Con Euthanasia Essay, Research Paper

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Con Euthanasia

The word euthanasia means the intentional termination of life by another person at the implicit or explicit request of the person who dies. In moral, ethical or religious terms euthanasia has many meanings and forms. The term Passive Euthanasia is hastening the death of a person by withdrawing some form of support or not putting the patient on respirator (act of omission), and letting nature to take its course. Another type of euthanasia that is Active Euthanasia involves causing the death of a person through a direct action (act of omission, patient intentionally killed). There are also division in active euthanasia one is Assisted Suicide in which somebody else help the patient actively to terminates his life and another one is Physician- Assisted Suicide in which physician provides the means and patient killed himself. Active Euthanasia has also been divided in another three categories: (a) Voluntary – in which patients will it and request the termination of his or her life, (b) Involuntary- in which patient does not will it; patient refuses the termination of his or her life, (c) Non-voluntary- in which patients will is not known, because of his or her incompetence. I think the distinction that has been shown in different kind of euthanasia is irrelevant because in any of these cases consequences is killing oneself and another person, and according to divine command theory killing is morally impermissible or wrong.

In assisted suicide physician or somebody else kills the patient where as in physician-assisted suicide the physician and the patient together kill the patient. Some people might say in physician-assisted suicide physician does not kill the patient he only serves the means. Now what if a person gives a loaded gun to a child by knowing that it might become the reason of his death. Unfortunately the child pulled the trigger and causes his (child) death. Now can we say that the man is not responsible for the death of the child because he did not kill the child, he just only serve the mean of his death! From this analogy we can say that in physician- assisted suicide, the physician also responsible for the patient s death, in other words the death of the patient fulfilled by the both patient and physician. So to make it simpler we will say that there is no difference between any kinds of active euthanasia. All term we have used to different kind of euthanasia has only one consequence that is killing , and according to divine command theory killing is impermissible. For example, in Islam holy Qur an states:

Take no life which Allah made sacred otherwise than in the course of justice.

Qur an also states that:

Do not kill ( or destroy) yourselves, for verily Allah has been to you most merciful. (Qur an 4:29)

The concept of a life not worthy of living does not exist in Islam. Since we did not create ourselves, we do not own our bodies, and attempting to kill oneself is crime in Islam as well as grave sin. Also there is argument offered by Christians that advise against and individual seeking suicide, for what so ever reason:

Life is a gift from God and each individual [is] it s Stewart.

That only God can start a life, and only God should be allowed to end one. An individual who commits any form of euthanasia is committing sin. For it belongs to God alone to pronounce sentence of death and life,

I will kill and I will make to live (Deut. 32:39)

Also God does not send us any experience that we cannot handle. God supports people in suffering, and to actively seek an end to one s life would represent a lack of trust in God.

In Summa Theologica, St. Thomas Aquinas gives four arguments against the permissibility of killing oneself or other. The first argument is based on divine command theory- it cites the st. Augustine s argument from The City of God, that killing violates the 6th commandment, Thou shalt not kill . The second argument is based on natural law or the natural purpose of a thing: active euthanasia is wrong since it is contrary to the natural life asserting purpose of humans. We have a natural tendency to love ourselves and any kind of suicide goes against that tendency. Aquinas third argument against suicide is Utilitarian type argument: assisted suicide or physician- assisted suicide is not justified because of the greater social harm that is done. Like Aristotle staes:

Suicide is contrary to the rule of life. ( Nicomachean Ethics, bk.5 ch.11)

Aquinas forth argument is based on divine command theory: any kind of suicide is wrong since it is a gift from God. Our lives are property that is owned by God, and we are merely the trustees of that property. Hence whoever takes his own life, commit a great sin since it opposes God s command:

I will kill and I will make to live ( Deut: xxxii. 39)

From the above discussion we can concede that active Euthanasia is wrong or impermissible according to divine command theory. Now some people might question

Moreover, there are many reasons why any form of euthanasia should be morally impermissible because it might go from a right to die to a duty to die . Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado said that,

The terminally ill elderly have a duty to die and get out of the way.

We definitely do not want elder people to feel this way. Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide are unethical because we do not want elder people to feel that they will not received medical care because they are unproductive or surplus . Also the moral permission and legalization of assisted suicide would itself send a message that suicide is socially acceptable response to terminal or incurable disease. Some patients will feel pressured and obligated to this option and feel pressured to relief their loved ones of the burden of care. Those patients who do not want to commit suicide may feel obligated to justify their decision to continue living. If euthanasia was morally permissible and legal there are a lot of people who would think that when a person is definitely going to die, why waste money on a dead person when we could use the same money to help a live person. Would you want to be the one to give up the last moment with your loved one to help the health care budget? Definitely not! Also today there are so many pills to relieve pain, so why should anyone miss a special moment with loved one due to pain. In the words of Mother Teresa,

Death with dignity is to die with grace, in the knowledge that [you] are loved.

At last I want to say that when people sit back and say active euthanasia should be legalized, what they are imagining is a patient in unremitting pain. Eventually when they get to the point, that s not what they are interested in; what they want is pain relief not death. Today medical science has technologically improved and pain can be relieved by medicine. So, we do not see any point to give moral permission to any kind of euthanasia.

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