

Article Research

A Theological and Ethical Perspective on Imposed Death

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Abstract: This paper examines euthanasia from ethical, theological, legal, and human rights perspectives, focusing specifically on the Christian faith. Euthanasia, defined as the intentional termination of life to avoid physical suffering, raises significant moral and legal dilemmas. This study applies a qualitative method through literature review to explore expert opinions, Indonesian legal provisions, and theological foundations based on the Bible. The findings indicate that euthanasia contradicts the core principles of Christian ethics, Indonesian positive law, and human rights values that uphold the right to life. From a Christian worldview, life is a divine gift and should not be ended by human will. Suffering is understood as part of a spiritual journey that carries redemptive meaning. Furthermore, euthanasia presents complex implications not only for the individual undergoing the act but also for families, religious communities, and healthcare professionals. In Christian ethics, life and death are matters of divine sovereignty, and human agency in ending life is considered a violation of God's authority. The legal stance in Indonesia, as reflected in national laws and regulations, clearly prohibits any form of euthanasia, emphasizing the protection of human life as a constitutional right. From a human rights viewpoint, although autonomy is important, it must be balanced with the principle of preserving life. This study suggests that interdisciplinary dialogue involving theology, law, bioethics, and pastoral care is urgently needed to build awareness and offer compassionate responses to end-of-life issues. Churches, educators, and policymakers are encouraged to develop ethical guidelines and pastoral counseling approaches rooted in biblical truth and legal integrity. A wise and faithful response to the problem of euthanasia requires not only empathy but also a clear commitment to uphold the sanctity of life.

Keywords: Bioethics, Christianity, Euthanasia, Human Rights, Law

1. Introduction

Death cannot be separated from human life. Birth, growth, and death are absolute and inevitable aspects of every human being's existence, forming a cycle that all must undergo. Where there is life, there will certainly be death, and every person will face it. Life is essentially a process that moves toward its end, which is death. Humans desire success in their careers and efforts. They also seek joy, peace, inner calm, and other forms of well-being. However, these desires do not always proceed smoothly as imagined. Sometimes, moments of goodness are accompanied by hardship, physical suffering, mental distress, and psychological illness, which are often tied to health conditions. When someone suffers physically, it also affects their mental state and burdens their thoughts. For example, a person who suffers from a severe and incurable disease may, in the absence of proper care and understanding, make an irrational decision to end their own life.

With the presence of highly advanced medical technology today, more patients can be helped to sustain and prolong life. At the same time, however, such technology can also be used to end a person's life. In this context, our focus turns to actions that aim to end someone's life even though, from a medical standpoint, they are not yet considered dead. For instance, a patient suffering from a chronic and severe illness that cannot be cured but who continues to live may be subjected to medical actions, whether actively or passively. This may involve administering a lethal injection or removing life-support devices such as oxygen and

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other medical equipment. The act of ending someone's life through medical procedures of this kind is referred to as euthanasia.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

This study aims to examine euthanasia from ethical and theological perspectives, especially within the framework of Christian belief and Indonesian law. To construct a solid theoretical foundation, several relevant scholarly works are reviewed, encompassing both conceptual frameworks and empirical research. The following section elaborates on the current discourse and identifies gaps that this study seeks to address.

Ethical and Moral Perspectives on Euthanasia

Ethics, in its general understanding, is concerned with the norms and values that guide human behavior. According to K. Bertens (1993), ethics can be defined as a system of moral principles that serves as a guideline for individuals and communities. In the context of euthanasia, ethical questions revolve around whether it is morally acceptable to end a person's life intentionally to relieve suffering.

From a philosophical standpoint, ethical reasoning about euthanasia often falls under three frameworks: deontological, teleological, and contextual ethics (Dharmaputra, 2015). Deontological ethics emphasize duties and moral rules, suggesting that killing is inherently wrong regardless of outcomes. In contrast, teleological ethics judge actions based on their consequences, which can justify euthanasia if it reduces suffering. Contextual ethics take situational factors into account and are more flexible in evaluating moral actions.

Previous studies such as Brownlee (2019) have shown that ethical justifications for euthanasia are highly contested, and often depend on cultural, legal, and religious backgrounds. However, most arguments in favor of euthanasia appeal to personal autonomy and the right to die with dignity, while opposition is grounded in the sanctity of life and societal responsibility to protect the vulnerable.

Christian Theological Perspective

Christian theology views life as a divine gift, and ending life prematurely is often regarded as violating God's sovereignty. According to Mealy (2009), Christian morality must be rooted in Scripture and exemplified by the life of Jesus Christ. Biblical teachings such as "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13) and "God gives and takes away" (Job 1:21) reflect this foundational belief.

