Famine, affluence, and mortality

Peter Singer in "Famine, Affluence and Morality" explains the moral duty of affluent to help the poor. Funds provided by governments are inadequate for controlling famine or hunger. Poor in underdeveloped countries continue to suffer the consequences of famine and poverty due to lack of support from the rich. I agree with Singer’s claims that “if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it” (Shafer-Landau, 2013). When an individual holds the power of stopping deaths caused by famines, they must do that. Wealth brings responsibility and moral duty for the rich. It can be argued that as affluent have excessive wealth so they have an ethical obligation of donating. The money that they give away in charities does not affect their lifestyles. Because donations don't bring misery to the rich they must give part of their wealth for supporting the poor. Peter Singer has provides a realistic solution for ending famine, poverty, and related implications. Many people lost their lives due to hunger that reflects the selfishness of society. The argument of Singer emphasizes on one's responsibility towards people and society (Parfitt & Skorczewski, 2015).

Affluent are morally bound to offer help to the people who are living in underdeveloped/ poor countries. It does not matter where the poor is because all humans are equal. I agree “if we accept any principle of impartiality, universalizability, equality, or whatever, we cannot discriminate against someone merely because he is far away from us” (Shafer-Landau, 2013). The argument of Singer claims that one’s responsibility is not limited to his own land. Moral obligation reflects that affluent must be able to treat all human beings equally. The only criteria that makes one responsible for donating are wealth. When one holds the power of saving lives, one must not consider origin, place or religion of the victim. A wealthy person can offer help to anyone, anywhere in the world. I agree with Singer’s philosophy that one needs to recognize their obligation or duty associated with their position. If someone can prevent death by giving money, one cannot justify his action of denying help. Affluent who deny charities are immoral and inhumane. They may be in no better position of judging the needs of the poor but they have an obligation of saving people.

I agree that “if everyone in circumstances like mine gave £5 to the Bengal Relief Fund, there would be enough to provide food, shelter, and medical care for the refugees” (Shafer-Landau, 2013). This depicts that everyone needs to accept their moral duty towards society and their role of helping humanity. Donations from more people will save more poor from deaths and famines. If fewer people make charities or donations only limited people will be saved from misery. When giving away some money don't affect one's status or position it is easier to help the poor. I agree with the viewpoints of Singer because the larger refugee population suffers the consequences' of poverty and famine. This is due to limited support from society. The solution of saving refugees rests in the hand of affluent and society. However, I believe that one should not cut their basic necessities for providing relief to the poor. Such as a father struggling to earn money for paying for his son's education is not obliged to give charities. The philosophy of Singer is applicable to the rich and affluent who have millions of savings.

Response

I agree with Katharine R. Forcier’s argument that the involvement of affluent in charities and grants can provide relief to the people who are suffering from famine. It is a moral duty of the people to give away part of their wealth in donations that will minimize the social injustice like deaths from famine. As one class is holding access to more resources they have a responsibility to use them for the welfare of the society. I agree with Katharine because she makes a strong claim that Singer’s idea of supporting humankind is valid. It doesn’t cause any harm to the affluent who only donate some part of their savings that is not consumed. I agree with the point, “but only me giving $5 a month, would not do much to solve the problem”. To end famine and deaths associated with it everyone needs to play their role. Fewer people donating their money won’t bring any change.

I agree with the argument of James White-White who states that there are people in this world who are actually following Singer’s philosophy. There are people who try to support needy from their hard-earned money. White provides a real-life example of his friend who after settling in America continued to support people of his community in Indonesia. I agree with White's viewpoints that every one of us has a moral obligation of helping others by providing food, clothing, and shelter. If someone has the ability to help others he must do it because denying help is more painful. I think the decision of giving charities is personal and people use different justifications for their actions. I agree that one needs to be powerful and self-sufficient for offering support. If someone is struggling for a better life it is irrational to help others. Larger change can only be brought if everyone contributes to charities.

References

Parfitt, M., & Skorczewski, D. (2015). *Pursuing Happiness: A Bedford Spotlight Reader.* Bedford/St. Martin's.

Shafer-Landau, R. (2013). *Ethical Theory An Anthology Second Edition.* A John Wiley & Sons, Inc.