



Ethical Considerations Of Euthanasia In The Bhagavad Gita

Dr Jayashree kuanr,

Department of Philosophy,

Narasingha Choudhury Autonomous college, Jajpur, Odisha, 755001, India

E-mail-jayashreekuanr2012@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the Bhagavad Gita, a revered holy book in Hindu philosophy, and its ethical considerations surrounding euthanasia. The deliberate taking of life to relieve suffering—euthanasia—presents difficult moral dilemmas in a variety of formal and social contexts. The Bhagavad Gita deeply integrates the concept of dharma, or obligation, with spiritual truths and moral principles. The book emphasizes how important it is to fulfil one's responsibilities and maintain a model lifestyle while also realizing that life is temporary and that death is inevitable. Euthanasia raises questions regarding the harmony between compassion, nonviolence (ahimsa), and the preservation of life in this particular situation. Analysing significant passages from the Bhagavad Gita provides insight into different perspectives on suffering, dying, and the moral implications of intervening in everyday life. The Bhagavad Gita's ethical reflections on euthanasia invite thoughtful analysis of the nuances of moral duty, the value of life, and the pursuit of liberation from the grip of human suffering. This paper emphasizes the relevance of ancient wisdom in addressing modern ethical conundrums involving end-of-life care and the decision to pass on.

Keyword: Ethical, Euthanasia, Bhagavad Gita, Legalizing, Guidelines

1. INTRODUCTION

It is believed in Hinduism as an enduring philosophical text, the Bhagavad Gita provides significant insights into the intricacies of morality, divinity, and human existence. Deep meditations on the nature of existence, death, and the moral precepts governing human behaviour are fundamental to its teachings. Of all the subjects it covers, the moral implications of assisted suicide stand out as a crucial topic for discussion and reflection in Hindu philosophy. The intentional taking of a person's life to end their suffering, or euthanasia, is a controversial topic at the nexus of spirituality, ethics, and medical in modern discourse. Though ethical viewpoints and legal systems differ among countries and religious traditions, the Bhagavad Gita offers a distinctive perspective for examining the moral implications of euthanasia within the context of Hindu philosophy.

"Euthanasia" is a general word for "charity killing," which involves taking a terribly ill or injured person's life to end their suffering. In the final days of their lives, some people suffer from unbearable physical agony due to a variety of issues, and euthanasia may seem like a



compassionate way to relieve this suffering. From a traditional Judeo-Christian standpoint, euthanasia is murder and a clear violation of the biblical commandment "Thou shalt not kill." Maintaining the sanctity of human existence is one of the fundamental justifications for regulation, according to a mainstream perspective. Because it sets individuals in a situation of suffering and death against strong beliefs, accepted customs, and, due to medical assistance in dying, clinical morals, euthanasia is very dubious.

The word "euthanasia" means "great death" and comes from ancient Greek. Originally meaning "great demise," the phrase euthanasia has also come to refer to a passage free of anxiety and suffering, sometimes accomplished with the use of a medication in modern culture. It has also evolved to mean "leniency killing," which is the deliberate taking of a life to spare the individual's suffering.

In any event, Alexander Morgan Capron said in his writings on euthanasia that the methods that cause death are simple and so the passing is easy. In any case, it also suggests that the desired death would be a relief from an unpleasant or sad situation in life (or biting the dust), so the death itself, rather than only the method by which it is achieved, is great or right. When the phrase "euthanasia" is used, the two angles are typically expected; nevertheless, when that isn't the case, there may be implications for legal examination. The Greek phrase for "simple demise," euthanasia, is interpreted in an ambiguous way that implies the term "euthanasia" is loaded. The point is seriously dubious: people have been debating it for a very long time. The current debate over euthanasia touches on a variety of topics, including ethics, law, public policy, medicine, logic, and the existential significance of life and death.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sakkarnaikar and Saboo (2022) examine the moral dilemmas surrounding euthanasia from the perspective of medical professionals. They look into whether euthanasia solves the problem of individuals in agonizing pain who are about to die or if it clouds the moral landscape for providers of medical care. The essay most likely examines the many ethical frameworks used in clinical practice as well as the challenges faced by practitioners when examining end-of-life options. Within the professional calling, it may provide insight into the complexities of patient autonomy, advantage, and the sanctity of life.