Verne Fletcher (2007) emphasizes that Christian ethics is not only about moral rules but about imitating Christ's love and self-sacrifice. Consequently, euthanasia is typically viewed as contradicting the redemptive value of suffering and the Christian call to trust God even in terminal conditions. Studies by Geisler (2015) and Wogaman (1993) further support this perspective by framing life as sacred and untouchable by human judgment.

Despite some theological debates regarding passive euthanasia (e.g., withdrawing life support), mainstream Christian doctrine maintains that any intentional act to end life is incompatible with biblical ethics.

Legal and Human Rights Framework

Legally, the status of euthanasia varies by jurisdiction. In countries like the Netherlands and Belgium, euthanasia is legally regulated under strict conditions. Amiruddin (2017) compares these frameworks and explains how legal systems rooted in individual freedom may justify euthanasia. In contrast, Indonesian law—based on Pancasila and religious values—strictly prohibits euthanasia under the Criminal Code (KUHP), particularly under Articles 338, 344, and 345.

Sutarno (2020) highlights that even passive euthanasia can be interpreted as criminal neglect under Articles 304 and 306 of the KUHP. Furthermore, according to the Indonesian Human Rights Law (Law No. 39 of 1999), every person has the inherent right to life, and no one may take it away under any circumstance.

Research Gap and Contribution

Most existing studies on euthanasia either focus on Western secular contexts or adopt a purely legalistic view. Very few studies integrate theological ethics, particularly Christian moral thought, with legal and human rights considerations in the Indonesian context. This study addresses that gap by offering a comprehensive, interdisciplinary perspective that reflects

both religious and constitutional values. Unlike prior work that isolates ethics from theology, this research shows how theological commitment directly informs moral evaluation and legal policy on euthanasia in Indonesia.

3. Proposed Method

This study employs a qualitative research method, specifically library research. The qualitative method is a research process conducted naturally and objectively according to real conditions in the field without manipulation [1]. The purpose of this research is to examine whether the practice of euthanasia in several developed countries contradicts moral ethics, human rights, and religious principles. Although euthanasia is considered a way to end life easily, painlessly, and is often referred to as a "good death," in reality, its practice continues to raise ethical and religious controversies.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the practice of euthanasia still occurs in many developed countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and other European nations. In these countries, constitutional law guarantees individual freedom, allowing each person to exercise their rights in making decisions for their own interests. Patients suffering from chronic and incurable illnesses are granted the right to end their suffering [2]. This becomes the primary reason why euthanasia continues to be practiced globally.

However, critical questions arise from this phenomenon: Does the practice of euthanasia violate ethical, moral, and religious principles? What are the legal regulations regarding euthanasia and human rights in Indonesia? What are the psychological effects on families when faced with euthanasia decisions? From a biblical perspective, is it permissible for humans to take someone else's life by any means?

Ethics

Ethics is a form of conscious and intentional behavior. It is also defined as the science of norms that govern human conduct [3]. Thus, ethics concerns the behavior of individuals or groups within a particular region and cultural context, where the application of values must be respected in order to maintain propriety and ethical standards. Ethics is not only general in scope, but religion, particularly Christianity, also possesses its own ethical perspective. Therefore, to arrive at ethical-theological decisions, one must first understand the concept of ethics, including what is referred to as Christian ethics.

Etymologically, the term ethics originates from the Greek word *ethos* (singular) or *ethika* (plural). The word *ethos* means character, habit, or custom. Both *ethos* and *ethikos* are often interpreted as referring to morality, inner feeling, or conscience from which an individual carries out their actions. According to the fifth edition of the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), ethics is a branch of knowledge concerned with what is good and bad in relation to moral rights and obligations. This understanding is consistent with the views of various scholars.

Robin W. Lovin defines ethics as relating to the nature, beliefs, and practices of a group in connection with their cultural background. This view is further simplified by C. H. Preisker, who states that ethics involves habit, usage, custom, regulation, cult, and law, as cited by Brotosudarmo. These perspectives are then expanded upon by Bertens, who proposes that ethics can be understood in three senses. Ethics can be seen as a system of values that serves as a guideline for individuals or groups. It can also be regarded as a set of principles and moral norms, commonly known as a code of ethics. Lastly, ethics is recognized as an academic discipline that studies or evaluates human behavior in terms of what is considered morally right or wrong, often referred to as moral philosophy [4].

In its development, ethics can be classified into two major categories: behavioral ethics and moral ethics. Behavioral ethics refers to customs or patterns of human behavior that develop in certain communities within a specific time and space. These behaviors become ethical norms because they are agreed upon and upheld by the society in which they exist. Behavioral ethics typically governs matters such as dress codes, social interaction, intercultural and intracultural marriage, and local traditions.

