

# Murder, by any other name

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COMMENT

## Murder, by any other name

**EUTHANASIA:** It is everyone's duty to condemn the inhumane practice

**A** FEW days ago, the life of a 17-year-old terminally ill minor was ended by medical intervention in Belgium. Authorities issued a statement, saying euthanasia was performed on the request of the minor. Wim Distelmans, chairman of Belgium's Federal Control and Evaluation Committee on Euthanasia, who approved the request, justified the astounding practice on the grounds of a strange reason, such as "children should not be denied a dignified death", trying, in his own way, to present euthanasia as an honourable practice.

Euthanasia is divided into various categories, such as "patient giving consent", "patient is unconscious and unable to give consent", "assisting a patient to commit suicide by medical means" and "killing the patient by withholding treatment or direct medical intervention". The categories are given names, such as "active", "passive", "voluntary", "involuntary", "assisted suicide", etc.

Just like Distelmans, advocates of euthanasia try to justify the practice in their own way with seemingly innocent definitions, such as "an honourable, dignified and comfortable death" or "a civil right to die". However, in truth, euthanasia is no different from the act of suicide or premeditated murder. Regardless of the health or mental status of the individual requesting euthanasia, making the decision for it means ending a person's life. In other words, deciding on that person's death and performing it with the consent of the victim or through medical means does not change the absolute truth.

Today, in countries such as Belgium, Holland, Colombia and Luxembourg, and in certain states of the United States and Canada, euthanasia and assisted suicide have been legalised and are performed frequently. In China and Vietnam, it is performed in exclusive clinics.

Assisting someone to commit suicide is legal in Belgium and Holland, and in certain states of the United States and Canada. On the other hand, not to legislate against it does not give the strong reactions from international public opinion. Belgium legalised performing euthanasia on children of all ages.

Euthanasia laws require that certain conditions be met before a can be performed, such as the patient requesting euthanasia must be mentally healthy, terminally ill, or suffering from unbearable physical or psychological pain.

However, these laws have been inconsistent from the beginning because it is readily impossible to talk about the unity and mental health of an individual who wants to commit suicide, and further, make another person an accomplice to the act. Considering the decision made by a patient, who is of sound mind and feeling, who has a sound willpower and is mostly suffering from depression due to physical problems, regarding euthanasia is valid is a grave mistake. Most particularly, it is most abhorrent to focus on concrete request as the "basis" of a child, who is not considered psychologically and mentally mature, and not granted authority to decide by law.

Therefore, it is quite clear that just as a person who has attempted suicide is provided psychological support and asked to undergo intensive treatment or medication, so, too, should those requesting euthanasia. Otherwise, killing such patients through medical methods or assisting them to commit suicide will be no different than pushing an unconscious person who has gone up to the roof of a building to commit suicide.

The most appropriate and humane way to act towards terminally ill patients is to court all available medical and non-medical treatments to treat and cure them, and bring them back to health, not unceremoniously and irresponsibly deciding on their deaths.

There are countless cases where parents overcome the most hopeless illnesses, recover from the most severe paralysis or wake up from years-long comas. Therefore, killing or assisting in the suicide of those who might have the chance to recover at any moment as long as they are alive, and denying them this chance, is utterly unacceptable. The condition that "the patient must be suffering from unbearable physical pain", which included in euthanasia decisions, is exploited to legitimise euthanasia. After all, there are various medications and treatment methods that relieve pain of all kinds and severity, and their quality and effectiveness are constantly being improved.

"Psychological pain", another reason for euthanasia, is, in the same way, a purely subjective matter, and its remedy does not lie in killing or assisting in the suicide of a patient, again -- it lies in treating and curing the patient.

Furthermore, euthanasia is a practice that is susceptible to exploitation.

In Switzerland, there are clinics that fulfil euthanasia requests on charge for thousands of dollars. In Holland, where euthanasia is performed in the thousands every year, records show that only a very small percentage of patients undergo a psychological evaluation. What's more is that one does not have to be terminally ill for the patients can be sent to death merely over regular psychological complaints, such as depression and anxiety.

This situation has escalated to such a point that even minors like "the elderly suffering psychological pain for being a burden on their relatives" can be considered sufficient for the approval of euthanasia requests. Some states being forced into taking the decision for reasons of inheritance or other financial gains and equity are among the possibilities that cannot be ignored.

Such laws even permit the killing of disabled babies through active euthanasia. Statistics reveal horrifying information regarding how euthanasia is performed on some patients without their open consent and how doctors merely face inquiry for the same.

