



# Religion Studies

- × × × **SELF STUDY GUIDE**
- × × **TOPICAL ISSUES IN SOCIETY:**
  - × a. SUBSTANCE ABUSE
  - × b. ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION
  - × c. EUTHANASIA
  - × BOOK 9



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# 1. Introduction

The declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation in 2020, led to the disruption of effective teaching and learning in all schools across South Africa.

Many learners, across all grades, spent less time in class due to the phased-in reopening of schools, as well as rotational attendance and alternative timetables that were implemented across provinces, to comply with social distancing rules. This led to severe teaching and learning time losses. Consequently, the majority of schools were not able to complete all the relevant content prescribed in Grade 10-12 in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

In order to mitigate and intervene against the negative impact of COVID-19, as part of the Recovery Learning Plan for Grades 10-12, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) worked in collaboration with Subject Specialists from various Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) to develop this Self-Study Guide for learners in Grade 12.

The content in this study guide is critical towards laying a strong foundation to improve your performance in this subject.

The main aims of this study guide is to:

- Assist learners to improve their performance, by revising and consolidating their understanding of the topic;
- Close existing content gaps in this topic; and
- Improve and strengthen understanding of the content prescribed for this topic.

This study-guide is meant as a self-study guide for learners and therefore should be used as a revision resource to consolidate learning at the end of a particular topic taught in class.

Learners are encouraged to complete the exercises and activities to test their understanding and to expose themselves to high quality assessment.

This study guide can also be used by study groups and peer learning groups, to prepare for the final NSC examination in this subject.

## 2. HOW TO USE THIS SELF STUDY GUIDE?

This study guide covers 9 of the topics that pose the most challenges in the examinations. Please also note the remaining topics that are set out in the CAPS. This Self-Study Guide includes the following topics:

- History and present dynamics of inter-religious relationships in South African, African and international communities.
- Religion in areas of recent conflict in South Africa, Africa, and the world.
- Analysis of secular worldviews with reference to the definition of religion and universal dimensions of religion: atheism, agnosticism, humanism, and materialism.
- Religion and the natural sciences.
- Religious freedom, human rights, and responsibilities.
- Normative Sources.
- Internal Differentiation.
- Central Teachings.
- Social Issues.

This is a Self-Study Guide that is designed to explain the concepts and content that is examinable in Religion Studies Paper 1 and Paper 2. It also provides explanations of the common action/command verbs used in the Question Papers and how to use these to analyze and understand what you are required to do to respond to a question. It also provides quick tips on how to approach specific content in an exam situation in order to save time.

The booklets have been designed to provide simplified notes and a variety of questions sourced from various past question papers. Instead of providing responses for all questions, the Self Study Guides assist with the analysis and interpretation of questions. This is to ensure that learners focus on studying the content instead of the questions. Learners are also reminded that the same content may be tested in different ways. Therefore, it is important to understand the command verbs and to have both conceptual and content knowledge.

A second package of the Self Study Guide labelled the Revision Package focuses on subject specific key concepts as examined over a period of 6 years and sourced from past Question Papers. There are 12 sets of questions/activities and Marking Guidelines provided to guide you and assist with revision and exam preparation. You are expected to answer these questions without looking at the responses. You may do a self-assessment after you have completed answering the questions.

Additional to this Self Study Guide learners are expected to:

- a. Know current affairs or topical issues in the media that are relevant to Religion Studies
- b. Use of past NSC papers – (Thutong and past papers on your internet search engine)
- c. Use the 2021 Examination Guidelines (Thutong – Religion Studies Exam Guideline)
- d. Use various textbooks, newspapers and other sources such as internet