Moral ethics, on the other hand, concerns the moral quality of human behavior. When ethical values are violated, the tendency to commit wrongdoing increases. This form of ethics

stems from individual moral awareness and is often analyzed through three ethical reasoning models: deontological, teleological, and contextual.

Deontological reasoning derives from the Greek words *deon* (duty) and *logos* (knowledge), meaning knowledge of what ought to be done. This ethical approach is guided by prevailing legal norms and moral rules. The strength of deontological reasoning lies in its clarity and consistency, enabling individuals to act based on firm standards. However, its limitation is the tendency to become rigid and less humane, as individuals may act solely on the basis of law, which can create anxiety and complexity in real-life situations where legal norms may not adequately address every possibility.

Teleological reasoning comes from the Greek word *telos* (end or consequence) and focuses on the outcomes of an action. Although it does not dismiss the importance of right and wrong, it places greater emphasis on whether the result is good or bad. If an action produces a positive outcome, it is considered ethically right. Conversely, if it leads to a harmful result, the action is deemed unethical. Therefore, the ethical value of an action is evaluated based on its consequences [8].

Contextual reasoning, often referred to as responsible or situational ethics, operates without fixed indicators of right or wrong. It is flexible and considers the unique circumstances and responsibilities in each situation. However, this flexibility can also lead to inconsistency, as ethical decisions may vary depending on the situation. This weakness lies in the possibility of becoming trapped in situational ethics that lack solid principles.

From these three ethical frameworks, it is clear that each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Deontological reasoning bases ethical decisions on established laws and moral norms. Teleological reasoning evaluates actions based on their good or harmful outcomes, while contextual reasoning emphasizes responsible decision-making within a specific context. Each approach offers important insights into ethical evaluation and reflects the complexity of moral reasoning in real-life situations.

Christian Ethics

Christian ethics refers to behaviors, habits, or customs of Christian life that are founded in and through the Bible [5]. Mealy emphasizes that Christian morality must be grounded in Scripture, while Brotosudarmo highlights that faith in God, who is revealed through Jesus Christ, enables Christians to practice biblical values [6]. Dag Heward-Mills further supports this by affirming that Christians are called to live out these values as revealed in Scripture [6], making God through Jesus Christ the center and model for ethical living [7]. Fletcher explains that Christian ethics is fundamentally about loving others as exemplified by Jesus Christ, with the right motivation that arises from a response to the salvation given by God, not for self-image or popularity. Such self-serving motives, according to Ramsey, are incompatible with the life God desires for believers [8].

Therefore, Christian ethics can be understood as a pattern or teaching concerning how a Christian should behave and act in the world, based on the Word of God found in the Bible and modeled through the life of Jesus Christ. Just as individuals are expected to follow the ethical norms of a particular environment to avoid conflict, Christian ethics must also be understood and applied by all believers, so that their lives may be pleasing to God.

In essence, Christian ethics has existed in Scripture since the time of creation. Human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, or what is known as *Imago Dei*, are called to reflect God's character in their actions, attitudes, and behavior on earth. This implies that, as rational beings, humans must live in accordance with the ethical standards established by God's Word. For example, God commands His people to live in holiness because He is holy (see Leviticus 11:45). God, who does not lie, commands that humans also refrain from lying (see Hebrews 6:18). God loves humankind, and therefore commands that humans love one another (see Matthew 22:39) [9].

Based on the definitions above, ethics may be understood as a way for humans to exist within a particular environment by observing and applying established values or norms in a good and proper manner. Christian ethics, then, is the way of life that aligns with the will of God as revealed in Scripture, with Jesus Christ as the ultimate model. Ethics is closely related to the human system of life, and it serves as a tool for individuals to evaluate their actions or decisions in everyday living. Ethics also helps guide human beings in making decisions that reflect moral responsibility [10].

It is especially important to note that, in the life of a Christian, ethical decision-making must be grounded in the Word of God as recorded in the Bible.

Definition of Euthanasia

The term *euthanasia* originates from the Greek words (*εὐθανασία* - *eu*), meaning "good," and (*θάνατος*) *thanatos*, meaning "death." Euthanasia refers to the practice of ending a human or animal life through means that are intended to be painless or to cause minimal suffering, most commonly by administering a lethal injection. It refers to an effort to bring about death in a gentle, easy, and pain-free manner, often described as *mercy killing*, *a good death*, or *dying peacefully* [11]. In most cases, individuals who request or undergo euthanasia suffer from severe illnesses and prolonged pain.

