Jurisprudential and legal study of concealing messages and using of subliminal stimuli with emphasis on Islamic jurisprudence and Iranian law^{*}

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Abstract

Although it is the responsibility of the experimental and psychological sciences to prove the effect of hidden messages in advertisements, films, music, etc., it is necessary for jurists to examine the verdict of the issue, assuming it is effective, and to provide the appropriate legislation. In the present study, with the descriptive-analytical method and library data collection tools, the fields of relationship between the issue of secrecy with Islamic jurisprudence and Iranian laws were identified and the mandatory sentence of subliminal stimuli and the resulting civil and criminal responsibilities were investigated. According to the findings of this study, concealment of useful messages with the consent of the audience is often permissible, and the concealment of criminal messages is prohibited. Also, the effect of stimuli on the legal actions of the addressee with the realization of titles such as compulsion (al'iijbar), coercion (al'iikrah), deception (alghurwr) or fraud (altadlis) causes special sentences.

Keywords

Subliminal stimuli, Hidden messages, Islamic jurisprudence, Iranian law.

A. Introduction

While the impact of covert messages in popular culture and sometimes in the scientific community is a challenge between affirmation and denial, their use in advertising, television shows, movies, and music is on the rise. Proving the effectiveness of these messages is the responsibility of the experimental and psychological sciences, but jurists are required to examine the ruling of the issue - assuming effectiveness - and provide appropriate legislation. This issue has not yet been explicitly addressed in Iranian law, and only Article 15 of the guidelines and set of rules for the production of radio and television advertisements states: "Advertisements should not be pronounced using technical measures or the use of short-term images or other methods to affect the subconscious of the audience and the desired message should be conveyed to the viewers without giving the necessary information and affect their minds "[1]. Also, no jurisprudential and legal research related to this issue has been observed so far. In this study, after identifying the areas of concealment with jurisprudence and law, these cases will be examined as follows: mandatory sentence of concealment (a. Regardless of the content and b. According to the content), crimes committed from non-concealment, legal actions resulting from non-concealment and damage to the audience from non-concealment.

B. Discussion

1) Statement of the problem

The purpose of concealment is to include a hidden message among ordinary and overt messages. A secret message is information that does not immediately and directly attract attention, and its conscious understanding requires precision, interpretation, and possibly decryption.

Message concealment is based on the idea of subliminal stimuli.

Subliminal stimuli, in contrast to transcendental stimuli, refers to any sensory stimulus that is below an individual's absolute threshold for conscious perception [2].

The concept of sub-threshold perception is therefore noteworthy in that it says that people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by a stimulus that is perceived despite not being aware of it (see, for example, [3]).

Subliminal stimuli are generally classified into both visual and auditory forms.

1. Visual: Visual stimuli are images that pass in front of the viewer's eyes sooner than they are received or are secretly embedded in the images.

2. Auditory: Auditory stimuli are messages that are whispered at a slower pitch than the person's hearing threshold, or that are returned to the listener in a process called "inversion."

The truth is that the effectiveness of some types of cryptography, such as inversion, has been severely denied. In an experiment in 1988 by T. Oh you. Moore found no evidence that listeners, consciously or unconsciously, are influenced by the content of backward messages [4]. Some studies have also revealed transient effects on thought [5].

However, the latest brain imaging techniques show that subliminal stimuli activate specific areas of the brain despite participants' inattention [6].

However, it seems that more evidence is needed to refute or prove this idea. But, in any case, proving or refuting these hypotheses does not interfere with the jurisprudential and legal debate; because jurisprudential and legal rulings are presented assuming the subject is realized. Therefore, this study, assuming the effectiveness of sub-liminal stimuli, seeks to examine its jurisprudential and legal rulings from the sender and receiver of these messages.

2) Some legal reflections

Following public sensitivities, subliminal advertising was banned in 1958 in Britain and Australia and on American radio and television networks [7].

In 1974, a statement from the American Telecommunications Association described subliminal advertising as "public decency" and "deceptive," banning such advertising in Canada [3].

