

Blood Transfusion: A Critical Review in Light of Shariah

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Abstract

Blood is an essential part of a human body. In the result of some diseases, the body becomes incapable to produce the new blood cells, or the generated cells are damaged. In such cases, the blood transfusion from a healthy person becomes necessary. Besides, in operations and surgery cases, blood is required to patients. In road accidents, the injured persons come across the blood deficiency. In these situations, blood is donated and transfused on humanitarian grounds. In this article we have tried to explore the legal status of blood donation in the light of Shariah.

Key Words: *Blood transfusion, Healthy persons, deficiency*

The advancement of the modern world has created so many issues that are worth explaining in order to make the common people aware of the legal positions with respect to Islamic teachings.

One of such serious issues is blood transfusion. Blood is transfused from one individual to another having the same blood group. During surgeries there is a huge loss of blood from the body which if not recovered properly, the patient will die of hypovolemic shock.

Similarly if a person is suffering from Bone Marrow disorder or has the disease of Thalassemia, then the blood is required to be transfused. This experience has helped in saving the precious lives from expiry. In the lines below, the positive aspect of blood donation has been explained.

Blood transfusion can save a patient's life and limit the complications of severe blood loss.

A lot of bleeding can lead to a seriously low hemoglobin level and cause damage to body organs due to a lack of oxygen.

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1. If bleeding continues the body's supply of platelets and plasma are also decreased. Then, blood cannot clot and bleeding will not stop.

However, there are also risks related to blood transfusion. Although the Canada's blood supply organization has been declared the most careful organization, yet the disease threats have been detected. For example, the following diseases have been the possibility to be transferred.

1. HIV (AIDS) about 1 in 4 million
2. Hepatitis C about 1 in 3 million
3. Hepatitis B about 1 in 1.2 million
4. West Nile Virus about 1 in 1 million

Other risks of blood transfusion are:

Hemolytic reactions

The patient's own blood destroys the transfused blood. This is due to a human error. Careful patient identification steps are followed to make sure the aseptic blood is given. Bacterial infections (highest with platelet transfusions) have the side-effects such as: itching, skin rash, fever, or feeling cold. More serious side effects such as trouble breathing are very rare. In this regard, blood transfusions are very carefully matched to the patient's blood type but transfused blood is not identical to an individual blood. Transfused blood can also have effects on immune system.

Sometimes excessive amount of blood is transfused than that is required to a body leading to volume overload causing circulatory failure due to increasing demand of blood transfusion in treating various diseases and hospital emergencies this problem need to be addressed by the Islamic scholars as most of the people are unaware of the facts related to transfusion and there are various myths regarding this issue. The following questions need to be answered from Islamic point of view:

1. Is blood transfusion allowed in Islam?
2. If allowed, then blood should be transfused free of cost or with cost.
3. Does blood transfusion among husband and wife has impact on their marriage?⁽¹⁾

These questions have been answered in the following lines. As

long as the first question is concerned the following verse of the Holy Quran explains it:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَخِمُّ الْحَنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهَلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ
وَالْمَوْفُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى
النُّصَبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَلِكُمْ فَسِقُ الْيَوْمِ يَكْفُرُ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ
فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنَ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ
لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَحَانِفٍ لِإِيمَانِهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ
رَحِيمٌ

"Forbidden to you are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, the animal slaughtered in any name other than Allah's, the animal which has either been strangled, killed by blows, has died of a fall, by goring or that devoured by a beast of prey - unless it be that which you yourselves might have slaughtered while it was still alive- and that which was slaughtered at the altars. You are also forbidden to seek knowledge of your fate by divining arrows. All these are sinful acts. This day the unbelievers have fully despaired of your religion. Do not fear them; but fear me. This day I have perfected for you your religion, and have bestowed upon you my bounty in full measure, and have been pleased to assign for you Islam as your religion. (Follow, then, the lawful and unlawful bounds enjoined upon you) As for he who is driven by hunger, without being willfully inclined to sin, surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate."⁽²⁾

In another verse of the Holy Quran, the human dignity has been highlighted. Allah says:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ
عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

"Indeed, we honoured the progeny of Adam, and bore them across land and sea and provided them with good things for their sustenance, and exalted them above many of Our creatures"⁽³⁾

First thing which is mentioned in a dispute regarding blood transfusion is the impurity of blood .Blood is a component of human body and the bloodshed from human body is impure and cannot be used. Considering this fact of impurity it will be considered haram for transfusing it into another body.