Chapple (2019) introduces concepts from Jain morality and otherworldliness while examining Jain perspectives on end-of-life matters. The Jain tradition emphasizes nonviolence (ahimsa) and eternal adoration, which may present unique perspectives on assisted suicide and palliative care. Chapple's work most likely explores how teachings from the Jain tradition shed light on attitudes toward dying, enduring life, and the moral considerations surrounding end-of-life decisions.

Agarwal and Sastry (2019), Hindu perspectives on bioethics are discussed potentially involving discussions of euthanasia and end-of-life care. The paper most likely examines the ways in which Hindu philosophical principles—such as dharma, or duty, and karma, or action—affect the ethical



dynamics that exist in healthcare environments. It might also look into Hindu views on suffering, death, and the role empathy plays in lessening human suffering.

Dhadphale (2018) awareness attitudes toward end-of-life care in various social orders requires an awareness of the social aspects of death and grief rites. The study could look into how societal norms and beliefs affect people's perceptions of euthanasia, advance directives, and palliative care arrangements. It can discuss the value of social skills and responsiveness in meeting the needs of patients and their families who are close to passing away.

Barman (2020) takes a plausible approach to examining how bioethical concerns—such as those pertaining to euthanasia and end-of-life care—coordinate with applied morality. The paper could explore moral reflections on life and death by utilizing examples from rigorous and philosophical disciplines. From a broader ethical perspective, Barman's work may also address ethical issues related to clinical mediations, patient autonomy, and the holiness of life.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In India, euthanasia is significant because it gave the weak and unredeemable the "opportunity to leave," allowing them to end their lives. When approaching the topic of death in an old-style Indian context, there are three basic types of death that one encounters: the natural, the abnormal (being slain), and the stubborn (suicide). When it came to regular death, there were significant advantages for a Hindu solution that could last for 100 years or even longer than the average lifespan. Being slain in combat, by murder, or by accident was regarded as an unusually violent death.

Apart from this, the third class is stubborn dying, which includes three different types: deliberate death, self-destruction, and rigid, unyielding death. Self-destruction was a stubborn demise sparked by fervor, grief, or an unusual circumstance. A way to avoid tragedy was to die consciously, just as a fighter avoided being caught and a woman avoided being attacked or taken prisoner by a hero by choosing a courageous death. Painstakingly, stubborn death was discerned from self-destruction, or at least from enthusiastic, obstinate passing, for causes neither noble nor strict.

Euthanasia belonged in the class of cold-blooded death, and it was never seen as the humane taking of another person's life. As long as the person performing the stubborn decease made a typical public proclamation stating their intention, it was acceptable to assist them. By the sixth century B.C., there are indications that self-destruction is becoming a social problem and categories such as conscious dying and severe, uncompromising death are emerging.

The Brahmas and the rise of kingdoms in the Gangetic plain may have occurred about the same time as the Rig Veda, which suggests "that champions losing life in fight receive the very benefits as that the people who make gifts of 1,000 cows in penances secure." "Shanti parva" states that similarly as the people who participate in the shower of the ruler toward the finish of the Ashvamedha penance are sanitized of all transgressions, so all warriors killed in fight become unadulterated by the annihilation of their wrongdoings".



The prize is clearly paradise, according to texts like the Yajurveda, Manu, and Bhagavad Gita. In ancient India, the Sati was also one of the forms of obstinate death. Most of it was refined by the women of regal families who preferred death to mistreatment when their husbands died in battle zones. Every woman has to attend this course.

