

खण्ड-A / Section-A

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- Q.1 Reason has always existed, but not always in a reasonable form.
तर्क सदैव अस्तित्व में रहा है, परंतु हमेशा युक्तियुक्त रूप में नहीं।
- Q.2 The opposite of poverty is not wealth.
गरीबी की विपरीत स्थिति केवल दौलत होना नहीं है।
- Q.3 To forgive is to set a prisoner free and to discover that the prisoner was you.
क्षमा करने का अर्थ है अपने भीतर के एक कैदी को मुक्त करना और यह पता लगाना कि वो कैदी आप ही थे।
- Q.4 A man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd.
जो व्यक्ति ऑर्केस्ट्रा का नेतृत्व करना चाहता है उसे भीड़ से मुँह मोड़ लेना चाहिए।

To forgive is to set a prisoner free
and to discover that the prisoner
was you.

"Weak can never forgive, to forgive
is the quality of brave" - MK Gandhi.

The above quote highlights the
virtue of 'forgiveness'. It highlights
that it takes immense courage to
forgive and let go of things.

Gandhi ji also said that forgiveness
has to be in words as well as
thoughts. Only when there is no
emotion of hatred or revenge, there
comes actual forgiveness.

After exploring Gandhi's idea of forgiveness, let us now turn to our 'forgiveness - prisoner relationship'.

The phrase seems to build a connection between the two. Let us find out what the connection is.

But, first let us understand the meaning of the words: 'Forgiveness' and 'prisoner'.

The Idea of Forgiveness.

Forgiveness does not mean 'It's okay!'. It takes a lot more to forgive. It is about 'moving on' and not letting the 'past hold you on' from moving forward. Those who remain in past can never forgive. That is forgiveness requires to be in 'present'.

Forgiveness does not mean 'to forget'. Our brain can never forget what it experienced. It remains there even though sub-consciously, but 'it does'.

Rather forgiveness is to let go of the vengeful emotions attached to those experiences.

Forgiveness is not about starting afresh. Rather it is about building upon what is already there. It is to learn from past mistakes and not repeating them.

Having looked at the idea of forgiveness, let us now turn to our second subject matter: Prisoner.

The idea of Prisoner.

Who is the prisoner? Is it the other person? No, rather the prisoner is me myself. Why is it that so?

When we hold 'ill feelings' for others and decide not to forgive them or not talk to them; we expend ourselves in the process. We put a part of our energy in those experiences; keep thinking about what could have been better; or

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how we could have avoided it. We do not realise that we can never turn the clock. We can never go back beneath the same roof. We become slave of our ill thoughts. This binds us and thus we become the prisoner.

Hence, now we know that it is necessary to forgive to let ourselves free. Let us now look at what forgiveness leads to.

FORGIVENESS : what it contributes to?

Nelson Mandela in his 'Walk to Freedom' wrote that, he realised that while he walks towards the gate of his freedom, he has to forgive the atrocities he faced. For if he doesn't do that, he will never actually be free. What this example shows is that Forgiveness leads to 'rising above self'.

When we forgive, we do not
discriminate. Our ego does not come
under way and we treat everyone
equally. This forgiveness guided
Nelson Mandela and he worked
both for the blacks and the whites in
South Africa. This was his freedom
from being a prisoner of injustice.

Our 'National Freedom Struggle'
teaches us the best contribution of
forgiveness. Gandhi ji's idea of
'Satyagraha' rests upon non-violence
and truth. He talked about
forgiving the wrongdoers and not
mutilating the feelings of others.
This idea implies that forgiveness
leads to peace. When we
forgive, we create room for peace,
both around us and within us.
This peace strengthens bonds and
brings emotional stability.

Forgiveness builds a good character. This is because when we forgive, we inculcate positive thoughts. These thoughts affect our mindset and thus our character. A good character brings in virtues like benevolence. It guides one in working towards the society and becoming emotionally sensitive towards the social issues.

Lastly, forgiveness leads to happiness, contentment and joy. Thus, forgiving is beneficial, to self and to society. Let us now look at another side of the coin 'Forgiveness'.

When we say we 'forgive', do we ask who we have to forgive? While it is important others, it becomes all the more important to forgive our own self.

Forgiving self.

As human beings, we commit mistakes. We do not know many things. At this point, it becomes important we tell ourselves that 'It's OKay'. Forgiving self leads to growth. This is because we learn. Let us look at it.

