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Q7

It is best to see life as a journey, not as a destination.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Essay · 125 marks · Philosophical and ethical quotes

Philosophical and ethical quotes

Core demand of the question

- **Journey vs destination:** process, means, becoming
- **Stake:** destinations matter (justice, health) but a life or republic obsessed only with arrival becomes cruel
- **Counter:** the poor cannot be told "enjoy the journey"

Revision summary

Guidance only.

Yatra vs unpaid labourer.

Gandhi on means; **Ambedkar** on daily democracy.

- **Body:** person, education, GDP vs dignity, **just transition**.
- **Counter:** the poor need arrivals. Close on both clocks.

Note

This is a map, not the full 1,000-1,200 word essay.

Anecdote

A pilgrim on a long yatra is asked, at a dusty dhaba, "How far to the shrine?" He says, "I am already on it." That is piety. A labourer on the same road, unpaid for weeks, cannot live on piety. "It is best to see life as a journey, not as a destination" is wise only if the road has water.

Heading map**Unpack**

- Journey = means, learning, relationships, unfinished self.
- Destination = goal, rank, GDP number, "developed India" slogan, moksha as a stamp.
- **Stake:** hold the goal; refuse to crush the path.

Quote to earn: **Gandhi** - means are ends in the making. **Tagore** - "the road is my own."
Khalil Gibran (if used once) - not a quote dump. **Buddha** - the eightfold path.

Person

- **Careerism:** IAS as destination turns the academy into a war. Journey: curiosity, service.
- **Illness:** cure is a destination; care is the journey.

Society

- Education as marks vs education as a path (NEP's claim).

- Marriage as "settled" vs companionship as practice.

Nation

- **Fact peg:** GDP growth is a destination-metric; jobs, air, dignity are the journey's quality.
- Viksit Bharat as a date can motivate; it can also excuse today's cruelty "for 2047".
- **Constitution:** a journey of becoming equal - **Ambedkar**'s warning that democracy is a daily habit.

Environment

- Net-zero year vs the journey of coal towns, **just transition**.

Counter

Hunger is not a journey to romanticise. Rights are destinations that must arrive in a lifetime. The quote rebukes obsession, not planning.

Last paragraph

- **Close:** pack water for the road, and still know the shrine's name. A civil servant measures both the file's end and how the queue was treated. Expand; this is only the itinerary.

Facts & figures

Gandhi

Means are the ends in process - the journey is the moral destination.

Ambedkar

Constitution as a daily journey; political democracy without social democracy is incomplete.

GDP vs jobs

Use growth as one destination-metric; pair with employment, pollution, nutrition - the quality of the road.

Just transition

A net-zero date without a coal-town journey is a destination that abandons people.

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