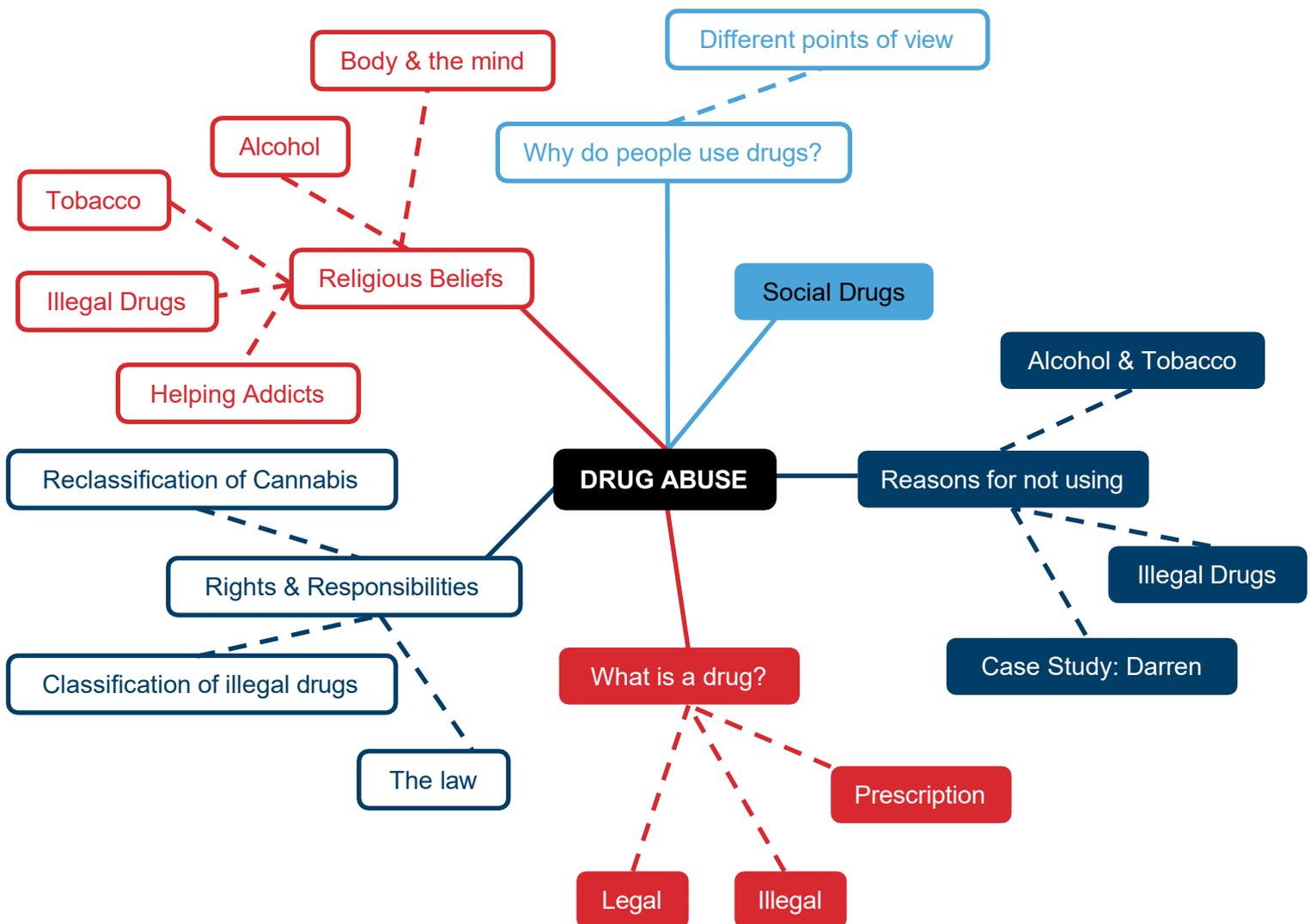
Lastly, Religion Studies is designed to test critical thinking, application of knowledge and provision of advice or solutions from a religious perspective. Therefore, a good grounding in the prescribed knowledge, skills and values in Religion Studies is essential.



