research activities on the human subjects should be in line with boosting this unprecedented dignity and other aspects which incur irreparable damage to this important aspect of human should be avoided. [Nour-Mohammadi, 2009, P. 140-146]

3. Human Dignity from Perspective of Bioethics and Law

In the contemporary period, human inherent dignity was first put forward by John Locke for the first time in line with individuals’ inherent objective idea in regular form. But according to some people, this concept, except in works of Kant, has never been analyzed precisely in philosophical terms and in many works, and it has been reflected as motto like. [Spielberg, 1970, P. 42-43, and 62 as quoted by Sadeghi, 2006, P. 121-122]

According to Kant, humanity itself is considered as a dignity and all human beings have inherent dignity because of their humanities. In the book entitled “Metaphysics of Ethics”, Kant explains this concept within the framework of one of the absolute rules, which constitute philosophy of ethics, as follows: “En-
dear and respect dignity not only for you but also for others.” [Naghizadeh, 2005, P. 90-91]

According to Kant, every human has a legitimate right to be respected by others and is duty bound to respect others. Humanity itself is a dignity, because, human can not be handled as a means by others merely, rather, he should always be used as an end. [Jaspers, 1993, P. 209]

Despite concept of human dignity has not been defined in any of the contemporary national and international documents explicitly, there is no doubt that identification of inherent dignity of human is surety of all these documents.

3.1. Human Dignity in International Bioethics Documents

Human dignity has been emphasized within the framework of documents of international human rights, which have been approved in the second half of the 20th century such as Convention to Support Civilians and War Prisoners during war, Treaty to Bar Racial Discrimination and Women Discrimination, Convention to Prevent Torture and other inhuman behaviors, etc.

As a matter of fact, human dignity has been more emphasized in biomedical documents. [Abbasi and et al., 2009, P. 56]

After World War II, in reaction to the violence of some scientists to the war prisoners, manuals were compiled with regard to the tests carried out on humans that are regarded as founder of the new bioethics.

In these manuals, defending basic rights and freedoms of individuals, exposed to medical treatment or testing against hazards, misuses or procrastinations which may happen during medical treatments or scientific research activities, have been taken into consideration. [Abbasi, 2009, P. 74]

Nuremberg codes, approved in 1947, and Helsinki Proclamation approved in 1964 are of the most important documents in this respect, based on which, they have considered human dignity as the basis of ethical rules related to the test and research on the humans.

In these documents, basis of fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, necessity of respecting human dignity have the same concept that is taken into consideration in basic documents of human rights.

Following fast-paced and increasing developments of recent decade in the field of modern biotechnologies and sciences, which has provided possibility of interfering in genetics configuration of organisms such as human, bioethics discussions especially human dignity, have been signified with more sensitivity. In the same direction, compilation of instructions, manuals and imposition of comprehensive regional and international regulations seem inevitable. The Convention to Support Human Rights and Human dignity, regarding application of technology and medicine and/or Human Rights Convention, approved by the European Council (EC), is the most comprehensive document which has thus far been approved in this respect. [Sadeghi, 2006, P. 127]

With regard to the different provisions of this Convention, it seems that concept of human dignity has found vast dimensions in this document. The necessity of respecting human dignity and fundamental rights and freedoms...
of individuals with relation to the bioethics applications has been emphasized in the introduction of the Convention.

The Article 1 of the Convention stipulates that: “Parties of this Convention will support identity and dignity of all human aspects.”

International Declaration on Human Genome and Human Rights, which is the first international document in the field of biology, has emphasized subject of human dignity vastly. The introduction of this document emphasizes on the necessity of respecting human dignity in the researches related to the human genome.

The Article 2, which implies main point of this part of proclamation, stipulates that: A) Dignity and rights of everyone is allowed, regardless to his genetic traits, to be respected. B) Dignity requires that prestige and status of individuals to their genetic properties should not be downgraded and their unity and diversity should be respected. Moreover the abovementioned cases, human dignity have been emphasized in seven other articles of the Convention: The Article 6 of the Convention stipulates: “Barring discrimination based on genetics traits which will violate human dignity.”

Article 10 of the Convention stipulates: “Necessity of respecting human dignity of individuals and/or safeguarding dignity of groups of the people who participate in implementing researches related to the human genome.”

Article 15 of the Convention emphasizes: “Barring acts such as simulating human reproductive system due to its contradiction with the human dignity and fulfilling appropriate measures to establish free research framework on the human genome so that respect of human dignity is guaranteed.”

