

The Fitrah Line in Change and Innovation*

Translated
Article
Çeviri

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Atıf

Fitrah is a concept construed with intense meanings in Islamic literature that originates from the Quran and Sunnah. The concept of fitrah is used to denote the essence, principles, and rules of creation, as well as a way of expressing the material and spiritual value that each entity possesses due to its creation. Allah has given each entity in the world an innate image and spiritual abilities. Of all these entities, human beings, by having willpower and responsibility, have undertaken the role of Allah's Khalifah on earth. Animals, plants, and other beings continue their existence without willpower, based only on fitrah. However, human beings are required to exercise their will according to fitrah and turn to the good, the beautiful, and the good in their choices. Moreover, they should do this not only for themselves but also for all beings to whom they are directly or indirectly related. Allah has placed the creatures in heaven and on earth at the service of man. While benefitting from these beings, their fitrah should be respected, and the fitrah of other beings should be observed along with the nature of the human being in relations with them. Just as there are certain types of wisdom that can only be understood in how Allah, who is the ruler of all, created all beings according to a certain fitrah, there may also be certain types of wisdom that cannot be grasped easily by all. Therefore, whenever one considers a change on a being -whether it is a human, animal, plant, or something else- one should first respect and try to understand the fitrah that Allah has made innate to that entity. All kinds of change and innovation should be carried out with knowledge and wisdom in a manner that will develop and improve creation and nature.

Keywords: Islamic Law, Fitrah, Change, Innovation, Deterioration.

Abstract

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Değişim ve Yenileşmede Fitrat Çizgisi

Fitrat, İslâm literatüründe üzerine yoğun anlamlar yüklenen Kur'ân ve Sünnet kaynaklı bir kavramdır. Yaratılışın özünü, ilke ve esaslarını ifade etmek için fitrat kavramı kullanıldığı gibi her bir varlığın yaratılıştan getirdiği ortalama maddi ve manevi varlığını ifade etmek için de fitrat kavramı kullanılır. Müşahede âlemimizdeki her bir varlığa Allah yaratılıştan maddi bir suret ve manevi kabiliyetler vermiştir. Varlıklar içinde insan, iradeye bağlı sorumluluk bilincini emanet olarak yüklenerek Allah'ın yeryüzündeki halifesi olma vasfını kazanmıştır. Hayvanlar, bitkiler ve diğer cemâdât ise gayri iradî olarak fitrat üzere varlıklarını sürdürür. İnsanın sorumluluk bilinciyle iradesini fitrata uygun olarak kullanması, seçimlerinde iyiye, güzele ve hayra yönelmesini gerektirir. Üstelik bunu sadece kendisi için değil doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkide olduğu bütün varlıklar için istemeli ve yapmalıdır. Allah gökteki ve yeryüzündeki varlıkları insanın hizmetine vermiştir. Bu varlıklardan faydalanırken onların fitratlarına saygı gösterilmesi ve onlarla ilişkilerde insanın kendi fitratı ile birlikte diğer varlıkların da fitratlarının gözetilmesi gerekir. Hakîm sıfatının sahibi olan Allah'ın yaratmasında ve yaratılıştan varlıkları belirli bir fitrat üzere var etmesinde anlaşılabilen hikmetler olduğu gibi herkesin kolayca anlayamayacağı hikmetler de bulunabilir. Bu sebeple ister insanla, ister hayvan, bitki ve diğer cansız varlıklarla ilgili bir değişiklik olsun, bir değiştirme düşünüldüğünde öncelikle Allah'ın yaratmasına ve koyduğu fitrata saygı göstermeli ve anlamaya çalışılmalıdır. Her türlü değişim ve yenilik, ilim ve hikmetle, yaratılış ve fitratı geliştirecek ve iyileştirecek tarzda yürütülmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslâm Hukuku, Fitrat, Değişim, Yenileşme, Bozulma.

Özet

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Introduction: The Concept of Fitrah

Fitrah is an essential concept in the Quran and hadith narrations, and many meanings have been ascribed to it within Islamic literature. The root of the word, fetara (فطر), has several meanings, such as splitting, creating, and creating out of nothing.¹ The word fitrah is derived from this root (فطرة), and it holds the meanings of creation (khalqat), genesis, essence, nucleus, the original form of a thing, spirit, and nature. In the context of our subject, the meanings of creation and genesis are used jointly.² Al-Fatir, which is used as one of the titles of Allah, is also derived from the same root (الفاطر), and this word is used to denote that Allah is the unique creator who creates from nothing.³ In general, the word fitrah refers to the essence, principles, purpose, talents, and abilities of created beings. In this sense, it could be said that all living and non-living beings have a fitrah. The concept of human fitrah, on the other hand, expresses the nature, essence, spirit, abilities arising from their creation, potential abilities and talents, and the general typology of all humans. The word khalqat,

¹ See Ebü'l-Fazl Cemâlüddîn Muhammed b. Mükerrrem İbn Manzûr, *Lisânu'l-Arab* (Beyrut: Dâru Sâdir, 1994) "fetara".

² See: Ebü'l-Hüseyn Ahmed b. Fâris er-Râzî el-Kazvîni İbn Fâris, *Mu'cemu mekâyîsi'l-luğâ* (Beyrut: Dârü'l-Fikr, 1979) "fetara", "haleka".

³ İbn Manzûr, *Lisânu'l-Arab* "fetara", "haleka"; Muhammed b. Muhammed Murtezâ el-Hüseynî Zebîdî, *Tacu'l-'arûs min cevâhiri'l-kamûs* (İskenderiye: Dâru'l-Hidâye, n.d.) "fetara", "haleka".

which means creation, has been used transitive, intertwined, or side by side with the word fitrah in both canonical texts and religious literature. To summarize, the average material and spiritual existence of a species can be expressed as their fitrah.⁴

The cartography of meanings ascribed to the concept of fitrah is based on a verse of the Quran and two narrations attributed to the Prophet Muhammad.⁵ Surah Ar-Rum commands: "So as a man of pure faith, stand firm and true in your devotion to this religion and stick to this clean disposition (fitrah) Allah has instilled in all people. There is no altering in Allah's creation"⁶. The word fitrah within this verse has been attributed with meanings such as essence, nucleus, basic structure, ability, capability, true religion, and belief of oneness, and the concepts of fitrah and khalaqa/khilqat were linked via the following statement of "There is no altering in Allah's creation".⁷ Via connection established with the word taghyir (creation and change), this verse has also been interpreted and evaluated in the context condemnation stated within the Surah an-Nisa 4/119, which states "They will tamper with Allah's creation." Moreover, through the verses of al-Isra 17/33, al-Ahzab 33/62, Fatir 35/43, and al-Fath 48/23, which proclaim that there will be no alterations of the "sunnatullah", this very concept has been associated with fitrah based on its interpretations as social laws and, with further interpretation, and the laws of nature. Although it is possible to establish such a connection between these concepts due to the wide range of interpretations that are available regarding the aforementioned verses, it is also possible to argue that the concepts of "fitratullah", "khaqullah" and "sunnahullah" have different meanings within their own contexts.⁸ Among these concepts, the concept of fitrah in particular has become a broad and profound concept due to the integration of the meanings attributed to it by the verses and the hadith narratives.