As this practice has developed over time, it has not always been accepted, and it is often viewed as problematic from various perspectives, including social, legal, psychological, moral, and religious. This controversy is closely tied to the fundamental question of whether such an act is morally and legally permissible.

When discussing euthanasia—*eu* (good) and *thanatos* (death, corpse)—the debate is inevitably linked to the idea of the patient's right to self-determination. This right is a core element of human rights and continues to be a central point of discussion. The evolution of societal thought has brought about a new awareness of individual rights, especially in light of advances in science and technology, particularly in the medical field. These developments have significantly altered the general understanding of euthanasia.

The issue of the "right to die" often arises from the prolonged suffering experienced by patients. Despite the existence of advanced medical technologies, suffering cannot always be eliminated. In such cases, continued and unbearable pain may lead patients or their families to feel incapable of bearing the emotional, physical, or financial burdens. As a result, the patient or their relatives may wish to end life once the peak of suffering becomes intolerable [12].

The act of ending a patient's life by removing medical devices installed by attending physicians raises legal and ethical questions, including whether such an action violates fundamental human rights.

History of Euthanasia

The term *euthanasia* was first popularized by Hippocrates in his manuscript known as the Hippocratic Oath, written around 400–300 BC. In this oath, Hippocrates declared, "I will not recommend or administer a deadly drug to anyone, even if asked to do so." From this ancient document on euthanasia, it is evident that the earliest perspective regarding euthanasia was actually a rejection of the practice. Since the 19th century, euthanasia has sparked debate and movements across North America and Europe.

In 1828, anti-euthanasia laws were enacted in the state of New York, and in the following years, similar laws were adopted by other states. After the Civil War, some advocates and medical professionals began to support voluntary euthanasia. Groups promoting euthanasia first emerged in England in 1935 and in the United States in 1938, advocating for the practice of active euthanasia. However, efforts to legalize euthanasia in both the United States and the United Kingdom ultimately failed.

In 1937, physician-assisted euthanasia was legalized in Switzerland, provided that the patient's illness was incurable. During the same era, American courts rejected requests for euthanasia from terminally ill patients and parents of children with disabilities. These requests were considered "mercy killings" and were not permitted under the law. In 1939, Nazi Germany carried out a controversial euthanasia program targeting children under the age of three who suffered from mental disabilities, physical deformities, or other conditions deemed to render their lives worthless. This program, known as Action T4, was later expanded to include older children, the elderly, and those with chronic illnesses. Following the horrors witnessed under Nazi rule, public support for euthanasia declined significantly during the 1940s and 1950s, especially concerning non-voluntary euthanasia or euthanasia motivated by genetic defects [13]. Under Adolf Hitler's leadership, the Nazi regime viewed people with disabilities as obstacles to national progress, and massive forced euthanasia was carried out against disabled individuals in Berlin and throughout Germany.

In ancient India, there was a practice in which elderly individuals were thrown into the Ganges River. In Sardinia, it was customary in prehistoric times for the eldest son to beat his elderly parents to death. In Uruguay, the legal right to practice euthanasia has been recognized since 1933. Similarly, in several European countries, euthanasia is no longer considered a crime, with the exception of Norway, where it has been treated as a special criminal offense since 1902. In the United States, euthanasia is categorized as a criminal act in all states. Both suicide and permitting oneself to be killed are illegal under American law. However, the

Netherlands stands out as the only country where euthanasia may be legally carried out under certain conditions. In this context, individuals who meet specific criteria are allowed to request euthanasia for themselves.

The Development of Euthanasia Practices in Various Countries

Euthanasia is permitted in countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium, and it is tolerated in jurisdictions like the state of Oregon in the United States, Colombia, and Switzerland. In contrast, it is classified as a criminal offense in other countries such as Spain, Germany, and Denmark.

In the Netherlands, on April 10, 2001, the Dutch government enacted a law permitting euthanasia. This law came into effect on April 1, 2002, making the Netherlands the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia. Patients suffering from chronic and incurable diseases are granted the right to end their suffering. However, it is important to note that, formally, euthanasia and assisted suicide are still classified as criminal acts under the Dutch Penal Code. Since the end of 1993, Dutch law has required physicians to report all cases of euthanasia and assisted suicide. The judicial system is responsible for assessing whether the procedures were correctly followed. In 2002, a convention that had been in place for twenty years was codified into Dutch law, allowing physicians to perform euthanasia in certain cases without facing punishment [2].

