

Abortion and the Definition of Human Life



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~ Is the fetus a human being with sacred, inviolable rights, or is it just a clump of cells that might be inconvenient for a woman, much like a boil that can be removed at will?

The controversy after the approval in 2019 of New York's Reproductive Health Act and its stipulation that abortion can take place up to the moment of birth, followed by then Virginia Governor Ralph Northam's remarks which seemed to approve of infanticide,[1] have highlighted key variables in the arguments about abortion.

Pro-choice feminists argue that it's all about a woman's right to do what she feels is best for *her body* and that anyone arguing against abortion is a misogynist and a tyrant. This view rests on suppositions that are, in the opinion of many pro-life advocates, entirely untrue. They are:

- The "fetus" is just a "clump of cells."
- The fetus is part of the woman's body.
- The woman owns the clump of cells—what she does with them is nobody's business but her own.

So, let's explore these three assumptions.

"The 'Fetus' Is Just a 'Clump of Cells'"

To me, this is the heart of the argument.

Is the fetus a human being with sacred, inviolable rights, or is it just a clump of cells that might be inconvenient for a woman, much like a boil that can be removed at will?

The New York Reproductive Health Act (Senate Bill 240), enacted on January 22, 2019, clarifies that babies in the womb are not persons.[2] The Senate bill includes this definition:

[1.] "Person," when referring to the victim of a homicide, means a human being who has been born and is alive.

As reported by *ChristianNews.net*, in an article by Heather Clark on February 10, 2019, titled "NY's New Abortion Law Allows Man Who Killed Pregnant Girlfriend to Get Away With Death of Unborn Child,"[3] Anthony Hobson, who killed both Jennifer Irigoyen and her unborn child, was only charged with the mother's death.

Killing the child became irrelevant under the law because the unborn child was not a person.

The New York law also states (with emphasis added):

- 2599-BB. Abortion. 1. A health care practitioner licensed, certified, or authorized under title eight of the education law, acting within his or her lawful scope of practice, may perform an abortion when, according to the practitioner's reasonable and good faith professional judgment based on the facts of the patient's case: the patient is within twenty-four weeks from the commencement of pregnancy, or there is an absence of fetal viability, **or the abortion is necessary to protect the patient's life or health.**[4]

In the January 22, 2019, *National Review* article "New York State Senate Passes Bill Permitting Abortions up to Birth,"[5] Alexandra DeSanctis wrote that the mother's life or health was

defined as:

... the exception that was defined in Roe companion case Doe v. Bolton as “all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman’s age—relevant to the wellbeing [sic] of the patient.” In other words, abortion will be available to women essentially on demand up to the point of birth.

In my opinion, laws allowing abortion up to birth are possible because their proponents choose to believe that a child growing in a mother’s womb is nothing more than a lump of flesh. To me, this view is influenced by two primary motivating factors:

1. Babies Can Be Seen as a Huge and Inconvenient Responsibility

Having a baby that was not planned can be an enormous burden to mothers and their families. In some cases, mothers-to-be are overwhelmed with the consequences of bearing and raising a child and choose abortion as a way out of their predicament. Although abortion can indeed be offered as a compassionate response to the mothers-to-be, it has also allowed abortion to become an all-too-convenient solution to any unwanted pregnancy. It is such an emotionally difficult procedure that it can soothe one’s conscience if the “fetus” is considered less than human—just a “clump of cells.” In essence, a “woman’s right to choose” can become an excuse for what many would call a narcissistic viewpoint.

2. An Unwillingness to Consider the Spiritual Component of Human Beings

For someone to view a zygote or a fetus as an innately spiritual human being, however tiny and unformed it might be, one needs to view all humans as spiritual creations of an Intelligent Source.

As an aside, even among religious people who *do* view humans as

“eternal children of God,” there is considerable questioning as to whether unborn children live forever in the afterlife if they die in the womb. Some religious people believe that a child doesn’t receive an eternal spirit until they leave the womb and draw their first breath.