But that's not all, euthanasia laws, which can be stretched to the point of killing patients, the crippled, the disabled, babies, coma patients, the elderly and unwanted people, should urgently be investigated, and necessary measures should be taken. The ever-expanding rights on euthanasia are also alarming in the sense that they being to erode the strict practice of eugenics of the Nazi era, which aimed at weeding out those who were unwanted, considered to be lesser and sick, while increasing the number of healthy individuals.

Let alone being a humanitarian right, euthanasia is an utterly inhumane and barbaric practice. It reflects the materialistic and egotistic approach towards human life of societies that have departed from spiritual values, such as faith, love, compassion and mercy, and strong which a lacklustre, arrogant, selfish and senseless lifestyle quickly becomes prevalent.

It is quite apparent that, be it voluntary or involuntary, active or passive, ending a human life does not conform with a good conscience, and should be considered a major crime. Although the parliaments of a few countries and states have legitimised the inhumane practice, the majority of the world considers euthanasia to be murder, and those who commit the crime will stand trial and face the possibility of lifelong imprisonment or even the death penalty. Some religions consider it a cardinal sin to take a person's life, including one's own. He lives or not, it is the duty of every person, as a human being, to respect the uniqueness of the practice and offer a solution.

The writer has authored more than 300 books, translated into 75 languages, on public, religion and science.



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### Democracy depends on ability to use reason

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Significant statement during this campaign, revealing his worldview, was "to declare that governmental healthcare can work". He quoted Trump praising the Scottish and Canadian systems -- see a nationwide system -- as a nationwide system -- as proof of his remarkable willingness to think rationally and challenge Republican dogma about government.

Now, another interpretation of Trump's remark would be that it was a strong statement, thrown off the top of his head, signifying almost nothing. Remember that Trump has taken five different positions on abortion in three days.

NBC News calculated that he has changed his position 120 times on 20 issues since he was elected president. In Monday's debate, he took two contradictory positions on the "see first" policy of nuclear weapons in 30 seconds. And, most importantly, after that off-hand remark, Trump backed down from his support for government healthcare, instead, only reciting Republican orthodoxy about the evils of Obamacare.

So, an intelligent libertarian has chosen to support a man whose main -- and utterly consistent -- public policy positions are anti-free trade and anti-immigration, and who has promised to appoint several conservative judges to the Supreme Court, because he is convinced that Trump is actually sincere in his support for a national healthcare system?

I cannot think of a better example of a man's greed that he come to a decision first and reason our way to afterwards.

Paul Ryan has managed similar success. Ryan is opposed to all of Trump's major policy proposals -- the wall, mass deportations, ending birthright citizenship, unilateral trade agreements with China, strengthening the North American Free Trade Agreement, total opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership -- and has even publicly contradicted many of them. And yet, he explains that Trump is hilarious.

The signs to look for are whether Trump is losing support among Republicans. This would indicate that politics is about more than ritual loyalty to a team. It would be best to ask many levels. After all, democracy depends on ability to look at evidence and argument, to use reason and judgment, and to use reason and logic as citizens of a great republic.

www.commentarymagazine.com

The writer is an American journalist and author. He is the host of CNN's "Tuned In" and a weekly column for The Washington Post.



HARJOT TYAGI

A FEW days ago, the life of a 17-year-old terminally ill minor was ended by medical intervention in Belgium. Authorities issued a statement, saying euthanasia was performed on the request of the minor. Wim Distelmans, chairman of Belgium's Federal Control and Evaluation Committee on Euthanasia, who approved the request, justified the astounding practice on the grounds of a strange reason, such as "children should not be denied a dignified death", trying, in his own way, to present euthanasia as an honourable practice.

Euthanasia is divided into various categories, such as "patient giving consent", "patient is unconscious and unable to give consent", "assisting a patient to commit suicide by medical means" and "killing the patient by withholding treatment or direct medical intervention". The categories are given names, such as "active", "passive", "voluntary", "involuntary", "assisted suicide", etc.

Just like Distelmans, advocates of euthanasia try to justify the practice in their own way with seemingly innocent definitions, such as "an honourable, dignified and comfortable death" or "a civil right to die". However, in truth, euthanasia is no different from the act of suicide or premeditated murder. Regardless of the health or mental status of the individual requesting euthanasia, making the decision for it means ending a person's life. In other words, deciding on that person's death and

performing it with the consent of the victim or through medical methods does not change the absolute truth.

Today, in countries such as Belgium, Holland, Colombia and Luxembourg, and in certain states in the United States and Canada, euthanasia and assisted suicide have been legalised and are performed frequently. In China and Switzerland, it is performed in exclusive clinics.

