

July 16, 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is a fundamental right to uphold life whenever possible until its natural course has come to its final end. By natural, I mean whenever the body expires; whether it is due to disease or old age or cessation of brain activity. If one chooses to take measures to end his/her life before its natural course then it is suicide. If a practitioner administers a drug to provoke the cessation of life then this by definition is assisted suicide either of which is contrary to the Hippocratic Oath and the Sanctity of Human Life.

I do not believe that one should suffer needlessly or constantly: the medical field should preserve life as it is morally obligated to do so until there is no other recourse. In the meantime the practitioner should provide medical treatments that alleviate the suffering of the patient until they naturally expire. The medical field is sophisticated enough to aid those even in their most dire moments leading up to death. Death is a natural process by which no one can escape but medicine has made it so that we can find cures and ways to cope with such issues.

If extraordinary means are required to preserve life but offer no benefits then the afflicted or the proxy can decide whether to take this offer or not. If he/she chooses not to and this brings him/her to their natural death, then this is not suicide. It is an act of free conscience to decide what treatment would be best for him/her.

The medical field can rise to the occasion and offer hope for the patient in that the suffering, even in dire situations, can be alleviated, as to ease the patient's mind and body as well as those caring for the afflicted. They should concentrate more on how to help cure diseases and ease pain, both psychological and physical, rather than offering to end one's life. It seems that the burden to provide special care and attention to those afflicted by disease/disability is too much for our society; when in fact it should be our concern to comfort those afflicted and their families. It is proven scientifically that we can cure patients and alleviate their pain and even allow them to die peacefully when great care is given.

It seems that what the Quebec government is proposing is that our society does not have any place for those who are left behind and so the easy way out is to end the life of the afflicted. The afflicted don't value themselves because they are not accepted or able to integrate into society. As a result they are either neglected or rejected. We have to change our way of perceiving those who suffer.

Where euthanasia appears, quality end-of-life care disappears. Decriminalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide would create unwarranted pressure on the chronically ill, the severely disabled and those who require a lot of assistance or expensive treatments: The vulnerable could begin to think that they are an undue burden on their loved ones or on society and that they should consider euthanasia or assisted suicide. Euthanasia might well dangerously distort social attitudes toward the seriously ill, the disabled and the old.

In conclusion the focus should be on the improvement of services to the afflicted and a change in societal values that are geared to accept illnesses/disabilities and old age in a way that allows the afflicted to feel that they are not alone and are valued. Measures should be taken to deal with the illness and alleviate suffering until the natural cessation

of their life. The family members of those afflicted should have support both financially and emotionally. If society and the government do not change their view on the chronically ill, the old, and the disabled then we will become like the ancient Spartans who kill their infants and the weak to relieve themselves of such burdens and create a 'supreme' society.

Where will this all lead? Will it lead us back to 19th and 20th century debates from the leading Darwinist in Germany, Ernst Haeckel who believed in eugenics, infanticide, abortion, involuntary euthanasia, suicide as a measure to bring a better society? Here is a quote from Richard Weikart. 2004. *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pages 145-148, 160f

“Not only did Haeckel justify infanticide, abortion, and assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia, but he also supported the involuntary killing of the mentally ill. He condemned the idea that all human life should be preserved, "even when it is totally worthless." He called cretinism and microcephaly "decisive proof" for the physical basis of the soul, since those suffering from these conditions "spend their entire life at a lower animal stage of development in their soul's activity." He complained that not only are many mentally ill people burdens to society, but so are lepers, cancer patients, and others with incurable illnesses. Why not just spare ourselves much pain and money, he asked, by just giving them a shot of morphine? To safeguard against abuse, Haeckel proposed that a commission of physicians make the final decision in each case, but the individual being reviewed would have no voice. **The leading Darwinist in Germany thus gave his scientific imprimatur to murdering the disabled, both in infancy and in adulthood. . . .**

Here are other reasons against Euthanasia as quoted in the link listed:

<http://www.enotes.com/genocide-encyclopedia/euthanasia>

“During the 1990s in the United States, the state of Oregon passed legislation allowing physician-assisted suicide, and two federal appeals courts ruled that state laws banning assisted suicide are unconstitutional. In these instances, physician-assisted suicide was viewed as promoting death with dignity. The U.S. Supreme Court, however, upheld state laws against assisted suicide. The Supreme Court recognized a strong state interest in criminalizing physician-assisted suicide because the practice of legally assisted suicide may lead to episodes of nonvoluntary and even involuntary euthanasia. The Supreme Court invoked the popular "slippery-slope" argument that once assisted suicide is legalized, all forms of euthanasia may follow without restraint. Several justices cited the experience of the Netherlands, where some data suggest that euthanasia now occurs without patient consent, that is, involuntarily. The recurrent fear is that human lives, especially the lives of the vulnerable or unwanted, will be ended against their will, that patients will be pressured into requesting a death that they do not desire, and that depressed patients will choose easy death rather than receive appropriate medical care.”

I pray that you understand the implications of this issue and that you do an extensive research from countries which allow such practices and see the negative implications.

Sincerely,

Maria G. Lepore (Laval, Quebec)