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खण्ड-A / Section-A

उम्मीदवारों को
इस मार्ग में
लिखना नहीं है।
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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...

“Seek any punishment for Ashwatthama and it shall be delivered,” asked Arjuna to Draupadi after Ashwatthama killed all her sons in Mahabharate. Despite the unbearable agony of loss of her sons, she chose to forgive Guna Dronacharya's son,

for, she did not want to be enslaved by the chains of revenge and anger. Besides, she could do no harm to Aruna's wife, who, she believed, would go through same despair if Ashwathama was killed.

Ethics of a 'Just War' aside, fallibility is an essentially human trait. We all err at times and our mistakes may have grave economic and socio-psychological implications for others. The ability to bear the consequences, no matter what, decides the strength of our character. When we cut off the shackles of revenge, anger and reparation, we feel relieved from a self-imposed burden of psychological discomfort. What is forgiveness after all? More importantly why should we forgive the culprits? Will it lead to anarchy and chaos? How does ^{an} individual

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and community's peace, stability and harmony gets affected in a society that values retribution and punishment over forgiveness? And how to tread on the arduous journey from sorrow to forgiveness and ultimate liberty? Let's examine!

"To err is to human and to forgive, divine", goes the age old maxim. Mistakes are inevitable. To forgive means to place yourself in other person's shoes and realize the 'involuntariness' involved in the action. In a world where we carry cartload of fragile egos, forgiveness means pardoning the offender for his actions and thus liberating him of guilt and unclear conscience, and rewarding yourself 'inner peace'. Thus forgiveness is not an instrument of weak, but a bold decision to put aside the folly. The

forgiveness is not granted for utilitarian benefits or to take the moral high ground, but for its own sake. It's what a noble man would do. But nonetheless, it offers practical advantages and paves the path to eternal happiness, or 'EUDAIMONIA', to use Aristotelean construct.

Hitopadesha fables make amply clear that forgiveness is the key to lasting and pious friendships (well established in its Book 1 called MITRALABHA). Forgiveness, Kant argued, frees us from 'self-imposed tutelage' and enlightens us. We must go a step further and argue that it enlightens and liberates not just ourselves, but also the erring person of guilt and enables their transformation to a wiser and empathetic being of care.

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in point would be Lord Rama's return from 14 year exile. He was banished from Ayodhya on Kaikeyi's insistence and yet on return, while Kaikeyi feared hostility, he touched her feet before his own mother Kausalya's, and said that there was nothing to forgive, as he left the burden of exile in the jungle itself. After this Kaikeyi transformed to a radically different being.

Economically also, forgiveness makes great financial sense. Realizing that government may get accelerated revenues and save itself from tedious legal battles, Ministry of Finance launched 'SABKA VISHWAS - Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme' to enable those who did not pay taxes for any reason to pay the amount after due date and avoid penal action. Socio-culturally, forgiveness

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forms the bedrock of tolerance and plurality in a society. Moplahs of Kerala remember the atrocities they were subjected to, by the zamindars (mostly Hindus) in late 19th and early 20th c, but they live in harmony today celebrating Sivali with as much zeal (if not greater), as Eid. Sikhs remember the injustice meted out to them by Canadian regime during infamous Kamagatamane incident in 1913-14, but still form a major community in today's Canada, contributing to their economy and society well.

Forgiving is not forgetting. We must learn from our vulnerabilities and aspire for resilience and yet, forgive the sinner. As Gandhi said, "Hate the sin, not the sinner". Thus despite amoral 1962

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war, Doklam crisis (2017) and Galwan episode (2020), China remains India's largest trade partner. Rather than launching a war to end all wars, we chose peace and forgiveness, while strengthening our defense, to avoid trauma in our minds, instability in society and chaos in the region.

Nelson Mandela's 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' immediately after end of colonial rule in South Africa reflected aspirations of a people to set themselves free from horrors of Apartheid and allow oppressors/wrongdoers to live in the same society harmoniously after they realized their felony of racial discrimination. It was Buddhist virtue of *karma* and universal virtue of forgiveness that Buddha displayed, which transformed

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tyrannous Angulimaël into a righteous being. Having understood how forgiveness is an internally and externally liberating tool, let's examine how its absence may affect us.