Under that viewpoint, if the baby is aborted, it’s not the same as killing a living baby who has an eternal spirit. However, I would wager that even with that viewpoint, those religious people still tend to have a deep respect for children in the womb and view them as sacred creations. Still, the “first-breath” doctrine (if one may call it a doctrine) can make it a degree easier for some to consider an abortion under certain circumstances. Yet, there is no evidence anywhere that the newly-formed baby in the womb does not have an eternal spirit. I think the idea may have come about as a convenient justification to make abortion easier.

Although I once accepted the first-breath doctrine, I’ve now come to believe that God’s spirit and essence imbue everything. Everything is part of God’s energy. Thus, when the baby is conceived, I personally believe that it makes more sense to assume that the souls and spirits of the man and woman are also engaged in the sexual act (not just their physical bodies) and that God is present as well since each person is an individual incarnation of one distinct part of the *omnipresent* God.

Some might find it strange to consider the idea that God is present even when a man and woman make love, but it makes sense if one views God as omnipresent. If God created all energy and is the spiritual and physical force that runs the universe, if *God is all there is*, then God can’t be anything other than omnipresent. Where would God go during a couple’s sex act? Would God leave the room? If so, why?

Granted, there are many sexual acts that are not centered on love. Some are degraded and demeaning; some are violent and

horrific, such as the act of rape. One can only assume that a compassionate and omnipresent God feels profound grief during those acts. Why God allows those acts to happen is a different topic—a discussion about the value of human freedom as it relates to the flowering of creative love, even at the cost of potential human pain.

With an omnipresent God participating in the creation of new human life, as the man and woman join and the sperm meets the egg and a zygote is created, it's reasonable to conclude that the couple cooperates with God's creative power to create a new life that is eternally spiritual, as well as briefly physical.

The process of creation of new life in the womb is a question that has enormous implications for how society views human beings. Or at least it should have. Is God the ultimate creator of each baby formed in the womb? Does each baby develop with eternal spiritual attributes, created from the spiritual essence of the father, the mother, and God? If so, that newly-formed zygote, fetus, and then *baby* inherits the God-given and inalienable rights of survival that all humans share.

If one removes God and spirituality from the process of pregnancy, then it allows the human mind to develop all sorts of theories about the definition of humans. It is plain to see, from laws like the New York Reproductive Health Act, that many on the hard-Left view babies as bits of flesh that can be flushed away.

Note that the "Left" and "classical liberals" are not the same. The "Left" includes people who espouse Marxism and totalitarian socialism and have a general contempt for freedom for *all individuals*—most especially those individuals with whom they disagree.

However, even an atheistic view of human life should not

ignore common sense. The traditional definition of whether a human is alive or dead is the presence of a heartbeat. If the fetus has a heartbeat, it's alive. It's certainly not dead! So, the mishmash of convenient rationalizations about why a living baby in the womb can be declared as "not a person" really comes down to the Left's contempt for human life in general. As reported by the Family Research Council in the January 2022 white paper "U.S. Abortion Law in Comparison with the Globe," the author Mary Szoch wrote:

The answer lies in the definition of what abortion is. It is either the killing of an innocent unborn child in the womb, or it is not. ... In light of the fact that abortion takes the life of a human being, the abortion laws of human rights violators like North Korea and China make sense. These countries do not value human life as being created in the image of God.[6]

This view of human life doesn't stop with fetuses. As history has clearly demonstrated with the purges of over one hundred million people under Leftist regimes in the twentieth century, the hard-Left views all human beings as hunks of meat that can be put down if they don't serve the purpose of the collective.

"The Fetus Is Part of the Woman's Body"

Viewing the fetus as a clump of cells, disconnected from a spiritual source, allows a woman to declare that the fetus is part of her body. The slogan "my body, my choice" supports the rationale that a woman has a right to abort a fetus because a woman *is* the owner of *her* body.

However, even *if* God did not exist, and human babies were born solely through a process of physical evolution, it is completely erroneous to view a child in the womb as part of the woman's body. A butterfly is *not* the cocoon. It is simply grown in the cocoon. A baby is born as a singular and unique entity that is able to live even after the mother's body dies. The mother's body is the *temporary* host of the baby, which is

an entirely separate life form. It is utter nonsense to say that the baby *is* the mother's body, and thus she can do whatever she wants with it as if she was removing a wart.