While evaluating the issue of fitrah and change, it would be appropriate to draw attention to two more expressions in the Quran, both of which establish guidelines regarding the concept of change. The first of these is in the 106th verse of al-Baqara, which states: "Any revelation We cause to be superseded or forgotten, We replace with something better or similar."⁹ The message of change present in this statement indicates that such change always occurs towards improvement or at least in the direction of a current equivalent of what is changed. The other can be found in the 11th verse of ar-Ra'd, which states "Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in

⁴ See İbn Manzûr, *Lisânu'l-Arab "fetara"*; Zebîdî, *Tacu'l-'arûs "fetara"*; Muhammed Hamdi Yazır Elmalılı, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* (İstanbul: Nebioğlu Basımevi, 1960), 6/3822.

⁵ al-Rûm 30/30.

⁶ The works that were used within this research in relation to the meanings of the Quran: Bu araştırmada âyet meallerinde faydalanılan eserler: Muhammed Esed, *Kur'an Mesajı: meal, tefsir*, çev. Ahmet Ertürk - Cahit Koytak (İstanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1996); Mahmut Kısa, *Kısa açıklama Kur'an-ı Kerim meali* (Konya: Armağan Kitaplar, 2013).

⁷ See: Ebu Abdillah Muhammed b. Ahmed Kurtubî, *el-Cami' li-Ahkâmî'l-Kur'ân (Tefsiru'l-Kurtubî)* (Kahire: Dâru'l-Kütübü'l-Misriyye, 1964), 14/ 27.

⁸ See: Vejdi Bilgin, "Kur'an'dan Sosyolojik İlkeler Çıkarmanın İmkânı -Sünnetullah Kavramı Çerçevesinde Bir Eleştiri-", *Eskiye* 22 (10 Ekim 2011), 35-43.

⁹ al-Baqara 2/106.

*themselves.*¹⁰ This expression indicates that change occurs from within, from one's heart and his very person, and that societies can be virtuous or unvirtuous depending on the inclinations of their members. Moreover, it is also implied here that Allah will not intervene in this matter directly due to the divine rules of cause and change, as per the requirements of the sunnatullah.¹¹

The concept of fitrah is included in two groups of narrations in hadiths. One of these narrations proclaims that each child will be born in accordance with the fitrah, while the other proclaims that some actions are borne of fitrah or are in accordance with the fitrah. In another part of these narrations, which are deemed to be weaker in their veracity, it is stated that every child will be born according to the fitrah of Islam.¹² However, the narrations that are conveyed more often and are based on sources that are more solid indicate instead that every child will be born according to a fitrah, rather than specifically the fitrah of Islam.¹³ The narrations that proclaim that certain actions are borne of fitrah or certain actions are in accordance with fitrah only list such actions without specifically indicating their number. However, another part of these narrations proclaims five things that are borne of fitrah.¹⁴ Some narrations, on the other hand, proclaim ten things are borne of fitrah.¹⁵

The meanings contained within the narrations that proclaim that every child will be born according to a fitrah are not that far apart from those contained within narrations that proclaim that they will be born according to the fitrah of Islam. Since the word fitrah is explained in many sources via Islam and tawhid, it is possible to state that this addition can be considered to be a commentary and it could be interpreted to mean that people are born with the capability of accepting Islam and tawhid. However, the understanding, which interprets this narration that each child will be born according to the fitrah of Islam to mean that every child will be born as Muslim has been criticized on grounds that the religion is a conscious choice and that this choice can only be made at the age of puberty.¹⁶ From the Islamic point of view, birth and childhood are things that express the concept of innocence. For this reason, being born according to a fitrah is essentially the same result as being born according to the fitrah of Islam. Based on this result, the viewpoint regarding the concept of fitrah, which claims that no one is born good or evil as mankind was created by Allah according to the standards of man in terms of their

¹⁰ al-Ra'd 13/11.

¹¹ See: Bk Esed, *Kur'an Mesajı*, interpretation of al-Ra'd 13/11, footnoted numbered 26.

¹² Ebû Hâtım Muhammed İbn Hibbân, *Sahihu İbn Hibbân*, critical ed. Şuayb el-Arnâvûd, (Beyrut: Müessesetü'r-Risâle, 1414), 1/342.

¹³ Abû Abdillâh Muhammed b. İsmail (ö. 256/870) Buhârî, *el-Câmi'u's-sahîh*, critical ed. Muhammed Zühayr b. Nasır (b.y.: Dâru Tavkî'n-Necât, 1422), "Cenâiz", 78; Ebü'l-Hüseyn Müslim b. el-Haccâc Müslim, *el-Câmi'u's-sahîh*, critical ed.. Muhammed Fuâd Abdülbâkî (Beyrut: Dâru İhyâi't-Turâsî'l-Arabî, 1374), "Kader", 22.

¹⁴ Buhârî, "Libâs", 62, 63.

¹⁵ Müslim, "Tahâre", 56.

¹⁶ See: Ebû Ömer Yusuf b. Abdillâh İbn Abdilber, *et-Temhid limâ fi'l-Muvatta mine'l-meânî ve'l-esânîd* (Mağrib: Vizaratu Umumi'l-Evkâf ve's-Suûni'l-İslamiyye, 1387), 18/69-70; Abdülkadir Evgin, "Hadislerde 'Fitrat' Kavramı ve 'İslam Fitratı' Söyleminin Tenkidî", *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1/1 (2003), 103-108.

material characteristics and with the ability to be inclined towards good and evil in terms of spiritual characteristics that is shaped through mental development, comes to the forefront.¹⁷

In the narrations stating that some actions are of fitrah, it is possible that those who have conveyed these narrations counted, based on their discretion, a certain number of points, such as five or ten, without indicating their specific number, and reported that the Prophet has proclaimed that these actions were borne of fitrah.¹⁸ The actions mentioned in these narrations are common except for a single example. In the narrations that inform that ten things are of fitrah, the following are counted amongst these actions: Shortening the mustache, growing a beard, using a miswak, drawing water into the nose, cutting nails, washing the fingers and knuckles, removing the armpit hair, removing the hair of one's private areas, cleaning oneself with water, and rinsing one's mouth with water (mudmada). However, the conveyor of these narrations has added the latter with hesitation. Apart from the narrations that include ten points, the narrations that only count five points generally list circumcision as the first and the most crucial provision of fitrah. In these narrations, the issues that are stated to be of fitrah are united on the common ground of being related to cleanliness, which is presented as a part of the sound human fitrah and as a life-style that suits humans and Muslims.