Displaying anger and seeking revenge is based on the belief that exacting individual / community / nation must suffer for the committed wrong. It represents a myopic view to harm others as a means of giving pleasure to ourselves. But history has ample evidence to show that such a view only promotes enmity & illwill and fails to grant lasting contentment. Post Hutu-Tutsi massacre / genocide in Rwanda, both tribes have continued to engage in never ending warfare and peace eludes the region. Current Russo-Ukrainian war is a reflection of a country's aspirations to avenge breaking

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of age old ties. Only 'moral competence' can enable the aggressor to realize that it was the prisoner itself - to its selfish desire of autonomy. It was Achilles' wrath that made the Trojan War what it was.

Forgiving is difficult to begin with. Anger is only natural to see our close ones in pain because of actions of others. But gradually, we realize that anger is like holding a hot coal in our hand and expecting the other person to get hurt. Training our mind to forgive is like walking on 'hierarchy of needs', as expounded by Psychologist Maslow - When we get 3 meals a day and feel secure, we seek companionship and love. Gradually, we try to break free from enticements of greed and bodily pleasure as our

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Awareness improves. Self realization and a moral compass in heart enables one to be his 'own light', or 'APPO DEEPO BHAVA', to use Buddha's phrase.

Rising developmental levels reflect our 'progressiveness', as displayed by many developed nations' abolition of 'Capital punishment'.

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. All our sorrows originate from

Ego-centrism. Forgiveness paves the way to socio-centrism and highest order public and personal good. It may be difficult, but it's imperative for our own freedom. And as Gandhiji said,

"Weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

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While Draupadi did order Ashwatthama's
 gem on the forehead to be taken away, so as
 to set an example and limit voluntary
 selfish acts of oppression, she did forgive, for
 this is what a 'moral man' (or woman) would
 do. In a nutshell, forgiveness is not just
 a faint hope for us, it's an emergent
 necessity for us to steer clear of the winds of
 mental burden and psychological slavery.
 At last, I must argue that,

Forgiveness is most superior of
 all liberties. In forgiveness,
 there lies freedom!

— * —

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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।

Nature is neither a servant nor a master, but
a necessary partner.

"This last chapter may have given us the impression that man is the ultimate triumph of evolution that all these years of development have had no purpose but to put him on Earth. There's no scientific evidence whatever, to support such an argument, and to suppose that our stay here would be any longer than that of the Dinosaur!"

— David Attenborough
(Life on Earth)

Deplorable realities of Thar desert expanding at rate of 12000 ha. per year, global temperatures rising by 0.28°C /decade and sea level rising by 1.2 mm /year bring these words of Attenborough to mind. Evolution of life on Earth in general and humans in particular, is a saga of a species trying to bow down to natural forces as a master and gradually aspiring to tame them for self-interest. The metamorphosis of a slave to a master had its reasons, but perception of evolutionary excellence to have emerged as 'master-species' is a chimera. The key to prolonged existence of man on this planet is realization that relationship of nature and man is of partners and not as thesis and anti-thesis or vice-versa. Let's ponder!

'Environment' denotes everything outside human skin - flora, fauna, air, soil, water

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and sunlight. These biotic and abiotic components coupled with inexplicable endogenetic, exogenetic and other mysterious forces may be called as 'Nature'. Ever since *Homo habilis* emerged on this planet, he has tried to fight these forces, perceptibly as inferior. From the harsh ice ages (Pleistocene era) to fractures on Earth's crust; from Ganga's 'capture' of Yamuna from paleo-saraswati (shifting courses of rivers), to Kosi's flooding of Bihar (hence the epithet 'Sorrow of Bihar'), man was essentially rendered helpless by Nature. What could he do after all?

As a coping mechanism, to accept his 'second grade status', man began to worship nature, as evident from 'Mother Goddess' terracotta figurines and 'Pashupati Seal' of Indus Valley Civilization. He took to religion - Emergence of Zeus, Olympus and Persephone in Greco-Roman mythology and Indra, Agni, Vayu gods in Hindu mythology is but a manifestation of man's acceptance of nature as a master. But soon the tables were to turn.

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Man began to assert his authority, first as frantic equal and gradually as dominant master, raping Nature of its resources, exploiting them beyond nature's 'carrying capacity' and thus pushing them to exhaustion. If Dodo, forest owl, wood's cycad and Stellar's sea cow are only a part of folk lore today, due credit must be given to this assertiveness and 'apparent control' of man over nature. We will pass on coal, petroleum and natural gas to our future generations, but not as geological reserves, but as epitaphs of our conventional transport.

