



prāṇasāvāsa

quarterly newsletter of jeevan, india

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From the Director's Desk...

Dear Reader

Greetings! These are tough times, when the world is searching for answers. The COVID19 pandemic has created fear and anxiety among all people. It is observed that domestic violence is on the rise. And women are becoming pregnant. Many of these pregnancies are unplanned. Unplanned pregnancy causes much stress to the mother, family and others. In these times let us come forward and help the mothers and families to see the bright hope. Even amidst all these pain there is still hope.

I am happy to bring this 2nd newsletter to you. I thank Dr. Jameela George for writing this wonderful article on "Abortion and Ethics". I also thank Horeb Life Centre, Azhagamandapam Road, Nagercoil for the inspiring story.

with regards

Godfrey Rajkumar,
Director - Jeevan, India

Abortion and Ethics

Dr. Jameela George MIRB

As we look at the ethics of abortion, let us see the various terminologies used in this regard. Abortion is the willful termination of pregnancy. Miscarriage on the other hand is the spontaneous loss of fetus before 20 weeks of gestation. Medical termination of pregnancy (often called MTP) is the induced termination of pregnancy (abortion) by a medical professional. The upper limit of MTP has been extended from 20 to 24 weeks. The

LifeStory

Vanitha* (Name changed to protect privacy) fell in love with a boy. With the hope of marrying him soon, she consented for physical relationship. Vanitha found herself pregnant now. She asked the boy to marry her. But he started to avoid her and finally broke the relationship. Being pregnant she faced many problems from the society. Her parents and relatives rejected her. It is three months now.

One of her friend suggested that she visits us - Horeb Life Centre, Azhagamandapam Road, Nagercoil. She came to the Life Centre, thinking that she will get help to abort her child. We counseled her and she changed her mind. She also got married. The bridegroom understood her story, and agreed to marry her. The child in her womb is safe. Vanitha is very happy. We wish them a very happy family life.

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reasons to have an MTP have also been laxed.

The original Hippocratic oath taken by doctors, prohibits the use of measures such as pessaries (small soluble medicine placed in the cervix) to induce abortion. Over the years various medical, surgical and traditional methods have been used to cause abortion.

Currently in India it is estimated that there are about 1,56,00,000 abortions happening each year. This translates to 43,000 abortions a day and so 1800 per hour. Of these about 4000 a day is female feticide, 8000 a day is that of unmarried youth, about 800 rape, handicapped, to save mother's life and the rest, "unwanted" just married, have enough, no gap etc. one third of all pregnancies are said to be terminated by induced abortion.

There is a world- wide push for "home abortion" promoted by abortion activists. They have included this as part of Corona virus related measures. The argument is that women are unable to go to Hospitals due to Corona virus. So, they want any doctor to prescribe the drugs which will cause abortion. In India getting the tablets which cause abortion is much easier than in the west.

If it is inappropriate to kill a person how could it be ethical to kill a fetus who is a human person? Some are of the opinion that a fetus is a human being but not a human person. This is on the basis that "the fetus does not have the same moral status as infants and children. According to this the moral status of the fetus incrementally increases along with the development of the fetus.

Fetus' right to life and abortion as a fundamental right of women are in themselves against each other. Abortion could be a fundamental right if a fetus is not a human person. From a scientific point of view, it is clear that a new human life with its own unique genetic code is formed with the

union of a sperm with an ovum. They then do not continue as sperm and ovum but have become a new entity. This new life has the potential to grow provided it receives all the nutrients, oxygen, water etc.

In the abortion argument one thing which is denied is that the unborn is a human person. When it is considered to be not a human person, then destroying this does not affect the morality of the action.

As a new human life starts at conception, aborting the baby after conception is unethical. Even in a case of rape it is unethical to punish the baby (by aborting) for the crime of the biological father.

Sex could lead to pregnancy, but not every time. So, the argument that consent to sex is not consent to pregnancy is not acceptable. Also stating that abortion in the early weeks of pregnancy does not inflict pain on the baby and so it is ok, is pointless. Abortion up-to- birth is practiced in some countries.

The size of the developing fetus, the location of being inside the womb and the dependence on the mother for survival do not make one less human. The differences between an unborn and a new born do not merit freedom to permit abortion.

Some moral laws could be viewed as restrictive in some aspects, but could maximize human flourishing, long term. Increased sexual constraints, either pre or post marriage, always led to increased flourishing. The best combination for highest flourishing is chastity before marriage and complete faithfulness to one's spouse.

Complete sexual freedom on the other hand could necessitate abortion, which in turn leads to guilt, shame, physical, mental and psychological harm to the individual, family and society at large.

In conclusion, it is absolutely unethical to have abortion. When the mother's physical health is at grave risk, it could be necessary to terminate the pregnancy, knowing fully well that if the fetus is viable (24 weeks), it could live, but if the fetus is below the period of viability, the fetus cannot live.