The fitrah, which constitutes the essence, basis, and foundation of creation, is Allah's law of creation, and it is not variable or alterable due to this characteristic. Every created being has a fitrah, and this fitrah expresses the common material and spiritual qualities of the type of that being. The fitrah of mankind refers to the common physical qualities of human beings and the basic abilities placed in our innate essence. In all of creation, there is a perpetual flow between creation, destruction, and change, and transformation lies at the very core of this cycle. On the other hand, fitrah, as a part of its creation, includes a certain type of immutability and standard within an infinite diversity. Since change is perpetual and mankind has been granted the capability to alter both themselves and other beings, human beings will use this ability and alter and improve their material and spiritual being towards the better in accordance with their fitrah. Besides, it will consider the fitrahs of other beings in their actions that involve other entities and always act towards good. Development, improvement, change, and innovation are inevitable. Acting towards communal good and charity in all change and innovation is something that complies with the fitrah and that is expected from a Muslim.

¹⁷ See İbrahim Kaplan, "Din, Fitrat ve Akl-ı Selim İlişkisi Üzerine", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (ÇÜİFD)* 17/2 (29 Aralık 2017), 72.

¹⁸ Buhârî, "Libâs", 62, 63; Müslim, "Tahâre", 49, 50, 56; Ebû Abdîrrahmân Ahmed b. Şuayb Nesâî, *es-Sünen (el-Müctebâ)*, critical ed. Abdülfettah Ebû Gudde (Halep: Mektebü'l-Matbûâtü'l-İslamiyye, 1406/1986), "Ziyne", 1; es-Sicistânî Ebû Dâvûd, *es-Sünen*, critical ed. Şuayb el-Arnâvûd (Beyrut: Dâru'r-Risâletü'l-Âlemiyye, 1430/2009), "Tahâre", 29; Muhammed b. İsa Tirmizî, *Sünenü't-Tirmizî*, critical ed. Beşşâr Avvâd Ma'rûf (Beyrut: Dâru'l-Garbi'l-Islâmî, 1998), "Edep", 14; Ebu Abdullah Muhammed b. Yezid İbn Mace, *Sünenü İbn Mace*, critical ed. Muhammed Fuâd Abdülbâkî (b.y.: Dâru lhyai Kütübü'l-Arabiyye, n.d.), "Tahâre", 18.

In this research, the concept of fitrah will be frequently used together with the concepts of creation, created, and change, and alteration. Creation is the emergence and formation process of an entity in this world. For human beings, this process involves the fertilization of an egg, the development of an embryo in a mother's womb, and birth. The term created or entity (makhluk), on the other hand, implies a being that has completed its process of being created, which constitutes an autonomous being that exists as an example of its kind. On the other hand, while change is a differentiation that appears to emerge as a result of internal or external influences, alteration expresses a differentiation that emerges as a result of an intentional intervention.

1. Creation According to Fitrah

We pointed out the relationship between the word fitrah and the concept of creation. When we say creation according to fitrah, the essence of what we are trying to imply is a characteristic or status that exists within the nature of a thing. The verse of Ar-Rum 30/30, which we included in the introduction section, points to the fact that mankind is created according to a fitrah. However, it could be said within the scope of the meaning of the word itself that each entity, including animals, plants, and inanimate objects is created according to a fitrah. In this sense, all types of entities, including humans and other living beings, possess certain basic characteristics, the purpose for being, and fundamental abilities.¹⁹ In this context, it could be said that creation according to fitrah denotes the material and spiritual existence that is possessed by all types of beings by their very creation.

In a study examining the interpretations of Islamic scholars regarding the meaning of the fitrah possessed by humans intrinsically, it was determined that there are three approaches adopted by the scholars in question: dualist, neutral, and positive. According to Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati, who are indicated to be advocates of the first view, it is stated that human beings are naturally inclined to accept faith or blasphemy and that they are at an equal distance to good and evil, but later chose faith or blasphemy by following the revelations or the devil. According to ibn Abd al-Barr, who is presented as the representative of the neutral approach, mankind does not have an innate tendency towards belief or disbelief. On the contrary, a person is like a blank slate upon its birth. He or she later chooses one of these paths by gravitating towards good or evil.²⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, Imam an-Nawawi, al-Qurtubi, Shah Waliullah, as-Sabuni, Al-Faruqi, Naquib al-Attas, Tantawi Gohary, Muhammed Asad, and Mufti Muhammed Shafi were presented as the representatives of the positive view. According to them, although human beings have the potential for disbelief, they are actually born with faith. They are naturally inclined to believe in Allah and to do good. They can follow the devil and deviate from the true path or obey the revelations and embrace the

¹⁹ See: Yaşar Kurt, "Kur'an'da Fitrat Kavramı", *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 5/2 (2005), 101-102.

²⁰ See: İbn Abdilber, *et-Temhid*, 18/69-70

tendencies arising from their nature.²¹ The fact that human beings are born sinless and clean, that they tend to recognize the creator, and that they generally learn about bad deeds from the environment has brought this positive approach, which claims that the good side of humans is borne of their fitrah, to the forefront.

1.1. Diversity and Immutability in Creation

In the 30th verse of Ar-Rum, which uses the concepts fitrah and creation alongside one other, it is stated that "*There is no altering in Allah's creation.*" Likewise, An-Nisa's 119th verse condemns the alteration of Allah's creation by yielding to the temptation of the devil. The word "taghyir" is used as the verb for change in this verse. The term "Khalqullah" that is used in both verses can be understood within the context of Arabic language and grammar both as an infinitive, which indicates Allah's action of creating and as a participle, which indicates a being that is created by Allah or an entity. In this case; "Do these two verses contain contradictory expressions? Are Tabdil and Taghyir different concepts? What does the transformation or immutability of a created being or a creation mean?" are questions that are in dire need to be answered.²²

The fact that the 119th verse of an-Nisa mentions the "taghyir" of Allah's act of creation or beings that are created by Him and that the 30th verse of ar-Rum states that Allah's act of creation or beings that are created by Him cannot be altered (tabdil) can be explained by introducing that these two verses are applicable in different circumstances. However, an explanation has also be attempted based on the meanings of the words "taghyir" and "tabdil". As a matter of fact, in a study dealing with this issue, it was assumed that the problem was solved by affirming that the word "taghyir" expresses the change in both the essence and the quality, while the word "tahdil" expresses only the change in the quality.²³ However, it could not be sufficiently supported that the words taghyir and tahdil had such fixed meanings or that these meanings place these verses within a frame of reasonable meaning. At this point, it would be more appropriate to state that the contexts of these verses point to mutable and immutable aspects of creation and the created.

It could be said that the immutable aspect of creation is the general, inclusive rule of creation.²⁴ In the beginning, Allah brought existence into being and created the universe ex nihilo, and then imposed separate laws of formation and occurrence for each type of being in the universe. These laws, which can be named the laws of creation, cannot be altered or transformed in any way except for divine miracles. Another immutable aspect of creation is the

²¹ See: Yasien Mohamed, "The Interpretations of Fitrah", *Islamic Studies* 34/2 (1995), 130, 139-140.

