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खण्ड–A / Section-A

Q.1 If you look into someone's face long enough, eventually you feel that you are looking into yourself.
यदि आप किसी के चेहरे को काफी देर तक देखते हैं, तो अंततः आपको महसूस होता है कि आप अपने भीतर ही देख रहे हैं।

Q.2 We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.
हम उस बच्चे को आसानी से क्षमा कर सकते हैं जो अंधेरे से डरता है; जीवन की वास्तविक त्रासदी तब होती है जब लोग रोशनी से डरते हैं।

Q.3 It is the province of knowledge to speak and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.
बोलना ज्ञान का क्षेत्र है और श्रवण करना बुद्धि का विशेषाधिकार है।

Q.4 Drop the question what tomorrow may bring, and count as profit every day that fate allows you.
यह प्रश्न छोड़ दें कि कल क्या हो सकता है, और हर उस दिन को लाभ के रूप में गिनें जो भाग्य आपको अनुमति देता है।

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Q2. We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.

A casual day on the outskirts of Delhi. Children are back from school, toiling the roads, playing in the dawn. Elder men, tired of their daily work stand talking below the street light.

The children in dark and men under light hear a scream. It was poor Sakshi who was being thrashed & stabbed by her boy-friend.

Little children, afraid of such a dark cruel crime & ignorant about societal responsibilities rush to their homes. However, the grown men, who are well aware about good samaritanship, stand as mere spectator of this horrific crime, afraid of doing the right thing of stopping the boy.

Result of such cowardice by grown men was MORDER of Sakshi, a incident that shook the conscience of Nation, A TRAGEDY!

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The above instance from Shabaaz Dairy area of Delhi aptly exemplifies the topic, "We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of dark, but real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of light."

This essay is an humble attempt to highlight the consequences of ignorant behaviour by grown up's, the reason for such behaviour & steps to ensure men ~~are~~remain unafraid of light.

Before delving into the topic, let us look at what terms 'dark' & 'light' mean. Darkness can be interpreted as ignorance or lack of knowledge or some unchartered waters. Light, on the other hand, is knowledge or truth. or the right thing.

Human life from birth to death, from childhood to oldage is a continuous journey of march from unknown to known, from darkness to light, as one unravels the mysteries of life with experience.

This makes it normal for a child to be afraid of darkness and hence it becomes natural for one to forgive such ignorance due to lack of experience.

Moreover, forgiving a child for his lack of awareness paves way for development and gives scope for learning, as unforgiving punishment can stunt moral progress.

This can be exemplified

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through 'New born India' in 1947, which decided to travel the uncharted waters of democracy. It made many mistakes in the darkness of democracy, but forgiving these mistakes led India towards light of freedom.

This shows that a child can be easily forgiven for being afraid of darkness. But, what about ~~a~~ Men who are afraid of light?

Men afraid of light shows ignorance despite awareness, lack of knowledge & wisdom despite its availability.

Plato's Allegory of Caves best showcases this scenario where grown men in a cave, sit with their backs facing mouth of cave, considering shadows on wall to be reality.

Such ignorance can stem from having no idea about true knowledge and following some false mirrage as source of knowledge. People following fake Godmen or Baba's in name of religion & spirituality highlights this phenomenon of ignorance and being afraid of light.

Moreover, with growing age come many responsibilities that act as a veil and men start getting afraid of doing right thing due to the fear of consequences. Many common people suffering ill of corrupt, yet not complaining, shows this.

However, such fear of

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light, cowardice due to consequences leads to many tragedies in society and human life.

Firstly, when men are afraid of speaking up & showing / throwing light on wrongdoings, it strengthens the evil doer & leads to banality of evil as,

"Only thing required for evil to triumph is for virtuous men to do nothing."

This can be seen through phenomenon of "Criminalization of Politics" where number of MP's with criminal cases has increased from 26% to 43% in last 10 years.

Secondly, being afraid of light / truth, prevents an individual from performing his/her duty. Arjuna's fear of fighting with his own family was preventing him from performing his 'Kshatriya Dharma'. It was only on Lord Krishna's divine intervento that his fear was subdued & a fearless warrior born.

