



STUDYING THE LAW AND DISPENSING IT—TWO DIFFERENT THINGS?

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Every year, hundreds of bright people complete their Bachelor of Laws degree (LL.B.) or their Juris Doctor (JD) degree. I referred to this forum I encountered online, <http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/archive/1960140>. A participant in that forum explained that Bachelor of Laws and Juris Doctor basically have the same structure of study, but those that conduct teaching in Juris Doctor expect students to be able to give higher quality responses compared to those in the LL.B. field.

I really don't understand the difference between the two. But that doesn't change the fact that in my country, the Bar exams taken by aspiring lawyers has got to be one of the most, if not the most, difficult licensure examinations there are in existence today. The Medical board exams are in the same league as the Bar exams, I believe.

A very close relative studied to complete her Bachelor of laws. She's married with children and has a good administrative job in the city where her family resides. I have seen how she toiled hard with very thick books and impossible-to-finish reviewers. She has completed her degree, but has yet to take the Bar exams. When she successfully graduated, I was all praises for her. I had often wondered how she could manage it all: work through the whole day; have people depending on her at the office and under her direct supervision; take care of her family; and still attend night school for her law degree. I could never do that!

She has told us she wants to make sure she's good and ready before she takes the Bar exams. She has remarked once that the laws are very difficult to study. We know they're there, but to be able to explain why they're there, to justify their existence, is another matter altogether. Sometimes there are laws that seem to oppose one another. Of course, it is always upon our lawyers to explain the implications of the law to us in such a manner that we begin to understand how the law benefits us or puts our interests in jeopardy. What may be lawful in my eyes might be lawless in another's. Ever notice how people say "Talk to my lawyer!" when they're confronted with a situation where they need to exercise due care? Someone who understands the law can help us get through the tightest situations. But of course, that all depends on what kind of law or what particular law we 'manage to disobey'.

Lady Justice, who carries the Scales of Justice in one hand and a sword in the other, has her eyes covered all the time. This signifies how law is to be dispensed: without bias and in complete impartiality, but with finality and force. Arguments abound that what is legal is not always moral. But there are also those who say that wide acceptance is not always proof of validity. So what will it be?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Have you ever had the ambition to become a lawyer? Why or why not?
2. Explain "What is legal is not always moral."
3. Why do you think people feel secure when they have a relative or a close friend who is a lawyer?
4. The law applies to all or none at all. Be able to expound on this concept.
5. Why is it important that a course on professional ethics be incorporated into any area of study?