²² See: İbn Atiyye el-Endelüsî, *el-Muharrerü'l-vecîz fî tefsîri'l-kitâbi'l-'azîz*, critical ed. Abdüsselam Abdüşşafi Muhammed (Beyrut: Dâru'l-Kütübî'l-İlmiyye, 1422/2001), 2/114; Adil Bor, "Din ile İlişkisi Bağlamında Fitratın Mahiyeti", *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 21/3 (15 Aralık 2017), 1297-1299.

²³ See: Bor, "Din ile İlişkisi Bağlamında Fitratın Mahiyeti", 1697-1700.

²⁴ al-Rûm 30/ 30.

fact that all types of beings were created according to certain measures and standards. This does not mean that beings are created based on a prototype as if they are produced in a factory. Instead, each type has common and average standards. All humans being having two eyes, two ears and ten fingers (except of course, for any disorders that may occur) is a case in point in this context.²⁵ Another aspect of creation that is constant is the general abilities granted to each sort of being. For example, fish can swim, birds can fly, and a human can stand on two legs, think, and establish civilizations. Although some abilities are common between different kinds, there are common and inalterable abilities that potentially exist in all types.

Examining the ever-mutating face of creation reveals that a great diversity from creation prevails in the realm of humans, animals, plants, and even the sphere of inanimate objects. People are divided into different colors, races, and subgroups and the number of different mindsets and physical characteristics are as numerous as the number of existing people. As a result of this, we can say the following: In the natural flow of life where different beings are continuing their lives, one cannot expect an alteration of physical structures and basic capabilities that are inherent to these beings, however, there also exists a diversity that is almost as numerous as the number of beings that belong to that category on an individual level.

After the stage of creation, change and transformation are essential in the entities (makhlukat) that have been created. This is because a cycle of perpetual creation and destruction exists within the universe. Every living being born eventually dies. Humans, animals, and plants are in a state of change and transformation, both in the context of here-and-now and within the framework of their lifetimes. A man turns into soil, soil into a plant, and plant into an animal, which returns to the soil upon death. Each being, whether human, animal, or plant, undergoes changes in the struggle of life, and also changes and improves itself and its environment. Although change is essential in all creatures, the purpose, and direction of change are not always for the good, which means that sometimes a change occurs for the better, while sometimes, it occurs for the worse.²⁶

1.2. Changing the Creation, Changing the Created, and the Direction of Change

The change either occurs spontaneously or occurs under the influence of an external agent. The effects of humans and the environment can also be found in some changes that are thought to have occurred on their own. When examining change through a human-centric perspective, direct or indirect influence of mankind can be seen in all changes, except for those that occur due to the passage of time, such as aging, lava explosions, or fault-line cracks that occur in random locations throughout the earth. Collective or individual marks

²⁵ See: Elmalılı, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, 6/3822.

²⁶ See: Sabri Hizmetli, "İslam ve Değişim", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 37/1 (01 Ağustos 1997), 88-89.

of human influence should be sought under all events, even under those that are believed by the many to be environmental effects, such as hail storms, floods, droughts, or destructive earthquakes. Apart from these, there are changes that occur in humans, animals, plants, and nature that are caused by humans in a more direct manner. While such changes can be in a good direction that is in accordance with the fitrah, they can also be in the opposite direction. In changes where mankind is the subject, the changes towards good reflect changes that are in accordance with the fitrah, while changes towards worse reflect the opposite.

2. Living in Accordance with the Fitrah

Allah, the creator of the universe and the ruler of the worlds, sent religions, prophets, and books to guide mankind, which provided them with ample examples of good and ill and provided them with many clues that let them distinguish between the two. Amongst all material beings, humans are the only beings that hold responsibility, and due to the natural capabilities bestowed upon mankind by Allah, it holds the ability to distinguish good and evil. Moreover, thanks to his infinite mercy and benediction, Allah still chose to guide them to the good path, in addition to all those gifts He has bestowed. What is clearly ordered in the book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet is a requirement of our fitrah, and those that are clearly prohibited are acts contrary to our fitrah. Additionally, the things that are ordered as ijihad under the light of the revelations and the guidance provided by the experts in this field within the framework of the principles of Maqasid al-Shari'a and Istislah are in accordance with our fitrah, while things that are likewise prohibited are against our fitrah. In simpler terms, to live our lives by determining what is good and beautiful via the guidance provided by the revelations and reason is living in accordance with the fitrah.

In addition to the general principles of the revelations, which guide the fitrah of mankind in identifying the measure of living in accordance with the fitrah, it would also be appropriate to examine the actions that are proclaimed to be appropriate or contrary to fitrah in the narrations attributed to the Prophet or that are associated with being contrary to the fitrah and hold the characteristic of altering the creation. In this context, the common characteristics of the actions that are reported to be suitable or unsuitable with fitrah can be explicitly identified. In line with these common qualities, firstly, the conceptual framework of changing the fitrah for the better or the worst will be drawn. In the final stage, objective criteria will be developed to determine the principles and rules regarding preserving the fitrah or changing it for the better.

2.1. Actions Reported to be In Accordance with Fitrah

There are narrations in hadith sources, which state some behaviors are born of fitrah. In some of these narrations, certain actions were stated to be borne of fitrah without indicating their exact number, and an important part of

these narrations is commenced by counting five actions that are borne of fitrah. However, another part of these narrations does the same by counting ten actions. The list which includes ten actions as being borne of fitrah includes matters also counted in other lists, with the exception of circumcision. These narrations point to a grander truth due to the fact that they are included in a large portion of hadith sources and that their conveyance is in coherence with one other. In this research, however, we will attempt to explain the relationship of these provisions with the matter of fitrah and change, instead of conveying all of these narrations one by one and listing the evaluations regarding their authenticity.

As abovementioned, in the narrations that state ten things borne of fitrah, shortening the mustache, dropping a beard, cleaning teeth, cleaning the nose, cutting nails, washing between fingers, shaving the armpits, shaving the groin, and cleaning oneself with water are counted amongst these actions. The conveyor of these items stated that he had forgotten the tenth item but added that it should be rinsing the mouth with water.²⁷ In the narrations that report five things borne from fitrah, circumcision, groin shaving, armpit plucking, nail cutting, and mustache shortening are included.²⁸ If being circumcised is not the item that the conveyor, who communicated the previous group cannot remember, then there are eleven items in total. In some narrations, the parts of the body that should be cleaned periodically amongst these items were counted, in this context, it is stated that the Prophet determined a period of forty days for cleaning these body parts and proclaimed that this period is not to be exceeded without cleaning them.²⁹

It is observed that matters that are indicated by hadith narrations to be borne of fitrah are usually related to cleanliness and that they help human beings to carry out their bodily cleaning in an easier and more efficient manner. As a matter of fact, shortening the mustache, cleaning the teeth, cleaning the nose, cutting the nails, washing between the fingers, shaving the armpit and pubic hair, cleaning oneself with water, and rinsing the mouth with water is obviously for cleaning purposes. No permanent processes are performed on any essential part of the body during these processes, as they only include the removal of parts that can be considered as waste or turn into waste due to dirt of the body. In the process of circumcision, which includes aspects different from the aforementioned, a certain portion of living skin is removed from a man's genitalia in an amount that will not rejuvenate, and the original and created form of the body is altered. However, this process is generally correlated with cleanliness and it is seen as lawful, and even necessary.³⁰ Female circumcision, which has been deemed necessary by some jurists and is subject to harsh criticism today, seems difficult to associate with

²⁷ Müslim, "Tahâre", 56.