Article 21 of the Convention stipulates: “Establishing preliminaries to raise awareness to the responsibilities with regard to the basic issues related to defending human dignity as a result of research in human genetics and similar cases.”

Finally, Article 24 of the Convention stipulates: “Obligation of UNESCO International Bioethics Committee to present consultation services with regard to the provisions of this Proclamation especially with regard to identifying and introducing acts which contradict with the human dignity. [Sadeghi, 2006, P. 129]”

Respecting human dignity has been emphasized in Articles 5, 7 and 10 of UNESCO Proclamation.

For instance, Article 10 of the Convention stipulates a direct resultant of human dignity, because, in this Article, it is reiterated that: “Any research activity, etc. should not be preferred to respecting human rights, basic freedoms and human dignity.”

The said issue has been emphasized in Article 5 of Helsinki Proclamation [1964-2000] of World Physicians Society.

The World Proclamation of Human Genetics Information dated Oct. 16, 2003, which has been approved in order to safeguard human dignity and basic rights and freedoms of human in collecting, processing, applying and saving genetics information and human biological samples, (Article 1), moreover reminding and referring to the basic documents of the
human rights and documents preferred to the bioethics, stipulates that identity of each person should not be downgraded according to his genetic traits. [Article 3]

In addition, Article 7 of the Proclamation stipulates that human genetics and protein information should not be misused.

It is obvious that human inherent dignity, moreover considering as basis of identifying and respecting basic rights and freedoms of all walks of life, has been used as a basis for respecting type of human as well.

On the other hand, respecting human dignity has been emphasized as a base for safeguarding rights and freedom of people. In the same direction, human dignity of human individuals requires identifying a branch of rights for the individuals who are put under research or treatment operations.

In contrast, inherent dignity of human type requires establishing a branch of constraints and restrictions for the treatments and researches which is related to the human type.

In fact, regulators of such documents have approached to the Islamic concept of human dignity.

3.2. Human Dignity in Documents Related to the Human Simulation

Growing concerns over the last few years’ efforts to simulate human being forced regional and international bodies to issue resolutions and proclamations in order to prohibit these measures as mentioned in above. In most of these documents, human generative simulation has been condemned and prohibited due to its contradiction with the human dignity.

In Resolutions approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1997 and 1998, it has been reiterated that: “Simulation in order to copying human individuals is unacceptable in ethical terms and is opposed with the human dignity and integrity.”

Perhaps, main reason of severe tendency to the human dignity lies in this fact that the mentioned interpretation is considered as the last barrier against change of some of fundamental traits of human being, so that human type has faced as a result of novel biomedical technologies such as simulation or genetics engineering. [Abbasi, 2007, P. 68]

In Human Simulation Prohibition Protocol, productive replication of human has been prohibited due to the violation of human dignity. [Sadeghi, 2006, P. 132]

World Proclamation of Human Genome and UNESCO Human Rights Proclamation, approved in 1998 by the UN General Assembly, have stipulated that acts such as human generative simulation, which contradicts with the human dignity, have been found unauthorized. In Articles 11 and 24 of UNESCO Proclamation, human productive simulation and interventions of hereditary type have been prohibited which is opposed with the human dignity. [Sabalarv, 2003, P. 31]

The UN Proclamation emphasizes that if human simulation is contradicted with the human dignity, it is prohibited. It is believed that human simulation is a modern form of tool for human negligence. Generally speaking, human simulation is opposed with the human dignity. This Proclamation has requested member states to prohibit using techniques of genetics engineering which may be incompati-
ble with the human dignity. [Abbasi, 2007, P. 70, Sadeghi, 2006, P. 133]

3.3. Human Dignity in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Proclamation

Since scientific progresses are so vast, international cooperation requires conforming legal standards and establishing appropriate strategies to guarantee effective acts of such types of criteria.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has emphasized significance and necessity of observing human prestige and dignity explicitly in the following cases:

1. First Paragraph of the introduction which emphasizes on the factors and motivations behind imposition and formulation of human rights. “Identifying inherent prestige of family members and their identical and non-transferable rights constitute freedom, justice, and peace in the world.”

2. Article 1: All individuals of human being are born freely and are identical with one another in terms of rights and prestige. All human beings have reason and conscience and should behave with themselves with brotherhood spirit.

