Inquiry Name: Inquiry into End of Life Choices

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I wish to state the view of traditional and mainstream Judaism – as well as that contained in the Noahide laws, the shared common denominator values of the world religions going back to Abraham – concerning “end of life choices”.

(a) Inasmuch as a human being possesses a soul, made in the image of G-d, his or her own life is not his or her property to dispose of at will. It is Divine property and G-d has set out the conditions under which life may and may not be taken. A human being has purpose and value as long as he or she lives, and it is for us to embrace that purpose and value, hopefully under conditions of support and care from our fellow human beings.

(b) A human being does not have permission to commit suicide, i.e. actively to intervene – with or without assistance – to terminate his or her life. Apart from this objective Divine source of this religious precept, a culture of suicide has a terribly corrosive cultural influence down to the point where we see in regimes of euthanasia in Belgium that a child can request euthanasia. In our society where depression, due to lack of meaning and corroded social values, is so rife, a public and legislative affirmation of a so-called “right” to suicide could only compound and intensify these destructive tendencies.

(c) In circumstances of terminal illness without prospect of cure and with an outlook only of continued pain, a person may decline aggressive therapies and treatments aimed at cure. However, one may not request an intervention, such as the cutting off of nutrition, hydration or the provision of oxygen, and certainly not the administration of a drug and measure aimed at killing him or herself. Any kind of active euthanasia of these kinds are forbidden according to religious tradition as suicide or assisted suicide.

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File1:

File2: