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खण्ड-A / Section-A

उम्मीदवारों को
इस भाग में
लिखना नहीं है।
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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।

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

In Ancient Greece, there was a group of people living inside a cave since their birth. They had no contact with the world outside. Completely engulfed within the darkness of the cave, they began forming ideas of the world around them based on the

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blurred shadows that were being formed on the waves of the wall. One day, by chance one of the person ventured out of the cave accidentally. For a few minutes he could not open his eyes as he was blinded by the intense illumination of the radiant sun. When he could see clearly, he was astounded as whatever ideas he had regarding the world were entirely different from what he saw. Surprised and excited, he ran to the cave to inform his friends about his new discovery. But to his utter disappointment, his friends did not believe in a single word what he said. On the contrary he was labelled as mad and everyone continued living in the cave without any progress in their lives. Even though the rays of light knocked at their doors, the people refused to come out of darkness. This is what is known as Plato's Allegory of slaves.

Here, Plato refers to darkness as ignorance and rays of sun light as true knowledge. People refusing to come out of darkness because they were afraid of the light in form of new knowledge and ideas. What tragedy did it bring? Is not the lack of progress, poor living a tragedy even when they got the opportunity to improve it.

Perhaps we have a question. Why is everyone afraid of dark? Darkness seems to bring in a sense of oblivion, showing a frontier which is beyond human comprehension. We don't know what is in the darkness. All of us would have imagined something existed in the darkness. The old tales of a monster or a chimera residing in the oblivion is the popular image that comes to our minds when we think darkness. Is this the factor why humans are afraid of darkness?

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Or is it the fact that darkness is too big to comprehend, going beyond our imaginative capacities that makes us fear darkness? There was a popular myth that world would see its end in 2012 owing to a misinterpretation of Mayan calendar. The world would then get sucked into a Blackhole. The sheer darkness, the ability to drain out even the brightest of the light was the biggest fear factor concerning the people.

Darkness is associated with ignorance, prejudices, stereotypes and all other negative characteristics. Even the Indian philosophy equates "Tamas" with darkness which is an undesirable quality. Though it is possible to remove darkness, it is a very difficult task requiring efforts. Ignorance, prejudices are deeply entrenched in our societies. Societies play a crucial role in

development of a person. Thus it is highly possible that people would show resistance of to move out of darkness as people are afraid of dark. Isn't this a paradox? Indeed it is, though we are afraid of dark, we tend to live in darkness. Why is it so? It may be because of convenience because it takes some effort to turn on the switch of light.

The fear of ostracisation and exclusion from society can force people to be in darkness, be fearful of darkness because they don't know what lies ahead. Isn't it then justified to forgive someone who is afraid of dark?

Alexander's army after conquering Alexandria entered the unknown lands of East-India. They saw the vast forests of India completely a new visual for them. They had heard about the large elephants led by the Nandas waiting for them. India was similar to

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the oblivion of darkness. Frightened of not knowing what lies ahead, they rebelled to not push ahead?. Does any channels of history or any chronicles blame Alexander's army? No, perhaps it's a mistake which can be forgiven as it was a result of ignorance.

Coming back to "Allegory of caves", one might also wonder, why do people living in the cave fear the light that was knocking at their doors? Is it because they were used to living in dark or is it that their eyes cannot factor in so much light coming in? Why is it that there is a culture of poverty existing? Why is it that ambitions of people coming from lower strata were limited? It is because their choice their experiences and exposure prevents them from thinking big. They may have the talent

but they feel their dreams might be unachievable as they were used to live in darkness. Too much dreams is like too much light for them making them afraid of light.

New ideas, knowledge, truths are seen as different forms of light. These can replace darkness. The idea of "Jamasoma Jyotirgamaya" explains darkness goes when light comes in. The human comfort of status quo is disturbed when new ideas, knowledge and truths come in, shaking our belief system. For instance, it is very difficult to convince old people about LGBTQIA+ content. Why is it so? Because it goes against long years of exposure and value system which they have built. A sudden erosion of this value system creates insecurity for people. Perhaps this is the reason why many are afraid of the light.

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What happens when one is afraid of light? It results into tragedy and sheer destruction as it blocks the incoming rays of light. There is stagnation in the society as darkness fills the void of light. Would the world see aeroplanes if Wright Brothers were afraid of light? Would the Indian society see reformation if reformers like Swami Vivekananda were afraid of light of Vedantism?

The tragedy of being afraid of light can be seen in Afghanistan where Taliban is creating a closed society for women fearing the light of equality and inclusivity. The evils of female genital mutilation is still prevalent in Africa as darkness of religious orthodoxy has not been challenged by light of rationality.