²⁸ Buhârî, "Libâs", 63.

²⁹ Müslim, "Tahâre", 51.

³⁰ See: Nebi Bozkurt, "Sünnet", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Erişim 10 Aralık 2020); Hakan Hadi Kadioğlu vd., "Dini ve Tıbbi Açından Sünnet", *Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 25 (30 Haziran 2006), 1-16; M. Cumhuri İzgi, "Tedavi Amaçlı Olmayan Erkek Çocuk Sünnetinin Etik Değerlendirmesi", *Türk Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 25 (2014), 2-3.

cleanliness.³¹On the other hand, through the common point of cleanliness among the ten items we have counted, it is hereby determined that cleanliness is borne of fitrah and things that are done in the name of cleanliness or things that are necessary for being clean are in accordance with fitrah.

Since the matter of growing a beard, which is often counted after shortening the mustache in some narrations, is obviously different from other items counted, it needs a separate explanation. While all of the items of the narrations, except the beard, order the removal of the pollution in one part of the body or the thing that causes the pollution, growing the beard is continuous. In other words, while a change via an intervention is essential in most of these items, non-intervention is the central theme in the matter of growing a beard. While all other items can be correlated with cleanliness, this is not the case for the beard. In narrations that count five things as borne of fitrah, shortening the mustache was counted, but growing the beard was not. In the primary narration, while the expression used for growing a beard (إِعْفَاءُ اللَّحْيَةِ) can mean "grow your beard", it can also mean "exempt your beard from cutting". Although they essentially mean the same thing, considering the mustache and the beard together the second interpretation can mean that shortening the mustache is essential for cleanliness while cutting the beard is not. As a result, this means that growing a beard is either in accordance with the fitrah or it does no harm to beings in accordance with the fitrah. Therefore, it could be said that having a beard is in accordance with fitrah, as it is an indicator that distinguishes men from women and Muslims from non-Muslims.³²

2.2. Actions Reported as Contrary to Fitrah

There are no direct descriptions regarding attitudes and behaviors that are contrary to fitrah. However, in line with the definition of fitrah and the indirect indicators laid forth by canonical texts, certain actions were asserted to be contrary to fitrah.

For those who base their arguments on the fitrah definition included in the canonical texts, which define fitrah as Allah's religion and tawhid, any actions and attitudes that are contrary to tawhid and Islam, such as kufr, shirk, and haram are considered to be contrary to fitrah. On the other hand, those who consider fitrah to be related to khilqat and creation deem altering the original form of any created being or, to be more precise, distorting the creation and the created, as contrary to fitrah. In this context, not only activities that aim to alter the essence or the appearance of humans, animals, plants, or any other beings within the universe are denounced due to being causes of harm, but they are

³¹ See: M. İhsan Karaman, "Sosyokültürel, Etik, Tıbbi ve İslami Perspektiften Kız Çocuklarda ve Kadınlarda Sünnet", *Anadolu Kliniği Tıp Bilimeri Dergisi* 22/2 (2017), 125-130; Bozkurt, "Sünnet".

³² For views and evaluations regarding beard, see: İsmail Yalçın, "Sakal", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Erişim 09 Aralık 2020); Hüseyin Baysa, "Sakal Uzatma Ve Bıyık Kısaltmanın Hükmüne İlişkin Görüşlerin Değerlendirilmesi", *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 7/14 (19 Aralık 2017), 273-289.

also considered to be within the scope of being contrary to fitrah. However, in the religious literature, objective and consistent criteria are generally not presented regarding the attitudes and behaviors that are judged to be haram or impermissible due to their alteration of creation or distortion of fitrah.

The meaning of Islam and tawhid attributed to fitrah in classical sources are considered alongside its meanings related to khilqat/creation and many examples of distorting the fitrah have been provided, including changing the essence, the abilities, the form, the image, or the purpose of creation. Worshipping the sun, the moon, the stars, the fire, and the stone, even though Allah has made the earth and the sky ready for the service of man, is to act contrary to the purposes of their creation.³³

Marking the ears of animals in order to sacrifice them to idols, even though Allah has created them for humans to eat or to use as mounting or draft animals, and turning halal animals to haram via these actions is to act contrary to the fitrah of these animals.³⁴ Among actions that alter the outer appearance of human beings, having tattoos, hair transplantation or brow removal operations, teeth filing, men acting like women or vice versa, or emasculating animals or cutting their ears are examples of distorting the fitrah.³⁵ There are differences in the principles to which provisions will be bound in the evaluation of these examples, as well as in the provisions that emerge accordingly.

The authors who have envisioned modern examples of distorting fitrah in the guidance of classical examples have cited many new examples. If these were to be grouped in broad categories, genetically altering the genetical structure of humans, animals or plants, sex-change operations, aesthetical operations on the human body, providing animals or plants with hormones and medicine other than to cure them, and, in general, destroying the balance and order of the environment and nature are counted among the behaviors that are contrary to fitrah.

2.3. Altering Fitrah Towards Good or Bad

We know that transformation is at the core of creation, that everything created moves towards an end, and that people are living their lives in an effort that involves changing things and being changed. The points stated in the previous two chapters have explained that change and alteration processes of humans can be towards good or the ill. If in the framework established by certain theorists, fitrah is considered as the basic abilities that are inherent to a being through its creation, then it is only possible to speak of the training, development, or control of these abilities. However, if fitrah is considered as a large concept that holds many aspects within itself, then it becomes possible to talk about its alteration towards good or ill. Therefore, it could be said that

³³ See: İbn Atiyye el-Endelüsî, *el-Muḥarrerü'l-vecîz fî tefsîri'l-kitâbi'l-'azîz*, 2/114; Fahrettin Râzî, *Mefâtîhu'l-gayb* (Beyrut: Dâru İhya'it-Turâsî'l-Arabî, 1420-1999), 11/223.

³⁴ See: Râzî, *Mefâtîhu'l-gayb*, 11/223; Tâhir İbn Âşûr, *et-Tahrîr ve't-tenvîr* (Tunus: Dâru't-Tunusiyye, 1984), 5/205.

³⁵ See: Râzî, *Mefâtîhu'l-gayb*, 11/323; Kurtubî, *Tefsîr*, 5/390-395.

altering fitrah towards good is the improvement of fitrah, and changing it towards the ill is the distortion of fitrah.