At the same time, a study by the United Nations concluded that "the cultural implications of indoctrination are below the threshold of a major threat to human rights worldwide"[3]. Under California's Successful 1983 Bill, distributing files containing unsolicited messages without prior notice constitutes an invasion of privacy for which the distributor can be sued.

In the same year, the Arkansas Act was passed unanimously, requiring several music albums containing hidden messages to be labeled with warning labels, although the bill was returned to the state Senate and rejected [8].

In 1985, after two young men committed suicide, their family blamed the suicide on listening to a song with the words "do it" hidden behind it. But the judge ruled that this could not be imagined without the "power of suggestion" and that young people would not do so unless they really intended to do so [9].

3) The edict of concealment regardless of the content:

Regardless of whether the content of the concealed message is criminal or not, the question arises whether the mere concealment of the messages and the creation and distribution of subliminal stimuli is obligatorily forbidden and can be criminalized for?

It seems that this issue can be examined in several ways:

3-1. Privacy:

Privacy in jurisprudence means something that is forbidden for the non-owner to approach [10] except with the permission or consent of its owner.

But the combination of privacy is a new term that has been introduced in the executive regulations of the Law on Dissemination and Free Access to Information as an area of a person's private life that he expects others not to violate without his consent or prior consent or by law or judicial authorities; Such as physical privacy, entering, watching, listening and accessing personal information.

Important teachings of Islamic law can be related to privacy in modern terms. In fact, many prohibitions in Islamic verses and hadiths is to protect privacy. Absenteeism, eavesdropping, entering homes without permission, and spreading prostitution about others. Therefore, various rational and narrative arguments have been presented on the necessity of respecting privacy and the prohibition of violating it [11].

The realm of thoughts and ideas is one of the most important realms of privacy, and it is disgusting for intruders to enter and explore this realm; What is more disgusting is that someone wants to secretly penetrate a person's subconscious using certain technology and capture and change his thoughts and ideas without him realizing it.

3-2. Denial of complete monarchy and restriction of individual freedom

According to the rule of domination, individuals have control over their property, possessions, rights and self, and therefore, firstly, they have the right to any possession that is not against the Shari'a, and secondly, no one has the right to disturb this monarchy and without the consent of the owner, incur the possession that is contrary to it. This rule, which has been proven by the four arguments (book, tradition, reason, consensus) [12], also includes self-control and rights and is one of the most important principles of individual freedom [13]. Undoubtedly, infiltrating into man and capturing his thoughts and beliefs without his knowledge and consent is a violation of this monarchy.

3-3. the prohibition of oppression

Undoubtedly, oppression is one of the clearest examples of ugly reason, and human intellect, without the help of the Shari'a, condemns the oppressor and considers him deserving of punishment. This definite rational ruling is also the discoverer of the religious ruling [14]. Therefore, if the subliminal stimuli are such that they are considered as an example of oppression from the point of view of the wise, such as leading to influencing the thoughts and ideas of a person without his attention and desire, and restricting his will and wasting his rights, this can also be ruled as prohibited.

3-4. The Prohibition of harms

The prohibition of harm is one of the indisputable rules of Sharia, which is indicated by rational, Qur'anic and narrative evidences [15] [16].

Article 40 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran also states: "No one can use the exercise of his rights as a means of harming others or violating the public interest."

Since the concept of harm is customary, if the use of subliminal stimuli of mystics is generally considered harm to others, they are forbidden. However, it seems that in the current practice, the use of these stimuli is not considered harmful regardless of the content of the message; unless the exposure to these stimuli causes serious damage to the nerves and mental disorders and things like that that need to be considered from the point of view of the wise.

3-5. Analysis:

One. The requirements of the primary and secondary rule. According to the basic rules, the use of subliminal stimuli and concealed messages will, in itself, be forbidden if one of the titles "violation of privacy", "violation of the monarchy and freedom of another", "oppression" or "harm" applies. It should be noted, however, that this rule applies to the original sentence and, like most initial sentences, is exceptional. Therefore, the realization of secondary topics such as necessity, urgency, and maintenance of the system can be considered specific to this primary rule. For example, if a physician is forced to use such stimuli to treat his patient without his knowledge, the basic rule of prohibition is removed.

