BLOGS

Sample Legal Reasoning Questions for CLAT 2024

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PASSAGE

Mentioning instances where substantive laws were laid down during the times of the Ramayana, he explained Bharata's list of moral injunctions. "Bharata's list had laws related to ethical business, family matters, taxation, pollution of the environment, breach of trust, addiction, and more," he cited.

"Similarly, contract law principles can be seen in the epic Ramayana". "When Dasharatha decides to crown his eldest son Rama as his successor in the royal court of Ayodhya, his wife, Kaikeyi, reminds him of the promise he made to her years ago".

"In order to bind him to his earlier promise despite his decision in the royal court that contradicts it, Kaikeyi remarks, 'It will be in vain to build a dam when the water has already run down.'"

"This principle can be seen in most of our commercial laws today," he said, providing an example of how a bank treats two payees who present checks. The bank pays the payee who presents the check first, he added.

Another well-developed area of law during those times was the law related to diplomatic relations with neighboring states. When Ravana sent Sukha to persuade Sugriva not to be on the side of Rama, Sukha came under attack from the vanaras. Being an envoy of Lanka, Sukha cautioned Rama that he ought to be protected.

Interestingly, he is believed to have also uttered some exceptions to this rule at this juncture: 'Only those envoys can be attacked who do not convey the message of the king or convey their own message'.

Making parallel connections to contemporary law, Justice Ramasubramanian referred to Article 31 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961, which grants immunity to diplomatic agents from criminal prosecution.

"It also lays down exceptions that enable the foreign state to take action against the envoy if his actions were outside his official duty, similar to the exceptions explained by Sukha." He made another compelling observation is that most of the substantive legal principles of ancient India seem to have originated during the times of the Ramayana, whereas procedural law seems to have largely developed during the times of the Mahabharata.

Concluding his detailed lecture, Justice Ramasubramanian remarked: "A significant difference between modern law and the Dharmashastras say that if the former is concerned with only the 'conduct' of human beings, the latter dealt with both 'conduct' and 'character'.

" It provided opportunities for comparative studies of legal philosophies and their integration Dwelling on religious texts seeking legal and ethical principles could immensely benefit positivist law founded on logic and reason, although care and caution must be taken not to carry out such an exercise from an ideological lens.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from Law as the Epics Propound It by The Hindu, July 09, 2020]

1. Kaikeyi remarks: 'It will be in vain to build a dam when the water has already run down.'

a. Kaikeyi's remarks are addressed to Dasharatha to bind him to his promise of making Ram the Successor.

b. Kaikeyi's remarks are addressed to Dasharatha to deter him from making Ram the successor by holding him accountable to the promise made by him earlier as analogous to current contract law principles.

c. Kaikeyi's remarks are addressed to Dasharatha to deter him from making Ram the successor by holding him accountable to the promise made by him earlier as analogous to current commercial law principles.

d. Kaikeyi's remarks are addressed to the decision made by Dasharatha to crown Bharata the successor of Ram.

2. In the above passage, what was the foundation of law on which Sukha pleaded for protection?

a. Natural Law

b. Taxation Law

c. Contractual Law

d. International Law

3. On what grounds does the author establish a parallel between 'Only those envoys can be attacked who do not convey the message of the king or convey their own message' and Article 31 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961?

a. The author establishes a parallel to Sukha's warning in the provision under International Law concerning domestic relations with neighboring states

b. The author establishes a parallel to Sukha's warning in the provision under Contemporary law on the grounds of initiating proceedings against a foreign diplomat acting outside his line of official duty.

c. The author establishes a parallel to Sukha's warning with the provision under Natural law concerning universal moral order

d. The author establishes a parallel to Sukha's warning with the provision of the Article 31 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations grants immunity for diplomatic agents from criminal prosecution.

4. As portrayed in the passage by Justice Ramasubramanian, what is the central idea of the argument?

a. The main thrust of Justice Ramasubramanian's argument is the connections between modern and ancient philosophies, law, and religion.

b. Justice Ramasubramanian's main point of contention is dwelling on religious texts for seeking legal and ethical principles, finding logic, and reasoning to base modern laws.

c. The main point of Justice Ramasubramanian's argument is establishing the instances where substantive laws were laid down during the times of Ramayana.

d. The main point of Justice Ramasubramanian's argument is establishing the instances where substantive laws were laid down during the times of Mahabharata.

5. According to the author, what is the difference between modern law and Dharmashastras?

a. While Dharmashastras are concerned with a person's actions and morals, modern law is largely based on his morals.

b. While Dharmashastras are concerned with a person's actions and morals, modern law is loosely based on his actions.

c. While Dharmashastras are concerned with a person's disposition and his demeanor, modern law is loosely based only on his demeanor.

d. A significant difference between modern law and the Dharmashastras is that if the the latter is concerned with only the 'conduct' of human beings, while the former deals with both 'conduct' and 'character'.

ANSWER KEY

1. The correct answer is (c)

Kaikeyi's remarks are addressed to Dasharatha to deter him from making Ram the successor by holding him accountable to the promise made by him earlier as analogs to current commercial law principles.

This option is supported by the first paragraph, Kaikeyi remarks: 'It will be in vain to build a dam when the water has already run down.' "This principle can be seen in most of our commercial laws today,"

The author does not discuss the contract law principles when talking about the statement in question, therefore option (b) cannot be correct. Neither is there any information in the passage to support option (a) or (d) as the correct answer.

2. The correct answer is (d)

International Law is supported by 'law related to diplomatic relations with neighboring states'. When Ravana sent Sukha to persuade Sugriva not to be on the side of Rama, Sukha was attacked by the Banaras.

Being an envoy of Lanka, Sukha cautioned Rama that he ought to be protected. Here law related to diplomatic relations with neighboring states comes under the cusp of International Law.

Option (a) is not correct as there is an explicit mention of diplomatic relations and therefore a natural school of law emphasizing that law should be based on a universal moral order is less desirable. Option (b) and (c) are not supported by the passage.

3. The correct answer is (b)

The author establishes a parallel to Sukha's warning by the provision under Contemporary law on grounds of initiating proceedings against a foreign diplomat acting outside his line of official duty.

The answer is supported by the passage 'Only those envoys can be attacked who do not convey the message of the king or convey their own message'. Making parallel connections to contemporary law, Justice Ramasubramanian referred to Article 31 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961 which grants immunity to diplomatic agents from 'criminal prosecution'.

Option (d) is incorrect since the question mentions the 'grounds' on which the author establishes a parallel and not on the 'provision'. Options (a) does not speak of a relevant provision and Option (c) is not mentioned anywhere in the paragraph.

4. The correct answer is (a)

The central idea of the argument made by Justice Ramasubramanian is the connection between modern and ancient philosophies, 'law and religion' because it encapsulates the whole idea of the passage and is the theme of the discussion.

Option (b) is incorrect due to incoherence in the reasoning of the argument with the reasoning of the author. Option (c) is narrow and does not encapsulate the essence/ central idea of the passage. Option (d) is incorrect due to false information provided.

5. The correct answer is (c)

'While Dharmashastras are concerned with a person's disposition and his demeanor, modern law is loosely based only on his demeanor.' As the words demeanor and disposition correctly encapsulate the essence of 'conduct' and 'character'.

In options (a) and (b) ‘moral’ cannot be used to replace the word ‘character’, since the character does not only compromise morals but also values. Option (d) is incorrect due to false information.

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