Rachel Carson has beautifully expounded impact of pesticides like DDT on nature. While man thought he became master of the agrarian fields, he essentially fuelled the process of Biomagnification - cumulative accumulation of non biodegradable chemicals up the food

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chain. Driven by greed and backed by technology, we became so blind that we were willing to use some humans as 'tools' to further our advancement, while exploitation of nature, of course remained the primary aim.

We got Gold from Amazon, so what if Yanomami tribes had to pay the price? we got Palm oil, so what if Dayaks of Borneo are disappearing into oblivion. But if last millions of years of evolution are any indication, Nature emerged as the greater equalizer at the end - it sees no gender, caste, class or creed and its response to apparent mastery of man was quite furious.

Man built 3 Gorges dam and Koyna dam as engineering marvels, putting immense overload on Earth Surface. Nature responded by Seismicity, and Earthquakes made the region vulnerable to evils of disaster. Man overused toxic chemicals and ozone depleting substances like

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Chlorofluorocarbons to cool the Nature's heat. Nature responded by giving skin cancers and reduced plant productivity due to high penetration of UV rays. Our atolls are disappearing, climate is changing and droughts increasing at rates never witnessed before, since Paleolithic age saw rise of 'modern man-primate'. Let's not be surprised if Jakarta disappears by 2050, (Bandung Institute of Technology Report). Should we accept our gloomy fast approaching end then?

Solution to this man-nature conflict has always been clear in our ethos, religions and cultures. Seers of Bhukla Yajurveda plead us to look at the nature with the eyes of a friend -

'Mitracayaham chakshushe sarvani
bhutani sameekshe'.

Guru Granth Sahib compares pavam (air) to guru (teacher), paani (water) to pita (father)

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and even to a mother. Jainism prohibits even minutest form of violence (Ahimsa) to any animal / plant to attain liberation and become a 'kevalin'.

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इन बातों में
विश्वास नहीं है।
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Nature, contrary to popular perception, is one of our most reliable partners. - During 1999 Supercyclone, hundreds were killed along Orissa coast, but only two people died in village Praharaipur of Odisha, thanks to 'mangroves' acting as the 'Sentinels of the coast'. Not just from security point-of view, nature is a trustworthy partner economically and socially too - ask Garhwalis and Bishnois. Chipko Andolan, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Silent valley movement - they all reflect the importance of natural resources for locals and tribals. The famous five 'F's' - food, fuel, fibre, fodder and fertilizer - sustain the livelihood of millions of tribals across India.

Realizing nature's role as a faithful partner,

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our Constitution makes put onus for protecting environment and safeguarding nature and wildlife on state itself (Art 48 & 51 of constitution). Besides, it's a fundamental duty of every citizen to protect nature as our partner. But nature knows no boundaries or borders. To curb illegal trafficking of wildlife trophies and other parts like horn of Rhinoceros, tusk of elephant and scales of Pangolin; and to conserve global biodiversity, all nations did come together in form of CITES and UN Convention on Biological Diversity, but their effective implementation is a sine qua non to protect natural and environmental integrity.

Kunming - Montreal Biodiversity framework & Sustainable Development Goals (2015-30) both address the issue of exploitation of natural resources and aim to restore and regenerate them for our own good. We must realize that there are ample resources on Earth for all of us to grow well, but overexploitation

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Would lead to intergenerational and intra-generational inequities that will only breed violence and forced migration (Eg.-rise of environmental refugees).

Friedrich Hegel argued that it takes 3 moves for a society to attain equilibrium - first two moves towards extremes and third to strike a balance (for instance, from exploitation of proletariat to violent revolution by workers and finally stability of equal society). Having swung to extremes of slave and master, let's shake hands with nature as partners. This calls for realization of 'Common but differentiated responsibilities & respective capabilities' by all of us.

Since Hippalus' discovery of monsoon winds in c. 45-46 AD, seasonal winds have helped us navigate and relish the resources of entire planet. It's our responsibility to drive the winds of partnership now. Scandinavian

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nations' model of 'sponge cities' to responsibly use our aquifers for a sustainable urban development can be a good start. In light of realistic admonition of Attenborough that we began with, I would like to conclude with my vision for 'Amritkaal' in the form of following 'Shubhashita' -

Geography has made us neighbours,

History has made us friends.

Economy has made us partners, and,

Necessity has made us allies.

Those whom God has so joined together,
let no man put asunder!

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