

## Crime and Punishment Essay

### ★ Explain why religious people might find it right to break the law. (5 marks)

Christians say that everyone should be treated equally. Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as yourself". This meant that everyone should be treated equally. If there was a law in a country that did not treat people equally then some Christians would find it acceptable to break the law as they believe that they law was not fair to some people. Christians believe in the law of love and would not go by a rule that was unjust to anyone. An example of this is when Martin Luther King broke the law in a peaceful way because he felt the law was unfair towards black people and that they had a lack of civil rights. This was an example of how the government was not treating people equally.

Hindus have two kinds of law. One is the law of the government and the other is the law of Dharma. Hindus would see it acceptable to break the government law if it was contradicting with their Law of Dharma. Hindus, like Christians would also break the government law if it goes against common rules of decency and morality. An example of this is when Mahatma Gandhi fought in a peaceful way against the English that ruled in India who were treating Indians as if they were lower than the English. He also campaigned against the idea of "untouchables" and the injustice of the caste system in India. This was not moral or decent so it was acceptable to fight against and break.

### ★ Explain religious attitudes towards criminals. (10 marks)

Christians feel that when a crime is committed there are several ways to punish the criminal. These are *Protection*, when the government put people into prison to keep them away from the opportunity to do the crime again which helps to protect society, *Retribution* when the criminal is punished in a way that is fitting for the crime he or she has committed, *Deterrence*, which is when a person will be put off from offending a crime as they have seen a person getting caught and punished or it, will stop the criminal from committing the crime again, *Vindication* is when the law is upheld and the crime is punished. This creates respect for the law and law-abiding citizens know that the law is being used in the way it should be, *Reform* is when the people who commit the crimes need help so that it will stop them from offending again. There also used to be the death penalty but most Christians are against it, as they believe that if you kill the criminal you should also be killed as you have murdered, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". Christians also believe in forgiving people so would be against capital punishment, as you are not forgiving the person or letting him or her to reform. Jesus said, "You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy, but I say to you Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven.'" (Matthew 5:43-44)

Hindus find criminal behaviour as an act against Dharma and the criminal should be punished for his behaviour. Hindus believe that the punishment given to the criminal should be appropriate to the crime committed. Even though Hindus believe in Ahimsa they find it acceptable to punish people as they see the punishment as part of the criminal's karma. It is the duty of the ruler to punish criminals in order to protect the society. In India punishment consists of Retribution, Restraint, Reformation and in extreme cases, the death penalty.

★ "Execution is less degrading and inhuman than keeping someone locked up in prison for life." Do you agree? Give reasons from both points of view and religions. (5 marks)

I am not sure whether I agree with this statement or not. I feel that execution is wrong as it goes against the Hindu idea Ahimsa and it would also be immorally wrong as if you were executing someone then you should also be killed too. I feel that only God has the rite to take a life away and that if the criminal committed a crime then he or she should suffer in a prison cell rather than not suffer at all and leaving the world as it would be the easy option out. I also feel that if an execution did take place, the criminal's family would suffer and they may be innocent so it would be very upsetting for them. It would be hard for them to live with whereas if their relative was in jail then they could still see him or her. I am not sure whether execution should be totally banned or if it should be used in extreme cases. I think that if there was to be a death penalty then it should be fit for what crime is committed and suit the type of criminal. For example if there was a murder and the man who has committed has done it several times before and has no good reason for committing the murders has a chance of getting capital punishment rather than a man who killed his wife and then tried to kill himself because he had no passport to stay in the country where his family were and wanted his two young children to have a better education and life in the country. I feel that this would not be worthy of capital punishment - maybe a few years in prison. Being in a prison for your whole life would be very hard and you would have to have a strong mind and will to stay sane in there. It would also be hard for the offender's family to go see him or her too and the friends of the family would look down on the family. It would be hard for everyone but I feel it could be better than losing the person forever and knowing that they may have had a chance to reform. As a Hindu I believe that it is better to suffer in this life so that if you get through the suffering, you will be rewarded in your next life.