3. Article 5: No human being should be tortured or punished which is beyond humanity.

4. Paragraph 2 of Article 26: Education should be guided appropriately so that human personality should be materialized perfectly and human freedoms should be improved. Of the abovementioned cases, we come to this conclusion that human prestige, dignity and respect is of the most fundamental of human rights. [Ja’fari Tabrizi, 1991, P. 97]

In important international documents, which is considered as founder and productive culture of human rights in the contemporary world, inherent dignity of human has been considered as fundamental freedoms and rights of humans.

In different cases of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human dignity has been reiterated as basis of rights. In introduction of International Covenant of Economic, social and Cultural Rights and International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, it has been reiterated that the rights in these two covenants is derived from the inherent dignity of human. Article 10 of International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights reiterated that people, who have deprived of their freedoms such as prisoners and defendants, should be behaved with respect and their inherent dignity should be honored.

According to the abovementioned documents, it should be said that human dignity is basis of human fundamental rights and freedoms which is manifested in two forms: respecting human dignity of individual and empowering each individual to flourish his talents.

3.4. Human Dignity from Perspective of Law

Article 2 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has declared six principles and bases, based on which, human dignity has been reiterated in its sixth article. The Article 2 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated: “Islamic Republic of Iran is a system which has been formed based on belief to, 6- dignity and sublime value of human and freedom simultaneous with his responsibility with the Almighty God” [Mehrpour, 2006, P. 28]
Of course, introduction of the Constitution in mass media section opposes dignity of the human beings.

Observing Islamic and human dignity, as a part of ethical and legal duties of medical profession, has been reiterated in many cases. For example, in Note 1 of Article 28 of the Medical Council Organization approved on April 14, 2004, it is read: “Non-observance of legal and legitimate criteria and guild, profession and job regulations and procrastinating in fulfilling legal duties by the employees of medical profession is considered as “violation” and will be sentenced to the below severe punishments.”

For this purpose, medical practitioners and affiliated organizations have been entitled to make their utmost effort to fulfill their legal and professional duties regardless of nationality, race, religion and social, economic and political situation of patients.”

Article 7 of French Medical Ethics Law and also Article 23 of the Quebec Medical Ethics Law have confirmed this important effect explicitly.

In Article 3 of the Law on establishment of Health Ministry approved on June 30, 1985, it has been stipulated: “Health Ministry is duty bound to strengthen and stabilize Islamic values in all healthcare and treatment affairs of the country.”

Also, in Paragraph 6 of Article 2 of the law on establishment of Medical Council Organization, approved on Dec. 2, 200, making effort to execute Islamic values and criteria in medical profession and affiliated jobs has been emphasized as one of the most important objectives of the organization. Article 2 of Law on adapting Medical Institutes Technical and Administrative Affairs with the Sacred Religious Norms approved on Nov. 1, 1998 stipulates that: “In line with enforcement of Article 3 of law of establishment of the Health Ministry approved on June 27, 1985, this ministry is duty bound to adapt healthcare and medical treatment services with Islamic religious criteria.”

Undoubtedly, human dignity is regarded as one of the important Islamic values and criteria which has been explicitly been reiterated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The concept of religious criteria is comprehensive in the above-mentioned cases and its limit has not thus far been clarified. But in some cases, determination of its cases seems simple.

In comprehensive clarification of human inherent dignity, it is resulted that Theory of Non-Specific Contract is the best theory for the nature of treatment contract. [Salehi, Almasi, 2011]

One of the important qualifies of the treatment and healthcare contract is as follows: the mentioned contract is a human contract. [Al-Hayari, 1429 Hejira]

For this purpose, human dignity should be taken into consideration in interpreting and enforcing provisions of healthcare and medical treatment contract. [Sabatier, 1956, P. 212, Corn Provost, 1957, P. 857]

Generally, human should be considered as a biological animal and human dignity should be respected in all stages of treatment and in interpretation of the mentioned contract and also at the time of emergence of disputes.
In addition, safeguarding human dignity has been emphasized in medical ethics rules of France, Quebec, and Tunisia explicitly.

**CONCLUSION**

Human is considered as master of creatures, favorite of the Universe and most salient gem of the creation. The Almighty God pointed to the human as "حسرّاف لخرّشلقذا" namely, master of all creatures and the best creature on the earth.

The said interpretation has not been used with regard to the rest creatures.

