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Q3(a)

Given below are three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context? a)
"Learn everything that is good from others, but bring it in, and in your own way absorb it, do not become others." - Swami Vivekananda

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS IV · 10 marks · Moral Thinkers and Philosophers
 Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and the world.

Core demand of the question

- (a) **Vivekananda**: learn the good from others; absorb in your own way; do not become a copy
- (b) Patel: faith without strength cannot finish a great work; both are needed
- (c) **Kant**: law punishes the act against others' rights; ethics already condemns the mere will to do it

Revision summary

Vivekananda asked India to learn the good from others and digest it, not to become a copy that scorns its own poor.

Patel held that faith without strength cannot complete a great public work, and strength without faith is only force.

- **Kant drew a line**: law waits for the rights-violating act; ethics already condemns the will to do it.

Together they train identity, delivery and inner integrity.

A dashboard, a riot plan and an unsent communal file are the present-tense tests.

Introduction

Three lamps, one present tense. **Vivekananda** warns a borrowing nation not to **become the lender**. **Patel** warns a pious officer that **faith without muscle** does not integrate a State. **Kant** warns that **ethics begins before the FIR**. Together they are **identity, capacity and inner law** - still the civil servant's kit.

Body**(a) Vivekananda: absorb, do not become others**

The line is against **imitation that erases the self**. Learn **germ theory, a good civil code, a working port**. Do not import **contempt for your own people** or a **costume of another civilisation**. "In your own way" is **digestion**, which is how India took the **Constitution's** borrowed furniture and still had to **grow constitutional morality (Ambedkar)** at home. For a civil servant this is **policy transfer with a field visit**: a Singapore dashboard that **excludes a tribal household** is not "world class". It is **becoming others** at the poor's cost. Atmanirbhar

is ethical when it is **self-respect plus learning**, not **xenophobia**. **Vivekananda's man-making** is character that can **use** a tool without **worshipping** the tool's country.

(b) Patel: faith and strength

Sardar Patel integrated **hundreds of States** with **negotiation, pressure and an army in reserve**. Faith without strength is a **prayer over a collapsing dam**. Strength without faith is **brutality**. The quote is **Weber's ethic of responsibility** plus **ethic of conviction** in one Indian mouth. A communal riot needs **belief in fraternity** and **a lathi that arrives**. A welfare scheme needs **belief in the widow** and **a payment system that works**. Mission-mode without values is **target cruelty**. Values without delivery are **a speech**. Patel's civil servant is the one who **files, moves, and still does not hate**.

(c) Kant: guilty in ethics at the thought of violating rights

Law, in a liberal State, generally waits for an **act** (and sometimes a **preparation**). Ethics, for **Kant**, looks at the **maxim**. If I **will** to falsify a muster, I have already used persons as **means**, even if the pen has not moved. This is not a call for a **thought police**. It is a call for **integrity before audit**. Professional ethics - a doctor imagining a **fake trial**, a judge imagining a **caste bias**, an officer imagining a **nephew's tender** - must **stop the will**, not only the gazette. Mens rea in criminal law is a cousin; **Kant** is stricter because **inner respect for the moral law** is the motive he wants, not fear of CBI. In the present context of **viral hate and silent communal files**, the quote says: **the tweet you almost sent** already failed ethics if it **willed harm**.

- **The three together: do not become a copy, do not be a weak believer, do not wait for the crime to begin in the street.**

Flow diagram

Vivekananda: absorb -> Civil servant
 Patel: faith plus strength -> Civil servant
 Kant: guilty at the will -> Civil servant

Conclusion

Vivekananda wants learning without self-erasure. Patel wants faith that can actually finish the work. **Kant** wants guilt to start when the will to violate a right is born, not only when the statute is broken. A public servant needs all three.

Facts & figures

Vivekananda on borrowing

He urged Indians to take science and organisation from the world without surrendering spiritual and civilisational self-respect.

Integration of States

Patel's work with V.P. Menon used diplomacy and, where needed, force; the quote matches that mix of conviction and capacity.

Categorical imperative

Kant's test: act only on a maxim you could will as universal law; using a person only as a tool fails it.

Constitutional morality

Ambedkar's reminder that forms must be learned; a borrowed Constitution still needs an Indian habit of obeying it.

Ethic of responsibility

Weber's idea that a political actor must own consequences, not only keep clean hands in intention.

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