Bhima parva writes that "it is a wicked represent a Kshatriya to bite the dust in his home from some sickness; the old set of rules for him is that he ought to meet demise from steel". A penance may be performed for a specific purpose, such as obtaining something by giving up something; Ravan gave his skull several times and received the same result. Similarly, deliberate, unyielding death came to be associated with a specific purpose: to obtain opportunity (heaven or freedom) by proving one's superiority, which included self-punishment.

Furthermore, it's highly likely that the close connection between the intentional dying and the achievement of paradise or idolatry planted the seeds for the general association between the strict goal of paradise or edification and the stubborn death in the indigenous religions of the Gangetic plain, and as a result, the peculiarity of strict obstinate dying.

4. THE BHAGAVAD GITA: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF EUTHANASIA

The Bhagavad Gita is an ancient Hindu scripture that teaches duty (dharma), action (karma), non-violence (ahimsa), and the nature of the self (atman). From these teachings, ethical issues surrounding euthanasia can be deduced. Philosophical considerations such as those pertaining to euthanasia and end-of-life care are among the many ethical decisions that can be helped by the Bhagavad Gita.

- 1. Dharma (Duty):** The Bhagavad Gita places a strong emphasis on the value of carrying out one's dharma, or duties, in life. On the battlefield, the main character Arjuna must choose between his moral obligation as a warrior and his dislike of bloodshed. Arjuna receives advice from Lord Krishna to battle for dharma and fulfil his warrior duty, no matter the cost. The idea of dharma in relation to euthanasia encourages people to accomplish their duties and commitments, which include giving the terminally ill compassionate care and attempting to lessen their suffering as much as possible. But people's interpretations of dharma can differ, and they might find it difficult to balance competing obligations while deciding whether to end a life.
- 2. Karma (Action and Consequence):** According to the Bhagavad Gita, everyone is subject to the law of karma, which states that all actions have repercussions. When unselfish and morally motivated actions are taken, good things come of them, and when selfish actions are taken, bad things happen. People should examine the karmic consequences of their conduct while contemplating euthanasia. They have to evaluate if self-interest or compassion and easing pain are driving their actions. Comprehending the karmic consequences can assist persons in making morally sound choices regarding assisted suicide.



3. **Ahimsa (Non-violence):** An essential component of Hindu spirituality and ethics is ahimsa, or non-violence. The Bhagavad Gita emphasises the sacredness of each person and the interdependence of all life, encouraging compassion and non-violence towards all living things. The ahimsa concept encourages people to approach end-of-life care with compassion and regard for the dying person's dignity in the context of euthanasia. Euthanasia presents ethical questions regarding the sanctity of life and the possibility of injury, even though it may be considered a way to eliminate suffering. While opponents of euthanasia raise concerns about the intrinsic value of life and the possibility of misuse, proponents of the practice contend that it can be a humane gesture to end extreme suffering.
4. **Nature of the Self (Atman):** According to the Bhagavad Gita, the atman, or true self, is eternal and transcendent and exists outside of the bounds of the body. According to this perspective, death is just the soul's normal passage from one body to another during the cycle of rebirth, or samsara. According to this viewpoint, the choice to end one's life through euthanasia and the dying process are comprehended in the context of the soul's journey. Physical pain and impermanence cannot touch the essence of the self, even if the body can suffer and degrade.

The Bhagavad Gita's teachings on responsibility, action, non-violence, and the essence of the self provide significant insights into the ethical issues surrounding euthanasia. Even while the Bible doesn't specifically address euthanasia, its precepts can help people make morally difficult decisions that are consistent with their moral convictions and spiritual beliefs. In the end, the Bhagavad Gita's ethical reflections on euthanasia highlight the value of compassion, morality, and respect for life in the face of suffering and death.

5. SPECIFIC POSITION OF EUTHANASIA IN INDIAN RELIGIOUS TEXT

The attitude on euthanasia, or the deliberate taking of life to end suffering, differs among Indian intellectual traditions and religious writings according to different schools of thought. Though they offer guidance on moral and ethical behaviour, Indian holy classics such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and different Dharmashastras do not specifically address euthanasia as a contemporary medical and ethical quandary.