Imam Shafi'i (Allah has mercy on him) states:

"If one infused blood under the skin and skin grew on it, it will become obligatory to extract that blood and repeat all the prayers that were performed after infusion."⁽⁴⁾

Thus it is proved that blood being impure must not be transfused but the famous principle of *fiqh* states: *الضروريات تبيح المحظورات* "Necessity makes prohibition lawful." ⁽⁵⁾ This principle proves that impure and unlawful things become permissible in cases of need and necessity. Allah has allowed use of prohibited things when in dire need; things that are prohibited under normal circumstances can be used when there is no other option available. Just as Allah says in the Holy Quran :

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"He has made unlawful to you only carrion and blood and the flesh of swine and that over which there has been pronounced the name of anyone other than Allah's. But he who is constrained (to eat of them) – and he neither covets them nor exceeds the indispensable limit incurs no sin: Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate."⁽⁶⁾

The said thought has been explained in another verse such as below

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا دُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُررْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَائِهِمْ بَعِيرٍ عَلِيمٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ

"And how is it that you do not eat of that over which Allah's name has been pronounced even though He has clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you unless you are constrained to it? Many indeed say misleading things without knowledge, driven merely by their lowly desires. But your Lord knows well the transgressors."⁽⁷⁾

In Surah Al-Maida, the Holy Quran throws light on it as:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلَّبِينَ تَعْلَمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

"They ask you what has been made lawful to them. Say: 'All clean things have been made lawful to you, and such hunting animals as you teach, training them to hunt, teaching them the knowledge Allah has given you - you may eat what they catch for you but invoke the name of Allah on it. Have fear of Allah (in violating His Law). Allah is swift in His reckonin.'"⁽⁸⁾

The believers have been directed in the Book of Allah to avoid the things that are unlawful. The Allah Almighty says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

"Believers! Do not devour one another's possessions wrongfully; rather than that, let there be trading by mutual consent. You shall not kill yourselves. Surely Allah is ever Compassionate to you."⁽⁹⁾

Likewise the Muslims have been restricted to cast their lives in destruction:

وَأَنْفَعُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"Spend in the Way of Allah and do not cast yourselves into destruction with your own hands; do good, for Allah loves those who do well."⁽¹⁰⁾

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) advised the people of *Ureynah* tribe to consume the urine and milk of camels as they were ill being affected by the climate of Madina. Just as Hazrat Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that once people of the tribe Urayna visited Madina and they all became ill due to climate of Madina. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) sent them to the place where camels for charity purpose were kept and asked them to consume their urine and milk and they all were cured. ⁽¹¹⁾ This hadīth shows that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) allowed the people of *Urenah* to use a haram substance (i.e. the urine of camels) for medicinal purposes when they were inflicted with disease. Similarly, if one was to use blood, which is originally *harām* and impure, at a time of dire need for medicinal purposes, it would be permissible for one to do so.

Similarly a companion of Prophet (P.B.U.H) Arfajah ibn Aswad (Allah be pleased with him) who had his nose damaged in the battle of kulab. He replaced it first with silver, and then

with a nose made of gold, with the order and consent of the Prophet (PBUH).⁽¹²⁾

Thus from above verses of the Holy Quran and sayings of Prophet it is clear that the prohibited things can be used in dire need like Gold by men, milk from woman breast, pork or urine can be used. Woman milk can also be used for medicinal purposes.

"It is permissible for a (severely) sick person to drink blood and urine, or consume the meat of a dead animal for the purpose of medication if an experienced Muslim medical expert stipulates that this is the only cure, and that one does not find an alternative. If the medical expert states that by using unlawful substances you will be cured earlier, then there are two opinions of the scholars."⁽¹³⁾

Imam al-Haskafi says:

"The Scholars differed regarding the usage of haram medication. The apparent opinion in the (Hanafi) school is that it is haram. However it is said that it will be permissible when the medicine is known to be effective and there is no other alternative, just as there is a dispensation in drinking alcohol for a person dying of thirst, and the fatwa is given on this opinion."⁽¹⁴⁾

It has stated by the famous Hanafi School of thought:

"There is no harm in injecting a woman's milk in a man or to drink it for medicinal purpose."⁽¹⁵⁾

Thus, it is clear that we have been allowed to use even the prohibited things for medicinal purposes or when in need when no other alternative is present. Similarly, blood although when shed from human body is in impure form can be used for transfusion when in need.⁽¹⁶⁾ Imam shafi even said it can be sold out in a dish.⁽¹⁷⁾

Second thing that is mentioned commonly in a dispute regarding blood transfusion is that Man is the most precious and valuable Creation of Allah in universe. Human body has its own dignity which must not be violated. Just as Allah says:

"And we bestowed dignity on the children of 'Adam and provided them with rides on the land and in the sea, and provided them with a variety of good things and made them much superior to man"⁽¹⁸⁾

Removing a component of the body and donating it to someone else is like destroying the dignity and sanctity of human body. However, it should be considered that blood

transfusion does not require any surgical procedure. Since blood is usually removed through injection from the body the dignity of human body is thus not violated as no cutting or tearing of the body is involved in it, the way milk is removed from the breast although it is also a component of human body. Thus blood can be transfused in need.⁽¹⁹⁾

Another important myth regarding blood transfusion is its effect on marriage. if the transfusion took place among husband and wife, there is no effect on *nikah* or marriage in such case.⁽²⁰⁾ It must be cleared that suckling renders a person *Mahram* to another not the blood donation and suckling too not beyond the age of two years. Thus blood transfusion among husband and wife will have no effect on their marriage. Similarly no blood relation will be formed between the person donating blood and the person to whom the blood is being transfused. Islam has restricted relationship and the impermissibility to marry with lineage and fosterage.

