ETHICAL DILEMMA OF SUICIDE: A PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE

N.Sivakaran

Department of Philosophy, University of Jaffna.

Keywords: Ethical Dilemma, Phenomenon of Suicide, Human Duty, Meaning of Life

Introduction

This study attempts to emphasize some of the ethical dilemma towards whether suicide morally right or wrong. This debate is closely tied to focus around the issue of duty, rights, obligation and meaning of human life. The phenomenon of suicide is a complex form of human behavior and part of human nature as well as a challenge on human existence and it poses difficult questions, and different answers have been given by Philosophers and Theologians of different periods and different traditions. Indeed, the phenomenon of suicide has been under the spotlight in philosophical examinations in the west at least from the period of Plato. French philosopher, Albert Camus in his *Myth of Sisyphus*, claims that suicide one of the serious philosophical problems.(Battin Pabst, 2005:P 34). For a long time philosophers have tried to solve to this problem through the ethical analysis and valuable suggestion were made. However this issue has not solved so far. In this regards this study is going to claim the difficulties of determine the moral rightness and wrongness of suicide from the point of view of philosophical arguments.(Freeman A, 2000: P 48)

This research mainly attempts to claim the most profound philosophical problem neither the essence of reality nor the foundation of knowledge but rather essence of human being. (OrbachIsral, 2007: P 62)This study claim that the phenomenon of suicide represents the single most serious, important and urgent philosophical question which must be answered before any other question is considered. These serious philosophical questions concerning the purpose and significance of human existence. (Aquinas Thomas, 1998: P 154) This perspective can be expressed through a variety of related questions such as suicide morally permissible or even morally permission in some extra ordinary circumstance? If suicide morally accepted, can it really become a universal law of nature? Is suicide behavior rational or irrational? Does anyone have the rights to end one's own life? Does it promise pleasure to the individual? Does it give permanent solution to a temporary problem? Does it violets natural law? Why human existence in the world? What is that significance and nature of life, etc. Therefore this paper has objective to examine the main current historical and contemporary philosophical theories surrounding these important issues.

Methodology

This researchis mainly base on philosophical inquiry and a literary survey. The researcher has planned to use the descriptive, analytic, and historical research methods; besides interviews and public debates shall be employed. Relevant philosophers' original works on suicide and the secondary resources books, related documents, paper clipping and various other documents from internet, media, etc will be used in this inquiry.

Discussaion and Conclusion

Through this study, arguments are schematically presented as "proponents" of moralizing suicide and "opponents" of moralizing suicidein practices. In general or religious perspectives, the birth of human species is regarded as superior to the other living being. Every human being shares the responsibility to safeguard this superiority. Man likes and

tries to maintain his physical well being by all positive ways. He even wishes to overcome death. It is regrettable that a man, rational being, commits suicide while other living beings have never attempted it. Despite it being a problem which hinders the social growth of beings, certain societies regard suicide as something that deserves glorifications. Therefore through the discussion, This study attempts to emphasize some of the ethical dilemmaon suicide in the philosophical school of thoughts such as Utilitarianism. Deontology, Human Obligation, Natural Law, Liberalism Egoism, Existentialism In this regards the conclusion seem to be difficult to judge the morality of suicide. However this study attempt to claim that whether or not the phenomenon of suicide moral / acceptable depend on the circumstance under which suicide is committed or attempted. The suicide of the individual, who has only experience pain for the rest of his existence and who has no other reasons to continue his existence may decided to surrender to suicide that might be moral. But if a person will be predicted to have a long life and if that person decided to commits suicide that will be morally wrong.

References

- Aquinas Thomas, (1998). "The Sin of Suicide from Summa Theologica" <u>in Ethics for Modern Life</u>, Raziel Abelson, Marie Louise (eds), New York: Stimartin Press.
- Battin Pabst, (2005). Ending life: Ethics and The Way We Die, US: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman A., (2000). "Death, Dying and The Human Rights Act 1998" in *Current Legal Problems* 1999: (Vol, 52), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Guyer Paul, (1998). Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: Critical Essays, New York: Rowman& Littlefield.
- Immanuel Kant (2004). "Suicide and Duty" <u>in Life, Death & Meaning: Key Philosophical</u> Readings on the Big Questions, Benatar (ed), Maryland: Rowman& Littlefield.
- Meisel Alan, Cerminara Kathy, L., (2004). *The Right to Die: The Law of End-of-Life Decision Making* (3rd Ed), New York: Aspen Publication
- OrbachIsral, (2007). "Existentialism and Suicide" in Existential and Spiritual Issues in Death Attitudes, Adrian Tomer, Grafton Eliason (ed), London: CRC Press