

खण्ड-A / Section-A

- Q.1 Little strokes fell great oaks.
छोटे - छोटे प्रयासों से बड़ी सफलता मिलती है।
- Q.2 Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers.
किसी व्यक्ति का मूल्यांकन उसके उत्तरों के स्थान पर उसके प्रश्नों से करें।
- Q.3 Great principles, great ideals know no nationality.
महान सिद्धांत, महान आदर्श किसी एक राष्ट्र से संबंधित नहीं है।
- Q.4 In struggling with misfortune lies the true proof of virtue.
दुर्भाग्य से संघर्ष करने में ही नैतिकता का सच्चा प्रमाण निहित है।

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In struggling with misfortunes lies the true proof
of virtue

The conversation between Victor Frankel and
a journalist after he was safely evacuated
from the Austwitz concentration camp goes
on like -

Journalist : After these many years in jail,
having lost your youth, your family,
your possessions, how do you deal
with these losses?

Victor : Everything in life can be taken
from a man except for his freedom -
to choose his attitude in the worst of

adversities. And I choose the attitude of resilience, courage and forgiveness.

The brief conversation mentioned in Victor's autobiography "A man's search for meaning" makes us ponder how this individual faced the worst of misfortunes - losing his family, his wife, his home, his nation, his freedom. But he did not bow before these misfortunes. He choose to struggle and bear till his last breath. This shows how he showcased the virtue of courage, resilience etc. and which helped him overcome the grief and start afresh after he got freed.

This brings us to firstly analyse ~~with~~ the basic nature of life. We can take the cue of Jainism philosophy which talks of cyclical nature of life which it calls - Avasarpani and Utsarpani

when at the high end we face fortunes of life, live in peace and a blissful state and when at the lower end we face misfortunes of life, life of grief and a painful state:

Delving deeper into the misfortune aspect of life, we can broadly categorise its manifestation into two sources of origin.

The first origin can be accidents of birth whereby an individual faces the misfortune of having born with certain disabilities. For example, the physically disabled people faced this sort of misfortune.

The second origin can be accidents of life whereby an individual has to face miscreated misfortunes for him/her by society, nation or the world. The growing climate crisis due to our unsustainable production and consumption

will place our future generations at this misfortune.

Now when such sort of misfortune strikes an individual he may bow before the situation and give up. This shows an attitude of cowardice and can be aptly summed up in the famous hindi saying "To daas gaya, samjho maas gaya" [one who fears, consider him as dead].

But then there are people who refuse to bow before the misfortunes and choose to fight back and it is in this process of fighting back is their proof of virtues showcased.

We can consider the case of Helen Keller who faced the misfortune of being blind, deaf and dumb. In such a situation she could have easily given up, would have chosen to blame her misfortune:

But rather than giving up, she choose to struggle with all her might. She showcased courage, resilience, not giving up attitude, compassion and became an inspiration for humanity.

Further, struggling with misfortunes allows an individual to leave his comfort zone and find innovative solutions thereby giving a proof of his abilities, his intellect, his problem solving

For example, Dashrath Manjhi lost his wife to misfortune but it served as a path for him to break apart a mountain by his axe and chisel and came a path for other villagers so that they don't face same misfortune.

Struggling with misfortune also gives us scope to self-reflect and assess oneself which at the times of

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peace we may not do. This gives us the ability to grow from those misfortunes to a more wise being as Seneca, the great stoic philosopher did when he was jailed in Corsica.

Misfortunes also provides an opportunity to show one's power and identify one's strength - one's true virtue which we may be unaware of and thus makes those virtue a part of one's consciousness

For example, the like of Rosa Parks who defied the inegalitarian rules of American society never knew they could showcase the courage to act that way yet it transformed their way of looking at themselves. Thus misfortunes helps us identify oneself.

But it is not just individuals that struggle with misfortunes show their proof of virtues, it is also the collective

struggles of society or group against misfortunes rendered on them that these action reflects proof of their virtues.

