

Buddhism

Attitudes to Buddhism regarding Euthanasia vary. Many Buddhists oppose it as it goes against the first precept (rule) of Buddhism; not to cause harm. Buddhists believe that suffering is a part of life that must be accepted on the path to enlightenment. Euthanasia creates negative karma for the sick person and the person who carries out the killing. Dying is an opportunity for spiritual development, and euthanasia prevents the possibility of gaining good karma.

That said, Buddhists also believe that the body is just a shell for the life force. The right intention might make euthanasia acceptable. Some Buddhists argue that in cases of terrible suffering it would not create negative karma for the doctor if it was motivated by kindness, benevolence and compassion.

Christianity

Many of the mainstream Christian denominations around the world have made official statements opposing active euthanasia. In addition to the general arguments given above, their reasons are:

- Life is sacred and God-given. Only he has the right to take it.
- Euthanasia shows a lack of trust in God's love and mercy.
- God gave humans control over creation and the right to make responsible decisions for themselves, but there are limits to autonomy. To take life in this way is playing God.
- The weak and vulnerable who are unable to speak for themselves should have special protection.
- Euthanasia breaks the sixth commandment.

Nevertheless, many Christians believe that euthanasia should be legalised. In addition to the general arguments given above their reasons are:

- Life is sacred, but not absolutely so. It is more than biological existence, and quality of life matters too.
- Terrible suffering and loss of dignity are not what God wills. To put an end to this is therefore working with God.
- God gave humans dominion over creation, which means being entrusted with responsible decision-making throughout life.
- Personal autonomy is a God-given right.

All Christians accept passive euthanasia if medical treatment would prolong the process of dying. The Roman Catholic Church opposed the removal of feeding tubes from patients. Other Christians see artificial feeding as medical treatment and think it can be withdrawn.

Hinduism

Active euthanasia is not acceptable, as it prevents Hindus from performing dharma (the duties of Hindus). People should recognise that any suffering they experience is the result of negative karma from the previous existence, so it must be accepted. Performing euthanasia would create even more negative karma for all involved. This could only be avoided if the intention was absolutely selfless. Passive euthanasia is accepted.

Islam

Muslims view active euthanasia as equivalent to suicide. They state that:

- Suffering might be part of Allah's plan, which should not be disrupted. Allah alone knows what is best.
- Allah's decision about the length of someone's life should not be challenged.
- Euthanasia causes suffering for others.

Passive euthanasia is acceptable, providing that it is a matter of allowing nature to take its course. It is submission to Allah's will.

Judaism

Active euthanasia is not permissible, however great the suffering and however much the person wants to die. Life is a great blessing that should be treasured. God alone is the giver and the taker of life. Euthanasia breaks the sixth commandment.

Some Jews accept passive euthanasia, however. When treatments simply prolong the dying process, they can be seen as impeding God's will.

Sikhism

For most Sikh's euthanasia is wrong, since God is the only one to give and take life. Suffering has a place in God's scheme of things, and humans should accept what comes their way as an expression of God's will. They should not seek to interfere with the natural course of life.

Some Sikhs, however, argue that quality of life is more important than its length, and that it is acceptable to withhold or withdraw treatment that is only slowing the dying process.

Some would go even further, saying that if someone wishes to die and that person's medical condition creates severe problems for the family, then active euthanasia should be permitted as long as there are medical and legal safeguards in place.