Response Drawn From Bioethics In Two Religions (Christianity & Islam)

1. “Thou shalt not kill” - Exodus 20:13

With reference to this statement, analyse Christian attitudes to bioethics and the variety of perspectives adopted, highlighting the faith as a living religious tradition.

Ethics is a set of rules and is a code of conduct that is directed to people which sets out what is acceptable and what isn’t acceptable. Bioethics the ethics which concern life and death Christian bioethics cover topics that are in the field of medicine, health, life and death. This is taught through principles found in the bible with one of the main ‘ethical’ rules set by the ten 10 commandments as well as Jesus teachings in the Beatitudes and the Jesus commandment of love. The Christian attitudes to bioethics and the variety of perspectives adopted are taught and is seen in many ways of teaching. Through scriptures, traditions, logic and natural law. This is due to the fact that Christians believe that God’s will is known and exampled through Jesus’ life and teachings. Believers and followers like ‘Disciples’ of Christ are expected to live life in which their faith expects them to live and to encompass the notion that all people are made an “image of God” – Genesis and this saying that value of someone’s life should be respected on all events.

The core ethical teachings of Christianity focus strongly on the appearance that all humans are made in the image of god. Sanctity of Life is a tradition in the bible which looks at values in different Christian denominations. Christianity looks at how all lives are important and are equally sacred and that human life is blessed of God and must be saved and preserved. Through the bible and scriptures, the attitudes towards life can be seen as a key idea to sustain life no matter. “God created mankind in his image” – Genesis 1:27 Bioethical issues focus on situations such as Euthanasia, abortion, IVF and other situations which reflect life and death. In Gen 1, it says “Exploitations and Manipulations that would destroy natural balance or degrade god’s creations are prohibited.” Meaning God’s creation of humans allows and encourages diversity and ecological balance of the Natural world and when focusing on human life, God values human life and freedom. Sanctity of Life looks at how it is wrong to intentionally take an innocent human life, it looks at how human lives are equal value no matter age, looks or condition and looks at the moral distinction made between intentional killing, which is regarded as morally wrong, and how that allowing a patient to die When it comes to an issue like Euthanasia, Christianity views that God created all humans and they belong to God not themselves meaning that he himself, God, can only take the life of an individual. So the attitude towards bioethics is highlighted in the faith of Christianity which focuses on scriptures and traditions in the bible especially the Sanctity of life and its importance and value to be saved and preserved based on Biblical perspectives such as the Doctrine of Imago Dei.

Denominations apart of Christianity is the Catholic religion. This branch when focusing on different perspectives on attitudes to bioethics looks at Natural Law. It makes an action right or wrong in itself regardless of the circumstances or consequences. Developed by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th Century, it’s become the important feature of moral thinking in Catholic beliefs. Natural Law has let do strong sanctity of life responses. It’s main point is to protect and

preserve innocence meaning it's a moral rule to never kill an innocent person seeing that something like Euthanasia is something they are against. Getting an understanding on Aquinas's views is important and is another way of teachings for grasping philosophical principles. Roman Catholics focused on this concept which lead to questions about bioethical issues such as abortion and Euthanasia. With these views and practices, Abortion, which is the killing of an unborn baby and the other action of Euthanasia which is the ending of life who is terminally ill is not accepted by the Christian religion. It is promoted as wrongdoing and action and is highly disagreed upon in the church and Christian traditions. In terms of Abortion, this act is a wrongdoing in the perspectives of Christians from all branches and denominations. Most denominations are strictly against abortion however some are flexible in specific circumstances. Focusing on the quote "Thou shall not kill" – Exodus 20:13 demonstrates and further proves the point that Abortion violates the sanctity of life as it a deliberate action of termination of a life which is considered a Gods creation. Other instances where teachings show disapproval of this Bioethical issue is in Genesis 1:27, saying "God created humankind in his image". This also proves that Abortion violates Christian's beliefs and traditions as it violates God's sovereignty, as destroying and getting rid of God creation is considered to insult his authority. Other denominations view these bioethical issues slightly the same way although there are slight differences in terms of how strict they are with these issues. The views on Abortion from the United Church perspective is more flexible than what the other branches follow. They believe that Abortion is left to the decision of the mother saying that "The final decision must be left to the pregnant women" in a Uniting Church National Assembly. The Uniting Church and Orthodox encourage people to act morally based on tradition and scripture but they do not punish those who choose to disagree with the church.

The attitudes to bioethics and the perspectives adopted to the faith also looks at the situational ethics of things. Situational ethics is based around the Christian tradition of ideal love for humanity. It looks at the theory of how there are no fixed rules but instead looks at the time of place and its outcomes depending on the situation at the time. The approach for morality has been seemed inappropriate by the church of Christianity and especially the branch of the Catholic Church as the belief that Situational ethics could not provide true ethical decisions since it's not following the traditional ethics of command. When comparing it to bioethics and situational ethics, Christianity focuses severely on the word and view of God. When Situational Ethics focus on whether its right or wrong depending on the situation there and now, it will still cause conflict with Christian church views.

To conclude, the Christian attitudes to Bioethics very much focus on what the teachings through scriptures, traditions, and natural law. It believes that since God created us human beings, our livees have value and meaning and life shouldn't be taken away from innocent individuals

2. " God knows the Unseen of the heavens and of the earth; and God sees the things you

Do" -Qur'an 49:15

With reference to the above statement and using your own knowledge, explain how Muslims approach issues in bioethics and the decision-making processes employed.