An issue that needs to be addressed here is the permission to use positive and useful messages. Are these cases also subject to the basic rule of prohibition or exception? It may be said that the use of these messages is not subject to the above criminal titles such as oppression and harm, etc., and they are excluded if they are involved with the construction of reason or arguments for promoting virtues and calling for good (such as verse 104 of Al-Imran); But it seems to be a little difficult to achieve the foundation of reason in these cases, because it is doubtful that the reason permits the dissemination of goodness in any way, and in this case, it should be sufficient to its full extent. With regard to the inclusion of arguments for goodwill, it may also be claimed that those arguments have been withdrawn in the usual way;

Unless it is said that when deviant groups use these techniques extensively to promote their deviant thoughts and ideas, the prohibition of doing so in terms of virtues is to leave room for those evil groups and lead to the triumph of right over wrong. Which is certainly not to the satisfaction of the holy shari'a. But another problem that arises is that if everyone reserves the right to use these hidden stimuli, at least in terms of the benefits and the right concepts, chaos ensues; because human beings typically believe in the legitimacy and usefulness of their thoughts and ideas. Now, imagine the ruling forces, the influential people

of the society, the members of the media, the parties and groups that have wide possibilities, trying to inject and impose their beliefs - which in their opinion are good and valuable concepts - in this way! But it seems that these forms do not apply, at least in the case of public concepts whose goodness is rational and on which the common sense agrees, such as the concepts of "respect for the rights of others", "good morals and association", "fidelity and avoidance". Betrayal "," Kindness to parents and relatives "and

Two. The role of personal satisfaction in deciding this issue is very important; Because most of the reasons mentioned are rooted in the sanctity of others and the protection of his rights, and therefore, if he is exposed to these stimuli with his knowledge and permission, it is not prohibited and is not considered a violation of privacy and oppression; Because, in fact, he himself waives his rights in matters such as complete monarchy over himself and is subject to rules such as "abrogation of the right" [17] and "action against himself" [17]. Of course, in the case of self-harm, if the purpose is serious material and psychological harm, consent has no role in the ruling, because basically man himself has no right to inflict such harm on himself [18] or to give up or hand over to someone else. Therefore, such harm is forbidden both to himself and to others; except in cases of urgency and conflict with more important matters such as treatment and survival.

Three. The role of the warning label is important with the explanations given. In cases where the message itself is permissible in terms of content and its sub-threshold provocations do not pose serious risks and physical and mental harm to the audience, it is possible to "install a warning label" on the product to the effect that: "This product contains hidden messages or subliminal stimuli that is not normally recognizable but may affect you during use, ", and there is no reason to prohibit this category; Because the person has voluntarily been subjected to these influences, which are inherently permissible.

Four: What is the practical principle in this matter, assuming that the implication of the above arguments is considered incomplete? At first glance, it seems that since doubt is essentially in a duty, one should be acquitted (the principle of exemption: asalat albara'a); Because in this case, we have doubts about the current permission or prohibition about which no text has been entered, and such as "the doubt in the prohibition in which there is no reason", which according to the Scholars of Usul Fiqh is a channel of principle of exemption (asalat albara'a) [18]. But with a little care, it becomes clear that this is a case of doubt in important matters which is the conduit of the precautionary principle (asalat alaihtiat) [18]; Because doubt is about the permission and impermissibility of taking possession of the souls and rights of others, and without a doubt, the Shari'a is not satisfied with violating this important matter by invoking doubt.

4) The edict of concealment with criminal content

Assuming that concealment is permissible per se, but it will undoubtedly be prohibited if it has criminal content and causes illegitimacy; Some of these matters are: cooperating on sin, spreading prostitution, enjoining denial, arousing lust, misguidance, insulting the sacred, and strengthening infidelity, polytheism and falsehood.

