

Cloning claim prompts call for ban

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The claim by a controversial company linked to a UFO sect that it has produced the world's first human baby clone has prompted calls for cloning to be outlawed in the United States.

The chair of a leading American bioethics committee told the BBC the US should "come down very hard on people who want to cross this boundary between procreation and manufacture".

US-based company Clonaid says it has produced a healthy cloned baby girl, nicknamed Eve by scientists, born by Caesarean section on Thursday to a 31-year-old US mother.

Chairman of the US president's council on bioethics Leon Kass said that the practice was unethical and should be outlawed.

Although the House of Representatives passed a bill to ban all cloning last year, the bill has not passed through the Senate and has not become law.

'Infinite cycle'

Clonaid is linked to a sect called the Raelians, whose founder, Claude Vorihon describes himself as a prophet and calls himself Rael.

The Raelians believe humans are the result of a genetic engineering project run by super intelligent extra-terrestrials.

"This is a good step, but it's not the goal. The goal is to give human beings eternal life," said Rael.

"Step two will be through the discovery of accelerated growth process, to be able from a cell from your body, to make an adult clone of yourself in a few hours with a special technology.

"Ultimately, we will create life in the laboratory, like it was done for us, on other planets, and the people who we'll create will look at us as gods, so this is an infinite cycle, if you like," he said.

Race to clone

Clonaid has been racing against the Italian fertility doctor Severino Antinori to produce the first baby clone.

Dr Antinori has claimed that one of his patients will give birth to a baby clone in January.

Clonaid's has not so far put forward any proof for its claim and the location of the alleged birth has been kept secret.

The DNA to be cloned was taken from the mother's skin cell, Clonaid said.

The company says that independent scrutiny and DNA testing of mother and child would be allowed in "eight or nine days".

But BBC science correspondent Richard Black says most scientists doubt Clonaid's ability to clone a human and their motives, pointing to the company's intention to charge around \$200,000 for each cloned child.

Questions

1. In your opinion, what do you think the purpose of human cloning?
2. What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of human cloning?
3. Do you agree cloning people for exchanging organs when you are sick?
4. Do you want to have your own cloning?
5. If human cloning is allowed, where do you think they can live?
6. How do you get along with your cloning?
7. If you fall in love with a cloning person, do you want to marry him/her?
8. Whether cloning people have human rights?
9. Do you think if cloning people will counterattack?
10. Do you agree to clone human babies?