

Killing a disabled infant is not morally equivalent to killing a person

[Family](#), [Children](#)



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According to the Utilitarian Philosopher, Peter Singer's final paragraph in his article entitled, "Moral Maze", "Killing a...person. Very...at all" (Singer, 2001). In support to his aforementioned claim, he argues that:

First of all, he utilizes kids who suffer from a condition technically referred to as "Severe Spina Bifida" as an example, and reiterates that even if a surgery may be carried out later in the life of these children, it still does not change the fact that these patients are extremely unhappy because they would have to go through exceedingly painful and uneasy life experiences (Singer, 2001). This resulted in Singer's belief that since a child will only live such an unhappy life, then it is not worth living at all, thus, the child should not suffer further and should be allowed to die instead (Singer, 2001). Again, for Singer, letting an infant who is "physically challenged" die is not at all similar to killing an individual and that it is not at all a wrong act because it is done to save the child from living an exceedingly unhappy life (Singer, 2001).

Secondly, Singer upholds "utilitarianism" by encouraging the principle which states that an act is right if carried out to attain the greatest happiness and will benefit the greatest number as well (Will., n. d.). He again picked another medical condition, which is technically known as "hemophilia" to restate his conviction (Singer, 2001). He says that killing the disabled infant will result in another newborn child with the possibility that the child will be happier, the parents would not have to worry about another child who suffers from "hemophilia" (Singer, 2001).

Explaining further, without the child with hemophilia, the parents will not have to attend to painful bleedings which are difficult to clot if not impossible (Singer, 2001). When Singer says that greatest happiness, he means, the children will be attended to equally and adequately because there is no other child with hemophilia to share their parents' time with; and at the same time, the parents will also be happy because they will not have to think endlessly about their sick child (Singer, 2001).

In addition to that, when Singer says "greatest number", he apparently refers to the unaffected normal children, the hemophiliac who no longer has to live a painful life, as well as, the parents who never have to worry (Singer, 2001). Again, for Singer, letting an infant who is "physically challenged" die is not at all similar to killing an individual and that it is not at all a wrong act because it is done with the intention to attain the greatest happiness and to benefit the greatest number (Singer, 2001).

Third, Singer believes that killing an infant who's "physically challenged" is not killing an individual and that it is not an act which can be labeled as wrong because here an abortion is carried out to hamper delivery of a child who according to prenatal diagnosis has "hemophilia" or "Down's Syndrome" (Singer, 2001). In addition to that, he says that there should be fairness and equality in the sense that if fetuses' lives are taken away through an abortion, then it should also be allowable that newborns who have "hemophilia" or "Down Syndrome" etc (Singer, 2001). Also, he adds that just like fetuses, newborns may also be restored or replaced (Singer, 2001). Again, for Singer, letting an infant who is "physically challenged" die is not

at all similar to killing an individual and that it is not at all a wrong act because it is done to hamper the delivery of a “ physically challenged” child, to institute fairness between fetuses and newborns, as well as, establish the fetuses and newborns’ ability to be replaced (Singer, 2001).

Fourth, Singer’s conviction is that killing a disabled or “ physically challenged” infant is not wrong because he considers an infant as “ still not human” (Singer, 2001). He says that since an infant does not yet have the ability to think critically, still very much dependent on the people surrounding him or her, and is not yet aware of the occurrences around him or her, thus, the infant is not yet qualified to be labeled as a human being(Singer, 2001). The aforementioned characteristics are extremely crucial for Singer since he pushes that, parents should be given the right to decide if it would be better for the child’s life to be taken away (Singer, 2001). Again, for Singer, letting an infant who is “ physically challenged” die is not at all similar to killing an individual and that it is not at all a wrong act because it is done to help parents realize the characteristics the infant have and that they should be given the right to decide for their children because infants are not yet aware, still dependent, and cannot yet think and decide for themselves (Singer, 2001).

Last but not least, Singer believes that killing a “ physically challenged” infant is alright to prevent an infant to be born with hemophilia (Singer, 2001). His example is a case wherein a pregnant mother will have to wait for three months so as not to have a baby with hemophilia (Singer, 2001). Again, for Singer, letting an infant who is “ physically challenged” die is not

at all similar to killing an individual and that it is not at all a wrong act because it is done to make sure that such kind of waiting is worthy enough because it will produce a child without any medical condition (Singer, 2001).

Meanwhile, I beg to disagree with one of Peter Singer's convictions. If for him, letting an infant who is "physically challenged" die is not at all similar to killing an individual and that it is not at all a wrong act because it is done to save the child from living an exceedingly unhappy life, then he might as well re-think about it (Singer, 2001). For example, even if the best reply to my objection is the fact that "Severe Spina Bifida" is incurable at the moment, this should not result in a final decision that the child be killed.

In the first place, there are available therapies to manage such a condition, for instance, certain rehabilitations to motivate progress and hamper speedy worsening of the condition. Besides, there are several new researches that are ongoing with regards to how it may be managed. Besides, who's to say that a disabled or "physically challenged" child will be exceedingly unhappy? Countless agreeable things can happen, but only if we resort and stick to current research, positive thinking, and our morals. On a final note, to assume that a disabled child will turn out to be very unhappy if he or she lives with such a condition is really unreasonable, thus, to kill a disabled infant for that simple reason is way wrong as well.

References

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