## 3.2. RELIGION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse, also known as drug abuse, is the use of a drug in amounts or by methods which are harmful to the individual or others. It is a form of substance-related disorder. Differing definitions of drug abuse are used in public health, medical and criminal justice contexts.

The topic on Religion and substance abuse lends itself to questions that are at times open-ended. The mind-map below is provided to assist you in exploring various aspects of this topic. Use the mind-map below to think about possible questions and responses:



### 3.3. RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS REGARDING SUBSTANCE ABUSE



There are various religious beliefs and teachings that relate to substance or drug abuse. Below are a few teachings:

#### 3.3.1 BUDDHISM

There are two principles in Buddhism that relate to substance abuse, namely, right livelihood and the Fifth precept. These two principles are discussed below:

##### a. Right livelihood

- Right livelihood (*samyag-ājīva / sammā-ājīva*).
- This means that practitioners ought not to engage in trades or occupations which, either directly or indirectly, result in harm for other living beings.

##### b. The fifth precept

- According to the fifth precept of the Pancasila, Buddhists are meant to refrain from any quantity of "fermented or distilled beverages" which would prevent mindfulness or cause heedlessness.
- Caffeine and tea are permitted.
- Majority of Buddhists and Buddhist sects denounce and have frowned upon the use of any intoxicants by an individual who has taken the five precepts.
- Most Buddhists view the use and abuse of intoxicants to be a hindrance in the development of an enlightened mind.
- Some Tibetan Buddhists and Bönpos have been known to ingest small amounts of grain alcohol as an offering.
- As part of the five precepts a layperson must refrain from taking intoxicants, or rather drink in moderation so not to become drunk.
- Bhikkus and Bhikkunis who have taken the ten vows as part of taking refuge and becoming ordained, cannot imbibe any amount of alcohol or other drugs, other than pharmaceuticals taken as medicine.
- Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, is known as tee-totaler and non-smoker.

### 3.3.2. JUDAISM

- Judaism maintains that people do not own their bodies – they belong to God.
- Jews are not permitted to harm, mutilate, destroy or take risks with their bodies, life or health with activities such as taking life-threatening drugs.
- There is no general prohibition against drugs in Judaism, as long as they don't interfere with one's ritual duties and don't cause definite harm.
- Though most Rabbis generally prohibit drugs, in order to avoid social, legal and medical problems in their community.
- Spiritual use of various alcoholic beverages, sometimes in very large quantities, is common and well known.
- In some Jewish communities there is a tradition to get drunk on Purim.
- In many Jewish communities it is customary to drink on Simchat Torah as well.
- Drinking in small quantities as a mind-altering practice is commonly used during the Farbrengens of the Chabad Hasidim.

### 3.3.3. CHRISTIANITY

- Many Christian denominations disapprove of the use of most illicit drugs.
- Many denominations permit the moderate use of socially and legally acceptable drugs like alcohol, caffeine and tobacco.
- Some Christian denominations permit smoking tobacco, while others disapprove of it.
- Many denominations do not have any official stance on drug use, some more-recent Christian denominations
- Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses discourage or prohibit the use of any of these substances.
- Because Jesus and many Biblical figures drank wine, most Christian denominations do not require teetotalism.
- In the Eucharist, wine represents the blood of Christ.

### 3.3.4. ISLAM

- Islam prohibits all drugs that are not medically prescribed.
- Islam's prohibition of drugs stems from two concerns:
  - Their intoxication effects.
  - Their harm to the human body.
- There are numerous verses in the Qur'an and hadith that ban khamr (intoxicants, including alcohol).
- Muhammad said: Every intoxicant is like alcohol, and every (type of) alcohol is prohibited.
- The second reason for banning drugs is that they are believed to have a harmful effect on the body.
- The Qur'an says, "And make not your own hands contribute to your destruction." Surah, Al-Baqara, 2: 195
- The Muslim nations of Turkey and Egypt were instrumental in banning opium, cocaine, and cannabis.