In Australia, the Northern Territory became the first region in the world to pass legislation permitting euthanasia and assisted suicide. However, this status was short-lived. In 1995, the Northern Territory passed the "Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill," which allowed terminally ill patients to choose euthanasia. Although the law was implemented several times, in March 1997, it was overturned by the Australian Senate, leading to its revocation. Therefore, under Australian law, euthanasia is no longer legally permitted [2].

In Belgium, the national parliament legalized euthanasia at the end of September 2002. Supporters claimed that thousands of euthanasia procedures had already been carried out annually since the law was enacted. However, they also criticized the complex and burdensome procedures, suggesting the emergence of a "death bureaucracy." Belgium has become the third jurisdiction to legalize euthanasia, following the Netherlands and the state of Oregon in the United States. Senator Philippe Mahoux, a member of the Socialist Party and one of the drafters of the law, asserted that a patient who suffers physically and psychologically has the full right to determine the continuation of their life and to choose the timing of their death.

In the United States, active euthanasia is declared illegal in many states. Currently, the only state with an explicitly legal provision allowing terminally ill patients to end their own lives is Oregon. In 1997, Oregon passed the "Death with Dignity Act," which legalized physician-assisted suicide for qualified patients. However, this law pertains only to assisted suicide and not to active euthanasia.

In Switzerland, lethal drugs may be provided to both Swiss nationals and foreign citizens upon personal request. Article 115 of the Swiss Penal Code, drafted in 1937 and enforced since 1942, states that assisting in suicide is illegal if it is motivated by selfish interest. This article has been interpreted as allowing the controlled distribution of drugs intended for ending life, provided the motive is not personal gain.

In the United Kingdom, on November 5, 2006, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists submitted a proposal to the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. The proposal suggested that consideration be given to permitting euthanasia for newborn babies with severe disabilities. However, this proposal was not aimed at legalizing euthanasia in the UK. Instead, it was intended to open discussions regarding the medical legitimacy of such practices based on the newborn's potential for survival.

Definition and Types of Euthanasia

Euthanasia is defined as a human action intended to end life quickly in order to avoid physical suffering. It is often described as a good and peaceful death. Euthanasia is generally categorized into two types: active euthanasia and passive euthanasia. Active euthanasia refers to the act of deliberately ending a life to prevent further suffering. In this case, the patient agrees to the termination of life, and the act may be carried out either by the patient themselves or by another individual. Such deaths may occur among both the young and the elderly, including cases involving the killing of infants.

According to M. Kuitert and F. Tengker, the distinction between active and passive euthanasia lies in whether the act is performed based on the patient's request or not [14].

Discussions about active euthanasia, which involves intentionally ending someone's life by oneself or through another person, whether it concerns a young person or an elderly individual, show that none of these cases can be considered natural deaths. They are not the result of natural biological processes but rather are initiated by human decision and action.

Arguments for and Against Euthanasia

The term *euthanasia* itself carries a positive connotation regarding the act of ending human life. It is seen as an attempt to achieve a pleasant and painless death. The primary reason often cited in favor of euthanasia is the desire to avoid physical suffering. In relation to this, those who support active euthanasia usually provide the following arguments.

One of the key arguments is the belief in a moral right to die with dignity. It is widely held that every person should have the right to die with dignity, which is considered a fundamental aspect of human life. A slow, painful, and merciless death is not regarded as dignified. On the contrary, it is viewed as a form of death that strips away human value and reduces a person to the level of an animal or a plant. Therefore, euthanasia is seen as a necessary means to ensure a dignified end to life.

Another common argument is that euthanasia is an act of compassion toward those who are suffering. For example, if one sees animals trapped in a burning cage, the morally justifiable decision might be to shoot the animals rather than let them burn slowly and suffer. So the question arises: why allow humans to continue experiencing prolonged pain and suffering? Denying euthanasia is, for some, equivalent to prolonging suffering unnecessarily. The most compassionate action, they argue, is to help the sick escape their pain. It is not noble to insist that someone endure endless suffering for no meaningful purpose. Mercy calls us to reduce pain through effective and permanent means, including offering a peaceful death to those who suffer. Nobel Prize winner Dr. James Watson once wrote that if a child is not declared alive within three days after birth, parents should be allowed to make a choice under a controlled system granted only to certain individuals. Doctors could permit the child to die with the parents' consent in order to spare them from future suffering and hardship [15].

