

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

TOPIC 5

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

1



78 year old Richard Osborn-Brooks stabbed and killed a burglar who broke into his home – is this evil?

GOOD AND EVIL

The terms 'good' and 'bad' are **RELATIVE** – this means that they can change depending on the situation.

For example, most people generally regard killing someone as bad yet they would not consider it bad to kill someone in self defence.



Is it evil to kill an enemy during a war?

MUSLIMS

Many Muslims would claim that human beings are not perfect and make mistakes. Some do evil things but this is because they have not resisted temptation, not because they are bad people.

Muslims believe that a devil figure called Iblis continually tempts and pushes humans to be wicked.



CHRISTIANS

Many Christians would claim that there is no such thing as an evil person. Human beings are not perfect and make mistakes.

Most Christians believe in a figure called the devil or Satan, who is an evil power. The Devil continually tries to tempt people and encourage them to behave badly.

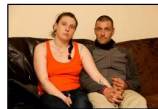
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CAUSES OF CRIME

GREED

In April 2015 four elderly men stole £200 million worth of jewellery from safety deposit boxes in Hatton Garden, London. The thieves gained access by drilling an underground tunnel.



POVERTY

In May 2015 Paul and Kerry Barker were charged with theft after rummaging in a Tesco bin for out of date products. The charges were later dropped.

HATE



These are crimes that target a person because of their race, religion sexuality etc. In Feb 2019, a Jewish cemetery vandalised, the Nazi symbol was spray painted on many of the graves.

MENTAL ILLNESS



In Oct 2013 Phillip Simelane stabbed Christina Edkins to death on a bus as part of his suffering from paranoid schizophrenia.



UPBRINGING

Nicky Cruz was physically abused by his father and grew up to be a member of a violent gang.



ADDICTION

In March 2018 Ant McPartlin went into rehab for drug and alcohol addiction after he was found guilty of causing a car accident whilst drunk.

OPPOSING AN UNJUST LAW

Nelson Mandela broke many laws in South Africa such as burning the identity pass he was required to carry because he was black – white people did not have to carry one.



3

AIMS OF PUNISHMENT

	RETRIBUTION	REFORM	DETERRENT	PROTECTION
				
What is it?	Getting even, eg if someone has taken a life (murder) they deserve to have their life taken away.	Focuses on helping the offender change their life so that they stop committing crime.	To put others off committing crime, also to put the offender off from doing it again.	To withdraw the criminal (usually by putting them in prison) so as to keep everyone else safe
Strength	Can make victims feel better.	Addresses the reasons why someone commits a crime – if we can fix this then they shouldn't need to reoffend.	Should stop crime before it happens.	Keeps the rest of society safe.
Weakness	Does doing the same back to the offender not make us just as bad?	Offenders have to want to change for this to work – not all do. Victims can be left feeling as though criminals have 'gotten off easy'.	Does not always work – everyone knows that if you commit a crime you could be sent to prison but many people still commit crimes.	Just locking someone up does not address the reasons why they committed a crime. Give people the chance to make friends with and learn from other criminals.

MUSLIM ATTITUDES TO LAWBREAKERS

4

Muslims are against people committing crime. They believe that God has made it clear that any fair law should be obeyed.

There are many different attitudes to lawbreakers. Some believe that the punishment should reflect the fact that the lawbreaker's crimes are unacceptable and are in favour of harsh punishments such as cutting the hands of thieves.

Others believe offenders should be helped not to offend again. While the crime may be hated, the person who committed it is not.

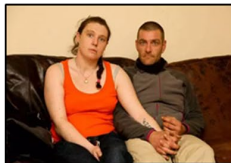
Many Muslims believe that those who commit crime due to illness or addiction should be helped.



'God commands justice...and prohibits wrongdoing, and injustice...'

Murder
Muslims believe murder is the most serious crime and is completely unacceptable ('Do not take a life which Allah has made sacred').

Hate Crime
These are unacceptable as Muslims believe that God creates all humans with equal value and no individuals or groups should be singled out.



Theft
Muslims may be sympathetic towards people committing theft out of need rather than greed. However, they believe that the needy should be cared for by the community, so they have no reason for resorting to crime.

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TO LAWBREAKERS

4

Christians are generally against people breaking the laws of their country without just cause. The law in the UK is there to protect the rights and security of all citizens. There are some laws that a Christian might consider to be morally wrong, and they have a duty to try and change them.

There are many different attitudes to lawbreakers. Some believe a punishment should be as severe as the crime committed.

Most Christians believe that they should be helped not to offend again. They may hate the crime but not the person who committed it.

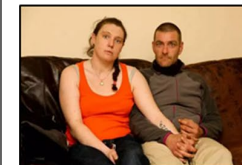
Many Christians believe that those who commit crime due to illness or addiction should be helped.



'Love your neighbour'

Murder
Christians believe murder is the most serious crime and is completely unacceptable ('Do not kill').

Hate Crime
Christians are against hate crime. This is because God made everyone equal, therefore nobody should be targeted and persecuted on the basis of their race, religion, background, etc.



Theft
Christians may be sympathetic of people committing theft out of need rather than greed but they believe the needy should be cared for so they have no need to commit crime.

5

THE USE OF PRISON

ADVANTAGES

Society has the right to be protected from dangerous criminals.

Prison can act as a deterrent – many people will be frightened of the prospect of being sent to prison.

Being sent to prison takes a person away from their everyday life and gives them the chance to reflect on what they have done.



DISADVANTAGES

Prison can provide offenders with the opportunity to network with other criminals and develop their 'skills'.

Around 70% of prisoners go on to reoffend once they have been released.

Simply locking someone up does not address the reasons they committed the crime in the first place.

