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TITLE

ABORTION FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: SHIITE VIEW

AUTHOR/S

Nemati Aghamaleki Z (IR) [1], Omani Samani R (IR) [2]

ABSTRACT

Background: There are two main branches of Islam. Majority of the Muslims are Sunni and around 10% of them are Shiite, mostly located in Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq and south of Lebanon. The procedure of solving the problems in the society is releasing decrees by religious scholars called: "Ijtehad". The aim of this study was to provide a perspective of the Shiite scholar toward abortion permission in case of threat to mother's life or fetal malformations.

Methods: this was a review of Islamic texts, including holy Quran, sayings of prophet and leaders, decrees of clergy scholars and papers and books related to Islamic ideas about abortion. Our focus was on Shiite ideas so Iranian law is being considered on the basis of Shiite Islam.

Results: according to detail review, abortion is forbidden in Islam, but any first rule has second rule covering exceptions. Ensoulment time is important border above which the fetus is considered complete human. This time is in controversy between Shiite and Sunni scholars. Most of the Shiite scholars believe that 120 days of fetal age can be considered as ensoulment time (19 weeks). Below this border, in case of fetal malformations or any threats to mothers' life abortion is permitted. Types and extent of the malformations and also social burdens, like incest, rape and poverty are in controversy. Above the ensoulment time, the pregnancy termination is permitted only if the mother's life is in danger.

INSTITUTE

[1] Department of Epidemiology and Reproductive Health, Reproductive Epidemiology Research Center, Royan Institute for Reproductive Biomedicine, ACECR, Tehran, Iran, [2] Royan Institute for Reproductive Biomedicine, ACECR