Euthanasia is also viewed by its proponents as an act of compassion toward the suffering family. The patient is not the only one who suffers; the family also experiences emotional, psychological, and financial distress. Choosing to end an inevitable death not only relieves the patient but also lifts an immeasurable burden from the patient's family. Social sacrifices, psychological pressure, and financial stress are as heavy as the suffering of the patient. Therefore, disconnecting life support systems is seen as a compassionate act for the family. Professor Peter Singer has argued that the life of a fetus holds no more value than that of an animal at the same level of rationality. He further claims that such reasoning also applies to newborn infants and concludes that the life of a newborn is less meaningful than that of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee [16]. An article in *Newsweek* magazine in 1982 printed in large letters that biologists claim infanticide is as common as sexual arousal and that most animals, including humans, engage in it [17].

In response to these pro-euthanasia arguments, Christian perspectives provide a strong rebuttal. The foundation of this opposition lies in the utilitarian assumptions that stand in sharp contrast to Christian affirmations about the sovereignty of God and the sanctity of human life, which is created in His image. From a Christian viewpoint, life is not a commodity to be measured by suffering or utility, but a sacred gift entrusted by God. Therefore, ending a life intentionally, regardless of the motive, is seen as a rejection of divine authority and a violation of the image of God in humanity.

Euthanasia in the Old Testament

There is no moral right to take a life. Proponents of euthanasia claim that there is a moral right to deliberately end the life of an innocent human being. However, the Bible states, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). Supporters of euthanasia believe that humans have sovereignty over human life, but Scripture affirms that God alone holds full sovereignty over human life. The Lord declares, "It is I who put to death and give life. No one can deliver out of My hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39). As Job said, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away" (Job 1:21). God is the one who created human life (Genesis 1:27), and He alone has the authority to take it (Hebrews 9:27).

Everything created by God belongs to Him, and no human being has the right to claim ownership over what belongs to God. Anyone who violates His decrees is considered rebellious and is subject to God's judgment. In testing the faith of His servant, God examined the character of Abraham. When Abraham was prepared to offer his only son to God (see

Genesis 22:1–19), the Angel of the Lord immediately stopped him, recognizing Abraham's deep faith. Abraham's intent to offer his son could be perceived as an act of giving a quick and painless death, yet God did not permit it.

In this context, even if one party agrees to euthanasia, if the other — in this case, God — does not, then the act cannot be justified. The fundamental error of euthanasia lies in the misuse of divine authority over human life.

Euthanasia in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the death of Jesus Christ is sometimes interpreted as a voluntary act for the salvation of humanity. This, however, cannot be equated with euthanasia in the conventional sense. As the Jewish Passover approached, the chief priests and scribes conspired to kill Jesus (Mark 14:1–2). Jesus knew about the betrayal that would come from His own disciple, Judas (Mark 14:18). He prayed and communed with the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:42).

Jesus' death was not a random or self-directed act. It was part of God's redemptive plan, an expression of divine love for humanity. What Christ did was a fully conscious act of obedience, a self-offering for the sake of others. Although it may appear similar to active euthanasia, the motive and purpose are fundamentally different. Jesus willingly gave His life not to escape suffering but to fulfill the divine mission of salvation.

By contrast, human acts of euthanasia, whether active or passive, are motivated by personal decisions that often stem from despair, helplessness, or the desire to escape prolonged suffering. These acts can be seen as a rejection of the grace of God expressed through the redemptive work of Christ.

In the case of Jesus, the purpose was to redeem humanity, whereas in human euthanasia, the purpose is often to end personal suffering. As previously explained, euthanasia is typically carried out as a way to avoid pain. For this reason, it is important to examine how Scripture addresses the issue of suffering.

Constitution from the Perspective of Positive Law and Human Rights

The constitution does not grant the right to kill. From the perspective of positive law in Indonesia, euthanasia is considered a criminal act against the body and life, as regulated in the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP). These include crimes against the body or physical abuse (Articles 351 to 361 of the KUHP) and crimes against life or murder (Articles 338 to 350). The Criminal Code does not explicitly mention the term euthanasia. However, those who perform euthanasia may be prosecuted under Articles 338, 340, 344, and 345 of the KUHP [18].

In Indonesian positive law, euthanasia is regarded as a form of homicide. According to Moeljatno as cited in Pradjonggo (2016), Indonesian criminal law formally recognizes two types of euthanasia: active euthanasia (conducted upon the request of the patient) and passive euthanasia (where the patient is intentionally left untreated). In cases of active euthanasia, the perpetrator may be charged under Article 344 of the KUHP. The main difference between homicide under Article 344 and Article 338 lies in the inclusion of the victim's explicit and sincere request in Article 344, while Article 338 defines general intentional killing without such a request [19]. The element of the victim's request confirms that the initiative for the act of killing came from the victim themselves [20].