### 3.3.5. BAHÁ'Í FAITH

- Bahá'ís are forbidden to drink alcohol or to take drugs, unless prescribed by doctors.
- Accordingly, the sale and trafficking of such substances is also forbidden.
- Smoking is discouraged but not prohibited.

### 3.4. HOW MAJOR RELIGIONS UNDERSTAND AND DEAL WITH ADDICTION



- Religion may offer some assistance and safeguards when it comes to addiction, but it isn't a sure fire protection against addiction.
- While AA and NA aren't associated with any particular religion, they do have a spiritual basis and believe in a "higher power" that helps each individual in his or her journey to sobriety.
- Through support groups, tiered step-by-step plans for progress, and therapy, individuals can often utilize religion to help them gain ground in recovery.

#### 3.4.1. CHRISTIANITY

- The Christian religion system is rooted in a faith in Jesus Christ as the son of God and saviour of human sins.

#### 3.4.2. JUDAISM

- The Jewish religion is quite forgiving of addiction and understanding of its pathological persistence. A standard inpatient or outpatient detox experience coupled with continued therapy and support is typical.

### **3.4.3. BUDDHISM**

- The root of this suffering is thought to lie in cravings and attachment. Addiction combines both to make for an intense and prolonged period of suffering as long as one is dependent.
- Buddhists focus on the Eightfold Path, which consists of: View, Intention, Action, Speech, Livelihood, Concentration, Mindfulness, Effort.

### **3.4.4. HINDUISM**

- Many treatment programs now incorporate similar views that both of these religions share, adding yoga to their rehab regimens and making the focus of treatment about the whole person instead of just the person's addiction habits.
- Mental health issues are viewed by both Hindus and Buddhists as issues to be dealt with on the journey to complete health, rather than a social stigma.
- Many Buddhists and Hindus even believe their religions can cure mental health ailments, with both focusing on the root causes of dysfunction and unhappiness rather than the biological ones that modern medicine zeroes in on.

### **3.4.5. ISLAM**

- In the Muslim religion, addiction is viewed as a sin that is punishable on Judgement Day.
- The Quran frowns upon both drug and alcohol abuse.
- In most majority-Islamic regions, use of either is prohibited.
- Muslims view alcohol as impure.
- They don't just abstain from drinking it, but also from consuming it in foods or coming into contact with it in any other form, such as via cologne.

## **3.5. ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**

### **3.5.1 WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THE DEGRADATION/DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT?**

- a. Environmental destruction is caused by irresponsible use of chemicals (pesticides and plant fertilisers).
- b. It is also caused by the excess burning of fossil fuels.
- c. This increases the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- d. Excessive increases in carbon emissions from factories and transport result in the 'greenhouse' effect/global warming.
- e. This raises the temperature of the earth's atmosphere, resulting in climate change.
- f. It is also caused by some human activities such as dumping of waste products in open areas (land pollution).
- g. Improper methods of farming also harm the environment, by causing soil erosion.

### **3.5.2 WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT?**

- a. The weather and climate have changed (global warming).
- b. There are more frequent storms, droughts and floods across our planet.
- c. Desertification is increasing, especially in Africa.
- d. This is resulting in food shortages.
- e. The ozone layer has developed a hole which causes the temperature to increase
- f. More people are dying yearly because of diseases caused by air pollution.
- g. The seriousness of diseases has increased because our bodies fail to adapt to the ever-changing environment.
- h. Some species are becoming extinct, as a result of climate change.

### **3.5.3 WHAT ROLE CAN RELIGION PLAY IN RESTORING THE ENVIRONMENT?**

- a. Religious organisations should be formed that will identify and fight against environmental destruction in their areas.
- b. They must organise practical campaigns against environment destruction, e.g. water harvesting, renewable energy, food gardens, etc.
- c. Teach their adherents about the importance of nature conservation.

