

Religious views on abortion religion essay



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Abortion is defined in different ways by different people; the medical dictionary defines abortion as a premature exit of the product of conception from the uterus. It is the loss of pregnancy (MedicineNet. com, 1998).

Religion is a key factor in the control of morality in the society today; in examining the concept of abortion and the perspective of the religion on abortion one must find how the different religions in the society influence this concept. Within the various religious circles, it is argued and continuously debated whether a fetus is a living being. The main argument is on when or at what stage does the state and religion consider a fetus to be a living being. Some religions argue against the state with the point that a fetus is not a living person. The arguments on the morality of abortion are often based on the religious beliefs.

On the grounds of religion, each religious belief has its views on the concept of abortion, In Christianity abortion is considered a bad omen, an evil practice and non-acceptable by God, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that abortion is wrong and any member of the church found involved in the practice can be excommunicated from the church. The Jehovah witness also do share the common belief with the catholic that abortion is wrong, it is concluded that in most Christian denominations, abortion is highly prohibited and at no time accepted in the churches. Like other fellow Christian communities, the protestant churches does not allow abortion, in the Northern Ireland the catholic's as well as protestants have come together to oppose the concept of abortion, this does not imply that all the Christians denominations against the act and concept abortion (SPUC, 2010). Some of the Christian denominations are pro abortion and believe that abortion can

help save lives if carefully carried out with the help of doctors and professionals in the field of medicine such as in the Baptists and Methodists churches. In these cases, a woman was not disgraced after having an abortion unless she went against the advice of a professional.

The consistency of the Catholic Church against the abortion has raised questions; however this question was answered by catholic theorist James McCarthy. His argument was based on whether the life of a child begin at the point of conception or not. It is however clear that there has been no clear church teaching on this matter, there has been lots of argument at what point does a fetus become a human being. Others argue that a person is more than just the biological parts, and believes that a living person has more advance characteristics that a fetus do not possess, like the ability to think and make relationships with other people (McCarthy, 1996).

The pro-life proponents also argue that the ability of a fetus to exist independently defines it as a person, their argument is based on the right to life and they believe that the fetus can live given time and good environment just like any other human beings. It is however realistic that the Catholics will still view abortion as evil no matter what arguments are brought forward (Dombrowski, 2000). From this argument we can easily conclude that the Catholics have viewed and will always view abortion as evil regardless of any positive contribution it has in the society; it is also not clear whether they view fetus as a living human being.

It therefore raises questions as to why the Catholics carry out fetal baptisms, which were practiced early 1700s. The contradiction is clearly evident, the

McCarthy claims that a fetus is not a human being and the early church carried out fatal baptism (McCarthy, 1996). From this argument it is evident that most of the religious belief and concept on abortion is based on the human life, and the point at which it is considered to begin.

Hinduism view

In the Hinduism faith, abortion is considered evil; however some of the Hindus texts prove abortion to be a ' necessary evil', since it save lives. The Hindu scripture reference the act of abortion as ' gorha-batta' meaning womb killing, the abortionist is referenced as the greatest sinner in the society as described by Atharva Veda. It is therefore clear that in the Hindus faith abortion is an abomination. The Vedas does not show when life begins or whether a fetus is a living being but it is clear that abortion is a sinful activity. This is as outlined in the part of the Aryan scriptures is in the Vedas which states;

“ Whpe off, O Pushan [Lord], the sins of him that practiseth abortion.”

(Sacred Books of the East).

Another compelling evidence that abortion is unacceptable in the Hindu religion is contained in the books of Chandrasekhar (1974) in which he pointed out that induced abortion, which he referred to as bhrunahatya (foetus murder) is a sin. He pointed out that according to Vishnu Smriti (c. 100 B. C. to 100 A. D.) , the act of abortion which is the destruction an embryo can be considered as the killing of a holy person (Chandrasekhar, 1974)

Christian view

The concept of abortion in the Jewish law is not as strict as the Christian way; the Jewish legal authorities have not established principles by which to determine the morality and validity of abortion in the society. The issue is complex and always refers back to the bible. The Bible on the other hand has a lot to say regarding the concept of abortion, the Biblical arguments indicated that the unborn child is a human being and constitutes God's creation. God came up with three creations. The conceived life on the conception of God is a living, after conception the result is referred to as the child in the likeness of God, as per the Bible the infant, child, son or daughter refer to the same thing since they are all creation of God. Other phrases of the Bible indicates that when men fight and one of them hit a woman who is expecting with the result of a miscarriage, the responsible person will be charged based on the woman's husband judgment, but if other issues occur, the penalty will be life for life (Bible Exodus 21: 22). ' Life for life ' indicate the miscarriage is the loss of life, the life loss as a result of miscarriage is equivalent to the life of the responsible person. It is therefore concluded that the stands of the Bible on the miscarriage or abortion is defined clearly, in loss of life through abortion is equivalent to the life lost for an existing human being.

