

खण्ड-A / Section-A

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

If you look into someone's face long enough, eventually you feel that you are looking into yourself

At the height of the cold war, the Iron wall had divided Europe into 2 blocs. When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in USSR, he adopted the reformative steps of glasnost and Perestroika. This allowed the people of Eastern bloc to peep through the Iron wall and visualise the lives of their

Western counterparts.

They could see the dichotomy where the one on the other side of the wall were living a prosperous life, could speak up their minds whereas they were confined to the chains of a rigid state rule, could hardly manage 2 meals a day.

This created an upheaval and thereby rounds of protest by people themselves against the unjust rule. This led to the famous 'Velvet revolution' and regime change across Eastern Europe and finally culminated to disintegration of USSR.

The above illustration aims to signify how looking at someone's face allows us to look at our own situation and enables us to understand the same and thereby take actions.

In this essay we shall first aim to decipher what 'face' signifies, then we shall see how it gives an opportunity to look within. We shall further see how looking

long enough is necessary yet not sufficient condition for self reflection. Finally we shall see how to ensure that this reflection be done better and can help others.

### One Face - Many stories

To begin with, we need to first decipher that what a Face signifies? What does looking at a face tell us?

It tells us many stories. It tells the stories of struggles an individual might have gone through across his/her lifetime. We can take the case of people of LABTQAT community. Their life depicts an experience of marginalisation, ostracisation and bullying.

We can also take the case of women who had faced wrath of patriarchy since the development of civilization. When a man looks at their female counterpart they can see how she had been confined to narrow domestic walls, amputated of her capabilities to reach highest potential, a victim of glass ceiling effect.

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A face also depicts a person's strength and weaknesses and allows to assess the same.

This is not only a possibility for humans but we can transcend the idea to societies and nations.

For instance, when India looks at USA, what does it reflect? It can see the technological progress, democracy, defence capabilities as strength and at the same time, populism, increasing alienation of its population as the weak points.

Moving ahead face not necessarily means a person, society or nation but also circumstances or situations that one may find oneself to be in. Victor Frankel during time of holocaust found himself to be confined in the prison of Auschwitz to be taken to gas chamber at any moment. That was the 'Face' he had to look into - The Face of death.

Face also signifies one's attitude towards life and hardships. When we see an 'ant' crawling and taking a grain across its back,

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it falls again and again and yet it moves back, takes up task and completes its ordeal. That is the 'Face of the ant'.

So, when we as an individual, society, nation, humanity look at the above faces, what does it render into? Does it just provide an opportunity to peep through other's experiences or it has a higher purpose?

A chance to glance within

When we look at someone else's situations, their struggles, their strength, their weakness, their attitude it gives us a benchmark. It further gives an opportunity to reflect our standing before them and thus in a way it helps us self introspect.

For instance, when France is witnessing the rising xenophobic tendencies, it may look at Indian model of secularism and thereby see what contradictions lie in its societal and legislative framework and thereby adopt changes.

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Similarly, looking at someone's face also allows us to gain strength, show courage that - "If he can do it, why can't I". In a way it allows an assessment of one's own strengths and weakness.

For instance, when Gandhiji led crusade against infallible empire it provided an opportunity to leaders like Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah to assess the strength of non violent satyagraha and fight the apartheid regime.

Additionally, looking at someone's face also provide a chance to rethink on how we if at all had been responsible for their situation. For instance, Raja Ram Mohan Roy crusade against sati started with his contemplation of how people like him and their silence were responsible for struggles of women.

An extension of the same, having assessed one's responsibility it also allows us to reflect on how our actions can henceforth alleviate

the sufferings of those who are miserable.  
Here we can take the cue of Gandhiji's  
Talisman and his prescription of how we  
should assess our action by scrutinising it  
from point of view that whether it will help  
the most vulnerable?

These scenarios discussed above provide a  
light on how seeing someone's face provides  
an opportunity to self-reflect. But our and  
about this, it also helps identifying our  
biases, perceptions, judgement of the person  
whom we see.

That is to say it helps in identifying  
our 'own identities' - what things have  
formulated our perceptions, we are a product  
of 'what type of thoughts?' and this gives  
an opportunity to question ourselves - the  
first step to mental evolution.