"The Woman Owns the Clump of Cells"

The short answer to a "my body, my choice" woman is: "Madam, the baby in your womb is *not* your body. It is a *separate and different* mind and body of a living human being who *does not belong to you*."

Even if the fetus is just a clump of cells, it's very clear that a woman cannot produce a fetus on her own. It requires the participation of a man, even with the practice of artificial insemination. Without a man's sperm, there will be no fetus.

Although there are some new variations on how that sperm meets with the woman's egg, the standard, historical method has been based on a sexual relationship with a man. The historically optimal scenario involves love between the man and woman, with marriage binding them together.

Writing for *Aeon Magazine*, in the January 17, 2019 article "The marvel of the human dad,"[7] evolutionary anthropologist Anna Machin led with this question:

Among our close animal relatives, only humans have involved and empathic fathers. Why did evolution favour the devoted dad?

She wrote:

But crucially, dad has not evolved to be the mirror to mum, a male mother, so to speak. Evolution hates redundancy and will not select for roles that duplicate each other if one type of individual can fulfill the role alone. Rather, dad's role has evolved to complement mum's.

Millennia have passed with the men who contributed their sperm

watching as the fetus grew and was subsequently delivered as a child who was intrinsically connected to *both* parents—not just the mother. Men were integral to the creation and maturation of their children—sons and daughters who were usually loved and raised by *both* parents.

Thus, the argument that the fetus, or clump of cells, is owned by the woman is nonsense. The pregnancy and pain of childbirth do *not* remove the value of the man's contribution to the creation and parenting of a new life.

After Virginia Democratic Governor Ralph Northam spoke about abortion up to birth and gave the impression that he supported what many described as infanticide, directly after a baby is born, Tucker Carlson of *Fox News* interviewed pro-choice advocate Monica Klein about Northam's remarks.

I was shocked by Klein's smugness in her responses to Carlson. She refused to answer his questions and stated at the end of the short interview, "This is about a woman's right to choose, and you as a man should not have a single say in that." [8]

A Call to Action to Reexamine the Arguments for Abortion

In spite of the radical Left's push for abortion until birth and infanticide after a baby is born, it is clear that there are still many sincere and good pro-choice women and men who are *not* "monsters."

Many pro-choice men and women are compassionate. It seems like a Good Thing to care for the mothers-to-be who struggle with unwanted pregnancies that could radically alter their well-being for the worse. Who wants to inflict suffering on young mothers? No one.

Additionally, there may be cases where abortion is necessary: for example, in occurrences of severe deformity or the life of the mother. I personally think that those situations should be permissible. However, many parents of Down's Syndrome children

are grateful that those infants were *not* aborted. It is a complex landscape that needs to be reviewed with openness and respect for all points of view in a balanced and compassionate fashion.

Yet, as we have seen, the pro-choice movement contains elements within it that are radical and *not* balanced in their approach to all of the issues that need to be discussed, including the role and value of men in the parenting process, which begins at conception.

Men are the fathers of their unborn children and *must* be given equal rights of participation in abortion decisions.

Therefore, let us call out to both pro-lifers and good-hearted pro-choice advocates to go back to the roots of the abortion debate and reexamine all of the premises upon which abortion has been made legal. If the founding assumptions are incorrect, the end result will be deeply flawed and even horrific, as we have seen with the laws and proposals mentioned above.

We must analyze the many motivations to seek an abortion, from efforts to avoid serious repercussions or burdens to the mother to callously sought abortions that are done simply for convenience.

More than anything else, we must openly and honestly look at the sacred and spiritual value of unborn children and the definition of human life.

Killing an unborn baby in the womb must no longer be a casual action. Avoiding unwanted pregnancies should be the first method to reduce abortion. If that fails, even though placing a child up for adoption is a tragic step to take, it is still better than looking at an innocent child in the womb and deciding to kill it.

With the assumption that an unborn child is a human being—a

person—that may indeed possess an eternal spirit created by God, killing that child (for that is what abortion will be, based on that definition of human life) should *only* happen, if at all, under the rarest of circumstances, like the life of the mother or untenable and severe deformities that would bring the child a horrific life on earth.

In all discussions about abortion, correctly defining human life is our first and most important task.

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Photo of a baby wearing many items of winter clothing, 2007, by Andrew Vargas from Clovis, United States

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