- d. Religious leaders should have representation in government structures dealing with environmental issues.
- e. All religious organisations must have subcommittees that promote nature conservation/protection of the environment.

### 3.5.4 RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

Choose ONE religion and provide religious teachings that forbid the destruction of the environment.

#### EXAMPLE 1: CHRISTIANITY

- a. Christianity teaches that men were created after the image of God to rule the earth on behalf of God.
- b. Man is responsible for every creation and accountable to God.
- c. In the book of Genesis God commanded Adam to tend (to work, to serve) the garden.
- d. God commanded that the land should also keep the Sabbath unto the Lord as a way of conserving the earth (Lev.:25:2–4).
- e. God condemns the destruction of fruit-bearing trees even when waging war (Deut.: 20:19).
- f. In the book of Jeremiah God warns against destroying wildlife and nature (Jer.:9:9–11)
- g. The Bible condemns the destruction of beasts (Habakkuk 2:17).
- h. The world is for the Lord, the earth and their inhabitants, so let us take care of our environment.
- i. In the book of 2 Kings the Prophet Elisha appears to remedy a water crisis caused by pollution.
- j. The Lord Jesus Christ used examples from nature in His teachings about the kingdom of God.

#### EXAMPLE 2: AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

- k. AmaZulu have the goddess of nature called uNomkhubulwane.
- l. uNomkhubulwane is approached during times of natural disaster.
- m. They believe that she is half forest and half land.
- n. Protecting the environment is a sign of obedience to uNomkhubulwane.
- o. There are different myths which are told to the young ones so that they can respect nature.
- p. If you urinate in the river you will become the opposite sex, which was a way of not polluting water.
- q. Burning the land unnecessarily is a punishable offence in the African Traditional Religion.
- r. They believe in traditional medicine made of herbs and some animals, so plants and animals are life to the African Traditional Religion.
- s. They believe that the ancestors use different animals as their messengers to communicate with the living, e.g. bees.
- t. African Traditional Religion was the custodian of nature in Africa before colonisation.

## 3.6. EUTHANASIA

### 3.6.1. WHAT IS EUTHANASIA?

#### DEFINITION OF EUTHANASIA



The intentional killing by act or omission of a dependent human being for his or her alleged benefit. The key word here is “intentional”. If death is intended, it is not an act of

### 3.6.2. DISTINGUISH BETWEEN:

- a. Active or voluntary euthanasia,
- b. Non-voluntary euthanasia and
- c. Assisted suicide

#### FORMS OF EUTHANASIA



- Active euthanasia means ending life of a suffering person on his own request by another person, mostly by a doctor, and most of the time by lethal injection.
- This form has two varieties: non-voluntary and involuntary.
- Passive euthanasia means acceleration of death by letting the patient die naturally.
- Assisted suicide – the suffering person dies with another person’s help.

