Capital punishment is the punishment of death which is generally awarded to those guilty of heinous crimes, particularly murder and child rape. In India the traditional way of awarding this punishment is "hanging by the neck" till the death of the criminal. In other countries, shooting, electric chair, etc. are the various devices used for the purpose.

Though the awarding of capital punishment, especially for murder, is according to age-old, tradition, in recent times there has been much hue and cry against it. It has been said that capital punishment is brutal, that it is according to the law of jungle - "an eye for an eye", and tooth for a tooth". It is pointed out that there can be no more place for it in a civilized country. Moreover, judges are not infallible and there are instances where innocent people have been sent to the gallows owing to some error of judgment.

Capital punishment is nothing but judicial murder, it is said, especially when an innocent life is destroyed. Besides, capital punishment, as is generally supposed, is not deterrent. Murders and other heinous crimes have continued unabated, in spite of it. The result of such views has been that in recent years there has been an increasing tendency in western countries to award life imprisonment instead of capital punishment. Muslims countries, generally speaking, continue to be more serving in this respect.

Despite frequent demands from all society, India has not so far abolished capital punishment. But even in India there has been a decline in the frequency of such punishment. It is now awarded only in cases of hardened criminals and only when it is established that the murder was not the result of a momentary impulse, the result of serious provocation, but well-planned and cold-blooded. In such cases, it is felt that nothing less than capital punishment would meet the ends of justice, that it is just and proper that such pests of society are eliminated. Those who indulge in anti-social and sternest possible measures should be taken against them, especially when they are habitual offenders.

It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that India has not so far abolished capital punishment but used it more judiciously. Sociologists are of the view that capital punishment serves no useful purpose. A murderer deprives the family of the murdered person of its bread-winner. By sending the criminals to gallows, we in no way help or provide relief to the family of the murdered. Rather, we deprive another
family of its bread-winner. The sociologists, therefore, suggest that the murderer should be sentenced for life to work and support the family of murdered person as well as his own. In this way, innocent women and children would be saved from much suffering, hunger and starvation. Moreover, such measures would provide the criminals with an opportunity to reform himself. He would be under strict watch and if his conduct is satisfactory, he may be allowed to return to society as a useful member of it.

There is much truth in such views, and they must be given due weightage before a decision is taken to abolish or retain capital punishment. But Capital punishment should be continuing for those who commit rare of the rarest crimes such as child rape, group rape, terrorism and etc.

**Answer the following questions:**

1- Explain:
   - Infallible:
   - Deterrent:
   - Gallows:
   - Bread-winner:
   - Cold-blooded

2- Do you think the author is with or against capital punishment? Explain.

3- The author is talking about capital punishment in India. Do you think the situation is similar in Lebanon?

4- Are you with or against capital punishment? Write a 15-line essay to explain your position support you opinion.