

# Aquinas on suicide

Aquinas gives three reasons why suicide is “unlawful” (i.e., morally wrong) in the *Summa Theologica* IIaIIae, Q. 64, a.5.

1. *It is contrary to the natural law* because “everything naturally loves itself” and so naturally tries to “[keep] itself in being” and “[resist] corruptions so far as it can.”
2. *It is harmful to the community* because “every man ... belongs to the community” and “by killing himself he injures the community.”
3. *It usurps a prerogative that is God’s alone* because “life is God’s gift to man, and is subject to His power.”

What do you think of these reasons?

# Hume on suicide

In his essay “On Suicide,” David Hume (1711-1776) gives a sharply contrasting take on the morality of suicide.

1. *It is not contrary to divine prerogative* because God has given us the power to end our own life and nothing happens that God has not ordained.
  - Hence, whatever happens is something God wanted to happen.
  - Hence, “everyone is free to end his own life when he wishes.”
  - If it were an infringement on God’s rights to take our own life, then acting to preserve our own life would equally be an infringement on God.
2. *It is not always harmful to the community*, indeed, it is sometimes beneficial to the community that a person takes his own life and thus “not only lawful but praiseworthy” to do so.

# Hume on suicide

In his essay “On Suicide,” David Hume (1711-1776) gives a sharply contrasting take on the morality of suicide.

3. *It is not always harmful to ourselves* because “age, sickness, or misfortune may make life a burden that is even worse than annihilation.”