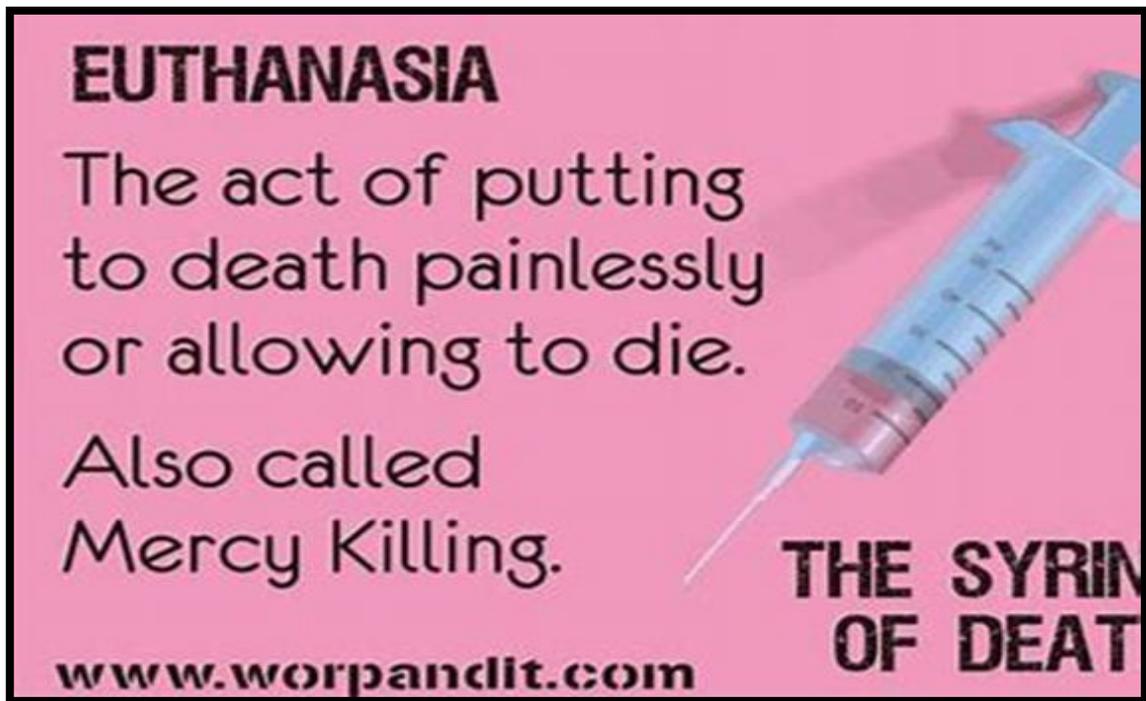
Therefore:

- Voluntary euthanasia refers to the situation where a person who is terminally ill and dying in pain, asks another person to end his/her life painlessly.
- Non-voluntary euthanasia means ending someone's life painlessly when they are unable to ask for death, but there is sound medical reason for thinking they would want death.
- Assisted suicide refers to providing a terminally ill person with the means to commit suicide.

#### WHAT EUTHANASIA IS NOT



There is no euthanasia unless the death is intentionally caused by what was done or not done. Thus, some medical actions that are often labeled “passive euthanasia” are no form of euthanasia, since the intention to take life is lacking.



### 3.6.3. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EUTHANASIA



#### ADVANTAGES

It may help the following patients:

- People who are terminally ill and for whom there is no relief from excruciating pain.
- Such a person's suffering will be ended.
- It can also help those who are too weak to ask for voluntary euthanasia.
- It can help those who cannot respond to treatment as a result of organ failure.
- In addition:
- It will ease the stress of people who have been bedridden for a very long time.
- The economic benefit is that this may help save the family and the state money, as some people will never recover, based on medical evidence.
- Medicine and medical treatment are very expensive, and the resources can be used for those who have a better chance of recovery.
- The family is relieved from helplessly watching the suffering of their loved one.

## DISADVANTAGES

- Conflict often arises due to differing opinions and beliefs of various family members.
- The family of the terminally ill person may choose euthanasia and assisted suicide for economic and inheritance reasons, and benefit from the inheritance.
- Some people may regret their decision at a later date, leading to unresolved grieving and guilt.
- Euthanasia could be used by unscrupulous doctors as an excuse for organ harvesting.
- Euthanasia and assisted suicide may send signals to other family members that choosing death is an acceptable action, and lead to suicides.
- Doctors may refuse to perform euthanasia on the basis of their religious beliefs.

### 3.6.4. RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS REGARDING EUTHANASIA

Choose ONE religion and provide its teachings regarding euthanasia.

#### EXAMPLE 1: CHRISTIANITY

- Christianity is against euthanasia because it values the sanctity of life.
- It teaches that life is created by God.
- The sacredness of life is embedded in the Word, so no one can tamper with life in any way.
- It is up to God, not humans, to determine when people would die.
- Euthanasia is to put oneself on par with God. This is condemned in the Bible.
- In the Christian faith the option of euthanasia is regarded as murder.
- 'Why should you die before your time?' (Ecclesiastes 7:17).
- This means euthanasia is against God's will because it causes somebody to die before his/her time.
- 'Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, even one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them'. (Psalm 139:16).
- This means that God alone determines the time of death for every one of us. Therefore, euthanasia is against God's plan for men.
- 'Thou shall not commit murder' (Exodus 20:13). This commandment forbids euthanasia.