- **Hinduism:** With its wide range of philosophical viewpoints and diverse membership, Hinduism lacks a cohesive position on euthanasia. Since euthanasia entails the intentional taking of another person's life, some interpretations of Hindu ethics may consider it to be in violation of the fundamental tenet of ahimsa, or non-violence. Nonetheless, Hindu texts also stress the significance of bringing about pain relief and carrying out one's responsibilities (dharma). For instance, the Bhagavad Gita exhorts people to acknowledge the transience of life and behave with compassion and integrity. Though euthanasia may not be spoken about directly, Hindus are guided by ethical considerations to weigh compassion against the sanctity of life.



- **Buddhism:** The ethical precept of compassion, or karuna, is central to Buddhism, which likewise has its roots in ancient India. Although taking one's own life is generally frowned upon in Buddhism, there are subtle considerations about providing care for the dying and reducing suffering. In certain Buddhist traditions, passive euthanasia—that is, stopping life-sustaining treatment—may be acceptable if it relieves unnecessary suffering and is consistent with the compassionate action principle. On the other hand, most people believe that active euthanasia—which entails purposefully inflicting death—is incompatible with Buddhist ethics.
- **Jainism:** Another ancient Indian faith, Jainism emphasizes reverence for all living forms and ahimsa. The principles of Jainism promote nonviolence in speech, thought, and action. Euthanasia, therefore, is against Jain ethical precepts since it is a purposeful taking of life. Jains adhere to the idea of karma, which states that every action has repercussions and that taking a life or purposely harming someone might result in bad karma. Thus, in Jainism, euthanasia is typically regarded as immoral.
- **Sikhism:** This religion, which originated in the Indian Punjab region in the fifteenth century, places a strong emphasis on the virtues of compassion (daya) and selfless service (seva). Although there is no explicit mention of euthanasia in Sikhism's scriptures, Sikhs are urged to lessen suffering and extend compassion to those in need. Sikh ethical values and the notion of hukam, or divine will, serve as a guide for individuals and their families when making decisions about end-of-life care and medical interventions.

Different perspectives on euthanasia are provided by Indian strict texts and philosophical traditions, reflecting the complexity of ethical considerations surrounding end-of-life care and the holiness of life. The ethical dynamic around end-of-life care is illuminated by common themes of sympathy, peace, and the lightening of endurance, even if there is no one, cohesive position on euthanasia throughout Indian religions. People and networks use these fundamental principles as a starting point to examine the complexities of contemporary clinical morality and the pursuit of compassionate consideration for persons facing terminal illness and lingering

Two Hindu perspectives on euthanasia exist:

- A person is doing a good act and upholding their moral duty when they assist in ending a life that is difficult.
- When someone assists in ending a life, even one that is miserable, they are upsetting the natural order of death and rebirth. This is wrong, and those who carried out the euthanasia will bear the patient's residual karma.
- According to the same rationale, it would be wrong to keep someone artificially alive on a life support system.
- On the other hand, using a life support system in an interim effort to heal wouldn't be harmful.



6. INDIAN ETHICAL VALUES

The diversity of religions seen in Indian culture ultimately triumphs over societal virtues. In the unlikely case if we followed India's urbanization down the Ganga Waterway, we would be exposed to ancient Hindu culture, which we could learn from many other stringent texts as well as from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, Purana, Shrutis, Smritis, and Vedas. Again, to sum up our discussion, we can easily learn from this rigorously accepted holy text in order to meet our own needs for comprehending the characteristics related to a person's existence and dying.

Sankhya Yoga: The Timeless Truth of the Spirits Eternality is the title of the second section of the Shrimad Bhagavad-Gita. There are numerous section references on the reality and study of resurrection in this section of the Bhagavad-Gita. These are a few noteworthy models.