The experience of our Economy teaches us this. Today, when the world is witnessing slowdown, Indian Economy stands resilient. How did this happen? This is a result of our efforts of continuously forgiving ourselves as an economy. We started out as an inward looking, capital-intensive industrialisation, bureaucratic controlled economy. Soon, after 30 years of growing with 'The Hindu Rate of growth' we realised that we made a mistake. We learned from it and made the required changes. And now today, we are looking forward to our 'AMRIKAAAL', where we become a developed country.

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Thus, forgiveness leads to growth. The previous example also teaches us forgiveness is about 'second chances'. All of us deserve a second chance. The best example of this is the second chance given to us by our 'Mother Earth'. Nature is reminding us everyday of our mistakes and giving us an opportunity to mend them. So, far we have tried, with efforts like 'Montreal Protocol', 'Paris Agreement'. But the efforts have to continue to realise the goal of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

So, we know that forgiving self is needed. Let us look at what happens if we don't forgive.

Feeding hatred leads to destruction. This destruction was very much evident in world wars, Battles of supremacy etc.

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holding on to hatred makes us 'narrow minded'. This becomes evident from ideologies of communalism, Regionalism. We put one section's interest over the nation and in the process threaten national security. The idea of terrorism finds its root base in hatred. Thus, as a society also it becomes important that we forgive the communal skirmishes and become broad minded in building 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

However, forgiveness entails a cost. It can be taken for granted. This would mean that the evils continue. Let us look at it.

Forgiveness: Its cost and what's needed.

Sometimes, forgiveness can be misunderstood as weakness. Here the wrongdoer continues with the evils.

In such cases, we have to collectively dwell upon the concept of human dignity.

Karl Marx's theory teaches us what happens when exploitation exceeds and impedes upon human dignity. He said that in a society, where labor are exploited, there will come a point when these laborers will rise in rebellion and establish a communist state for themselves. This came from the excessive exploitation of the capitalists. The example teaches us that human dignity has to be supreme.

When human dignity is trampled upon, it is justified to voice against the injustice. This explains the tide of feminism that is on rise. Women for ages have been subjugated and treated like 'properties'. This violates their dignity. And therefore, it is justified if they choose not to forgive and instead decide to rise against injustice in order to liberate themselves.

having looked at all the aspects of the 'Forgiveness - Prisoner relationship', let us explore the modern relevance of this phase.

Today, with rising individualism, reduced levels of tolerance, reduced concern for others, the world is witnessing issues of conflicts, threats and consumption. The world is witnessing 'value crises'. Amidst this value crises, it becomes important that the right values are inculcated. This will ensure that the world grows and lives in harmony.

Thus, we now sum up and embrace that we as humans understand what forgiveness means. It is only when we bring it into action, we can be really free. We need to realise that the world is ever changing and the time is passing by. If we do not move with time, we will lag behind.

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खण्ड-B / Section-B

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- Q.5 International Trade is a good indicator of National Security.
अंतर्राष्ट्रीय व्यापार राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा का एक अच्छा सूचक है।
- Q.6 It is not that we use technology, we live technology.
ऐसा नहीं है कि हम प्रौद्योगिकी का उपयोग करते हैं, हम प्रौद्योगिकी को जीते हैं।
- Q.7 There is more to life than simply increasing its speed.
जीवन में केवल अपनी गति बढ़ाने के अलावा और भी बहुत कुछ है।
- Q.8 Nature is neither a servant nor a master, but a necessary partner.
प्रकृति न तो सेवक है और न ही स्वामी, बल्कि एक आवश्यक सहभागी है।

there is more to life than simply
increasing its speed.

"Why do I need to read and study
this word?", I said.

"To build a life", my mother replied.

"What is this life?", I said.

And my mother replied, this is the
LIFE of 'happiness', 'contentment', 'joy',
'success', 'stability' and 'health'.

So, my mother interpreted life like this,
let us look if the meaning of
life has always been this?, has it
changed? If it did, then how? And
where do we head from here?

IDEA OF LIFE : ITS EVOLUTION

The farthest we know in history of human existence, it is in the palaeolithic Age. We know of early men as hunters and gatherers. They lived on subsistence. This shows their idea of life was confined to ensuring existence. Thus the life was slow.

Few thousand years later, when agriculture evolved, the pattern of life changed. It became more sedentary and society became organised into different classes. Later these classes took shape of varnas in the Rig Vedic period. In this era, life was about animal and human sacrifices, rituals, wars to protect the 'Dana'. This shows that there attached a meaning of occupations and subjugations.

Fast forward to 18th century, there was felt the need of industrialisation. Needs became more and diverse and the society divided into classes of capitalists and labourers. Life became about profits for some and more survival for others. That is, life became more complex.

