

## Euthanasia

Euthanasia is illegal in the UK, It can be seen as assisted suicide, therefore breaking the **Suicide Act of 1961**. It can be viewed as manslaughter or murder and carries a prison sentence.

Some people believe that people should have the right to end their own life if they are terminally ill, incapacitated or in severe pain. This is known as euthanasia. In the UK, this is currently against the law, although in some other countries it is legal (Switzerland, Netherlands and Belgium). Some Christians believe that people should not be able to end their own life because all life is sacred, and that the terminally ill should be cared for in **hospices** at the end of their lives.

Islam tells us that Euthanasia is **zulm: wrong doing against Allah**.

**Active euthanasia:** being given lethal drugs to end a persons life so there illness does not kill them.

**Passive euthanasia:** a person stops taking medication to end their life.

## Sanctity of Life

Many religions believe that life is **sacred** because God created it, including Islam and Christianity. Christians believe that all life is sacred, and precious. Some Christians do not believe that anyone should take their own life or the life of someone else. Therefore some Christians believe that euthanasia and abortion is wrong, as it is wrong to end a human life. In all legal systems **murder** is the worst crime you could commit.

# Theme B: Religion and Life

## The Use of Animals

Many medicines are tested on animals before they can be used on humans to ensure that they are safe. This is very controversial because many people think that it cruel and unnecessary. However others believe that animal experimentation is necessary to make breakthroughs in science and technology, and to manufacture effective cures. For example many surgical procedures such as transplanted surgery were traditionally perfected on animals.

Christians and Muslims are allowed to eat meat in their diets, although Muslims do not eat pork and some Christians fast during Lent. **Vegetarian:** a person who does not eat meat.

## Abortion

The law defines abortion as *“the deliberate expulsion of a foetus from the womb, with the intention of destroying it”*. In the UK abortion is allowed up until 24 weeks of a pregnancy under special circumstances, i.e. if two registered doctors agree that there is a danger to the women’s mental or physical health, the foetus will be born with disabilities, or the mental or physical health of existing children will be put at risk. Some people do not believe that abortion is right because it means terminating the life of an unborn child. However, many people believe that it is the woman who should have the choice as to what happens to her body and therefore it is for her to make up her own mind. There are also circumstances such as rape, genetic abnormalities or failed contraception which cause debate on both sides of the argument.

In Islam, the life of the mother takes precedence – she is a fully developed human with responsibilities, whereas the foetus is not even born and will need everything doing for it.

**Pro-Life:** term used for arguments against abortion

**Pro-choice:** arguments in favour of having the CHOICE to choose an abortion

**“Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith”**

## Origins of the Universe and Life

Some Christians believe that the universe was created by God in 7 days. This is described in the bible in the book of **Genesis**. The bible says that Adam and Eve were the first man and women. Christians who believe the literal truth of the bible are known as **Creationists**. Other Christians think the creation story is a metaphor for the creation of the Universe, but do not believe that the world was created in 7 days.

Scientists believe that the Universe was created billions of years ago and is constantly evolving. This is known as **the Big Bang Theory**. **Charles Darwin** was a famous scientist who came up with the theories of evolution and natural selection. This theory explains that humans are descended from apes and that species are constantly evolving to adapt to their changing environment.

**Stewardship:** the idea that God created the world and that humans have a responsibility to look after it.

**Dominion:** the belief that God gave humans the right to decide what happens to the world and the species in it.