Articles 304, 306, and 531 of the KUHP classify the act of abandoning a person in need of help as a criminal offense. This clearly prohibits both active and passive euthanasia in Indonesia. For instance, if a patient requests to be discharged against medical advice and the doctor allows it, the situation may be classified as passive euthanasia. Even if the doctor claims to respect the patient's right, knowing that discharge would worsen the patient's condition, the doctor may be held accountable for abandonment leading to death. Other relevant articles that may be applied in euthanasia-related cases include Articles 340 and 359. Doctors and family members who give consent to euthanasia may be charged under Article 345 of the KUHP, which states that anyone who intentionally incites another person to commit suicide or provides them with the means to do so may be sentenced to up to four years in prison. If euthanasia is performed collectively — by doctors, nurses, other healthcare workers, or family members — then all those involved, including those who ordered, participated in, or misused their power or influence, can be prosecuted as perpetrators of a criminal offense.

In assisting with euthanasia, the involved individuals such as doctors, nurses, or other healthcare workers may also be charged under Articles 56 and 57 of the KUHP.

In Indonesia, legal assessment of euthanasia should not rely solely on the Criminal Code. Broader legal considerations can be taken into account, including doctrines from medical science. For instance, the *Jurnal Konstruksi Hukum* Vol. 1 No. 2 (2020: 313) discusses alternative perspectives from legal scholars and scientific reasoning as legal sources.

Legally, euthanasia is categorized as a criminal offense. However, not all individuals who commit a criminal act are automatically punishable. Chapter III of the Criminal Code outlines circumstances that can remove, reduce, or increase criminal responsibility, especially under Article 48. This article focuses primarily on physical coercion.

With advancements in medical science and technology, coercion may also be interpreted psychologically. In treating terminal patients who have no chance of recovery, doctors may experience deep emotional suffering and compassion for the patient. This is an example of psychological coercion. A doctor who performs euthanasia under such circumstances may technically be committing a criminal act but may not be held criminally responsible, or may receive a lighter sentence or even legal exemption, if interpreted under an extended application of Article 48 of the KUHP.

Doctors' conduct is governed by a professional guideline known as the Indonesian Medical Code of Ethics (KODEKI). This guideline does not only regulate how doctors carry out their duties but also governs their relationships with society. Doctors are expected to reflect noble behavior, as the medical profession is considered an honorable calling. Physicians are to act with pure intentions and follow the right path. Society need not fear that euthanasia will be easily practiced by doctors, even though doctors are human and susceptible to error. Therefore, legal frameworks are essential to control the future implementation of euthanasia in Indonesia.

Euthanasia from the Perspective of Human Rights

As a constitutional state, Indonesia upholds and respects human rights, as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is embedded within the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The first paragraph of the Preamble acknowledges the right to freedom, expressing Indonesia's commitment to humanity. Recognition of human dignity is the core of human rights, while recognition of justice is the essence of the rule of law.

The second paragraph of the Preamble refers to Indonesia as a just nation, which represents the ultimate goal of a legal state. The third paragraph declares that every person has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community. This aligns with Article 27(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The fourth paragraph affirms the human rights of every individual in the political, civil, economic, social, and cultural realms. The principles of Pancasila, which are embedded in this paragraph, also reflect the comprehensive respect for human rights. Although initially not explicitly mentioned, the principles of human rights have been integrated into the articles of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia [21].

In Indonesia, human rights are specifically regulated under Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights. According to Article 1, point 1 of this law, human rights are a set of rights inherently attached to the nature and existence of human beings as creations of God Almighty. These rights are His gift and must be respected, upheld, and protected by the state, law, government, and all individuals for the sake of human dignity and worth.

Law No. 39 of 1999 is divided into ten categories. The right to life is addressed in Chapter II, Article 4, which states that the right to life is possessed by every individual and must not be taken away, either in part or in whole, under any circumstances or by any party. This is further reinforced in Chapter III, Article 9(1), which declares that every person has the right to live and to preserve their life, and in Article 33(2), which guarantees that every individual shall be free from fear of enforced disappearance or the deprivation of life.

When examined in relation to euthanasia, it becomes clear that the practice of euthanasia is in direct conflict with Article 4, Article 9(1), and Article 33(2) of Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights. In addition, several provisions in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia explicitly regulate human rights and are closely related to the issue of euthanasia. These include Article 28A, which affirms the right to life; Article 28G(2), which protects individuals from fear and coercion; and Article 28I, which guarantees the right to life as a non-derogable right under any circumstances.

