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The first question of Fatwa no. 1542

Q: We read in some Arabic newspapers about some surgeries that are performed by doctors in Europe by which a person's existing sexual characteristics are changed to those of the other sex. Is this true? Is it not considered interference in Creator-specific matters, bearing in mind that Allah is solely the Creator and Fashioner of all forms of life? What is the Islamic ruling on doing so?

A: It is beyond the ability of any created being to change a male into a female or vice versa. This is neither their concern nor within their capacity, regardless how knowledgeable they may be about matter and its properties. This is in the Hands of Allah Alone. Allah (Exalted be He) says: **﴿To Allāh belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills.﴾** **﴿Or He bestows both males and females, and He renders barren whom He wills. Verily, He is the All-Knower and is Able to do all things.﴾**

At the beginning of the Ayah (Qur'anic verse), Allah (Glorified be He) informs us that He exclusively possesses this ability and concludes the Ayah by attributing this Exclusive Power to its cause, i.e. His Perfect Knowledge and Omnipotence. However, it might happen that a newborn has sexual characteristics midway between those of a typical male and a typical female. Such a newborn's primary sexual identification might be with the opposite sex. In most cases, ambiguity is removed and the truth is established once the child reaches puberty, at which point surgery may be performed to validate the individual's true sex. However, surgery may not be required in some cases.

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Such surgeries are intended for no more than the identification of the true gender of the child concerned. By doing so, doctors do not change the sex from male to female or vice versa. Therefore, it should not be understood that they interfere in Creator-specific matters. They just reveal to people the true gender identity as originally created by Allah. And Allah knows best.

May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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