BLOGS

Passage-Based Questions on English for CLAT UG [Part 17]

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Passage 1 (P.1)

When I first declared myself an atheist, I did not experience the thunderclap of liberation that popular narratives promise. There was no dramatic shattering of chains, no sudden clarity of vision. What I felt instead was a quiet dislocation, as if I had stepped slightly out of rhythm with the people I loved. The rupture was not theological; it was relational. I had grown up in a household where faith was less a doctrine and more a climate. It shaped the calendar, the language of consolation, the idioms of gratitude. We did not argue about God; we assumed Him. Doubt, when it arrived, did not announce itself as rebellion but as a series of small hesitations. A prayer left unfinished. A sermon heard with intellectual distance. A question deferred too many times. The decision to leave belief was not a moment but an accumulation. What unsettled me most was not metaphysical uncertainty but moral asymmetry.

I found myself troubled by the idea that eternal reward or punishment could hinge upon conviction. The disproportion between doubt and damnation seemed less divine than human. Yet atheism, as I soon discovered, is not merely the absence of belief. It is an altered grammar of existence. The language of providence gives way to the language of contingency. Suffering no longer fits into a cosmic narrative; it becomes starkly unjustified. Consolation must be sought not in eternity but in solidarity. I had assumed that abandoning faith would free me from guilt. Instead, it introduced a different kind of responsibility. If there is no transcendent arbiter, then moral accountability rests entirely within human arrangements. Forgiveness cannot be deferred to heaven; it must be negotiated here. Justice, too, becomes urgent, because there is no ultimate balancing of accounts. What surprised me most was how little my daily habits changed.

I still felt awe at the night sky. I still experienced gratitude. The difference lay not in emotion but in explanation. Wonder no longer pointed upward; it expanded outward. Over time, I realised that leaving faith was less about disbelief and more about intellectual honesty. It required admitting that uncertainty was not a defect to be overcome but a condition to be inhabited. If faith offered

certainty, atheism demanded endurance. In the end, what I relinquished was not merely God, but the comfort of metaphysical reassurance. What I gained was a sharpened sense of finitude and with it, an urgency to live deliberately.

1. The author suggests that their departure from faith was primarily?

a. an act of rebellion

b. an emotional collapse

c. an intellectual and moral evolution

d. a social performance

2. The phrase “faith was less a doctrine and more a climate” implies that faith?

a. was aggressively imposed

b. functioned as an all-encompassing atmosphere

c. was intellectually debated at home

d. existed only during rituals

3. The author’s discomfort with eternal punishment reflects?

a. skepticism about divine existence

b. resentment toward religious authority

c. concern about proportional justice

d. fear of personal condemnation

4. The passage suggests that atheism, for the author, leads to

a. moral indifference

b. intensified ethical responsibility

c. existential despair

d. social isolation

5. The tone of the passage is best described as ?

a. reflective and measured

b. combative and dismissive

c. triumphant and celebratory

d. cynical and ironic

Passage 2 (P.2)

When a government announces the construction of a new national museum, it rarely presents it as an ideological project. Museums, after all, are said to preserve culture, not manufacture it. Yet what is chosen for preservation is always a matter of power. The proposed Museum of Civilisational Achievement has been described as a tribute to the nation's resilience. Architectural renderings display sweeping halls of innovation, military triumphs, and technological ascendancy. Missing, however, from preliminary outlines is any sustained engagement with episodes of internal violence or political repression.

The omissions are defended as pragmatic: space is limited; emphasis must be selective. But selection is never neutral. To narrate history as uninterrupted progress is not simplification; it is sanitisation. A museum that refuses to confront historical wounds risks becoming less a repository of memory and more a theatre of reassurance. Supporters argue that public institutions should inspire rather than unsettle. There is, they claim, enough division in contemporary society without reopening old scars. Yet this argument presumes that silence heals. In truth, unacknowledged injuries tend to fester. The absence of representation does not erase pain; it merely privatises it.

Critics of the museum have proposed a different model: one in which triumph and tragedy are exhibited side by side. They contend that resilience is meaningful only when measured against suffering honestly depicted. Without that contrast, celebration becomes hollow. This debate is not about architecture but about citizenship. What kind of citizen does the state imagine? One who seeks comfort in curated pride, or one capable of confronting contradiction? The danger lies not in patriotism itself but in its insulation from critique. A nation confident in its democratic maturity should not fear its own history. The true measure of civilisation is not the grandeur of its monuments but the courage with which it acknowledges its mistakes.