MUSLIM VIEWS

Muslims agree with the use of prison, but under Shari'ah law prisons have less of a role in reforming the criminal and are normally only used while an offender is awaiting trial or punishment. The punishment itself is almost always corporal.

'Cut the hands of thieves'
Qur'an



CHRISTIAN VIEWS

While most Christians agree that prison should be used as a punishment for serious crimes, many strongly support trying to help prisoners while in prison and are keen to see education and training facilities well used.

'Love thy neighbour'
Bible

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THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

To use physical pain as a punishment for a criminal act.



REASONS IN FAVOUR

- Some people may see it as a deterrent (i.e. it might put people off committing crime).
- It can be seen as a good form of retribution.
- It would be more effective than prison as people fear pain.

REASONS AGAINST

- It may make criminals more hardened and does not reform them.
- Revenge is wrong – it makes you just as bad as the criminal.
- To inflict pain on purpose is unacceptable.

'Cut the hands of thieves'
Qur'an

MUSLIM VIEWS
Muslim teachings support the use of corporal punishments as they consider them to be an effective way of putting people off committing crimes.

'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'
Bible



'He who spares the rod hates his children'
Bible

CHRISTIAN VIEWS
Some Christians support the use of corporal punishment if it is necessary to discipline children so that they grow up knowing how to behave properly. Some Christians do not support the use of corporal punishment as it does not involve showing forgiveness.

ALTERNATIVES TO PRISON

These would only be an option for offenders who have committed crimes for which they could be imprisoned for months rather than years – they would not be considered for serious crimes such as murder.

Name		What is it?	Strengths		Weaknesses
Community Service		Unpaid work done in the community, eg cleaning up parks and helping in homes for the elderly	All of these allow an offender to keep their job, their home and not be separated from their partners and families – research shows that these are all things that help someone not reoffend.	Offenders can give something back to the people that they hurt	Some people see it as they have been let off
Electronic Tagging		An offender wears a device that tells a central computer where they are. Offenders usually have to be home between certain times and, in the case of sex offenders, are not allowed near parks and schools.	An offender will not be forced to live with other criminals whom they may learn new things from.	Less likely to reoffend afterwards	People could still commit crime whilst wearing one
Fines		A fixed sum of money paid to the courts, usually for minor offences such as speeding or being drunk and disorderly	An offender will not be forced to live with other criminals whom they may learn new things from.	Raises rather than costs money	Not harsh enough to put people off
Probation		When someone is monitored and given help to change their behaviour. They have to meet with a parole officer to show that they are behaving.	Cheaper than prison.	People can get the help they need to change	Some people see it as they have been let off

CHRISTIAN VIEWS

Christians would support alternatives to prison where possible because they are more successful in helping a criminal not reoffend and get their life back on track.

'Love thy neighbour'
Bible

'Cut the hands off thieves'
Qur'an

MUSLIM VIEWS

Muslim teachings generally favour harsh punishments as they argue this is the best way to put people off committing crimes in the future.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

REASONS FOR

- If someone takes away a life, they should have their life taken from them.
- It can act as a deterrent, putting people off committing serious crimes.
- The Principle of Utility** states that an action is right if it brings happiness to the greatest number of people. Capital punishment protects society and brings satisfaction to victims' families, so it could be argued to be right under this principle.



Timothy Evans was wrongly executed for the murder of his daughter.

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

IN FAVOUR	In the Bible it says 'Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth'. This means that if somebody has murdered someone, they deserve to lose their life.
AGAINST	In the Bible it says 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'. This means that capital punishment is not acceptable as it does not show forgiveness.



Myra Hindley was sentenced to life imprisonment and was told she would never be released. She spent 36 years in prison before she died of heart disease – would it have been better to execute her?

REASONS AGAINST

- It is a contradiction to say murder is wrong and then kill a murderer.
- Legal systems do not always get it right and innocent people can be executed.
- All life is sacred and murderers should be given the chance to reform.

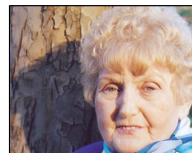
MUSLIM ATTITUDES

IN FAVOUR	In the Qur'an it says 'Take not life except by way of justice and law'. This means that the death penalty is allowed, but only for serious crimes.
AGAINST OR IN FAVOUR?	In the Qur'an it says 'Do not take life which God has made sacred, except by right.' This means that unless it is the most serious crime e.g. murder, capital punishment is not appropriate.

FORGIVENESS

SHOULD WE FORGIVE OFFENDERS?

YES	NO
- Some people are very young when they commit crimes and should be given a second chance. - It may help the victim/victim's family to get closure and move on. - It involves being the bigger person - If we did something wrong we would expect to be forgiven, so we should do the same for others.	- Some people commit crimes that are unforgivable (e.g. Ian Brady and Myra Hindley). - Forgiving someone doesn't change what has happened.



Holocaust survivor Eva Kor gave a letter of forgiveness to a Nazi doctor who worked Auschwitz.



Moors Murderess Myra Hindley was refused the chance of parole as the authorities considered her crimes to be unforgivable.

Religious Teaching	What does it mean?	How does this link to forgiveness?
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. (Bible)	If we want forgiveness from our sins at the end of time, we should forgive others	Most Christians believe we should forgive offenders if they are sorry for their sins.
Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms. (Qur'an)	If someone has attacked you, they do not deserve forgiveness but revenge.	Therefore, some Muslims do not agree with forgiveness, especially if the crime was very bad.
Pardon each other's faults and God will grant you honour. (Qur'an)	That if you forgive others, you will earn good favour from Allah.	Therefore, some Muslims agree with forgiveness as they believe it is what Allah would want.

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