Thirdly, being afraid of light also leads to a tragedy of manmade crisis. It can be seen from example of grown up India, as a nation, in late 80's, where it was afraid of economic reforms, that was the only light at end of tunnel of economic crisis. Despite knowing this, the fear of reform led to delay & ultimately Balance of Payment crisis in 1991.

lastly, knowing the right thing, yet ignoring it and being afraid of change can lead to destruction. The humanity today faces the issue of Climate change that originates from our ignorance of the issue & lacksadical approach in adopting ecofriendly practices.

The above discussion, highlights how real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of light. Now, one might wonder what happens when men embrace light and ~~through~~ throw away their cowardly behaviour?

Such embracement of light helps in eliminating the darkness in society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, is one such example, where his struggle to follow the light & do the right thing led to abolition of

Sati in 1829.

Similary, when India grew out of its fear of economic reforms, it embraced the light of globalization that has helped India become world's 3rd largest economy in PPP terms.

However, this path from being afraid to that of embracing light is not a cakewalk & one faces various challenges.

First and foremost challenge before anyone is 'knowing what is true light'. In today's age of infodemics, finding true knowledge is truely a challenging task.

Next, adapting & embracing light and tracing the journey from ignorance to knowledge is difficult as it requires one to break old prejudices and adjust to new painful light of truth, ~~A~~ metaphor aptly described in Plato's allegory.

Nonetheless, these challenges can be resolved by inculcating the value of courage to ensure one does the right thing fearlessly, and the value of curiosity & equity that ensures one traces the journey towards finding true knowledge.

Further, the philosophy of stoicism has certain valuable advices like "Amor Fati" (embrace your fate) with courage instead of being afraid of consequences. It can help get out of fear of light and ensure a fearless quest towards light.

To conclude, it can be said that ignorance or lack of knowledge out of naivity is admissible, but ~~ignorance~~ willfull ignorance is a sin. A sin that can not just harm a human, but all humanity. Hence, such a sin should be avoided at any cost and we should trace the journey that our vedas have traced for us in form of -

"Astoma Sadgamaya,
Tamsoma Jyotirgamaya,
Mrityorma Amrutamgamaya"

(From unrighteousness, to righteousness,
From darkness to light,
From immorality to morality).

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खण्ड–B / Section-B

Q.5 Truth, like a torch, the more it is shook, it shines.
सत्य, मशाल की तरह है, इसे जितना अधिक हिलाया जाता है, यह उतना ही चमकता है।

Q.6 Art is I; science is We.
कला मैं है; विज्ञान हम है।

Q.7 Only the dead have seen the end of the war.
केवल मृतकों ने ही युद्ध का अंत देखा है।

Q.8 Act as if it were impossible to fail.
कार्य ऐसे करें जैसे कि विफल होना असंभव ही था।

Q.8. ACT AS IF IT WERE IMPOSSIBLE TO FAIL

Imagine standing on the strikers end, in a jam packed Wankhede stadium. The nation is has hit pause as it is the World Cup final. The crowd of lakhs is silent, with most hands folded, praying for your performance.

You, are facing one

of the world's best bowlers with just 2 balls in hands & 5 runs to score.

Imagine the pressure that would build up on you, as all the ~~ka~~ nations hopes are in your hands.

Under such a stressful condition, anyone would have faltered, but not the person, on strike. He was none other than "Captain Cool", M.S. Dhoni.

As the bowler took pace, Dhoni kept his calm, treated it like any other ball & hit it hard to the long on, & it was a SIX!

The crowd went wild,

उम्मीदवारों को
इस भाग में
लिखना मना है।
Candidates
must not
write on
this margin

"India lifts the worldcup in style", exclaimed the commentator.

This incident highlights us how acting with confidence & acting as if it were impossible to fail, can actually leads to success.

This essay is a critical analysis of why it is necessary to act with confidence, the challenges associated with it, its corelation with success and a effort to vouch for such unshakable attitude.