Fast forward to modern day, life has become about consumerism, greeds and desires. These desires and greeds bring harm to nature and mental peace. This was propounded by Buddha when he said that the world is full of sufferings and the root cause is our greed. Modern day life is about competing against each other and in the process losing peace. It has become about capturing more and more resources thus destructing nature.

Thus, the previous discussion implies that as we increased the speed, life became more and more complex.

Let us now look at, what this increased speed that we add to our life leads to.

Increasing Speed : What it implies?

The increased speed while on the one hand brought comfort to some, it brought discomfort to others.

My increased wants and needs, necessitated that the society looks for alternative sources of energy. So, we moved to atomic energy. While I sit at home enjoying uninterrupted power supply; I forget that somewhere far the children around Jaduguda mine are born diseased and remain so for life. Thus, increased speed for me implies reduced speed for someone else.

My culture of communism, though on one hand leads to increased demand in the economy and therefore increased investments; but does this growth guarantees equality? Oxfam report, 'The India story: survival of the richest' highlights that top 1% in India control 40% of the wealth. Thus, while increased speed (investments) created profit for some, but led to increased inequality for others.

Increased speed of National ambitions leads to rivalry for which smaller nations pay the price. This is evident in the changing geopolitical scenario, increased militarisation of the Indo-Pacific. All this worsens the global warming and climate change in some way and the price is to be paid by small developing countries. Thus National ambitions for one leads to exploitation of others

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Thus, we looked at how adding speed to life leads to injustice, inequality and exploitation. However, sometimes adding up speed might be necessary. For example, while dealing with a crises. A good example of this is Covid 19 and the 'Atmanirbhar package' that it necessitated. This increased pace helped ramp up healthcare, industry and business. But this also led to overheating of the economy once the covid went down and thus led to the 'inflation cycle'.

Thus, so far we gave evidence that life has to go at its pace. This highlighted that there are other things that add meaning to life and therefore we need to slow down. How do we do this? Let's find out. Let us also look at why do we need to slow down.

SLOWING DOWN : Embracing life

"slow and steady wins the race : the Rabbit and Tortoise story" teach us two important things. One, going at your own pace brings success and second, it makes you other focused.

We need to slow down for creating justice in the society. The world is one family, what happens in one part definitely impacts the whole world. Arctic amplification will not impact just Arctic but the entire globe till Antarctica.

Therefore, we need to slow down and build a sustainable future. This is because we are not the owners of this Earth. We have inherited it and will have to pass it on. So we need to slow down so that all generations get to embrace life to the maximum.

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While slowing down is important for the entire world; at the micro level it is all the more important for an individual. Our life has become so mechanical that what we know of is just gyms, cafes, clubs, movies etc. This is the modern meaning of happiness.

Therefore, when we slow down, we experience peace. We realise happiness is sitting with family, caring for the nature, caring for self. This brings stability and positive thoughts. We realise what we want and what is meant for us. We decide our own path to success and assume all our own definitions of it. And in the process, we embrace life, nature and all other creatures around us.

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thus, we looked at how slowing down can lead us to appreciate life. Buddha once said, "let's rise and be grateful for what we learned, and if we didn't learn a lot today, atleast we learnt a little; and if we didn't learn ~~least~~ ~~to~~ a little, atleast we didn't fall sick; and if we fell sick, atleast we didn't die. so, let's be grateful."

Therefore, for Buddha life is about gratitude and feeling thankful to the small things in life.

But, having come this far, the life we have today is complex. We need to ask can we really slow down? What new meaning can we find of life and how do we do that? Let us see.

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A NEW MEANING?

Adding a new meaning would not necessarily mean turning back in time. We cannot do that. In the world of AI, quantum computing, big data sets, turning back is not a viable option. So we will have to find a new way.

The answer lies in our culture. It teaches us to limit self needs and work despite what the results are (Nishkama karma). This is our solution. The Life movement is about toning down needs and becoming 'pro-planet people'. This creates justice for the society and for the environment as well.

For the human values, our education system has to be re-directed. This is where the 'Panchakosha system' of education comes in.

Thus a new meaning lies in changing our habits and attitude. When we do this, we find the real meaning of life. Because a life at right pace leads to inclusion and growth for all. And this brings happiness to the society.

"So, now that you explained what life is, I will need to work more to achieve all those things: happiness, success etc", I asked.

"No, it is not like that. We looked at how we can achieve all of it by adding a new meaning and for that we just need to slow pace and embrace life. That's it my child!", said my mother.