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Q9.

'We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of dark, the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light'

The Supreme Court of Israel was conducting trials of Officers accused of war crimes during II World War. Adolf Eichmann, a nazi officer was accused of orchestrating massive killings. On being asked the reasons for his action, he replied, 'I was merely following my order'. He showed no remorse or guilt for his actions

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nor did he pleaded innocence. He rather was proud to have carried out orders in service of his motherland.

This incident is mentioned in Hannah Arendt's book 'Eichmann in Jerusalem', where she highlights how real tragedy of life occurs when men are afraid of light. Officers like Eichmann were the reason humanity witnessed the worst period of torture & killings in its history when six million jews were killed in concentration camps under Hitler. They are not children who could be forgiven as being afraid of dark (punishment). In this essay we will explore causes of above assertions, the tragedy that unfolds because

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of this and finally the need of the hour to bring men towards path of light.

Innocense of a Child

When we are born, we begin with a clean slate. Our understanding is shaped by our family and surroundings. A child begins crying as soon as he gets detached from his mother. For him everyday a new world opens up as he begins developing sense of everything around.

For such a child who lacks any critical thinking, can't differentiate between right or wrong, we can easily forgive him for being afraid of the dark. As in dark he is no longer

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under the protective shield of his mother. He doesn't even have true understanding of dark hence parents suggest him to lock the door when they go outside & not open in any case for any stranger. Thus innocence and lack of critical thinking makes him deserving of forgiveness for any wrong doing.

Grown Men under Darkness: A real tragedy

~~When Kauravi was~~ When Draupadi was being disrobed by Dushasana in front of whole 'Sabha' in 'Mahabharata', all grown men stood there & did nothing. Even in recent times the Delhi video of girl being killed by the boy with knife and no bystander taking any action reflects continuation of

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darkness among grown men.

The resulting tragedy is the subordination and exploitation of women becoming normal. Similarly Pravesh Shukla peeing on a Dalit man or the Hathras incident highlights the darkness of casteism due to people not seeing light of equality.

On the other side of the world the death of George Floyd triggering the global movement against racism or recent killing of Nahel Merzouk in France leading to civil ~~riots~~ unrest. Both these tragedies were a result of darkness among people in form of ~~ra~~ white supremacy or religious antagonism (France).

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Similarly the rise of Authoritarianism and far right leaders around the globe is due to people not taking part in public sphere. When genuine men become detached from politics, it leads to people without ethics gaining power. Plato said 'evil triumphs when good men do nothing'. Thus being afraid of getting arrested or losing jobs has made men kneel before totalitarianism. It can be seen in Russia and China.

Apart from this, the biggest tragedy of our time, 'Climate Change' which has impacted whole humanity is mainly due to inaction. This inaction is of individuals, society

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and most importantly global leaders. The COP summits have remained mere talking shops with no concrete outcome. The 'inability of leaders to see beyond 'self-interest' has led us to rising temprature, depleting carbon budget, rising sea level, disappearing biodiversity, etc.

Why such banality of Evil

The cause of this darkness or inability to see light is due to apathy and decline in moral values. Today there is rise of materialism, people are afraid to go for satisfaction of soul but want only fulfilment of needs. The hedonistic tendency to give preference to pleasure has made man focus on ends over means.

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The fear of finding truth on other side, the repurcussions of fighting evil has made men weak & timid. In modern times we can see this during social moments when people try to fight darkness but when pushed back by enemy; they quickly go back to personal sphere as seen in 'Arab Spring' which started on great note but soon was dispersed by violent repression.

It all boils down to 'Banality of evil' given by Hannah Arendt in the same book 'Eichmann in Jerusalem'. The evil becomes banal i.e. normal and thus no longer appears evil. Hence groups men today no longer feel crimes against

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women as something abnormal, reason why no protests on the same scale as after 'Nirbhaya' Incident despite NCRB pointing uniform increasing of rapes every year.

The Path to Enlightenment

To remove darkness from within requires a cleansing of thought process. It needs formation of good values leading to honest character capable of standing against injustice. One can follow Socrates method of Dialectics where we can ask ourself if path we follow is right or wrong and listening to voice of Conscience.

Even if others around you aren't following right path, One should carve out his own in lines with

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teachings of Buddha's 'eight fold path', or Vivekananda's Neo-Vedantism. Dr. BR Ambedkar despite being born as untouchable wasn't afraid of brahmanical society. He found light in form of studies and went on to become the most learned man in South Asia. His not being afraid of light allowed millions of dalits in India life a life of dignity.

'If you can keep your head when
all around you are losing theirs,
If you can trust yourself when
all men doubt you,....
Yours is the earth & everything
that's in it'

—'If' by 'Rudyard Kipling'

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To sum up the current tragedies of life can't be blamed on innocent souls who don't know the reality. The grown men and women need to wake up & raise their voices as they have 'nothing to loose except their chains'.

Finally whenever in doubt one can follow the following to ensure none of us ever become 'Eichmann of Germany':

'If you are ever in doubt or when self becomes too much with you, recall the face of poorest & weakest men & contemplate if path you are taking will lead him to a life of freedom, dignity. Then you will find all your doubts melt away'

— Gandhi's Talisman

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Q2.