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प्रश्न की
संख्या में
उत्तरों
को लिखें
कैंडिडेट
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लिखना
है

We can take the case of feminist movements especially suffragate movement where women came together to defy the manufactured misfortunes of confining them to narrow domestic walls. Thus they showcased the virtue of justice and awareness of their rights and courage to fight for it.

Similarly the environmental movements as Chipko movement where the tribals came together to fight back against the perceived exploitation showcased their commitment to mother nature and their awareness of the cause.

Not just groups or societies, nations also face misfortunes out of which they grow and show true proof of virtues.

we can consider the case of 200 years of benvolent despotism by the British. They looted India and made its people subject to the Queen. But people like Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh etc rose up to occasion showed grit, patriotism and rendered India to the path of freedom.

The illustrations mentioned showcase how an individual, society, nation - no one is immune from misfortune but how they deal with it lies in their attitude and in their actions thereby lies proof of virtues that they showcase.

This brings us to the next question of whether a person inherently poses these virtues and when misfortune strikes, he/she showcases them as suggested by the famous Italian philosopher Machiavelli or it develops with time?

Here we can consider that human's mind is 'tabula rasa' and it is the experiences that we face in life gives shape to it.

Thus it is not a necessity that a person may posses all the virtues but when a misfortune strikes, it grills the individual and forces him to develop those virtues necessary to overcome those misfortunes.

We can take analogy of a river. Its immanent nature is to flow freely but it is sin quo non that it will face boulders on its path. There may be a boulder that may obstruct its path totally. Then what does the river do? She is not taught to deal with this situation, the virtue of 'flowing freely' doesnot help.

Here comes the role of learning from misfortune and striking back subsequently with greater vigour. The river keeps on splashing against boulder - for days, for

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months, for years, for centuries and alas!
one day it breaks open a hole and
finds its path.

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Similarly we humans may face grill,
find ourselves vulnerable but small feats
of courage can help us find our ways.
As greatly said - "Little strokes can fell
great oaks".

~~Thus we may conclude by saying~~
~~that~~ Further, there is also a necessity
for us to change our perspective towards
misfortune. Having discussed of how
misfortune creates an assessment of our
virtues, then how come it is a misfortune?

Rather it is a fortune in disguise,
just that its effect felt is negative
we cannot see the whole picture - something
similar to the metamuda philosophy of
Jainism. Thus even misfortunes can be
seen from multiple perspectives

and thus when we develop this ultimate virtue even misfortune will not seem like one - rather we would consider it as an opportunity to grow, to fight back and be the best version of oneself.

We can thus conclude by what Victor Frankel suggests as ultimate solution to any such misfortunes -

"The thing that does not kill me will ultimately make me stronger"

Thus we need to strive to develop ourselves into our best version and show our virtues in any adversities as well as use them to develop virtues and thus make ourselves stronger, braver and courageous.

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खण्ड-B / Section-B

- Q.5 The whole purpose of Education is to turn mirrors into windows.
शिक्षा का सम्पूर्ण उद्देश्य दर्पण को खिड़कियों में बदलना है।
- Q.6 To dwell is to garden.
निवास करना बगीचे के सामान है।
- Q.7 Reality is the shadow of ideas.
सच्चाई विचारों की छाया मात्र है।
- Q.8 We can not despair of humanity, since we ourselves are human beings.
हम मानवता से निराश नहीं हो सकते, क्योंकि हम स्वयं भी मनुष्य हैं।

Reality is the shadow of Ideas

Plato, one of the most famous western political thinker in his work 'The Republic' gives the idea of allegory of cave.

He suggests that some men are tied in a cave facing towards a wall - all chained. A shadow of fire lit at back is visible to them. They consider the shadow as their realities and it becomes their world.

Now one of these chained men

is taken outside and for first time he sees the true light - the Sun and understands what he was considering as reality was merely shadow.

By this analogy, Plato intended to show that whatever exists as a material object which we consider as reality is just an illusion, its shadow of an 'idea' - an ideal object.