Among these countries, Holland and Belgium are the only ones where performing euthanasia on children under 18 is legal. The laws of Holland require that the child to be euthanised is older than 12. On the other hand, owing to legislation enacted in 2014 given the strong reaction from international public opinion, Belgium legalised performing euthanasia on children of all ages.

Euthanasia laws require that certain conditions be met before it can be performed, such as the patient requesting euthanasia must be mentally healthy, terminally ill, or suffering from unbearable physical or psychological pain.

However, these laws have been inconsistent from the beginning because it is medically impossible to talk about the sanity and mental health of an individual who wants to commit suicide, and further, make another person an accomplice to the act. Considering the decision made by a patient, who is of unsound mind and judgment, has a weak willpower and is mostly suffering from depression due to physical problems, regarding euthanasia as valid is a grave mistake. Most particularly, it is most abnormal to honour as extreme a request as the "suicide" of a child, who is not considered psychologically and mentally mature, and not granted authority or liability by laws.

Therefore, it is quite clear that just as a person who has attempted suicide is provided psychological support and administered rehabilitative treatment or medication, so, too, should those requesting euthanasia. Otherwise, killing such patients through medical methods or assisting them in committing suicide will be no different than pushing an unconscious person who has gone up to the roof of a building to commit suicide.

The most appropriate and humane way to act towards terminally ill patients is to exert all available medical and humanitarian means to treat and cure them, and bring them back to health, not unperturbedly and remorselessly deciding on their deaths.

There are countless cases where patients overcome the most hopeless illnesses, recover from the most severe paralyses or wake up from years-long comas. Therefore, killing or assisting in the suicide of those who might have the chance to recover at any moment as long as they are alive, and denying them this chance, is utterly unacceptable. The condition that "the patient must be suffering from unbearable physical pain", which is included in euthanasia decisions, is exploited to legitimise euthanasia. After all, there are various medications and treatment methods that relieve pain of all kinds and severity, and their quality and effectiveness are constantly being improved.

"Psychological pain", another reason for euthanasia, is, as the name implies, a psychological disorder, and its remedy does not lie in killing or assisting in the suicide of a patient; again — it lies in treating and curing the patient.

Furthermore, euthanasia is a practice that is susceptible to exploitation.

In Switzerland, there are clinics that fulfil euthanasia requests in exchange for thousands of dollars. In Holland, where euthanasia is performed in the thousands

every year, records show that only a very small percentage of patients undergo a psychological evaluation. What's more is that one does not have to be terminally ill for this; patients can be sent to death merely over regular psychological complaints, such as depression and anxiety.

This situation has escalated to such a point that even reasons like "the elderly suffering psychological pain for being a burden on their relatives" can be considered sufficient for the approval of euthanasia requests. Some elders being forced into taking the decision for reasons of inheritance or intra-familial grudges and enmity are among the possibilities that cannot be ignored.

Dutch laws even permit the killing of disabled babies through active euthanasia. Statistics reveal horrifying information regarding how euthanasia is performed on some patients without their open consent and how doctors rarely face inquiry for this.

For that reason, today, euthanasia laws, which can be stretched to the point of killing patients, the crippled, the disabled, babies, coma patients, the elderly and unwanted people, should urgently be investigated, and necessary measures should be taken. The ever-expanding rights on euthanasia are also disquieting in the sense that they bring to mind the atrocious practice of eugenics of the Nazi era, which aimed at weeding out those who were unwanted, considered to be lesser and sick, while increasing the number of healthy individuals.

Let alone being a humanistic right, euthanasia is an utterly inhumane and barbaric practice. It reflects the materialistic and apathetic approach towards human life of societies that have departed from spiritual values, such as faith, love, compassion and mercy, and among which a lacklustre, languid, selfish and loveless lifestyle quickly becomes prevalent.

It is quite apparent that, be it voluntary or involuntary, active or assisted, ending a human life does not conform with a good conscience, and should be considered a major crime. Although the parliaments of a few countries and states have legalised the inhumane practice, the majority of the world considers euthanasia to be murder, and those who commit the crime will stand trial and face the possibility of lifelong imprisonment or even the death penalty. Divine religions consider it a cardinal sin to take a person's life, including one's own. Believer or not, it is the duty of every person, as a human being, to express the wrongness of the practice and offer a solution.

Adnan Oktar's piece in New Straits Times:

<http://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/10/177305/murder-any-other-name>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/murder-by-any-other-name-34065>