'Act as if it were impossible to fail'

In August 2007, in Camp Nou Stadium, Barcelona was playing Getafe in Spanish football league in a fully packed 90 thousand capacity stadium. The match was tied with score one all and spectators were losing interest. Then came as a substitute, a 19-year old boy who ten minutes later begin the run from 60 yards out for the 'goal of the century'. Beating 8 players

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singlehandedly including goalkeeper, this little boy from Rosario, Argentina sent the stadium into frenzy. The crowd erupted and thus began an era where the chants of 'Messi.... Messi.... Messi.... Messi' became the new normal in world of football.

Suffering from Growth Hormone Deficiency, Lionel Messi was rejected in his young age by many clubs in Argentina due to short height. However he acted as if it were impossible to fail and proved his mettle and after winning the Fifa World Cup 2022 secured his place among the gods of football. Today we will dive deep into 4 various dimensions of this adage and explore how our actions

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determine our success, what makes it "impossible to fail", is it same as being indifferent to outcome and the need of the hour.

Actions: Defining destiny

The decisions we take, path we choose or actions taken determines the outcome. The 'predeterminism' philosophy of everything being fixed and actions having no consequence doesn't apply on real world. The choices we make decide the destination we reach.

Importance of actions thus need to be held supreme and it is not just physical but emotional state of mind, the attitude towards that particular goal which play as factor in deciding

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outcome. The poem 'Invictus' by Ernest Henley rightly capture the essense.

"It matters not how strait the gate
How charged with punishment the scroll
I am the master of my fate
I am the captain of my soul"

Right Actions: Recepie for Immunity to failure

To become the master of your fate, actions should be such that makes it impossible to fail. This failure shouldn't be understood in terms of small setbacks or roadblocks that one encounters on his path. The failure is not being able to achieve the 'final goal' that one sets for himself.

Jack Ma, the founder of Alibaba was rejected by hundreds of company.

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He failed in college entrance exam. In one interview for KFC he was only candidate out of 24 applicants to be rejected. These setbacks didn't deter him and his 'never say no' attitude made him one of richest man of planet.

Thus being brave, confident and having single minded pursuit of goal ensure immunity to failure. Remember 'Sucess is not a destination but a journey'. Practise is another aspect of achievement we keep focusing on getting better everyday we will reach destination one day. The reason why Sachin Tendulkar became 'God of Cricket' & master of 'Straight Drive' shot was because he put in 100s of hours

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for that shot which is played within seconds of bowl being bowled. Thus making him impossible to fail.

Confidence in one's ability also ensures this as unless we back ourselves for being on right path, we may get lost in the woods. Albert Einstein held success is 1% Talent and 99% hard work. Hence hard work with confidence boosts our immunity to failure. Thomas Edison failed over 1000 times before finally being able to invent light bulb which today enlightens the whole world.

It is said 'fortune favours the brave' thus the harder we work, luckier we get. Sitting

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only on behalf of destiny is sure shot failure. Being brave and courageous is also required. A civil services or IIT-JEE aspirant should thus be goal oriented and not result oriented as mild setbacks in practise test should become a stepping stone for going further.

Is failure impossible!

Taking actions always doesn't mean being indifferent to the outcome and believing that success is guaranteed. If one becomes egoistic, ignorant of others opinion then acting doesn't mean you will be impossible to fail. Not owning up to mistakes & filling loopholes will surely sink the ship of your goals.

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The victory of USA against Russia during Cold War can be attributed to Gorbachev's policies of 'Sinatra doctrine', 'Perstroika' & 'Glasnost'. It weakened USSR's hold over its economy and allies which made the victory of USA inevitable. Hence taking right actions as per your understanding may lead to failure.

The issue here was lack of consultation, not being open to new ideas, not taking reforms by Gorbachev. Similarly if we continue with narrow mindset and not reforming the path to be taken, the failure is inevitable. The current global challenges like Terrorism ~~are~~ is due to such attitude.

USA was the mother who gave birth to

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terrorist organisation Al Qaeda & Taliban. Feeling invincibility, it finally backfired on them through September 11 attacks.

The right attitude in today's world

Ability is what one is good at, motivation defines what he will do and attitude determines how well he will do it. This recipe for success is the right attitude. One needs to keep moving forward, Martin Luther King once said,

"If you can't fly, run
If you can't run, walk
If you can't walk, crawl
But whatever you do, you
must always move forward"

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To bring new innovations in today's world for solving food scarcity, water scarcity, climate change, etc. require us to act in a way to make failure impossible so that humanity succeed. We need to develop resilience and get up again and again. Rather than being sad of not achieving goal, we need to be happy of how far we reached.

To sum up in this discussion we understood how taking actions is important for success. What actually matters is taking right actions for being master of your fate. The impossibility of failure becomes

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reality & your f. destiny kneels down before you if you have the right attitude to learn from mistake and keep working on them.

Just like that little boy from Rosario, we need to keep pushing and have faith in ourself to make this world our admirer and become immortal on the pages of history!