#### EXAMPLE 2: HINDUISM

- In Hinduism, there are differences of opinion, due to different traditions.
- Hindus embrace karma (a belief that every action has a consequence, which may show up only in a later reincarnation). If one practises euthanasia there will be negative consequences for the soul.
- Hindus believe that whatever suffering a person experiences in his/her current life is the result of something one did in a past life.
- If one circumvents karma by taking action to stop suffering, one will pay for it later.

- Some Hindus believe that there are circumstances that justify a hastening of death.
- Some believe that if a person has reached a stage in life in which s/he can no longer worship God, s/he may ask a doctor to hasten the end of his/her life.
- However, most Hindus do not subscribe to the concept of euthanasia.
- In general, Hinduism is against euthanasia because it breaches the teaching of ahimsa (doing no harm).

### 3.6.5. SOLUTIONS TO EUTHANASIA

Hospices and hospice home-care support are seen as viable alternatives to euthanasia for the terminally ill. Those who want to die but do not have a terminal illness, are usually lonely or depressed.



- The greatest fear held by the dying is not physical pain, but the fear of being abandoned either by family, society, or both.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that governments devote specific attention to cancer pain relief and palliative care before considering laws allowing euthanasia.
- Most patients who request suicide change their minds once satisfactory pain control is established.
- Non-psychiatric physicians are not reliably able to diagnose depression let alone to determine whether the depression is impairing judgment.
- Psychological distress, particularly depression, is a major risk factor for suicide and for requests to hasten death.
- "People use the principle of autonomy as a justification for voluntary euthanasia."

### 3.6.6 WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE THERE FOR EUTHANASIA?

- The real alternative to euthanasia and assisted suicide (EAS) is to provide loving, competent care for the dying or disabled person.
- For those who have no family and/or few friends to be with them, loneliness can be a key factor in wanting to die.
- Hospice provides the answer and many lonely, elderly or dying people have found friendship when they least expected it.  
Professional hospice - palliative - care can be given either at home or in special facilities for the dying.
- Its purpose is to ease the psychological pain of loneliness and the physical pain of dying that many people suffer near the end of their lives.

### 3.6.7. ROLE OF RELIGION WITH REGARD TO EUTHANASIA

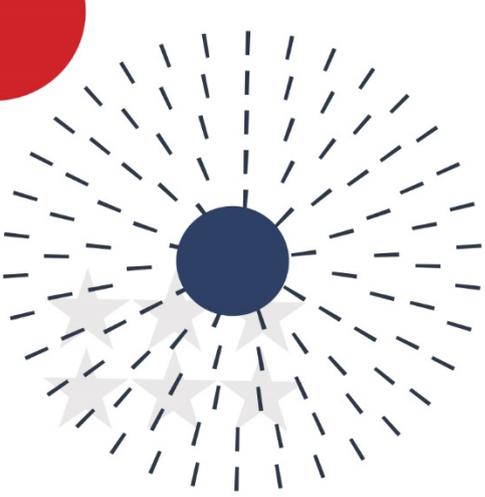
What can religious organisations do to prevent euthanasia from being performed?



- Religious organisations can pray and visit the people who want to do euthanasia.
- Counselling
- March and protest against Euthanasia been made legal by governments.
- Make adherents aware of Euthanasia and how they overcome it.
- Give people Hope and companion so that they do not feel lonely and alone.
- Volunteer at Hospice.
- Start a Helpline or an organisation to help people who want to do Euthanasia.

## 4. REFERENCES

Past grade 12 question papers  
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