For example, only in the narration of the gift of the intellect from Imam Sadegh (AS),

anything that is the source of pure corruption or strengthens polytheism and infidelity, or strengthens some of the chapters of error or falsehood, or weakens some of the chapters of truth, all seizures in It (including teaching, learning, making or practicing it and dealing with it) has been declared haram [19].

In the list of instances of criminal content subject to Article 21 of the Computer Crimes Law [20] many of these matters are also mentioned, in some of which expressions such as incitement and encouragement are specified, including:

Inciting, encouraging, persuading, threatening or inviting corruption and prostitution and committing crimes against chastity or sexual perversions (paragraph b of Article 15 of the Computer Crimes Law); Publishing content containing incitement, or invitation to violence and suicide. (Article 15 of the Computer Crimes Law); Encouraging, inciting and facilitating the commission of crimes that have a public aspect, such as disorderly conduct, vandalism of public property, bribery, embezzlement, fraud, drug trafficking, alcohol trafficking, etc. (Article 43 of the Islamic Penal Code approved in 1996).

Undoubtedly, committing any of the above matters is considered haram and if they are criminalized in the law, they are also considered a legal crime and can be punished; otherwise, the ruler of Sharia can criminalize it based on the rule of "ta'zir for the whole of the Muharram" [16]. Of course, this sentence is valid if the subliminal provocations do not cause the effect on others and as a result, their criminal behavior is not realized, otherwise it can lead to the realization of the deputy in the crime and the instigator will be sentenced to the deputy.

A similar distinction is stated in Article 25 of the Press Law: "Anyone who explicitly incites and encourages the people through the press to commit a crime against the internal security or foreign policy of a country provided for in the General Penal Code, if there is any effect on it, will be sentenced to the punishment of the deputy for the same crime, and if he is not affected, he will be treated according to the law of punishments according to the rule of Sharia."

Also, according to Article 126 of the Islamic Penal Code adopted in 2013, "anyone who incites, threatens, bribes, or incites another to commit a crime, or by conspiracy, deception, or abuse of power, causes or facilitates the occurrence of a crime." It is considered a crime. However, with regard to the application of this article, it seems that - as will be discussed later - in the event of the weakness of the perpetrator, the instigator is primarily responsible, not the deputy.

5) Investigation of crimes committed due to concealment by another

Previous discussions have focused on the creation and dissemination of hidden messages and incitement with substimuli messages. But the current debate is about the status of criminal behaviors that are formed as a result of concealment in the audience (those provoked). Suppose that subliminal stimuli contain incitement to commit criminal acts and that some individuals commit crimes as a result of these incitements.

In this case, the instigator is said to be the perpetrator; and the stimulus person is called the cause or causer and the issue is considered as the cause and director in terms of society.

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The well-known jurisprudential view is that the steward is considered the main responsible unless it is a strong cause. The realization of things such as compulsion, coercion, deception, childhood and lack of intellect in the manager are the factors that make him weak, and cause strong [21]. Of course, according to Article 526 of the Islamic Penal Code in the community of cause and effect, "the factor to which the crime is documented is the guarantor, and if the crime is documented to all factors, they are equally guarantors, unless the effect of the perpetrators' behavior is different. They are responsible. "If the mastermind in the crime is involuntary, ignorant, insignificant or insane, and the like, he is only the cause, the guarantor." In fact, in these cases, the steward, as an instrument in hand, is considered the cause for the realization of the action and, therefore, is the main cause of the crime. Of course, it should be noted that according to the well-known opinion [21], and Article 375 of the Islamic Penal Code adopted in 2014, the realization of reluctance is not considered another murder license, but in less than murder, it absolves responsibility. But if he is traditionally the strong steward of the cause, he himself will be responsible for the act and the cause will ultimately play the role of deputy in the crime, as explained earlier.