It is however not easy to simplify what the Bible state concerning abortion, several scholars has indicated that it is not easy to determine the real knowledge on the matters relating to abortion. Most of the Christians however, are just told that abortion is prohibited and not allowed in the society. This concept just simplifies what is hard to comprehend in our

society. It has become a matter of doing what God requires from his disciples, no matter what the consequences are to the living and the unborn; the final judgment is however the Almighty God. (Ward, 1978).

In summary it is evident that the Bible controls most of the judgment in the Christian faith concerning abortion. This is however only true if the decision is in congruence with God's demands as outlined in the Holy Bible

Buddhism view

Buddhism on the other hand has a more relaxed approach to abortion. This is evident in the Buddha's way of life, as it tries to get away from making finalization and judgment on matters. Buddha advised his followers not to accept or believe in any teaching from other religions not even Buddha himself. His emphasis was to investigate the teaching on how abortion is viewed from the people themselves and the society of the Buddhist. If an individual within oneself finds a teaching to be true, then he should practice the teaching, but not trust any teaching by simply trusting them. Buddha first perceives state "I will not harm any living creature" this does not only apply to the human being community but to all animals, once a fetus is alive the Buddhism faith protest not to harm the fetus and protect the fetus.

The Buddhist approach to ethical and social issues relating to abortion is based on the concept on compassion. The concept of compassion is important to the Buddhist than any other doctrines or laws set by the land. It is therefore important on any judgment as to whether abortion is good or evil in the land of the Buddhist one should bring in light the concept of compassion to the fetus before any argument is made. Most Buddhist feel

that in relation to the concept of compassion abortion is wrong, and regrettable, it is viewed as the act of depriving the unborn the compassionate right to live, however the compassion should be both to the fetus and the mother, it may be to a level where the compassionate on the fetus may deprive the mother the right to life. In this case Buddha then indicates that you do what I feel is right, such circumstances are allowed so that each individual arrive at the right conclusion and not judgmental.

In conclusion, reviews of literature from various Buddhist ethicists do bear a universal consensus that education is the best policy in tackling abortion. In this light, they advocate birth control as well as encouraging the use of contraceptives (Tsomo, 1998)

Discussions

This research however makes me to misunderstand the result of engaging in abortion, it relays that if a woman from the Buddhist faith engages in the act of abortion, she should be comforted with compassion rather than judgment and punishment. These religious have had their share of impact in different societies, and they have brought different views on the concept of abortion example, most of the United States population claims to be Catholic (Dombrowski, 2000); however there is no religion that stick to there rules and doctrines. It would be hard to say that religious factors are insignificant considering Roman Catholicism is the leading opponent of abortion (Abernethy, 1994). Hindus had been very firm and so many people. The Catholics have always been strict and against the act, but it is evident that most of the faithful indulge in such activities and the church assume not to know as a result of not losing the faithful. The religion has therefore left us in <https://assignbuster.com/religious-views-on-abortion-religion-essay/>

the dark whether abortion is good or not allowed within the church. It therefore calls for a personal judgment and that why this question, Is abortion Right? Is an open ended question that can be answered based on the individual judgment and not religious grounds and the doctrines of the church.

Conclusions

On my opinion the concept of compassion brought in the Buddhist faith, is more appealing, however abortion should be carried out with the assistant of a health professional, and only when it is dangerous to either the mother or the child. The mother side should be given precedence since she is a living being in existence as to the un-born as believed by the Buddhist. It is therefore depended on individual judgment whether to carry out abortion or not. The Buddhist vie of abortion is more liberal this is because it leaves the decision to the person who engages in the act to a large extent. The contemporary society is fuelled largely by the freedom of personal choice and technology. These doctrines seem to be well illustrated in the Buddhist view of abortion. To support my choice for Buddhist way of handling the abortion issue, I present the general universal consensus that the various Buddhist ethicists have advanced. In fact their approach to abortion has been considered by other scholars and organizations as being the best as pointed out by SPUC (2010). Tsomo (1998) further points out that Buddhists do recognize the level of incongruity that exists in the ethical theory of abortion as well as in the actual practice of the abortion. They however do not in any way condone the inappropriate, meaningless and taking of life. They therefore use their views of morality of abortion to advocate for a

universal understanding as well as the expression of compassion towards all forms of living things. Their views are nonjudgmental while respecting both the rights as well as the freedom of all human beings in the making of their own choices.