As the only being that is the target of the words of the divine, mankind is in the position of both being subject to change and the actor of the change. Any human acting to alter something can direct this to him or towards other humans, animals, plants, and other creatures. Some of these alterations occur at the stage of their emergence while others occur after the primary elements of the being in question have been formed. The intervention of mankind to animals or plants at their stage of emergence can take the form altering their genetic structures, or supporting their fertilization and reproduction, or vaccinations. After the formation of their primary elements, animals are being subjected to emasculation, surgical removal of horns or tails and plants are being subjected to chemical fertilizers and agricultural pesticides, all by human beings. Likewise, humans perform surgical or non-surgical operations on other humans to achieve aesthetical ends. Additionally, mankind spends great efforts to erect tall buildings, dams, bridges, roads, factories, and power plants. Endeavors to improve and construct upon earth can both be in accordance with the fitrah of nature and contrary to it. In the latter case, such efforts generally gravitate towards destruction. Thus, as the only being which possesses willpower, we can say that humans have the capability for moving towards both the good and the ill in their efforts for change and alteration.

Although it is outside our area of expertise, we can understand from the writings of the experts that the field of genetics has reached the point where it is possible to alter and intervene in the genome of men, animals, and plants.

Many new applications of biotechnology are mentioned in this context, such as genetical cloning, the selection of gender before fertilization, usage of assistive reproduction techniques, eugenics in animals and plants, the alteration of the genetical structure of plant seeds (which are also called genetically modified organisms), and the grafting of human organs grown on animals to humans.

Examination of the non-surgical aesthetical processes which are performed on the human body reveals processes such as make-up, alterations to the body hair including beards, mustaches, and brows, the whitening or darkening of the skin via various methods, peeling, usage of colored lenses or usage of artificial eyelashes. The number of aesthetical procedures increases with each passing day, and they include correcting six fingers and harelip, skin tightening, redesigning of noses, jaws or smiles, piercings and tattoos, laser epilation, botox, liposuction, breast enlargement, reduction or lifting, aesthetical vagina operations, and sex-change operations. Aesthetic surgery may be partially or completely complementary to certain treatments, such as the treatment of burns, injuries, and surgery scars. When the purpose of having such operations done is to eliminate material or moral damage, they may be included in the treatment according to the degree of the damage. Some of these operations, on the other hand, are done completely arbitrarily, which can be described as pursuing enthusiasm, following fashion, and yielding to the devil. On the other hand, some of the procedures may be harmful to health, while others may be beneficial or just pointless. Considering all of these matters and

evaluating this whole issue from a general perspective, alterations on the human body can be considered to be in accordance with the fitrah if they are done to remedy moral or material damages or to reach a better and more beneficial conclusion.³⁶

The interventions made in the physical structures of animals have always been considered within the change of fitrah and khilqat. The most common example of this is the emasculation of the male animals to terminate their reproductive abilities. The goal of emasculation is to turn large animals submissive to allow their use as draft animals, to fatten the males of ovine animals, and to control the reproduction of domestic animals such as cats and dogs. Additionally, it is also observed that the ears of sheep are cut to improve the quality of their meat, while the same is done to ensure the cleanliness of dogs, and the horns of some animals are removed to prevent them from harming other animals. At other times, the ears of animals are cut or split to mark them or they are branded for the same purpose. It is, therefore, noted that certain procedures carried out on animals are usually done to benefit from them more efficiently or protect them from harm.³⁷

As aforementioned, the interventions performed on plants are usually done to provide the plant with extra different characteristics by altering their genetic structure, or by providing them with fertilizers and hormones to control their growth, or by protecting them from pests via the use of pesticides. The benefits and harms of changing the genetic structure of seeds appear to be a matter of controversy, and it seems difficult for a person who is not an expert in the field to develop an informed opinion on this subject. However, it is claimed that subjects such as gene transfer between different species and especially the addition of animal genes to a plant species can have dangerous consequences and cause environmental disasters. Moreover, the effects of genetically modified (GMO), chemical fertilizers, hormones, and pesticides on human health are also a point of wide discussion. In this case, it is necessary to decide on this matter by considering the balance of benefit and harm on the individual and the society, while also taking the present and the future into consideration. This is the duty of national and international institutions in charge of this issue. However, conflicts of interest are an ever-present danger to the safety of humans.³⁸

In the relationship of mankind with nature, actions that distort the fitrah of nature are witnessed almost too often. For example, building houses on streambeds, constructing buildings without considering faultlines and

³⁶ For critical review, see: Omar Hasan Kasule, "Integrated Medical Education Resources: 990821P - Nature of the Human (Tabiat Al Insaan)", *Integrated Medical Education Resources* (Erişim 21 Kasım 2020); Eymen Salih, "Tağyîru halkıllah ve cirâhatu't-tecmîl: ru'ye cedide" (Erişim 10 Ağustos 2015); Abdullah Monkabo, "Dirâse nakdiyye li'l-ebhâsi'l-fikhiyye fi mevdu'î 'ahkâmu'l-cirâhati't-tecmîliyye" (Erişim 10 Nisan 2015); İsmail Yalçın, *İslam Hukuku Açısından Yarattığı Değişirme Fitrati Bozma* (Ankara: Fecr Yayınevi, 2018), 49-112.

³⁷ On the topic of benefitting from animals, see: Hüseyin Esen, *İslam Hukuku Açısından Hayvanlar* (İzmir, 2013), 113-170.

³⁸ For evaluations regarding interventions to animals, see: Yalçın, *İslam Hukuku Açısından Yarattığı Değişirme Fitrati Bozma*, 137-151.

earthquake zones, polluting the streams and seas in a manner that disrupts the flora and fauna, burning or disproportionately consuming forests, pollution of urban air, the destruction of the ozone layer with greenhouse gas emissions, and causing the climate change are all actions that can be considered among these. Moral weaknesses of human beings, such as their selfishness, greed, and cruelty, when combined with the capitalist mentality that is predominant throughout the world, destroys the very fitrah of nature. Individuals and societies that have destructive effects on every single one of the units within nature are responsible to Allah and to humanity in proportion to their effect.

However, mankind's routine of change and alteration does not always cause the evil and destruction that is recounted above. It can also take the form of improvement, correction, beautification, and doing what humans should be doing overall. However, since the purpose of this chapter to determine the attitudes and actions that distort the fitrah, only the examples of possible distortions are included. However, it should be kept in mind that not all of the changes in these examples may be contrary to fitrah, and each example should be subjected to a detailed examination in order to make a decision on the matter.

