

Ending Life Decision And Religion's Interpretation

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Introduction

George's malady reflects symptoms of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), which is a degenerative disease that affects brain functioning of George. ALS has direct impacts on the nerve cells and spinal cord, which are also linked to the muscles. The tests confirmed that George had ALS, which poses risks of muscle weakness and other issues related to movement. The motor neuron of George exhibits risks of deterioration and muscle atrophy, which are severe conditions that can lead to death. There is no treatment available for ALS. The life expectancy is five to ten years. Further risks associated with the disease involve the inability to speak, eat and breathe. The malady does not affect other sensations, including touch, taste, hearing, and smell. The treatment only slows the degenerative process but does not provide a permanent solution. The risks of physical disability are high, as George will need a wheelchair for moving. Losing mobility and speech are ordinary prospects for the future. To avoid such pain and torture, George seeks the option of voluntary euthanasia. Ending life decision puts the patient in a conflicting situation, as he needs to choose between right and wrong.

Religion's Interpretation of the Condition

It is important for the patient to consider religious views when deciding about taking voluntary euthanasia. The two religions that explain the ending life decisions include Christianity and Buddhism. Both religions provide views that identify suffering as part of human life. The interpretation of George's malady according to Christianity is a way of God's test. Christianity presents two views regarding suffering; the first one associates pain with sins as it identifies it as a punishment. God punishes humans by inflicting pain and suffering. The second view identifies suffering as God's way of testing people and their endurance. Both views support the view that humans must not run away from pain but endure it. Sufferings work in a mysterious way, taking people towards unknowable good. The Bible mentions that Christians should rejoice in suffering because it produces endurance, hope and character" (Romans 5:3-5). The quote from the bible supports the view that suffering is to bring tolerance, which suggests a continuation of enduring pain. The meaning of suffering is also to seek trust in God and accept it as his decision. Redeeming suffering leads to the transformation of humans, reflecting a strong side of pain.

Buddhism also promotes the concept of suffering by recognizing it as a noble deed. Dhammapada mentions that "by oneself, the evil is done, and it is oneself who suffers; by oneself, the evil is not

done, and by one's self-one becomes pure" (Dhammapada). The text reveals that humans must accept suffering because it is part of purifying oneself. Through suffering and pain, one manages to attain the highest forms of purity. Lama Surya Das mentions, "because there are myriad karmic causes conspiring to bring about any particular event, which then becomes a cause for other effects to take place" (Das). The comparison of Christian and Buddhist viewpoints depicts that the condition of George involves pain and suffering, but the suffering is to test him and his endurance.

Value of Life According to Religion

Christianity and Buddhism discourage the decision to end one's life and represent strong views against taking one's life. To respect life, George must continue with his life and not end his life. Buddhism confers the belief that it is immoral to take one's life even if an individual suffers from pain or disease. Human beings must continue to suffer pain in pursuit of virtue and noble deeds. George must continue suffering under the influence of religious teachings and their emphasis on respecting life. Buddhism is against the idea of ending life to overcome pain and suffering. George's intentions of taking voluntary euthanasia reflect an immoral act due to his decision to act against God's will. Buddhist teachings emphasize on respecting life and accepting suffering as part of God's will. Christian view on life states that it is a gift of God and ending life is a sin according to the religion. God has the authority to give life to humans, and he has the authority to take lives. The Bible mentions, "and if God were to withdraw his breath from humans, they would perish" (Job 34:14-15). Christianity denies the idea of ending lives irrespective of the suffering and pain associated with it. The Bible also recognizes the act of shedding blood as wrong and unethical. Teachings of the Bible value the life of a person and stress living it until death. Both religions value life, and in George's situation, they reject the idea of voluntary euthanasia. Ending life is an act against religious views (Cheng, 2017).

Decision of Euthanasia

The decision of voluntary euthanasia depends on the worldwide views of Christianity and Buddhism. Christian religion focuses on the teachings of Jesus, and it recognizes the existence of God. Religion associates the life of humans with God's will and power. Without God's will, humans never enter the world. He is the supreme authority for taking the lives of humans. Humans have a responsibility to follow the teachings of religion and follow principles. Religious views restrict humans from ending life, as Christianity recognizes suffering as part of human life. Christian views represent the belief that humans must live their lives in wholeness and emphasize the process of dying. The belief promotes the idea that humans must live their lives until the end and undergo the dying process created by God. The belief emphasizes the view that God has the authority to take people's lives, so acting against his will results in rejection of the belief. Christianity also recognizes the act of ending lives as sinful because God does not allow humans to make decisions regarding their lives. They need to complete the lives that take them to unknowable good. Buddhism also rejects the idea of ending a life

due to the pain and suffering involved in the survival of George with ALS. One view of Buddhism supports the decision of euthanasia as it stresses avoiding mistreating the human body. Buddhists are against the idea of self-mortification and treating the human body in a manner that results in pain and suffering. The idea supports the killing of George because it ends suffering (Stempsey, 1997).

Moral Interpretation

The decision on morality and immorality depends on worldwide religious views. Christianity presents the same solutions to deal with George's sickness, but there are some contradicting views. The central view of Christianity on the decision to end life reflects the role of God and his existence. Euthanasia is immoral under Christian views as it gives authority to humans regarding their lives, while religion states that only God can bring death. The view that sufferings lead to the purity of humans and is God's tool to assess human patience also recognizes the decision as immoral. Buddhism represents different views regarding the decision of euthanasia. The act of taking life is unethical when it is for suffering because Buddhists believe that it leads to self-purity. According to Buddhism, taking lives is unethical because the act is against the teachings of religion. According to the second view, which stresses avoiding pain and mistreatment of the human body, choosing euthanasia is ethical. The option will prevent George from suffering, and Buddhism is against the suffering of humans. Christianity does not support the decision of euthanasia, identifying the ending-life decision as unethical and wrong.

Personal Views

As I am a Christian, so my opinions reflect the influence of Christianity. I think the Christian belief system is useful in understanding the importance of life and the value of humans. The decision to end life involves a complex debate as an individual engages himself in a conflicting situation. When I put myself in the situation of George, I can better understand the decision and identify how my religion would influence my decision. I believe that the desire to end worldly suffering reflects human weakness that is against the idea of the Christian belief system. Christians must act in the best possible way that reflects the influence of religion. Acting against the religious ideology and belief system is wrong and sinful. I think that Christians must not think about the present world only but also about the secondary world. However, I believe that practically, it is difficult for the people undergoing suffering to deny the option of euthanasia, which leads to the ending of pain. If I had to decide on a nurse, I would leave the decision to the patient because it is their life, and they have the right to choose. If I were in the same situation, I would try to avoid pain and find an escape, thus motivating me to choose euthanasia.

Conclusion

Christianity and Buddhism provide different views regarding George's situation regarding ending life decisions. As George is a Christian so, under their religious belief system, he must not choose the option of euthanasia because it is against religion and the teachings of the bible. The patient needs to consider religion before deciding about taking euthanasia. Religion helps determine an ethical course of action.

References

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