In a world where violence and murder are rife, is Capital Punishment a necessary system of justice to protect our citizens from harm?

Developed countries often describe Capital Punishment as the humane execution of a dangerous criminal by one of about seven different methods and it has, for thousands of years, been used as a form of punishment for the most serious crimes. However, in more recent times many are quick to question the morality of such executions. There are innumerable arguments both for and against Capital Punishment; one of the most common condemning the practice is that many innocent people have been found guilty and killed. Conversely, those in favour expostulate that using this method of justice deters would-be killers from committing appalling crimes. So should Capital Punishment be abolished or should criminals continue to pay the price for the heinous violations of law they engage in?

One of the simplest principles in life is that **all** guilty people should be punished: we learn this from a very young age. Why then do people protest that utilizing Capital Punishment is morally wrong? If a human being kills another, should we not then implement the death sentence? Are we suggesting that the ‘eye for an eye’ principle is outdated and no longer something we should condone? Punishment should, without exception, be doled out in proportion to the severity of the crime.

Also, the fact stands that criminals inflict grief, suffering and misery upon the victim’s family and, whether intentional or otherwise, they should share the pain. There is surely nothing more heart-breaking than a family mourning their loss and although using the death sentence cannot ever fully eliminate their sorrow, it can be a factor in lessening it. Furthermore, ending a criminal’s life ensures that they pose no further threat to humanity, and this provides a certain level of reassurance to the families.

Additionally, it has been proven in many countries which still perform Capital Punishment that, contrary to what some people believe, the death penalty is an effective method of deterring potential felons from carrying out atrocities. However, it has been shown to be most efficacious when administered immediately after the criminal has been convicted. One exemplification of this theory is Singapore; the country employs the death sentence for significant crimes without exception, and their system sees excellent results from such swift justice. Subsequently, Singapore has one of the lowest crime rates in the world and incidents of violent crime are rare.

Nevertheless, those who oppose Capital Punishment insist that using the death penalty is a breach of basic human rights, and is inhumane for the criminal concerned. Yet such people conveniently forget that the criminals themselves demonstrate an extreme lack of regard for rights when they murder innocent victims. Why should they be treated with the compassion and mercy they plead for when they obviously showed their victim none? The wrongdoer effectively forfeits their right to life when they commit the most nefarious of crimes: the taking of another human’s life. Criminals have full knowledge of what they are doing and understand that it is undeniably wrong; yet, they do not accept the consequences of their actions.

Moreover, many believe that the judge and jury examining a case can often be biased against people of a certain class, colour or religion, and therefore the innocent are frequently executed. This is, in most cases, now a dated argument because of a better understanding of different cultures. Although there have been and always will be stories of how the blameless are unfairly persecuted, most fail to remember that victims of murderers and criminals were innocent people too: why should offenders be treated any differently to the rest of society?

There is a popular view amongst those who are against Capital Punishment that, considering the relatively new alternative of long-term prison sentences, there is no further need for the death penalty. This is an invalid belief however, as life inside a prison is, for the majority, much more comfortable than living a free life. Many criminals come from an impoverished background and therefore are often treated gently compared to their previous life on the streets. They receive three meals a day; decent accommodation; they are given the option of working for extra money; and their imprisonment is paid for by public taxes, which is money that could be spent on far worthier causes such as improving education or the healthcare system. Clearly there is little sense behind sentencing someone to life in jail, only to let them out long before their sentence is finished because of so-called ‘good behaviour’; it is completely unjust, and in many cases those who are released early go on to re-offend.

Ultimately, there can be little doubt that utilizing Capital Punishment is for the good of the public, and if we begin to accept the death penalty as a fair method of justice then perhaps we might see a decrease in crime rates. When criminals are willing to perpetrate appalling crimes like murder, it is almost certain that they cannot be persuaded to see the evil of such atrocities and instead the best thing to do is ensure they cannot harm anyone ever again. It **is** morally acceptable and although it will never bring the victim back, relatives are guaranteed that their pain will not be felt by ten more unfortunate families. We need to put an end to the horrendous crimes going on in the world, and Capital Punishment is the sole means of achieving this goal.

The resources used for this essay were:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/capitalpunishment/>

<http://www.capitalpunishmentuk.org/thoughts.html>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/teachers/citizenship_11_14/subject_areas/human_rights/newsid_1863000/1863030.stm>

<http://www.wesleylowe.com/cp.html>

<http://www.capitalpunishmentuk.org/mcnicol.html>