For example, Siddhartha Gautam always  
lived in luxury, he knew no miseries.  
One day he ventured into the oblivious world

where he came across - a sick man, a dead man and began reflecting of his own identity of a 'prince'. He could not bear with such a dichotomous world. He thus renounced all his luxuries and thus became Gautam Buddha - the enlightened one.

Finally, looking at someone's face also has a much greater and transcendental meaning and that can be linked our spiritual existence. Here, looking at someone signifies - oneness of everything - the state of entanglement - we can call it oneness of humanity. It allows to reflect not just within us but to reflect beyond boundaries of our existence.

For example, when we look at dead face it signifies the impermanence of our existence and how fragile we all are at hands of destiny. Further it gives us wisdom to follow maxim 'this too shall pass' during adversities and be a good companion to our fellow human beings.



Having discussed of what face signifies and how it provides opportunity to look within, we need to briefly also discuss, ~~whether~~ for how long we need to glance over the other and whether it is guaranteed formula for self-inspection?

How long to look?

Here we need to accept the fact that a superficial interaction does not good. That is to say in order to ponder on self by experience or face of other, we need to have pierced through the boundaries and looked within to understand truly the situation of the individual.

For example, B.R. Ambedkar or Jyotiba Phule had experienced the discrimination at hands of brahmins and other upper caste people. They had known 'face of struggle' and thus could lead the crusade against discrimination.

But having said that, looking long enough doesn't only confine to the narrow meaning of time, rather it also imbibes within it - 'degree of wisdom' a person holds.

Because, without wisdom to see through and reflect it is all waste.

For example, in the present state of crony capitalism as well as transactional relations, ad-agencies or businessmen consider people as customers. Similarly doctors also consider patients as customers so no matter how long enough they see their face, the struggles would still be invisible let apart reflection of oneself henceforth. Horkheimer has aptly termed this transition to 'one dimensional man'.

Thus, having discussed of span as well as wisdom to look to gain something it now brings us to final aspects of this journey that is -

Cultivating habits for better reflection -

Herein we can say that as individuals our value system needs to the foundational ground that is laden with integrity, courage, temperance, compassion as well as wisdom to find sense in experience of

others and thereby using it for reflecting on our own life and make it better - better not just for oneself but also for humanity.

Further, we need not chain our thoughts, by our judgement, biases when we see someone because that narrows our scope to learn. For instance, child's apprehensions with respect to USA yield it no success rather it can focus on learning the democratic values and thereby empowering its citizens.

We can also find motivation from great leaders as Swami Vivekananda and their life journey which can help us follow a similar path.

This can help us view everyone around us, everything around us as 'a lesson' and provide an opportunity to make ourselves better and be a better human and in Kautilyan words - achieve Yogshema.

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- 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।

Only the dead have seen the end of the war

"Putin has installed nukes in Belarus, is the world ready for a nuclear war?"  
read the headlines on the television. little  
Suiya asks her father - 'when will this war  
end?'  
Her father smiles and says - 'only those who  
died know!'

what did he mean? To decipher the same  
we need to understand the broader  
context of war. That we as human beings  
are in perpetual conflicts and thus  
only death brings an end to this conflict

because it ends our ability to take counter actions. Thus once death strikes, everything including the war ends. But we will also have to delve into the concept of death - Is only physical death leads to end of war or emotional, psychologically death as well.

Further, we need to counter this idea because living must and have the right to see peace and thus we need to explore that dimension of living in peace as well.

So firstly, we need to delve in the concept of war. Here war doesn't necessarily means war between nations. It means any sort of conflict that exists in our living manifestation.

Mankind in perpetual conflict -

To understand this state of conflictual relations between the people, we need to take cue of Lord Krishna who in one of his 'updhesa' to Arjun talks about the 3 gates to self destruction.

It is 'gate of anger', 'gate of ignorance', 'gate of hate'. Today mankind has opened all the three gates simultaneously and thereby we are witnessing every sort of conflict.

At individual levels, relations are turning superficial, the bond between partners, friends has shallowed. Conflict over petty issues creates knots in relations and this keeps on building up.

Further inability to ingrain the virtue of 'forgiveness' as well as compassion for other person keeps the conflict or so as to say state of war alive till death.

