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Q3

What does each of the following quotations mean to you? (a) "Every work has got to pass through hundreds of difficulties before succeeding. Those that persevere will see the light, sooner or later" - Swami Vivekananda (b) "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until and unless we obtain peace within ourselves" - Dalai Lama (c) "Life doesn't make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that it is better for us all" - Erik Erikson.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · GS IV · 10 marks · Moral Thinkers and Philosophers

Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and the world.

Core demand of the question

- What does each of the following quotations mean to you?
- (a) "Every work has got to pass through hundreds of difficulties before succeeding. Those that persevere will see the light, sooner or later." - **Swami Vivekananda**
- (b) "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves." - **Dalai Lama**
- (c) "Life doesn't make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that, the better for us all." - **Erik Erikson**

Revision summary

Vivekananda means stamina through lawful difficulty until a real public good appears, with correction when facts change.

Quitting after the first nexus threat is not wisdom.

The **Dalai Lama** means inner restraint so outer peace is not a lathi serving panic or greed.

Inner calm is for better action, not for ignoring a fire.

Erikson means we complete one another; administration is a chain, and a hero-complex or a hiding "we" both fail.

Introduction

Three sentences test grit, inner quiet and the fact that no file is a solo act. Each quote is a present work-rule for a public servant, not a life sketch of the speaker.

Body**(a) Vivekananda: perseverance through difficulties**

- **Vivekananda** is separating success from a first easy attempt. Work worth doing will meet delay, ridicule and failure.

- **For a civil servant, the "work" is a right completed:** a dry village that gets water, a scam file that survives transfer, a school that actually teaches.
- Hundreds of difficulties are the missing record, the stay order, the oral instruction to go slow, and the cynicism of a tired office.
- Perseverance is not stubborn cruelty. It is staying with the lawful object after the photograph has gone.
- Those that "see the light" are not only the officer's promotion. The light is the citizen who drinks, the muster that is true, the girl who stays in class.
- **Present context:** a reform such as Direct Benefit Transfer or a mining raid will be hated by a nexus. Quitting after the first threat is not realism; it is surrender of the oath.
- **Limit:** perseverance that ignores a court, a structural crack, or a failed policy is vanity. Vivekananda's grit still needs evidence and course correction.
- The quote therefore trains stamina plus learning, not a blind charge.

(b) **Dalai Lama: peace within before peace without**

- Outer peace is a ceasefire, a quiet street, a civil secretariat that does not shout. Inner peace is a mind not owned by hate, panic or greed.
- An officer at war with himself - status anxiety, a hidden bribe, a family treated as staff - will export that war as a humiliating counter and a communal rumour believed too fast.
- Crisis of conscience is quieter when the person has already decided that the Constitution, not the WhatsApp group, is the self he will live with.
- **Emotional intelligence is a tool here:** name the fear, do not dump it on a subordinate, then still refuse the illegal order.
- **Present context:** communal tension, a pandemic queue, a sand mafia threat. Outer force without inner restraint becomes atrocity or freeze.
- **Limit:** inner peace is not withdrawal. Meditation that ignores a burning basti is not the Dalai Lama's point; it is the calm that can still act without revenge.
- Public peace - **Article 21** and fraternity - needs officers who are not looking for an enemy to soothe their own wound.

(c) **Erikson: interdependence**

- Erikson, a developmental psychologist, is stating that a human life is a web, not a fortress. Identity itself is formed with others.
- **Administration is interdependence made official:** farmer, engineer, constable, ASHA, court and taxpayer complete one service.
- A District Magistrate who believes he is the sole hero will either burn out or crush colleagues; the work will still need the junior who knows the village.
- **Present context:** COVID-19 showed that a hospital, a vaccine, a truck of oxygen and a crematorium are one chain. Isolationist ethics fail.
- Federalism, **cooperative federalism in disaster**, and global public goods such as climate and refugees are Erikson at scale.
- **Limit:** interdependence is not fusion. The officer still owns a signature. "We" must not become a hiding place for a bribe or a mob.
- Learning it sooner means training that includes listening, joint control rooms, and respect for the person at the last mile.

Flow diagram

Perseverance -> Citizen right completed

Perseverance -> Course correction

Inner peace -> Calm lawful action

Inner peace -> No exported wound

Interdependence -> Team last mile

Interdependence -> Personal signature

Conclusion

Vivekananda asks the officer to stay with a hard lawful work until the citizen sees light. The **Dalai Lama** asks for an inner order so that public force is not a private war. Erikson asks for a republic of mutual need, with a signature that is still personal.

Facts & figures

Swami Vivekananda

His teaching of strength and work as worship is used here as administrative stamina, not as a licence to ignore evidence.

Dalai Lama

A public teacher of inner discipline and non-violence; the line is a warning that unquiet officials export conflict.

Erik Erikson

A psychologist of identity and the life cycle; interdependence is his claim that the self is formed and sustained with others.

Article 21, Constitution of India

Life and personal liberty; the usual outer peace the State owes, which inner disorder in office can still destroy.

Cooperative federalism in disaster

Oxygen, vaccines and relief in COVID-19 required Union, States and local bodies together; Erikson's insight at institutional scale.

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