Euthansia And Self Determination Essay, Research Paper

When speaking in terms of legalized euthanasia, and self-determination, Callahan feels that people should make decisions for themselves according to their own beliefs as to what comprises the good life. (pg. 226) He also states that we will, one way or another, die of some disease and that death will have dominian over all of us. (pg. 227) The meaning of this is no matter what we are all destined to die. In the case of death he first looks at suicide. This is when a person takes his or her own life, without the assistance of another. Euthansia, is a decision made between 2 people, the one being killed and the one doing the killing. He takes the stand that the very idea someone would waive their right to life, and then give another the power to take that life, requires a justification yet to be provided to him or by anyone. ( pg. 226) Should anyone want to end their life for any reason it can definitely be achieved.

Callahan feels that doctors of medicine should not be given the right to end lives of people who no longer feel life is worth living and that euthanasia should only be utilized only to releive the pain of an incurable disease. (pg. 228) It is not medicines, place to lift from us the burden of suffering, which turns on the meaning we assign the decay (or natural aging process) of the body and its eventual death. It is not it?s place to determine when lives are not worth living or when the burden of life has become to great to be borne. (pg. 229) Hence he is saying that physicians should not be allowed to be the sole person making judgements about who should be allowed to live or die, in any situation.

The person who knows that he or she is infected and chooses to forego treatment has decided to commit suicide. The flipside of this is the person who infected the individual initally, knowing that they were infectious decided to end the other persons life for them. This by our standards ehis would be murder. However, should both parties know about the infectious process then a form of euthanasia between two consenting individuals has be obtained, whether during the act of sex, or sharing needles in drug addiction.

Bayer and Callahan both agree that a person or group of people having their own beliefs and cultural habits need to be addressed with that in mind. Hence when dealing with AIDS prevention, these programs need to be in the language of the particular group and also be geared toward their cultural beliefs. Bayer feels that if they are not culturally sensitive, they will be ineffective, and that this needs to be achieved through public health programs directed toward specific groups. (pg. 356-357) Callahan I feel agrees from the standpoint that physicians ( public health programs ) need to remain within the boundries of promoting health, (pg 225) But I think Bayer and Callahan would clash when he makes the statement that behavioral modification can be achieved through cultural sensitivity. Because in essence you are taking control of someone else?s life, making that decision for them and not considering the other factors necessary, is not what Callahan feels is right. He is of the belief that you should show a person the way to travel to good health, but don?t make the actual decision of which route to follow for them.

When it comes to the health of the nation, even though we are comprised of many cultures each having their respective practices and beliefs. When speaking about AIDS, difficult decisions need to be made. I believe that each person has a right to their own beliefs and practices. However, when cultural beliefs stand in the way of stopping a virus that can change its form like a chameleon, we need to make these individuals aware of what needs to be done to help stop this dread disease, rather than worry about what may happen to their beliefs.

The same impasse, ?How can we achieve a happy medium for all concerned? , has echoed it?s presence in every chapter we have read. We are comprised of so many different nationalities and cultures, that for all of us to agree on the same issues and the approprate way to handle them is a known unlikelyhood. However, I have to agree with Callahan when it comes to each person making any decisions concerning their own well being and allowing them to do what they need to for themselves. This is I think an utopian thought process because ultimately, we need to consider how our decisions will affect those around us. Eventhough it may not be acceptable to a particular culture, how each situation needs to be handled we need to decide what needs to be done and take action.