To delve into this concept further, we need to first acknowledge this fact that there has been fierce philosophical debates over what is real - matter or ideas.

Some philosophers like Plato believe Idea as ultimate reality. It is considered that this world is a world of change and has no permanence so there is no use in understanding this world.

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Just like a shadow has no real value, it is just an illusion of one's being - this world is also an illusion of an ideal world.

Consider the case of a perfect world - one of perceive it with greenery, beauty, big trees, flowers but the actual manifestation is a distorted version. The recent IPCC synthesis report concretises the fact of how we are transitioning this world towards degradation.

Similarly, the idea of a perfect society is where people live in harmony, there is no discrimination amongst genders, caste, race etc. But the actual manifestation is every form of discrimination. Women face it due to patrearchal society, Blacks face it due to Xenophobic tendencies, Dalits face it due to Brahmanic hegemony.

Next, the idea of a perfect economy is that is inclusive, that has no barriers that migrains every section but what we have today is crony capitalism, monopolisation, frauds, neo-colonialism etc.

Finally, the idea of a perfect human being is that of one suggested by Immanuel Kant of ^{one with} 'moral virtue' who encompasses compassion, love and integrity but then world has witnessed the rise of individuals as Hitler, Stalin who were anti-theoretical to these virtues.

So, what does it suggests? It suggests the need to use knowledge to contemplate on that 'perfect idea' - that Ideal world, Ideal society, Ideal economy.

But does this mean that reality holds no significance? Is it just the shadow with no utility?

Here we can take the cue of greatest critic of Plato - Aristotle who suggests that though we need to understand the 'idea' - the idea of perfection but it is also necessary to understand this world.

Since a man's existence lies in this world and not the ideas so if we leave this world as it is and find no purpose in action we would render it unsurvivable.

Thus, we can say that it becomes necessary to understand this world as well - to understand all the issues that exist in this world, all the distortions then only we analyse and compare it with the ideal and strive for the ideal.

For instance, though the world may be facing thousands of crisis as terrorism, climate change etc., it is our analysis of it and our actions that can lead us to a better future.

The UNFCCC was setup keeping this ideal in mind and thus the efforts including Kyoto principles, Paris goals etc aim to curb climate change. Similarly UNSC resolution, counter terrorism strategy aims to overcome the malaise of terrorism.

Similarly, though our societies may be facing every sort of conflicts but without our actions the social fabric would break and it need the role of civil societies, social legislation, the constitution that can ensure that reality is not just shadow of ideas but a path toward idea- of a perfect society.

In an economy as well we can use this conception to understand that our actions of ingraining the ideals of compassionate capitalism as suggested by Narayan Murthy or Stakeholder's capitalism as suggested by Klaus Schwab can render a more egalitarian society.

Finally, for an individual as well, ingraining the moral virtues of love, compassion, integrity can help build a better society. We can take the case of people like Mother Teresa, Kaulash Satyarthi, Bezuada Wilson who strived hard for dedication towards vulnerable sections.

Thus what all of this renders to - it gives us the view that it is though knowledge is necessary to understand the perfect idea but empirical analysis of this world - the

reality is also necessary to ensure that we understand where we are living.

This understanding helps us analyse at what state we are in terms of reaching that perfection. Without understanding it, there is no scope to improve.

Further it is also necessary to understand that as Plato conceives change may not necessarily be distortive. That is to say reality that is considered as shadow may not always transition to a worse form.

It happens only when we fail to analyse it and acknowledge it and let things degrade much like a disease that enters one's body if not acknowledged kills a man, similarly ~~now~~ such conception of considering reality as shadow degrades everything.

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But on the other hand, if we consider the change as something positive and as suggested by Aristotle as reality being transitioned to ideas it would help us reach to that perfection which we desire.

Thus it is better to consider the latter option and strive towards that ideal situation, though we may not achieve it but can still land near - as suggested -

"Aim for the moon, you may land on the stars"