Muslims approach issues in bioethics through a set of regulations from their religion Islam. Islam

religion combines law from all aspects of life. Bioethics is practically a set of ethical concerns surrounding issues from healthcare, life and death. Issues such as Abortion, Euthanasia and IVF are included and are the 3 main issues that are discussed. Like other religions, rules, traditions and beliefs are taught through scriptures, historical events and ethical responses. The process to which decisions are made which is in accordance with God's will is jurisprudence. It focus's on God's view on what each individual does, focusing on "God knows the Unseen of the heavens and of the earth; and God sees the things you Do" – Qur'an 49:15. For Islam, the main source of Ethical teachings is the Qur'an, which is the universal scripture of ethics and life practices, focusing in haram. Since the Qur'an is very old, specific views and decisions on Bioethical issues aren't addressed so through another teaching such as the Shafi school of fiqh which is the process of jurisprudence that used modern experiences and applies Islamic principles in making their decision whether it is halal or haram. Another way of ethical teachings is the Sunnah which is the body of traditional law and social practices in the Islam community and as well the teachings through analogy and reasoning, Qiyas. Like other religions, the branches of Islam have different approaches in how they look upon Bioethics and each process of decision making are slightly different. Islam is monolithic as there is diverse views on ethical matters. This is because of the different teachings of Islam from jurisprudence, different cultural backgrounds and levels of religion. For example, Shi'a and Sunni have different interpretations of the Sunnah as well, there are different schools of Jurisprudence such as the Shafei, Maleki and the Hanafi which views the issues of Bioethics and the decision-making process differently to other teachings of Islam. Through Islam, the teachings have stated that the human life is sacred and has been made sacred by Allah and that human beings are a very special creature in the universe, placing us human beings above of all other creatures.

Sunni and Shi'a is prime example when comparing how each approach issues in bioethics and how their views are taught. The Umma is very diverse meaning there is a range of different views on ethical issues. The Sunni and Shi'a have a different process in which jurisprudence is seen. They both have different ways they interpret Sunnah. For example, Sunnis is based on the teachings of Sharia and Qiyas following teachings of Jurisprudence. Qiyas is an established precedent to new matters which is faced. Just like a legal system in Australia, legal precedents is given to new matters by identifying a cause which is able to be used in two situations whereas Shi'a base it on Mujtdahid which is a scholar who finds reasons and answers to form an opinion. In terms of principles and ethics, there are 6 Principles of Islamic Ethics. Tawhid which is the oneness of God, Ayat which is the signs of God, Caliph which is the stewardship, Mizan which focuses on Balance, Amana which focuses on trust and Accountability. These principles of Islamic Ethics provide a structure to which should be studied and followed. With this, Muslims must and are obligated to protect life because of the views shown from Allah regarding human life and it's sacred value. This can be seen throughout the Qur'an with examples such as "Take not life, which God has made sacred", "that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or to spread mischief in the land-it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life it would be as he saved the life of all mankind" – (Qur'an, AI-Maidah, 5:32) Generally, both views Sunni and Shia share the same ethical reasoning on issues with differences arising from new issues which are interpreted differently.

Abortion is a big Bioethical issue that has many different approaches of decision making. Abortion is the intentional killing of an unborn foetus at the end of a pregnancy. Muslims believe that the action of Abortion interfers with Allah's role as the giver and ender of life. Based on the Qur'an is states "do not kill the soul that God has made sacred, except for just cause" - (17:33, 25:68) The teachings see the fotus with the right of life meaning the termination and intention of

killing it before born is forbidden, although, others view Abortion as not forbidden or haram as long as the reason to carry out Abortion is justified. It still thinks that Abortion is not allowed due to a random decision, but is allowed if it endangers life of the mother. With the scriptures and teachings saying “Take not life, which God has made sacred” 6:151. The teachings discuss how life is made sacred by Allah and it is right to not take the life which is already made. Through human life, there is different views and decision-making with what is human life. There are different opinions saying human life and abortion is permissible before either 40 days or 120 days at which the unborn Foetus is human. This then looks at what rights they have after these days and their values. If the Foetus has a seriously untreatable disease, before four months, abortion may be permitted as it isn’t seen as human life. Teachings say “Kill not your offsprings for fear or poverty, it is we who provide for them for you” – Quran 17:32, meaning it’s teachings say it is ethically wrong and there isn’t any tolerance to justify an act to do this, giving the example of poverty and if the parent has the inability to provide for the child, it’s saying God and others will provide for you.

Another big bioethical issue is Euthanasia. Euthanasia is the painless killing of a patient suffering from a disease that is painful or incurable and also when a patient is in an irreversible Coma. Through the teachings, one cannot remove the life of another intentionally. Although the Muslim community have agreed that one can remove life support from a medical brain-dead person which was discussed by the Islamic Law Council of Muslim World league in 1987. Muslims believe that God, Allah himself owns the lives of all therefore Allah only has the right to end life, focusing on the Sanctity of life and how a human’s life is special and should be respected at all times. In the perspective of Muslims, Euthanasia is viewed as Suicide which regarding to the teachings such as the scriptures in the Qur’an, is a huge sin saying “Do not kill yourselves nor kill another”. wIt’s even gone to the point that even if you are terminally ill and are in pain, it’s an opportunity which Allah has created especially for you to let you know that there is a greater award in the hereafter.

Therefore, Muslim’s approach on issues on Bioethical issues is taught through the Qur’an, schools and word/view of Allah. They use principles to outline their way of ethical standards and processes and are kept to follow these principles through ways of pilgrimage and further studies of one’s religion of Islam. Bioethical issues such as Abortion and Euthanasia have different views from other teachings from Shi’a and Sunni. These views although are similar, one is strictly forbidden to carry out these actions as it’s just disrespectful to the teachings and practices, although other perspectives have more freedom for these actions the process of decision is looked upon what is happening then and then.