Chapter 2, verse 13

**dehino'sminyathadehakaumaramyauvanamjara
tathadehantarapraptirdhirastatranamuhya**

Translation

Just as in the physical body of the embodied being is the process of childhood, youth, old age; similarly in the transmigration from one body to another the wise are never deluded.

Chapter 2, verse 17

**avinasitu tad viddhiyenasarvamidamtatam
vinasamavyayasasyanakascitkartumarhati**

Translation

But know that by whom the entire physical body is pervaded is indestructible. No one is able to cause the destruction of the imperishable soul.

Chapter 2, verse 20

**najayatemriyatevakadacinnayambhutvabhavitavanabhuyah
ajo nityahsavato yam puranonahanyatehanyamane**

Translation

The soul never takes birth and never dies at any time nor does it come into being again when the body is created. The soul is birthless, eternal, imperishable and timeless and is never terminated when the body is terminated.

Chapter 2, verse 22

**vasamsijirnaniyathavihayanavanigrhnatinaro'parani
tathasariranivihayajirnanyanyanisamyatinavanidehi**

Translation

As a person gives up old and worn out garments and accepts new apparel, similarly the embodied soul giving up old and worn out bodies verily accepts new bodies.



Chapter 2, verse 24

**acchedyo'yamadahyo'yamakledya'sosyaeva ca
nityahsarva-gatahsthanuracalo'yamsanatanah**

Translation

The soul is indestructible, the soul is incombustible, insoluble and unwitherable. The soul is eternal, all pervasive, unmodifiable, immovable and primordial.

Chapter 2, verse 27

**jatasya hi dhruvomrtyurdhruvamjanmamrtasya ca
tasmadapariharye'rthenatvamsocitumarhasi**

Translation

For one who has taken birth, death is certain and for one who has died, birth is certain.

Therefore, in an inevitable situation understanding should prevail.

Death is actually his resting place, as any individual who rehearses internal life knows. Death is not equivalent to elimination to him. That is a significant change. The requirement for biting the dust will vanish totally when divine change happens inside us. We want Harmony, Light, Bliss, and Ability to change life. We shout out for these sacred characteristics. They shout for what we need. They believe that we should have everlasting life comparably much. Notwithstanding, we can't be moved by the heavenly Power, Light, Bliss, and Harmony until our body, crucial, psyche, heart, and soul all endeavor together.

Now we can sum up the discussion that Hindu philosophy does have very different meaning of life and death. In search of 'Moksha' many religious gurus take the Samadhi even recently Dynaneshwar took the Samadhi, it is common practice in Hindu up to 19th Century Sati tradition is also there. So, from religious point of view, we can conclude the discussion with the remarks that termination of Body with consent is not immoral it is generally accepted.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Bhagavad Gita offers profound insights into the ethical considerations surrounding euthanasia, reflecting the intricate tapestry of Hindu philosophy and spirituality. Through its teachings on duty, righteousness, and the transient nature of life, the Bhagavad Gita provides a framework for contemplating the moral complexities of end-of-life decisions. While emphasizing the importance of compassion and non-violence, the text also underscores the sanctity of life and the acceptance of death as an inevitable aspect of existence. The Bhagavad Gita's perspective on euthanasia encourages individuals to navigate ethical dilemmas with discernment, mindful of their responsibilities and the broader implications of their actions. It invites reflection on the interplay between human agency, divine will, and the pursuit of spiritual liberation amidst the challenges of suffering and mortality. As society grapples with evolving attitudes towards end-of-life care and the right to die, the ethical considerations articulated in the Bhagavad Gita serve as a timeless guidepost, reminding us of the importance of wisdom, compassion, and reverence for



life. In contemplating euthanasia within the context of this revered scripture, we are prompted to engage in deeper introspection and dialogue, seeking a balance between empathy and reverence for the divine order of existence. Ultimately, the ethical teachings of the Bhagavad Gita illuminate pathways towards ethical decision-making and compassionate care, enriching our understanding of life's profound mysteries and the sacredness inherent in every moment of existence.

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