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## **MORAL ASPECTS OF SUICIDE**

Today's man does not deal openly with some social problems. We all think they will go away if we ignore them. Suicide is one of such problems. We do not often talk about it because it is shocking and we do not have the slightest idea how to deal with it. But suicide is closer to us than many people think. Is suicide moral, immoral, or another? Does that depend on any circumstances? How exactly? What about the moral aspect of the issue?

In order to evaluate the moral worth of suicide one needs to look at the motivations and consequences of the act. After all, people don't seek death for death's sake, but rather for a wide variety of reasons, from relieving physical pain or psychological anguish to avoidance of judicial punishment, from martyrdom for a cause to societal shame. That is why the history of philosophical analyses of suicide is complex. Any beliefs about suicide naturally begin with religion. It is an interesting fact that though the Bible does not specifically prohibit suicide and there is no particular word for the act itself, Christianity generally condemns the practice as initially stated by St. Augustine. He was concerned with the decimation of Christians by suicide and condemned those who committed suicide just so they could gain immediate entrance into heaven. He successfully supplanted the Roman ideal of heroic individualism with a Platonic concept of submission to divine authority. Only seven instances of suicide are reported in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.

Oppositely, the Quran explicitly forbids suicide as the gravest sin, and it is more serious even than homicide. But killing oneself as an act of holy war (jihad) is not considered a suicide.

A philosophical tradition of the suicide problem started in ancient Greece. On one hand, the Stoics and Epicureans considered that one's destiny was a personal choice. Cato and Seneca thought the choice of suicide was acceptable. On the other hand, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero opposed suicide. Later M. Luther, Puritan religious leaders, and the philosophers such as J. Locke, J.-J. Rousseau and S. Kierkegaard were adamantly opposed to suicide.

New and less stringent attitudes towards suicide emerged during the Renaissance as churchly taboos began to lose their power. The sixteenth-century essayist Michel de Montaigne argues that the right to die was a personal choice, and Sir Thomas More justified suicide as a form of euthanasia in his *Utopia*. We think that the French philosopher A. Camus perhaps in the best way explained the divergent views philosophers and theologians held concerning suicide when he said: «What is called a reason for living is also an excellent reason for dying.»

On our opinion a person has the right to die, the right to choose when to die. His or her decision should be well-thought out. It is our own choice to live or to die. Our life is special and we must give it a chance.

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