2.4. From Subjective Examples to Objective Criteria in the Preservation of Fitrah

Leaving aside the differences in the interpretation of the conceptualization of fitrah, the following sentences can be listed in an attempt to draw a framework according to common acceptances: Allah has created humans in accordance with a fitrah. Fitrah is the material and spiritual characteristics that are borne from one's creation and khilqat. There is no altering the creation. Each sort of a being was granted by Allah general physical characteristics, which are their material aspect, and purpose of creation, which are their spiritual aspect. Moreover, all beings were also granted abilities peculiar to them to fulfill the aforementioned purposes. There is no change in Allah's laws of creation. However, change is essential in material life. The duty of mankind is to render the earth prosperous and compete with one other in the path of goodness and benediction. If a person moves away from good and benediction and inclines towards evil, he comes under the sway of the devil. The devil leads people to superstitions and delusions. A man's inclination towards attitudes and actions that distort his fitrah will render him evil, and this will either place him under the sway of the devil or cause his evil tendencies to overpower his tendency towards decency in his spiritual world.

In most of the classical works, changing the creation (taghyir) was used to express the disruption of the creation or the fitrah. However, the usage of a word that means change or alteration instead of using a word such as "ifsad", which explicitly means to corrupt, has led to this concept being placed upon a slippery ground, which has caused contradictions within these concepts.

While there are interpretations that claim that making any alterations is forbidden regardless of its time or place,³⁹ in certain cases, the expressions of "this includes an alteration of the creation" and "this does not include an alteration of the creation" are used in parallel to the religious decree formed in the juridical law for situations that appear to be objectionable and not objectionable respectively.⁴⁰ Opinions are dispersed between haram and halal regarding each subject under this broad category. In this case, however, which actions and behaviors will be considered a distortion of fitrah must be evaluated in consideration of the relevant justifications, and whether these actions and behaviors will be deemed haram, impermissible and permissible should be evaluated through examples in order to develop consistent principles.

Changing the genetic structure of a new generation or producing a genetic copy at the first stage of creation is the most fundamental act of changing creation that can be applied today. The safety, usefulness, and long-term effects of these procedures have not yet been adequately tested. It has been pointed out that many medical, biological, psychological, and social disadvantages may arise due to these procedures. As a matter of fact, even these interventions do not completely change the rules Allah set in the creation. Any interventions that may be performed on this perfect order and harmony within Allah's creation carry risks. However, if these interventions are performed within the rules and conditions of the creation and they act in a manner that is supportive of the creation and preventative of any negativities that may emerge due to external factors, they should not be viewed as disruptive. Although the primary field of expertise that will determine the nature of the subject in these matters is medicine, experts from fields such as religion, psychology, and sociology should assist in the evaluation.⁴¹

To make changes to a living being is like to render an organ or whole body inoperative, such as cutting off his arm, blinding or poisoning it. The legitimacy reasons for such an intervention are clear. Other interventions generally do not affect the body's integrity and do not change the basic form of the body. However, there are practices that push the boundaries for various reasons and change the normal and natural body lines without a real need, a benefit, or a good. Definitions or perceptions of need, benefit, and well-being are partially subjective and, in my opinion, there is no complete objectivity in this regard. However, these criteria will be used in the evaluation of the subject. While attempting to reach a judgment with a Muslim mentality, the revelations shall be first and foremost be grasped and interpreted through reason as they should be in all subjects, and under the guidance of the revelations, a final judgment will be made.

³⁹ See: Muhammed b. Cerîr Taberî, *Câmiu'l-beyân fî te'vîli'l-Kur'ân (Tefsîr)* (Beirut: Müessesetü'r-Risâle, 2000), 9/223; Ebû Muhammed Ali b. Ahmed İbn Hazm, *el-Muhallâ bi'l-âsâr* (Beirut: Dâru'l-Fikr, n.d.), 1/423.

⁴⁰ See: Yalçın, *İslam Hukuku Açısından Yaratılışı Değiştirme Fitratı Bozma*, 137-151.

⁴¹ For approaches regarding biotechnology, see: Anke Iman Bouzenita, "Change of Creation or Harnessing Nature? The Reception of Biotechnology in the Islamic World", *Islamic Studies* 48/4 (2009), 505-521.

By birth, men have foreskin on their reproductive organs. Their nails and toenails, hair, beard, mustache, and hair on other parts of the body grow continuously, albeit at different speeds. A large part of our body, especially our skin cells, is in a constant state of change and transformation. In the narrations we have discussed above, circumcision, cutting the nails, cutting the mustache, and shaving the hair in the armpit and groin areas were regarded as fitrah. The most radical change among these is circumcision. With the circumcision procedure, a piece of living tissue that cannot renew itself is incised and discarded. Based on the principle that creation is based on wisdom, the incision of this part that is present at birth can be explained either by the part having a prenatal function or via health or culture-related reasons. Other applications can be readily explained via health and hygiene purposes. Prior examples of changes that are deemed appropriate to be made on the human body show that changes that are expected to be beneficial are permissible, provided that they do not cause any known harm.

We have above-discussed that a type of fitrah relates to the physical characteristics and basic abilities of a species. In this context, human beings having two eyes, two ears, two hands with five fingers, and male members of this species having beards and mustaches on their faces while the female members not having such features are common characteristics that reflect the fitrah of humans. The birth of a person with six fingers, three arms, or two heads is his fitrah and it is not correct to say that such things cannot be changed. Likewise, it is not within their fitrah for women to have beards or mustaches. There are many congenital or other disorders in the human body that can cause uncommon characteristics. The elimination or treatment of such a disorder is to correct and to make the person in question suitable with fitrah. A woman who is exposed to male-pattern hair on any part of her body can treat or remove this condition and make her form suitable with her fitrah. Likewise, a person who has lost his hair correcting his situation is not distorting the fitrah. Stating that a person seeking marriage, who has corrected one of the above-mentioned flaws, has performed a form of deception by hiding his or her defect does not render his or her correction of a flaw against the fitrah. However, this may constitute a moral flaw or a sin due to the deception in question. In this case, the correction of the disorders that cause material or moral damage to the human body or the correction of disorders that render one outside the boundaries of normal and natural standards should not be considered as a violation of fitrah, but the opposite, as a return to the standards of fitrah.⁴²

Some of the changes made on the human body are performed with the purpose of beautification. The sense of beauty is inherent, and human beings tend towards what is beautiful and avoid what is the opposite. Religious data also supports that beauty should be respected,⁴³ but it does not fail to emphasize that real beauty exists within.⁴⁴ For this reason, people should

⁴² See: Yalçın, *İslam Hukuku Açısından Yaratılışı Değiştirme Fitratı Bozma*, 69-75

⁴³ Müslim, "İman", 147; Ebû Dâvûd, "Libâs", 25.