The discussion of the cause-and-effect community is also about the loss of other people's property, because the jurists have considered the loss as both directing and causation [22]. Article 332 of the Civil Code also states: "If one person causes the loss of money and the other becomes the director of the loss of that property, the director is responsible and not the cause unless it is a strong cause in a way that the mystics document the loss to him." Of course, it should be noted that criminal liability and punishment for loss depend on the knowledge and intent of the perpetrator, but civil liability and compensation, according to jurisprudence [22] and civil law (Article 328) also includes cases of ignorance and wastefulness. Therefore, if the addressee commits loss of property due to subliminal fires and the addressee, who is considered to be in charge of loss, is considered weak due to matters such as childhood, insanity and reluctance, the cause (the stimulus person) is absolutely responsible for compensation but criminal liability. Because of this causal waste of other people's property, he is dependent on his knowledge and intention.

6) Review of legal actions resulting from concealment by another

Assume that the subliminal stimuli contain incitement to commit legal acts and that some individuals commit those acts as a result of these incitements; For example, make a deal. This assumption is more prevalent in advertisements containing subliminal stimuli.

In this section, the realization of several situations in the audience has a jurisprudential and legal effect:

First: compulsion (al'iijbar). If the subliminal stimuli are strong enough to force a person; like some cases of hypnosis, in this case, due to the loss of will (al'iirada), the legal act is basically considered invalid because the will is one of the main pillars of transactions and without it the transaction will not be realized [23] [24]. According to Article 195 of the Civil Code, if a person trades while intoxicated or unconscious or asleep, that transaction is void due to lack of intention. The phrase is due to the lack of intention, it is clear that the reason for the invalidity of the contract is the lack of intention, and therefore in any other

case where the intention is revoked, the same ruling applies.

Second: coercion (al'iikrah). If the provocations are such that they lead to coercion in the addressee and force him to make a deal, in this case, although there is will, but there is no consent, and therefore the deal is ineffective. Therefore, after the decline of coercion and the return of the person to normal, if the transaction is allowed, it will be effective, otherwise it will be void [25].

Third: deception (alghurwr). According to the "rule of deception", if the subliminal stimuli deceives the addressee and causes him / her damages, according to the "rule of deception", the deceived person (almaghrur) can refer to the deceiver (alghar) and claim his damages. Of course, the definitive position of this rule is where the deceiver is aware of the deception and the deceived person is unaware of it [26]. Although some have not considered the deceiver's awareness as a condition [15]. Of course, it is not unlikely that a distinction can be made between criminal liability (prohibition and punishment) and civil liability (guarantee); because, as mentioned, the first sentence is conditional on knowledge and intention, unlike the second sentence.

On the other hand, if the customer, as a result of deception, unknowingly trades something other than the real price and suffers a huge loss which is generally not tolerable, " great lesion" (alghabn alfahish) has occurred and the injured person has the right to cancellation the transaction (khiar alghabn) [27]. According to Article 416 of the Civil Code: "Any interlocutor who has gross fraud in the transaction can terminate the transaction after knowing the fraud." Of course, it is clear that if terminated, he cannot go to the deceiver and seek damages.

Also, if the deception operation was carried out by the seller himself, "fraud" (altadlis) has occurred and the customer has the right to cancellation the transaction (khiar altadlis) [27]. According to Articles 438 and 439 of the Civil Code: Fraud is an operation that deceives the party to the transaction and if the seller has cheated, the customer will have the right to cancel the sale.

7) Investigate the audience's harm from non-concealment

If only subliminal stimuli, without the mediation of something else, cause harm to the audience, such as causing serious damage to his nerves or causing mental disorders and the like, the problem will take different forms:

One. Loss of life: If these stimuli lead to the death of the addressee, if the perpetrator intended to kill or his act was typically fatal or lethal to the addressee and the instigator was aware of this situation, he is subject to intentional homicide (qisas) Otherwise the blood money will be paid to it.

This sentence also applies to crimes less than murder [28].

Of course, in both cases, the guarantee is in a place where the addressee himself was not aware of these dangers, otherwise he himself - who is considered the steward - was responsible for being strong and, in fact, committed suicide or self-harm against himself.

