161799 - Ruling on cosmetic surgery to make one taller

the question

I have a growth problem and have not grown very tall, i am in my mid 20s and my height makes me feel really depressed i know it ist a major issue for most but for me it is and i dont want it done for beautification its very depressing being below average short. is it permissiable to increase height with cosmic surgery ?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Making a person taller is done by means of hormones and treating the factors that have made one short, or it may be done by means of surgery. There is nothing wrong with using the former method.

But with regard to surgery, it is done by breaking the bones and carries a risk of fibrosis of the muscles or infection. The basic principle is that it is haraam for a person to bring harm upon himself, unless it is for the purpose of medical treatment.

Ibn Hazm (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

They are unanimously agreed that it is not permissible for anyone to kill himself or to cut off any of his limbs or to cause pain to himself except in the case of medical treatment by cutting off the affected limb.

End quote from Maraatib al-Ijmaa‘, p. 157

This issue was addressed by Dr. Saalih ibn Muhammad al-Fawzaan (may Allah preserve him) in his letter to doctors entitled “Cosmetic surgery, a combined medical and fiqhi analysis,” in which he concluded that it is haraam.

Among other things he said:

It seems to me that it is haraam to carry out surgery for this purpose, and that is because of the following:

(a)

Increasing height by means of this technology depends on breaking healthy bones, and this is contrary to what is established of the sanctity of the body of a person who is protected in sharee‘ah, and the ruling that it is not permissible to transgress against it by any means so long as that is not for the purpose of necessary medical treatment. As for merely wanting to be taller, that is not sufficient justification for transgressing this sanctity.

And there is evidence to indicate that it is haraam to break bones in such cases, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Breaking the bone of the dead person is like breaking it when he was alive.” This hadeeth likens breaking the bones of a dead person to breaking the bones of a living person, which indicates that the prohibition on breaking the bones of the living person is a definitive and established ruling, hence breaking the bones of a dead person is likened to it. What is meant here is that both are haraam in principle, but they are not equally haraam, because transgression against the bones of a dead person is not like transgression against the bones of a living person in terms of qisaas (retaliatory punishment) and diyah (blood money), according to scholarly consensus.

(b)

Short stature is regarded as something normal among people and is not regarded as a defect in most cases, and surgery to change a characteristic that is regarded as normal may come under the heading of changing the creation of Allah, which the texts forbid, as stated above.

If we assume that shortness is not a normal characteristic, it cannot be treated and changed into a normal characteristic. That is because the appearance of the body will not be in the right proportions. It is the lower limbs that will be lengthened whilst the rest of the body remains short,

which will make the body appear abnormal, so this surgery will not change an abnormal characteristic into a normal characteristic, and if the lengthening is not a remedy to the deformity then there is no shar‘i justification for something that involves breaking healthy bones unnecessarily.

(c)

What is mentioned above of serious complications in this surgery, such as infection, severe chronic pain, and fibrosis of muscles, along with the possibility that the function of the muscles may be impaired, let alone the fact that the body’s appearance will not be in the right proportions – all of this means that it is not permissible to go ahead with it merely because one wants to look better and add a few centimetres to one’s height.

End quote from al-Jaraahaat al-Tajmeeliyyah, p. 322

Based on that, you should not worry about being short and you should understand that a person’s true beauty resides in his attitude and good conduct. The individual’s worth is based on good deeds, not good looks. So try to be accept your situation and what Allah has decreed for you, and look at those who are less than you in terms of physical well being and appearance, and you will realise the blessing that Allah has bestowed upon you.

We ask Allah to guide us and you, and to make us all steadfast.

And Allah knows best.