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## Mains Practice Questions

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**Q.**Can public ethics diverge from private ethics for a civil servant? Analyse with relevant examples.(150 words)

09 Jan, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

**Approach:**

- Briefly explain the principles of public and private ethics.
- Explain with examples how private ethics diverges from public ethics.

**Introduction**

While private ethics is largely based on personal beliefs and sense of morality, public ethics is formed on the principles like selflessness, leadership, integrity, objectivity, accountability, transparency, and honesty.

**Body**

- While the two remain in synchronization most of the times, there may emerge circumstances where the two can diverge for a civil servant.
- A civil servant might hold a particular political belief, the service might require him to go against it in larger public welfare. For example-  
During the Maratha agitation over their demand for reservation, many of the officers belonging to the Maratha community would have personally supported the demand. However, as public officials, it was expected from them to stop the agitation and maintain the law and order in the society.
- The personal religious faith might not be in line with the secular nature of the public post for a public servant. For example-  
Even after having a strong faith towards a particular religion and its belief system, a public servant should stay neutral towards all the religions in the country.
- Personal ethics of a person might make him/her oversee a certain violation of rule or law. However, professional should take precedence over it while in service. For example-
- A certain target beneficiary is not able to avail the benefits of the scheme because of the lack of required proofs of identity and as a result, it is facing a lot of hardships. The civil servant might want to overlook the required criteria for the scheme implementation and provide the beneficiary with the benefits. However, she should take an objective stance and ensure the rule implementation by all its standards.

**Conclusion**

While the private and public ethics might diverge for a civil servant, she should always try to maintain a fine balance between the two.