6. The central criticism in the passage is that the museum?

a. is financially irresponsible

b. exaggerates military achievements

c. presents a selectively sanitized version of history

d. lacks architectural innovation

7. The author rejects the claim that avoiding painful history?

a. promotes unity

b. reduces political polarisation

c. accelerates economic growth

d. genuinely contributes to healing

8. The phrase “theatre of reassurance” suggests that the museum would?

a. entertain visitors

b. comfort rather than challenge

c. dramatise conflict

d. distort facts intentionally

9. The author’s view of patriotism can best be summarised as?

a. inherently dangerous

b. incompatible with criticism

c. sustainable only when self-critical

d. dependent on heroic narratives

10. The tone of the editorial is?

a. sarcastic

b. analytical yet morally assertive

c. neutral and descriptive

d. nostalgic

Passage 3 (P.3)

Power, I learned early, does not announce itself as power. It arrives disguised as necessity. When I was first appointed to the cabinet, I imagined decisions would be guided by principle, debated in good faith, and executed with solemn clarity. Instead, I encountered urgency masquerading as inevitability. Every file carried the phrase “national interest.” It appeared so frequently that it began to lose semantic precision. To question a proposal was not merely to dissent; it was to risk appearing indifferent to the collective good. The language itself narrowed the range of permissible doubt. The most instructive lesson was how easily compromise rebranded itself as pragmatism. A diluted reform was described as strategic patience. A postponed commitment became administrative prudence. In this linguistic drift, intention blurred. I do not claim innocence. There were moments when I accepted the smaller wrong to avoid a larger political defeat. The arithmetic of governance is rarely clean. Yet the danger lies in habituation.

Once one begins to calculate ethics in fractions, the denominator expands. Resignation, when it came, was less dramatic than outsiders imagine. It followed a decision framed as temporary but likely permanent. I realised then that proximity to power alters perception. What once seemed

urgent from within the chamber appeared negotiable from outside it. Public life is often narrated as a contest between ideology and ambition. In truth, it is a contest between memory and convenience.

One must remember what one once believed, or risk adapting so thoroughly that belief becomes retrospective fiction. I left office with fewer certainties but sharper clarity. Power is not corrupting in a theatrical sense; it is corrosive in increments. It does not demand betrayal; it invites accommodation. The cost of that accommodation is rarely visible immediately. It accumulates quietly, in the space between what one defends publicly and what one rationalises privately.

11. The author's primary insight about power is that it?

a. operates through gradual rationalisation

b. corrupts through dramatic moral collapse

c. is inherently illegitimate

d. is impossible to resist

12. The repeated use of "national interest" is criticised because it?

a. lacks emotional appeal

b. is legally undefined

c. discourages dissent by moral framing

d. contradicts democratic values

13. The phrase "calculate ethics in fractions" implies?

a. incremental ethical compromise

b. precise moral reasoning

c. mathematical governance

d. policy inefficiency

14. The author's resignation appears to stem from?

a. public scandal

b. electoral defeat

c. policy disagreement with party members

d. discomfort with gradual moral dilution

15. The tone of the memoir extract is?

a. self-exonerating

b. introspective and candid

c. accusatory

d. sentimental

Answers

1. C – The author describes the shift as gradual, rooted in moral and intellectual discomfort rather than rebellion or emotion, which clearly reflects evolution in thought.
2. B – Calling faith a “climate” shows it surrounded daily life naturally and constantly, like an atmosphere, rather than existing as strict doctrine or debate.
3. C – The discomfort comes from the disproportion between doubt and eternal punishment, which is essentially a concern about fairness and proportional justice.
4. B – The author explicitly says morality becomes more urgent without a divine arbiter, showing increased, not reduced, ethical responsibility.
5. A – The tone is calm, reflective, and deeply considered, there is no aggression or triumph, just careful self-examination.
6. C – The editorial repeatedly argues that the museum omits painful history, creating a selectively sanitized narrative rather than a balanced one.
7. D – The author clearly states that silence does not heal wounds but instead allows them to fester, directly rejecting the healing argument.
8. B – “Theatre of reassurance” suggests performance meant to comfort citizens rather than challenge them with uncomfortable truths.
9. C – The author does not reject patriotism but insists it must withstand critique to remain meaningful and mature.
10. B – The tone blends analytical reasoning with strong moral positioning, especially in the final paragraphs asserting civic courage.
11. A – The author explains that power corrodes gradually through small compromises, not dramatic betrayal.
12. C – By framing decisions as “national interest,” dissent becomes morally risky, discouraging questioning through ethical pressure.

13. A – “Calculating ethics in fractions” metaphorically refers to making small, incremental moral compromises over time.
14. D – The resignation stems from discomfort with how repeated compromises were reshaping the author’s moral framework.
15. B – The writing is candid and introspective, with the author openly admitting complicity rather than defending themselves.