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Youssef Qaradawi's fatwa on excision

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Author: Youssef Qaradawi

Date: February 7, 2004

Original title: Islamic Ruling on Female Circumcision

Title of Fatwa Islamic – Ruling on Female Circumcision

Date of Reply – 07/Feb/2004

Topic Of Fatwa – Acts akin to human nature

Country Applied – Egypt

Question of Fatwa – As-Salamu `alaykum. What is the Islamic legal ruling concerning female circumcision?

Name of Mufti – Yusuf Al-Qaradawi

Content of Reply

Wa `alaykum As-Salamu wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

Dear sister, we are very pleased for the great confidence you repose in us and we really commend your apparent interest in having a better understanding of the teachings of Islam and the rulings of this great religion in all matters. In fact, Islam is a religion that encompasses all aspects of life and secures guidance and light for all mankind.

Before delving deep into the question of female circumcision, we would like to make it clear that "female circumcision" means removing the prepuce of the clitoris, not the clitoris itself.

As for the Shari`ah stance on female circumcision, it's a controversial issue among the Muslim scholars and even doctors.

In response to the question, the eminent Muslim scholar, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, states:

“Actually, this is a controversial issue among jurists and even among doctors. It has sparked off fierce debate in Egypt whereby scholars and doctors are split into proponents and opponents.

However, the most moderate opinion and the most likely one to be correct is in favor of practicing circumcision in the moderate Islamic way indicated in some of the Prophet's hadiths – even though such hadiths are not confirmed to be authentic. It is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to a midwife: "Reduce the size of the clitoris but do not exceed the limit, for that is better for her health and is preferred by husbands". The hadith indicates that circumcision is better for a woman's health and it enhances her conjugal relation with her husband. It's noteworthy that the Prophet's saying "*do not exceed the limit*" means do not totally remove the clitoris.

Actually, Muslim countries differ over the issue of female circumcision; some countries sanction it whereas others do not. Anyhow, it is not obligatory, whoever finds it serving the interest of his daughters should do it, and I personally support this under the current circumstances in the modern world. But whoever chooses not to do it is not considered to have committed a sin for it is mainly meant to dignify women as held by scholars.

As for male circumcision, it is one of the obligatory practices in Islam. Scholars even hold that whoever finds that some Muslims have stopped practicing male circumcision should force them to revert to this Sunnah that characterizes the Muslim nation.”

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Fatwa Bank

Details of Fatwa

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Date of Reply	07/Feb/2004
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Country Applied	Egypt
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