Are there conditions under which suicide is morally justified, and if so, what are these conditions? There are two competing moral principles. One holds that it is wrong to end a human life because everyone has a moral responsibility to live; the other holds that each person should have autonomy over their own body.

**Argument**

1. Kantian deontologists hold that human life is inherently valuable and precious.
2. Suicide violates our moral duty to honor the value of human life, regardless of the value anyone places upon that life.
3. Utilitarian views hold that suicide would be morally forbidden if the suicide leads to greater suffering, such as the grieving of family and friends.
4. Kant argues that choosing to commit suicide entails considering oneself as a means to an end to escape pain, which is immoral because we should not commit suicide to satisfy ourselves.
5. Hobbes claims that the natural law forbids every man "to do, that which is destructive of his life, or take away the means of preserving the same." (Leviathan, 1651).

**Counter-argument**

1. Hume believes that we do not contemplate suicide lightly. We need to overcome fear and gain motive to commit suicide, so it is not a transgression to ourselves.
2. Our duties to society are related to the benefits we receive, but we do not receive any benefits from society after we die; therefore, we do not have any duty to society.
3. It is not an insult to the value of life if one commits suicide. It may be protecting the lives or well-being of others (Kupfer, 1990, pp. 73-74).
4. Peter Singer supports Hume by saying that the individual has a choice to live if they think their future is worth living for; if it is not, then it is their decision.
5. People have an obligation to relieve the suffering of other humans and respect their beliefs and dignity. The person wanting to commit suicide would carefully have to evaluate their life to see if it is worth living.
6. Those with painful terminal illnesses have a right to voluntary euthanasia (Glover, 1990, chs. 14–15; Singer, 1993, ch. 7).
7. Utilitarian views hold that we have a moral duty to maximize happiness, and in the above cases an act of suicide will produce more happiness than if the individual were to remain alive.

**Conclusion**

Some philosophers believe that suicide is morally improper because life should be valued and suicide implies disobeying our duties to live life. Contrary to this belief, other philosophers believe that we have the right to make any decision concerning our bodies, especially if we want to stop suffering that may be caused by pain or terminal illness. The job of physicians is to decide whether or not to help their patient with their final request, and that is morally debatable.

**References**


