

Islam, Euthanasia and Western Christianity: Drawing on Western Christian thinking to develop an expanded Western Sunni Muslim perspective on euthanasia.

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Signature:.....

*All praises and glory be to God for giving me this opportunity,
and the strength and fortitude to complete this work.*

This thesis is respectfully dedicated to:

Syed Lateefullah Hussaini, my late grandfather

Munawar Sultana and Abdul Razzak, my parents

And

The rest of my family

*Without their continuous guidance, priceless wisdom and
invaluable support, I would not have reached this stage in life.*

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Thesis Abstract

In this thesis, I will examine various methods of argument used for and against euthanasia by Christian, Islamic and secular ethicists. Overall, this is intended to examine the role of faith-specific or tradition-specific assumptions and sources in shaping the stance on euthanasia that is taken by certain Western Christian thinkers and scholars in Islamic Medical Ethics. Following an initial overview of some of the central concerns of the thesis in the introduction (Chapter I), I will look at a range of select Western Christian perspectives (Chapter II) and certain Western and Eastern Islamic perspectives (Chapter III) on euthanasia. In these chapters, I will investigate how various sources are used by particular Western Christian and Islamic scholars to formulate their perspective for or against euthanasia. In Chapter IV, I will compare the approaches of these Western Christian and Islamic ethicists to determine points of overlap and distinction. Based on this comparison, it may be contended that the Western Christian literature on euthanasia is in some respects more developed than the Islamic literature. Chapter V will take account of some of the types of argument that are found in the Christian literature but for which there is at present no fully developed counterpart in Sunni Islamic literature. For example, the notion of respecting the elderly, as it specifically relates to opposing euthanasia, is discussed in the Western Christian ethics literature reviewed, but is not considered at least in Islamic Medical Ethics sources examined in this thesis. On this basis, Chapter V will offer an expanded Western Sunni Islamic perspective on euthanasia, which engages with strategies of argument drawn from the Western Christian literature, so providing a contribution to the literature in the developing discipline of Islamic medical ethics. The conclusion to the study will identify the possibilities and nature of dialogue on this issue between faiths, and between monotheistic and other ethical perspectives. So a secondary objective is to examine the possibility of convergence of thought among Christians and Muslims not just on medical ethical issues, but on a range of further issues from a Western point-of-view. In this way, the thesis also aims to make a broader contribution to interfaith dialogue as well as the study of method in ethics directed toward a Western audience.

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