Two. Material loss: If the subliminal stimuli directly inflict material damage (other than a crime on the soul) on the addressee, the perpetrator is a guarantor in terms of the rule of

"al'iitlaf and altasbayb" (Inflicting financial damage on another - whether directly or indirectly - creates a guarantee), unless the addressee is aware of the loss in terms of the rule of action [17], no one is its guarantor.

Three. Moral damage: Moral damage is a damage that affects the dignity and honor of a person or his relatives [29]. Even things like being away from family, suffering, and mental anguish can be considered spiritual harm. In any case, such damages can be claimed with the same condition as stated above, according to Article 1 of the Civil Liability Law (approved in 1960).

Of course, if moral damages are not traditionally considered property, it is difficult to prove the guarantee with the rule of al'iitlaf; because its subject is the loss and compensation of property [22]. But due to the customaryness of concepts such as: property and compensation, something that was not property or could not be considered compensable at a certain time and place, may be considered property at another time and place or even material compensation; Such as loss of life in cases such as the illegal or erroneous imprisonment of a defendant for which an amount is now set in some countries for the length of his imprisonment; Or material damage in exchange for lost beauty, which at least reduces the suffering of the victim.

On the other hand, compensation is not necessarily financial, and Article 10 of the Civil Liability Law also refers to the elimination of damages through means such as requiring an apology and publishing a verdict in the press and the like. Finally, it should be said: the rule of al'iitlaf is not the only document of guarantee and for example, we can refer to the rule of no harm according to some principles [18] and other narrations that explicitly consider damage as the subject of guarantee [19].

C. Conclusion

1. It is the responsibility of the experimental and psychological sciences to prove the effect of subliminal stimuli, but it is necessary for jurists to examine the verdict of the issue - assuming it is effective - and to provide appropriate legislation.

2. According to the original ruling, the use of subliminal stimuli will be prohibited if one of the titles "violation of privacy", "violation of the monarchy and freedom of others", "oppression" or "harm" applies. But the realization of secondary titles such as necessity, urgency, and maintenance of the system is specific to this ruling.

3. The permission to conceal useful messages, without the realization of secondary titles, and merely citing generalities such as "invitation to good" is problematic, except in the case of public concepts to which public good is concerned.

4. In cases where the content of the concealed message is not criminal and does not involve harm to the recipient, these messages can undoubtedly be used with the consent of the recipient. A warning label can accomplish this.

5. Assuming doubt about the license, the precautionary principle applies to important matters.

6. If the subliminal stimuli have criminal content, the person deserves punishment; and if provocations lead to the realization of those criminal behaviors of others, in addition to the

punishment of incitement, depending on the circumstances, the instigator may be considered as the deputy or even the main perpetrator of the crime.

7. If the addressee- due to subliminal stimuli, while for reasons such as childhood, insanity and coercion, - is considered weaker than the motivator, he/she is not responsible for compensation; rather, the motivator is the guarantor. Of course, the criminal responsibility of the inciting person for this causal loss of another's property depends on his/her knowledge and intention.

8. If the subliminal stimuli motivate individuals to commit certain legal acts and transactions, if the "compulsion" (al'iijbar) or "coercion" (al'iikrah) is true, his transactions are "invalid" (albatil) and "ineffective" (ghyr alnnafidh), respectively. Also, the realization of the title of "deception"(alghurwr) causes the deceived person to have the right to refer to the deceiver (stimulus). Titles such as "loss" (alghabn) and fraud (altadlis) in transactions also create a right to cancellation the transaction.

9. If merely subliminal stimuli cause harm to the addressee without the mediation of something else, the motivating person will be the guarantor, whether it is a loss of life, financial or moral; unless the addressee himself has used it despite being aware of these dangers.

10. It is worthwhile to conduct a similar study based on other legal systems in order to increase the richness of this discussion by presenting this issue on different bases of civil and criminal liability of those systems.

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