



Faustian Bargain Vs Principled Position

For Mains: Faustian Bargain Vs Principled Position in Politics

What is a Faustian Bargain?

▪ About:

- Its classical definition **refers to a pact where someone trades something of supreme moral and spiritual value to them**, a core principle which defines their essential being, in return for power, knowledge, or wealth.
- The idea comes from the **German legend of Johann Georg Faust** who sold his soul to the devil for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures.
 - This was for a **fixed period** and it is a tale that has inspired great literature from Christopher Marlowe's play Doctor Faustus to Goethe's drama Faust.
 - In this bargain, **Faust's soul gets reclaimed by the devil for eternity** when the contract expires. This is a hard bargain.
- In modern terms, **this means a temporary benefit gained for the suspension**, or suppression, of one's conscience. The guilt of the compromise, however, does not go away.

▪ Examples:

- The Chief Minister of Delhi too might have made such a bargain when he chose not to condemn the release of the 11 men who were convicted for serious crimes in the **Bilkis Bano case** while campaigning in Gujarat Election.
- Perhaps deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi also made a Faustian bargain when she made a deal with the Myanmar Generals to come to power despite the atrocities by the army against the Rohingya.
- The case of former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi can also be considered a Faustian deal with the Government that resulted in his nomination to the Rajya Sabha.
- Faustian bargain, **however distasteful and unethical** it may be, be justified by **better outcomes measured in utilitarian terms**.
 - Mr. Kejriwal may produce a better government in Gujarat and Aung San Suu Kyi's produced a democratic government in Myanmar.

What is the Principled Position?

▪ About:

- In contrast to the Faustian bargain, **some politicians prefer not to make compromises** believing that it is better to take public positions that are consistent with one's values rather than adopt a utilitarian calculus of compromise with evil for a future good.

▪ Examples:

- **Babasaheb Ambedkar resigned in 1951 when he felt Nehru had undermined his position** as the Law Minister on the Hindu Code Bill which he wanted to be discussed.
 - His resignation speech is an artistic statement of the principled position.
- Gandhiji entered into no Faustian bargain, nor did Nelson Mandela or Jawaharlal Nehru or Rabindranath Tagore.

[Source: TH](#)

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