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Q3

(a) Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have the right to do and what is right to do.'-Potter Stewart . (b) "If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher." - Abdul Kalam. (c) "Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it." Dalai Lama.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · GS IV · 10 marks · Probity in Governance

Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.

Core demand of the question

- Three quotations in the present context
- (a) **Potter Stewart** - ethics is knowing the difference between what you have the right to do and what is right to do
- (b) Kalam - father, mother and teacher for a corruption-free nation of beautiful minds
- (c) Dalai Lama - judge success by what you had to give up to get it

Revision summary

Stewart separates permission from justification; legality is the first test, not the last.

Public power to transfer, demolish or dismiss can be legal and still fail dignity.

Kalam places anti-corruption in parents and teachers who refuse to sell a grade or a file.

Statutes punish late; the dining table and the classroom teach early.

The Dalai Lama measures success by the duties sacrificed; a posting or a GDP number bought with silence or a river is a loss.

Introduction

Three sentences test a republic of legal powers, family classrooms and public ambition. Each quote is a present work-rule, not a life sketch of the speaker.

Body**(a) **Potter Stewart**: the right to do versus the right thing**

- Stewart is separating legal permission from moral justification.
- A public servant often has the legal right to transfer, to attach property, to refuse a meeting, or to leak nothing and also to hide behind a technicality.
- Ethics asks whether that permitted act is still the right act toward the person it will hit.

- In the present context, a demolition with notice on paper but no real hearing may be defensible as power and still fail as justice.
- A company may have the right to dismiss a whistle-blower on a pretext; it is not right to do so.
- Free speech may give a leader the right to mock a minority; constitutional fraternity says it is not the right thing to do.
- **For the civil servant the line is daily:** do not confuse "I can" under the manual with "I should" under [Articles 14 and 21](#).
- **The quote does not invite lawlessness. It invites a second test after legality:** dignity, necessity and the weakest person affected.

(b) Kalam: father, mother, teacher and a corruption-free nation

- Kalam is locating the first anti-corruption machinery in the home and the school, not only in the Lokpal.
- A child who sees a parent buy a mark-sheet or a teacher sell a grade learns that the State is a shop.
- Beautiful minds here are curious, honest and unafraid - not merely high ranks.
- In the present context, coaching factories that teach only how to clear a paper, and families that celebrate a bribe as "getting the work done", manufacture the next corrupt counter.
- The [Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988](#) can jail an adult. It cannot install the habit that Kalam wanted at the dining table.
- Teachers who take attendance honestly, refuse a gift for a seat, and treat a first-generation learner with respect are public ethics in a classroom.
- Parents who do not pay for a leak, and who shame a stolen rupee, do more for a clean republic than a once-a-year integrity pledge.
- The quote is not a claim that law is useless. It is a claim that law arrives too late if the first three teachers have already sold the child.

(c) Dalai Lama: success judged by what you gave up

- The line asks for the price of a win, not only the trophy.
- A posting gained by silence on a fraud is success only on a salary slip.
- In the present context, growth that gives up clean air, a river, or a forest for a quarterly number is the same false success.
- An officer who gives up family entirely for every fake-urgent file has not succeeded; the organisation has extracted a person.
- An election won by giving up truth, or a tender won by giving up a fair bid, fails the Dalai Lama's test even if the crowd cheers.
- The ethical use of the quote is not self-punishment. It is asking whether what was sacrificed was a vice (greed, hate, a bribe) or a duty (honesty, a child's care, another people's land).
- Public success that required the giving up of [constitutional morality](#) is not success. It is a cost that the next riot will invoice.

Flow diagram

Legal right -> Is it the right act
Father mother teacher -> Habit of honesty
Habit of honesty -> Corruption-free minds
Apparent success -> What was given up
What was given up -> Duty kept or sold

Conclusion

Stewart tells the officer that a lawful power can still be the wrong act. Kalam tells the republic that a clean State is grown at home and at school. The Dalai Lama tells ambition to count what it destroyed on the way to the photograph.

Facts & figures

Potter Stewart

A Justice of the United States Supreme Court; the line is used in public ethics to split legal power from moral rightness.

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

The principal Union criminal statute on bribery by public servants; it cannot replace the first education Kalam named.

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

His public teaching repeatedly tied a knowledge society to character in family and school, not only to laboratories.

Constitutional morality

The habit of holding power to the Constitution's values even when popular feeling or a legal loophole would allow more.

Opportunity cost of success

What was given up - truth, a forest, a child's care, a fair tender - is part of the ethical audit of any win.

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