Scholarly Perspectives on Euthanasia

Ethical Perspective

Etymologically, the word *ethics* originates from the ancient Greek word *ethos*, a singular form with multiple meanings such as habit, custom, character, and morals. The plural form *ta etha* means customs or traditions. This meaning forms the foundation of the term "ethics" as used by the great Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC), who developed it into the study of moral philosophy. Therefore, ethics can be defined as the science of what is commonly done or what is considered habitual. In this context, ethics is synonymous with moral philosophy. The term *moral*, etymologically, is used in contrast to *immoral* or *amoral*, for example: "extorting a pensioner is an immoral act" or "corruption is an immoral deed."

The following are views of various scholars on ethics:

- Aristotle distinguished between *terminus technicus*, referring to ethics as a systematic study of human actions, and *manner and custom*, which relates to natural norms that define good and bad behavior.
- K. Bertens defined ethics as moral norms and values that guide individuals or groups in regulating their behavior.
- W.J.S. Purwadarminto considered ethics as the science of moral principles and values.
- Hamzah Yakub viewed ethics as the study of which actions are good and which are bad.
- Sugarda Purbakawatja saw ethics as a philosophy concerning the moral value of human behavior.
- O.P. Simorangkir defined ethics as a human perspective on the goodness or badness of behavior.
- Prof. Dr. Franz Magnis-Suseno described ethics as a science that seeks orientation and provides a foundation for human action.
- Drs. Sidi Gajabla defined ethics as a theory of human behavior evaluated through reason in terms of moral quality.
- Drs. H. Burhanudin Salam viewed ethics as a branch of philosophy that discusses values and norms determining human behavior.
- James J. Spillane, SJ, defined ethics as the process of reflecting on human conduct in making morally related decisions.

Theological Perspective

Christian ethics is based on God's will, which is a form of command from above and is considered obligatory. Ethical commandments given by God are consistent with His unchanging moral character. God desires what is right according to His own attributes. Scripture commands, "Be holy, because I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45). Jesus told His disciples, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). These imperatives underscore that Christian ethics is not merely a suggestion but a divine mandate rooted in the nature of God Himself.

Implications for Christians

The practice of euthanasia carries complex implications for Christians, often shaped by religious beliefs, moral values, and church teachings. Life is seen as a divine gift, and only God has the absolute right over life and death. Therefore, euthanasia is often viewed as a violation of God's sovereignty. Christians believe that suffering at the end of life has spiritual significance, reflecting the call to follow Christ's example of endurance and sacrificial love.

Christian doctrine regards life as sacred. The Bible states, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13), which serves as a foundational objection to euthanasia, whether voluntary or non-voluntary. Even if intended to alleviate suffering, euthanasia is still perceived as an act that prematurely ends human life, contradicting Jesus' teaching to love others.

The Church views suffering as a test of faith or a means of drawing closer to God. Therefore, the Church advocates for palliative care as a way to relieve suffering without resorting to life-ending measures.

For Christian medical professionals, euthanasia poses a serious moral dilemma. On one hand, they are called to professional excellence; on the other hand, such an act may be seen as sinful for violating divine commandments. Families who consent to euthanasia may also experience guilt for transgressing God's law. Furthermore, euthanasia may have spiritual consequences beyond death, potentially affecting the state of the soul in the afterlife due to opposition to God's will.

Suggestions for Further Research

The author hopes that this paper contributes meaningfully to the Christian understanding of euthanasia from ethical, moral, legal, human rights, and most importantly, biblical perspectives. If there are shortcomings in this work, the author sincerely welcomes constructive feedback and suggestions, offered in humility, to further strengthen our understanding of Christian faith as grounded in the Word of God.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, euthanasia remains a deeply complex and controversial issue when viewed from ethical, legal, theological, and human rights perspectives. Ethically, while some scholars and philosophies may frame euthanasia as a compassionate response to suffering, Christian ethics affirms that life is sacred and sovereignly owned by God, and therefore cannot be taken by human will without violating divine authority. Legally, the Indonesian Criminal Code categorizes euthanasia as a form of homicide, and various articles of law explicitly prohibit both active and passive forms, emphasizing the sanctity of life and the professional obligations of medical practitioners. From a human rights standpoint, the right to life as enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution and Law No. 39 of 1999 firmly rejects any justification for ending life through euthanasia, aligning national law with international human rights standards. Theologically, both the Old and New Testaments affirm God's ultimate control over life and death, and call believers to persevere through suffering as a form of spiritual obedience and Christ-like endurance. The implications for Christians, including patients, families, and healthcare providers, are weighty, often placing them at a moral crossroads between compassion and divine commandment. Ultimately, euthanasia is not merely a medical or social matter but a profound moral and theological challenge that demands discernment, humility, and deep commitment to the truths of Scripture and the sanctity of human life as a gift from God.

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