Throughout our lives, we all have heard that positive thinking is the most fundamental ingredient for success. Right from Kabir's Doha-

"Man ka hara, hara; Man ka jeeta, jeeta" to modern day ideas like "Impossible itself says I am Possible". we are bombarded with ideas that promote positive thinking.

But, seldom do we realise that positive thinking is just part of the game. What actually matters is action, for thoughts without action is nothing but empty rhetoric. We all know of such a friend who has new business idea every time you meet her/him, but does nothing about it.

This makes it crucial to realising that along with positive thinking we also need to act as if it is impossible to fail.

Such action breeds

confidence, which further inspires action, leading to a positive spiral towards success. A person's fitness journey is its best testament. When a person starts working out and takes action, she/he starts to see changes which further motivates them.

Moreover, acting with such unshakable attitude can lead to weakening of enemy's morale. The Spartan war strategy of fitting with utmost confidence despite of poor resources is a case in point. It was their attitude that attacked first and conquered the enemy's mind even before the war began, making victory inevitable.

Further, it doesn't

just weaken the enemy but also helps up the morale of one's own team. Kapil Dev's "Never Give up" attitude and his actions of giving his 100% to every game, helped transform the skeptics within team, ultimately leading to 1984 world cup win, an unimaginable achievement, for that time.

Acting as if it is impossible to fail also helps keep the noise out, both external and internal. Kobe Brayant, a legendary basketball player, famous for his Mamba mentality, used this strategy of acting as if he is king of world before game. This helped him win games singlehandedly against legends like Michael Jordan and

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also taste success on days when he had 104°F flu.

Now one might wonder, such confident action can guarantee them success, but that would be a faulty & incomplete inference to draw.

While acting with confidence is a steping stone towards success, it has its own challenges & limitations.

The first & foremost limitation is the fact that world is full of uncertainties, an argument best put forward by Nicolas Taleb in his recent book "Black Swan". He holds that despite all preperations and performances, there will be some factors that are out of our.

control. Recent COVID pandemic is one such example that interrupted the confident strides of Indian economy towards a $5 trillion economy.

Secondly, sometimes acting as if one is infalliable can lead to arrogance and overconfidence which can have detremental effects. The world is not unknown to such leaders with inflated ego's and misplaced agendas, like Hitler, causing destruction, devastation and death.

Thirdly, it should also be noted that though actions help, it is a precondition that these actions should be in right direction, for "One cant expect roses by planting babool seeds".

Along with these limitations there are certain challenges as well that hamper one from acting with confidence.

The primary challenge is the internal demons that one has to face. These include lack of confidence and self-believe, self-doubt etc.

The secondary challenge are external critics, borrowed negativity that can shake one's confidence & lead to imposter syndrome. The taunts of relatives & neighbours is not a new thing for us Indians.

However, there is no challenge without a solution. These roadblocks in one's confident thoughts and actions can be cleared by following steps.

Firstly, inculcation of Growth Mindset. Dr. Carole Dweck, in her book "Mindset" describes it as an attitude of faith in one's ability to achieve a task or goal.

Secondly, we need to develop the attitude of "getting back stronger". The famous quote from movie Rocky summarizes it aptly-

"It doesn't matter how hard you hit, what matters is how you get back, when you are hit the hardest".

Thirdly, with all the positivity and confidence in the world, what we also need is

Intellectual Humility, acknowledgement of the fact that there are certain things out of our control & only thing that we can control is our actions.

To conclude, it can be said that while acting as if it is impossible to fail is not the only ingredient that ensures success, it is the most crucial one, for it acts as the fire, the flame on which the reciepe of success or victory is cooked. This attitude has been beautifully put forth by William Henley in his poem INVICTUS

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as pit from pole to pole.
I thank whatever god may be,
For my unconquerable soul.

उम्मीदवारों क
इस भाग मे
लिखना मना
Candidate
must not
write on
this margi

It matter not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the captain of my soul,
I am the master of my fate."

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