In important documents of the human rights like Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and International Covenant of Civil and Political rights, inherent dignity of human has been used as basis of many fundamental freedoms and rights of human individuals. In earlier documents, bioethics such as Nuremberg Ethics Codes, Helsinki Proclamation and Belmont Report which have been compiled in order to support individuals against hazards and aftereffects of treatments or tests, has been taken into consideration. In recent documents, bioethics such as Human Rights Convention and Biomedical Convention of the European Council, International Declaration of Human Genome, and UNESCO Human Rights Proclamation, concept of human inherent dignity has been used comprehensively.

In these documents, human inherent dignity has been used as a base for restricting freedom of individuals’ will and it seems that Islamic concept of human dignity has been paid more attention. In the documents which have emphasized on prohibition of human simulation, generative simulation violates human dignity. Some of these aspects violate human inherent dignity in individual dimension while some others violate human inherent dignity in its social and typical terms.

According to the principle of human dignity, all medical aspects especially human researches should be carried out in line with increasing this dignity and using other technologies, which will incur irreparable loss and damage to the human aspect, should be avoided.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. Hazrat Mowlana (AS), Masnavi and Ma’navi, 5th Edition
3. Respecting human inherent dignity and freedom and independence have been introduced as one of the main reason of prohibition of inappropriate punishments. For further information, please refer to: Rahiminejad, Esmaeil, Habibzadeh, Mohammad Ja’far, (2008), disproportionate punishments, punishments which contradict with the human dignity. Law Quarterly, Magazine of Faculty of Political Law and Sciences, 38th Edition, Issue No. 2, P. 115-133

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In Persian:

در میان مخاطفین مذهبی، سهم کاتالوگ‌ها نیز بر از سایرگروه‌های مسیحی است و برپاگشان دیدگاه‌های ملی‌مرزی دارد.
5. For more information on the human dignity in view of the holy Prophet of Islam (S), please refer to: Mozafari, Ayat, (Bita), holy Prophet (S) and Human Dignity, Hasoun Magazine, Issue No. 9, P. 37-54
6. Approved on November 11, 1997, General Convention of UNESCO
7. Attached to the Convention to Support Human Rights and Human Dignity in terms of application of medical and biology, approved on Jan. 12, 1998 in the European Council (EC)
8. For more information in this respect, please refer to: Sadeghi, Mahmoud (2004), human simulation, a brief review on the perspectives of sources of heavenly religions and studying it in view of Islamic jurisprudence, Humanities Quarterly, 8th Edition, Issue no. 3, Autumn 2005
9. Article 2 of Bylaw to Investigate Professional Violations and Offences of Medical Practitioners and Affiliated Organizations
10. "All civil, penal, financial, economic, cultural, military, political rules and regulations should be made according to the Islamic criteria." This principle is ruled over all principles of constitution and other rules and regulations, and Guardian Council has been tasked to distinguish this affair."
11. 1- Human reproductive cloning.
12. 1- Germ line intervention.
13. 1- Article 7: "Le médecin doit écouter, examiner, conseiller ou soigner avec la même conscience toutes les personnes quelles que soient leur origine, leurs mœurs et leur situation de famille, leur apparence ou leur non-appartenance à une ethnie, une nation ou une religion déterminée, leur handicap ou leur état de santé, leur réputation ou les sentiments qu’il peut éprouver à leur égard. Il doit leur apporter son concours en toutes circonstances. Il ne doit jamais se départir d’une attitude correcte et attentive envers la personne examinée". 
14. 1- Article 23 : Le médecin ne peut refuser d’examiner ou de traiter un patient pour des raisons reliées à la nature de la déficience ou de la maladie présentée par ce patient ou pour des raisons de race, de couleur, de sexe, de grossesse, d’état civil, d’âge, de religion, d’origine ethnique ou nationale ou de condition sociale de ce patient ou pour des raisons d’orientation sexuelle, de mœurs, de convictions politiques ou de langue; il peut cependant, s’il juge que c’est dans l’intérêt médical du patient, diriger celui-ci vers un autre médecin.
15. 1- ARTICLE 2: Le médecin, au service de l’individu et de la santé publique, exerce sa mission dans le respect de la vie humaine, de la personne et de sa dignité. Le respect dû à la personne ne cesse pas de s'imposer après la mort.
16. 1- Article 4 : Le médecin doit exercer sa profession dans le respect de la vie, de la dignité et de la liberté de la personne.
17. 1- Article 7 : Un médecin sollicité ou requis pour examiner une personne privée de liberté ou pour lui donner des soins ne peut, directement ou indirectement ne serait ce que par sa seule présence, favoriser ou cautionner une atteinte à l’intégrité physique ou mentale de cette personne

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