Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

What do each of the following quotations mean to you? “An unexamined life is not worth living”. – Socrates

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Self-introspection; self-awareness; moral reasoning; critical thinking; personal growth; ethical accountability; continuous improvement

Model Answer

Meaning of the Quote

Socrates’ statement emphasises that a meaningful life requires continuous self-examination. Individuals must reflect on their beliefs, actions, motives and values instead of accepting them unquestioningly.

Importance in Personal Life

1. Self-awareness: Introspection helps individuals recognise their strengths, weaknesses, prejudices and mistakes.

2. Moral Development: Examining one’s conduct encourages the distinction between right and wrong and promotes ethical consistency.

3. Critical Thinking: Questioning assumptions helps individuals avoid blind conformity and make informed decisions.

4. Continuous Improvement: Reflection on failures enables learning, correction and personal growth.

Relevance to Public Service

A civil servant should periodically examine whether decisions are impartial, lawful and beneficial to citizens. For example, an officer who reflects on complaints about a welfare programme may identify unintended exclusion and improve implementation.

Self-examination must also include openness to criticism and evidence, rather than becoming excessive self-doubt or indecision.

Conclusion

A life of reflection is a life of conscious choice and moral responsibility. By examining our actions and learning from experience, we become wiser individuals and more accountable public servants.

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