⁴⁴ See: Müslim, "Birr", 34.

attach importance to cleanliness and the beauty of their clothes and appearance provided that they remain within reason. However, they should not pursue an obsessive understanding of beauty by turning the body into a fetish. For example, trying to shape an organ into a certain shape based on fashion related aspirations, even when that organ is within normal size standards, displaying a part of the body as a focus for sexual attraction, and having tattoos with symbols of certain deviant groups or faiths is exceeding the limits of fitrah, even though some of these things may seem to be focused on beauty and attraction. Having aesthetical operations on an organ that is within the standards of normalcy with the sole reason being personal dislike to its shape is both ingratitude against Allah, as well as regularizing the body by destroying the characteristic structure within humans. To commodify the body by making it the focus of sexual attraction or to decorate it with tattoos is a deviation of character and belief. In addition to these, the lotus foot phenomena were predominant in China until 1940, where the toes of women were tied tightly starting from their childhood, or the rings worn by the female members of the Padaung tribe to prolong their necks, or ⁴⁵ some female members of African tribes placing large rings or plates in their lips ⁴⁶ demonstrate that aspiration towards certain perspectives of beauty can sometimes become a source of torture and even reach levels that threaten human health. For this reason, focusing on a clean, proper, and beautiful appearance that emanates from the sense of beauty that is within the fitrah of human beings is the necessity of human dignity. On the other hand, applications that are harmful or deceitful, or that contain elements of polytheism or purpose of sexual exposure, or that permanently alter the characteristic appearance of human beings are applications that distort the fitrah of humans.

The castration of a human or animal is the destruction of their inherent ability to reproduce. Unless there is a medical necessity, the sterilization of a person is a distortion of the fitrah. However, many controversies exist regarding the issue of the sterilization of animals. Although many commentators and jurists cite the endangerment of animals as an example of changing the creation, which is forbidden, human beings and animals are considered differently according to the widely accepted ijthad.

The sterilization of animals via emasculation to increase their benefits or to protect them from harm, or cutting off their ears or horns, or placing marks on their ears or backs have not been judged as contrary to fitrah.⁴⁷ Because human beings are allowed to benefit from animals, provided that they do not

⁴⁵ See: Nalan Damla Yılmaz Usta, "Antik insanın sosyokültürel yaşamını yansıtan bazı diş ve iskelet sistemi anomalileri", 2015, 551-552.

⁴⁶ See: Arzu Evecen - Zeynep Kirkincioğlu, "Giysiyle Gelen Biçim-Sizlik", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 69/1 (Mart 2020), 769.

⁴⁷ See: İbn Atiyye el-Endelüsî, *el-Muḥarrerü'l-vecîz*, 2/115 İbn Atiyye Nisa 4/119 bağlamında yaratılışı tağyir etme bağlamında hayvanların enenmesinin zikredildiğini oysa genel anlamda deęiştirme faydalıysa mubah zararlıysa yaratılışı bozma olarak bu âyetin kapsamına gireceğini vurgulamıştır.

cause these animals to go extinct or cause them unnecessary pain and suffering.⁴⁸

Humans overstepping their limits in their interactions with the plants, the environment, and nature and distorting the fitrah of such beings is, in essence, turning something beneficial for them into something harmful due to their worldly ambitions. While efforts to increase the quality and quantity of production in order to provide people with cheap and healthy food are in accordance with the fitrah, using drugs and hormones in a harmful way is disruptive of the fitrah.⁴⁹ Likewise, constructing dams that prevent floods is in accordance with fitrah, but constructing houses in streambeds is against the fitrah of the stream. If a person causes society harm due to his own interest, if he fails to perceive future harm due to an earlier benefit, or if he fails to notice long-term harm while he is focused on a short-term interest, he will be attributed with ill titles, such as being selfish, greedy, and reckless. In order for a person to direct his life to a path that is in accord with his fitrah, he needs to subdue his ill habits by controlling his desires, while cultivating his good habits.

Conclusion: Change In Accordance with Fitrah

In the Islamic worldview, there is a universe that is centered upon Allah and a world with humans at its center, as humans are the caliphs of Allah on earth. As a part of its duty to serve Allah, mankind was tasked with improving the world. This duty of being the caliphs of Allah and improving the world is carried out according to the rules that govern nature and objects within it, which can be identified in the light provided by reason and the revelations. Mankind is a mortal part of the temporal world and can perceive that change lies at both his core, as well as the core of every other sort of being. As a part of this change, a person who tries to fulfill his duty of servitude properly must live in accordance with the fitrah created by Allah and observe nature in the changes he causes around him.

In order for a person to live his life by adhering to his fitrah and to not to deviate from the line of fitrah in every change, transformation, and innovation he seeks to carry out, he must follow these principles:

1. The principle of tawhid: The attributes of divinity should be specific to Allah, who is one and single, and one should avoid direct and indirect forms of shirk. Making some animals haram by dedicating them to idols, carrying symbols of polytheistic faiths on one's person via accessories, symbols or tattoos are factors that harm both the fitrah and the principle of tawhid.

2. The principle of righteousness: Lying and deception are matters that destroy the trust between human beings and consequently damage human dignity. Making something appear as though it does not exist via a change or making something that does not exist appear as though it exists are changes that distort the fitrah since they contain deceptions and lies. But this principle

⁴⁸ For fiqh based viewpoints regarding emasculation of animals, see: Yalçın, *İslam Hukuku Açısından Yaratılışı Değiştirme Fitratı Bozma*, 127-128.

⁴⁹ Regarding interventions to animals, see: Yalçın, *İslam Hukuku Açısından Yaratılışı Değiştirme Fitratı Bozma*, 139-154.

is not violated when the change is declared and has no harmful consequences for anyone.

3. The principle of utility: Human fitrah inclines towards what is beneficial on its own and avoids what is harmful. However, it is not always easy to identify what is beneficial and what is harmful. If the benefit and damage are clear within the framework of the rules of interest, the choice will be easy. Because, causing harm is haram in the first place, as well as causing harm as revenge for harm suffered. But even in this situation, a person can willfully surrender to his desires and move towards the harmful by listening to the devil. If there is an equivalence in the conflict between benefit and harm, preventing harm should have priority. If both options will cause harm in the end, then choosing the option that will cause the least amount of damage should be preferred. If there is a conflict between harm on a single person and harm on the public, state, or society, the harm of the single person is preferable to protect the public interest.

4. Principle of goodness: although there are different approaches to the matter of the role of reason and the revelations in determining what is good and beautiful, the reason which understands and interprets the revelations should play a role in knowing and understanding what is good and beautiful. The revelations ensure the harmony and balance between reason and the revelations by guiding the reason, especially in areas where the reason has difficulty grasping.

5. A clean fitrah requires turning towards what is good and beautiful.

6. Although this principle is very familiar to the principle of utility, today, only medical experts can decide whether a subject is beneficial to human health or not. There may be a conflict of benefits and harms in terms of health in many issues. In this case, following the directions of the experts will be a choice that is in accordance with the line of fitrah.

7. The principle of morality: With its wide scope, this principle encompasses the above principles, confirms them, and also explains matters that are difficult for them to explain. In this context, the commodification of the human body, its use as a tool of sexual display, and sexual perversions that violate the notions of family and marriage are considered to be contrary to fitrah. Good morals, on the other hand, are protectors of fitrah.

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