

If you followed all the laws, would that make you a moral person why or why not

Law



The Morality of Law The Morality of Law The required readings for the week facilitated in me an understanding that in the civilized society of today many laws exist in nations across the world, which are intended for the common good of the public. The laws have been enacted by government for the purpose of safeguarding the rights and freedom of individuals living within a society. As such, every citizen has a legal responsibility to abide by the laws in a country. However, when laws disregard freedom of individuals and ignore the aspect of common good, such laws are unjust and against the interests of public. The readings further offered the insight that under such circumstances it becomes the moral responsibility of citizens in the society to oppose such laws and disobey them. Therefore, as discerned from the core textbooks and outside research, I can discern that when an individual obeys all the laws in society, it does not make him a moral person.

Obeying just laws, which are intended for the common good and well being of all the citizens, is the responsibility of every citizen in a country, as emphasized in the core reading and the journal articles I accessed during the research. These are intended to maintain peace and harmony within the society and to protect the weak from the strong. Similarly, laws also seek to prevent crimes, immorality and other evils within the society. Thus, citizens are bound to obey just laws for the prevalence of peace and harmony within the human society and when they break laws they become immoral people. On the other hand, the readings from the textbook chapters and other research materials I know that when unjust laws are enacted by rulers, such laws compromise the concept of common good. Thus, many political philosophers contend that unjust laws are no laws at all but “ acts of

violence” (George, 2008, p. 194).

Human history is replete with instances of exploitation of the weak by the ruling class through discrimination and other atrocities. The Nazi regime of Hitler sets a classic example of immoral rulers, who enacted discriminatory laws for the annihilation of particular races and it was considered as a breaking of law to “aid and comfort” members of these groups (Forji, 2010, p. 156). The citizens of Germany, who had a moral responsibility to live in consonance with the tenets of “justice, and love for fellow man” failed to stand up to their moral responsibility, which led to the mass murder of millions and thus entailed the violation of common good (p. 156). In this context, my readings provide me the knowledge that while on the one hand they have abided by the law enforced by the ruler, on the flip side they have failed to act morally.

Research evidence also points to an association between the “injustice of specific laws” and diminishing compliance by the public to such rules (Nadler, 2005, p. 1401). Therefore, when people perceive certain laws as unjust, they tend to disobey them out of their sense of morality and righteousness, which overrides their “law-abiding behavior” (p. 1401). The US has witnessed major instances of civil disobedience against laws of discrimination. In many cases, governments across the world have had to dispense with certain laws that are not in public interest due to protests from the citizens. Public interest can be served only when people understand their moral responsibility and oppose oppressive laws rather than obey them. Thus, the readings show that people do not become morally right when they follow all the laws in a country. On the contrary, as per the information

gleaned from different sources, they become moral when they obey just laws and oppose the unjust laws, which is one of their moral responsibilities.

References

Forji, A. G. (2010). Just Laws versus Unjust Laws: Asserting the Morality of Civil Disobedience. *Journal of Politics and Law*, 3(2), 156-169.

This article, which discusses historical events such as the Nazi holocaust, throws light into the evils of totalitarian governments and how it impacts the lives of citizens. It illustrates the relevance of civil disobedience as a tool for safeguarding the rights of citizens and is a good source for both academicians and practitioners of law.

George, R. P. (2008). Natural Law. *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy*, 31(1), 171-196. This article deals with the philosophy of moral judgment and theories of natural law especially from a Nietzschean perspective. It includes an in depth analysis of Aquinas' and Hart's legal theories and shows the need for adherence to morality in the framing of laws. This also can be a relevant source for understanding the morality of laws.

Nadler, J. (2005). Flouting the Law. *Texas Law Review*, 83, 1399-1441.

This article analyses the perception about laws and whether elements of injustice in a law encourage noncompliance in the citizens. The author argues that the legitimacy of laws has a positive impact on encouraging compliance. This source offers clear insights into the morality of laws and can be useful for students in their understanding.