ANSWERS FOR Exercise based on John Stuart Mill, Essay on Liberty

The Harm Principle:  The ideal of individuality comprises three basic elements:

first, the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological. The liberty of expressing and publishing opinions may seem to fall under a different principle, since it belongs to that part of the conduct of an individual which concerns other people; but being almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself, resting in great part on the same reasons, is practically inseparable from it. Secondly, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow; without impediment from our fellow-creatures, so long as what we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse, or wrong. Thirdly, from this liberty of each individual, follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals; freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others: the persons combining being supposed to be of adult age.

**Thus, the law, or private persons, cannot legitimately interfere with a person's liberty if the person is:**

**(a) not harming others**

**or is**

**(b) only harming himself.**

**HOW WOULD MILL JUDGE these following cases, by law or by social disapproval AND HOW WOULD YOU? If you disagree, please state your reason(s) for your disagreement.**

1. **Restricting slander and libel** BY LAW
2. **Restricting name-calling. (Think of your own example.) BY SOCIAL DISAPPROVAL**
3. **Dynamiting competitor’s plant BY LAW**
4. **Competing by lowering prices and/or improving service or product quality NEITHER**
5. **Rape BY LAW**
6. **Consensual heterosexual activity Generally NEITHER BUT THERE ARE CASES WHERE SOCIALDISAPPROVAL IS APPROPRIATE (FOR EXAMPLE, RECKLESS SEXUAL ACTIVITY)**
7. **Consensual homosexual activity TODAY MILL WOULD SAY Generally NEITHER BUT THERE ARE C ASES WHERE SOCIALDISAPPROVAL IS APPROPRIATE (FOR EXAMPLE, RECKLESS SEXUAL ACTIVITY)**
8. **Stopping someone from harming another BY LAW**
9. **Stopping someone from harming herself BY SOCIAL DISAPPROVAL**
10. **Free to believe and feel whatever one wants BY SOCIAL DISAPPROVAL (RECKLESS DISREGARD OF WELL-FOUNDED TRUTH IS FOOLISH)**
11. **Free to express and publish whatever one wants IT DEPENDS ON THE CASE. IF SUCH ACTION DIRECTLY HARMS ANOTHER, THEN BY LAW. IF SUCH ACTION HARMS THE SEARCH FOR SCIENTIFIC TRUTH BECAUSE OF BLATANT DEISREGARD FOR SCIENTIC METHOD, THEN BY SOCIALDISAPPROVAL. FOR EXAMPLE, SCIEN TISTS WHO HAVE FAKED THEIR RESEARCH HAVE BEEN SOCIALLY CENSURED IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUN ITY.**
12. **Free to do to oneself whatever one wants, for example, drugs BY SOCIAL DISAPPROVAL IF THE DRUGS ARE HARMING THE PERSON, FOR EXAMPLE, BY PREVENTING ONE FROM DOING ONE’S WORK.**
13. **Free to do to one’s children whatever one wants BY LAW IF DIRECT HARM OR NEGLECT IS INVOLVED. BY SOCIAL DISAPPOROVAL IF THE PARENTS ARE SO STUPID AS TO FAIL TO ADVANCE THE BEST INTERESTS OF THEIR CHILDREN.**
14. **Free not to pay taxes to support via Medicare the health care of seniors and those who are on Social Security after being disabled for two years IF MILL WERE A STRICT LIBERTARIAN, HE WOULD NOT LEGISLATE MEDICARE INTO EFFECT. BUT SINCE ALMOST ALL I ENGLAND, SOCTLAND, WALES, AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND ALL OF EUROPE NOW HAVE NATIONAL HEALTH CARE, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MILL WOULD BE A HARSH LIBERTARIAN AND DESTROY NATIONAL HEALTH CARE.**
15. **Free not to pay Social Security taxes because the government is forcing me to do a good for myself IF MILL WERE A STRICT LIBERTARIAN, HE WOULD NOT LEGISLATE ANATIONAL PENSION BENEFIT INTO EFFECT. BUT SINCE ALMOST ALL ENGLAND, SOCTLAND, WALES, AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND ALL OF EUROPE NOW HAVE NATIONAL PENSIONS, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MILL WOULD BE A HARSH LIBERTARIAN AND DESTROY NATIONAL PENSIONS.**
16. **Free not to pay Social Security taxes because the government gives lower income wage earners somewhat better benefits relative to their contributions than it does for higher income wage earners. IF MILL WERE A STRICT LIBERTARIAN, HE WOULD NOT LEGISLATE MORE BENEFITS FOR LOAW WAGE WORKERS INTO EFFECT. BUT SINCE ALMOST ALL ENGLAND, SOCTLAND, WALES, AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND ALL OF EUROPE PROBABLY NOW HAVE NATIONAL PENSIONS THAT FAVOR THE POOR SMEWHAT, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MILL WOULD BE A HARSH LIBERTARIAN AND DESTROY SUSIDIZING THE PENSIONS FOR THE POOR SOMEWHAT.**
17. **Free not to pay any taxes that support both free education of children and also somewhat subsidized higher education in state colleges and universities. WHAT LIBERTARIAN TODAY WOULD DESTROYPUBLIC EDUCATION OR PUBLIC FUNDING OF VOUCHER SCHOOLS? WHAT LIBERTARIAN WOULD TAKE AWAY ALL FUNDING OF STATE UNIVERSITIES IN VIRGINIA? AND DID YOU KNOW THAT VIRGINIA GIVES ANY VIRGINIA CITIZEN WHO ATTENDS A PRIVATE COLLEGE IN VIRGINIA A VTAG, A VIRGINIA TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT OF ABOUT $3,200 A YEAR NOW?**
18. **Free not to pay taxes that support Pell Grants and Subsidized Loans for college students IF MILL WERE A STRICT LIBERTARIAN, HE WOULD NOT LEGISLATE PELL GRANTS INTO EFFECT. BUT SINCE SUCH ASSISTANCE HAS EXISTED SINCE 1965 BY FEDERAL LAW, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MILL WOULD BE A HARSH LIBERTARIAN AND DESTROY PELL GRANTS.**
19. **Free not to pay state and federal taxes that support unemployment benefits for unemployed workers IF MILL WERE A STRICT LIBERTARIAN, HE WOULD NOT LEGISLATE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS INTO EFFECT. BUT SINCE UNEMPOLYMENT BENEFITS HAVE EXISTED IN THIS CDUNTRY SINCE 1935, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MILL WOULD BE A HARSH LIBERTARIAN AND DESTROY NATIONALUNEMPOYMENT BENEFITS. YOU MAY NOT KN0W THAT STATE UNEMPOYMENT BENEFITS ARE FUNDED BY TAXES ON EMPLOYERS AND THAT FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ARE FUNDED BY GENERAL FEDERAL TAXES.**
20. **Free not to pay taxes that support a cleaner environment and/or that prevent global warming BY LAW**