Similarly, at the level of society, we see conflicts between majority and minority. The recent conflictual situation in France over killing of an Algerian boy has engulfed the country. We also see the rise of xenophobia, discrimination against LGBTQAT community.

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Moving ahead, there is also conflict in ideologies today our type of economic system, type of governance system that is better. We can take the case of USA democracy versus Chinese authoritarianism. This thereby creates a conflictual relations between the two nations.

These conflicts as depicted above will see an end with death of society that is to say the 'ruin of the society' or 'death of country'. For example - the clash of ideology between USA and USSR that existed and fuelled the cold war ended with disintegration of USSR.

Wars or conflicts are not just confined by differences between individuals, societies, nations, it also exists between types of economies, war between human and environment.

Consider the case of conflict between feudal and capitalist system or capitalist and communist system. There was perpetual

conflict of subversion of one over the other. This conflict between capitalism and socialism is still continuing.

Further if we talk in terms of environment, we as human race have traded off environment for development. Environment by its alarming stimuli as environmental tragedies as Uttarakhand floods, Kerala floods aims to alert us but in vain.

Here we have largely explored the dimensions whereby there exists numerous conflicts and how death be it of individuals, societies, nations, ideologies etc. put an end to the same.

But death is not a physical manifestation.

Many meanings of death

We have already discussed how a physical end can stop a conflict and those who die finally see an end of war and those living have to fight yet other wars.

For eg: USSR died but USA is still at war with China.



Death can also mean emotional death, psychological death that is to say when person stops betting or becomes detached.

This further leads to end of war because person deliberately 'end of a life' within him of conflict. For example, in a relationship with much conflict, if an individual detaches himself from other person it renders him died - in terms of his existence in the relation and thus he can see end of conflict.

This gives a negative connotation of killing oneself emotionally but it may not necessarily be bad. Herein we can take help of Lord Krishna again and his theory of 3 gates.

These gates of anger, hate, ignorance dominated man's mind and that drove his actions. Once he closes these gates, he kills these negative emotions and thus his existence that was laden with

such emotions comes to an end. He gets a new life, new perspective. Thus this dead being will be able to see the end of war or conflict because he deliberately chooses to end it.

We can see the manifestation when we hear the story of Ashoka, who was once a ruthless king, killed innumerable people, made children orphans. But the battle of Kalinga killed his ruthlessness. He could see the end of war and thus ventured on a path of 'Dhamma'

Thus having discussed of different concept of death, we now need to venture into the idea of how the living can also see and end of war, how they can experience peace?

Living can see an end of war

Firstly, we need to understand that 'meta-narrative' created of perpetual conflict arises from our perspective of human

nature. We take Hobbesian view of human nature that man is selfish by nature and that creates a situation of "all against all".

Herein we need to shed this perception. We can see innumerable people who have lived on this earth who relentlessly worked for upliftment of humanity - be it Mother Teresa, Kailash Satyarthi or Bezwada Wilson.

This will give us a scope to follow positive virtues. Ingrain integrity, compassion, empathy for fellow human beings. Further nations need to shed their security dilemma and adopt what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru talked as Panchsheel of peaceful co-existence.

We need to also follow democratic values be it as a part of our relations to allow open communication, as a part of our society - to ensure multiculturalism and safeguarding rights of minorities,

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our nation - to provide opportunity for all its citizens to grow as well as world - to follow the principle of equality.

These democratic virtues can reduce the conflicts exponentially and allows us to be at peace with each other and cooperation.

We can take the case of cooperation with respect to climate change at international level by following CBDR principle, OSOWOG, Mission LIFE. Herein nations can come together, take up responsibilities and thereby reduce conflict.

We should also not forget in focussing on inclusive growth and sustainable development. This can help reduce our conflict with nature whereby we would develop while conserving. This will also create space for vulnerables as tribals etc to grow and thereby reduce their conflict with others unlike what happened in Nyaingiri.

These endeavours on our part can help  
fulfill the dream of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam  
and bring to life the old Indian saying -

"Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina  
Sarve Santu Niramayaha"

(let all beings be at peace  
let all be happy).

And thus timeing will also see an end to  
war and experience the bliss of  
peace.