Dr. Zakir Naik answers the following question: “Is it permitted in Islam for a male or female Muslim to donate blood to a Muslim or non-Muslim?” "As far as blood donation is concerned, if blood donation to the recipient is, blood donation is then permitted provided that the donor is healthy enough and does not donate a large quantity. Similarly donation will bring major benefit to the recipient, does not lead to the loss of the donor's life and is not made for money.

Concerning this matter, the Hay'at Kibaar al-'Ulama' (Council of Senior Scholars) stated the following:

1. It is permissible to donate blood, so long as this does not cause him any harm, when there is a need for it to help other Muslims
2. It is permissible to establish Islamic blood banks to receive and store donated blood, to be kept for any Muslim who may be in need of it, so long as no money is charged to the sick person or the people in charge of his affairs in return for this service. A blood bank should not be set up as a commercial enterprise or a means of making money, because it is in the public interest of the Muslims.⁽²¹⁾

The evidence derived from this proof tells us that if the recovery of the sick or injured person depends on a blood transfusion which he needs to save his life and that there is no other medicine or food that can do the same thing, then it is

permissible for him to receive a blood transfusion. In fact, this comes under the heading of nourishment, not medicine (using forbidden foodstuffs in cases of necessity is permissible, as in the case of a starving man eating dead meat).

With regard to the second point, the one from whom blood is taken, this should not result in any serious harm, because the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“There should be no causing harm or reciprocating harm.”

As regards the third point, which is the matter of whose opinion should be relied upon to decide whether a blood transfusion is needed, this should be a Muslim doctor. If that is not possible, we see nothing wrong with taking the word of a non-Muslim doctor, whether he is Jewish or Christian (or any other religion), so long as he is experienced in medicine and is trustworthy. The principle here is the saying of Holy Prophet which describes how the Prophet hired a man of Bani Deel as a skilled and experienced guide, although he was a follower of the pagan religion of Quraish-⁽²²⁾

When a patient becomes so sick that the only way for him to get better is to undergo a blood transfusion, and when doctors are at least confident of the benefits that will result, he may be treated in this fashion, even if the donor and the recipient belong to different religions. Blood from a disbeliever, even though he may be at war with the Muslims, can be donated to a Muslim. And Muslim blood may be donated to a disbeliever who is not at war with the Muslims.⁽²³⁾

It is unlawful to buy or sell blood. In this regard, Imam al-Kasani (D.1189 C) states:

“The sale of a woman's milk put in a bowl is invalid for two reasons: Firstly, milk is not considered wealth, thus it is impermissible to sell it. Secondly, it is part of a human body and all parts of a human are sacred, thus it is contrary to its honour and respect to disgrace it by trading in it.”⁽²⁴⁾

Some classical scholars (from the Shafi'i, Maliki & Hanbali schools) consider purity a pre-requisite for a valid sale.⁽²⁵⁾ However, in case of necessity, if one is unable to obtain blood except by purchasing it, then it will be permissible to purchase it, but the provider will still be sinful.⁽²⁶⁾

Today a large numbers of blood banks have been established where they store the blood and people can take the blood they need and also donate blood to be stored in blood bank there should be no selling of blood rather people must only donate their blood to blood banks.

Blood can be transfused to Non-Muslims the way it is transfused to Muslims, however we should avoid transfusing blood to non-muslim or a sinner or obtaining blood from them as there is a risk that their evil deeds will transfer to the person to whom the blood is being transfused, the way people don't like their child to be breastfed by transgressor or a sinner.

Conclusion

From the above discussions following results can be obtained:

1. When the survival of a patient depends upon blood transfusion and medical practitioner has advised him blood transfusion which will cure him then blood should be transfused.
2. If there is no harm to the donor in anyway and his health is not affected by the transfusion as Islam does not recommend harm to an individual while saving the life of other individual then blood transfusion should be carried out.
3. If there is no other alternative available except blood transfusion. If the health and survival of the patient depends only upon blood transfusion e.g patients who are brought to emergency department after road traffic accidents require an urgent blood transfusion due to huge amount of blood loss from their body.
4. If it is not for the sake of beautification or any other additional benefit. Blood transfusion should be carried out for some valid reason not just for gaining strength.
5. Blood can be bought for a patient in need but it is not correct to take money for it as no trading should be involved. Blood banks are established just to store blood; there should be no purchase of blood involved. People can donate their blood to banks.
6. Only the amount of blood needed should be transfused as transfusion of excessive amount of blood can create problems for both the donor and recipient.
7. Blood transfusion rules are the same for both Muslims and

8. non-Muslims but we should abstain from transfusing the blood of non-Muslim to our body as some scholars believe that their evil effects can affect our body as well. Thus the blood of sinner should not be transfused into one's body.

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