When we look at the situations where people accepted the incoming rays of light, fully soaked in itself, we see positive changes. Amazon is a successful corporate giant today, with its budget going to lacks of crores, beyond the budget of some countries. How did it become the giant as it is today? It is because Amazon and its founders accepted the new idea of e-commerce as the future which was the source of light for them. They didn't hesitate to soak in this light and the result is what we see today.

How can we ensure we run behind light as the founders of Amazon did? The answer lies in darkness. Darkness should evoke a sense of curiosity. While humans are afraid of the unknown, they were also eagred to explore and conquer the unknown. Constantly looking for questions and questioning what is in the darkness can help us come out

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of the tunnel of darkness. It was Alice's curiosity of knowing what lies beyond the dark rabbit hole which led her to the stream wonderland.

Similarly all of us must invoke the same curiosity that Alice had to conquer darkness and chase light. Alice's curiosity to explore the dark rabbit hole was nothing but her search for light.

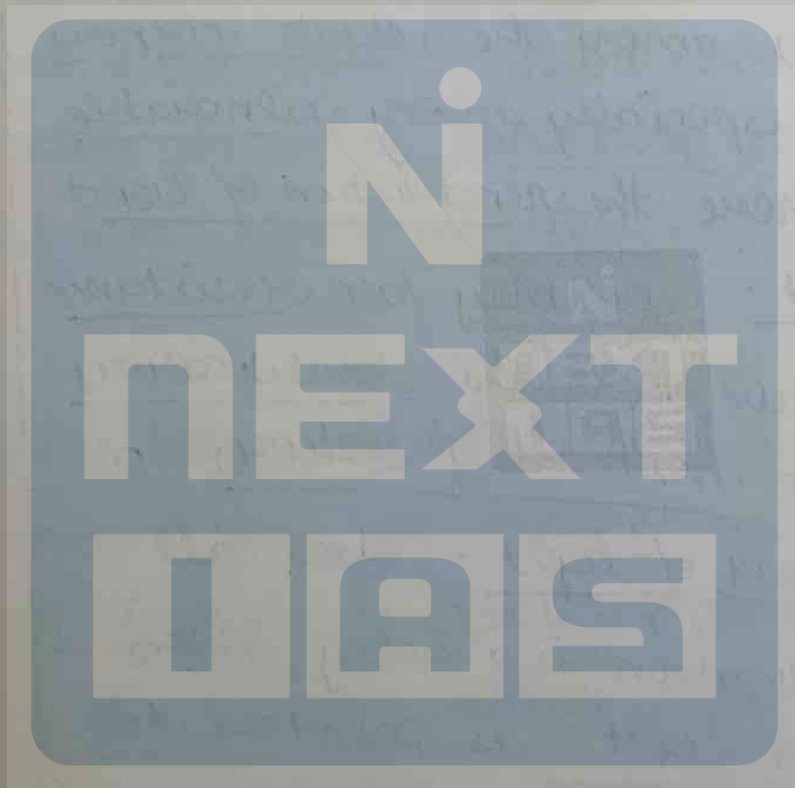
We must always be open to new ideas, thoughts and beliefs. A constant urge to explore must drive our journey to search for truths. Sometimes it's the journey rather than books which give us high intensity light in form of experience of others and our own.

Ego itself is darkness. The ego must go and filled in with Humility as it would lead to a constant urge to search for light from torchbearers around us.

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When we gain the light,
it is our duty to spread the light
to others. Just like in Allegory of
caves where the person was eager
to spread the light of truth among his
friends, we must also be eager to
spread light among the dark corners
of society, especially among vulnerable
sections where the penetration of light
is difficult. We may face resistance
but we have to be the torchbearers
of light for next set of seekers to
prevent fear of light. After all
human civilization is a relay where
the torch of light is passed on to
successive generations, leading to grand
event what we call "Human Race".

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खण्ड-B / Section-B

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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।

5) Truth, like a torch, the more it is shook,
it shines

Manasa was a film which
created ripples recently in Indian film industry.
The film is set in the beautiful forests of
South Karnataka, 'Jaludesam' which is beset with
dense forests of western ghats engulfing the
area with darkness. During their movement
people use torch of fire to light up the
surroundings during evenings. In order to
ensure greater visibility, people shook their

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torches, stimulating the fire and kindling it, making it more brighter, thus clearing the visibility to a larger area.

What happens when the torch is shaken? It leads to fire spreading to other parts of the torch, increasing the brightness of the flame and illuminating the place. Truth also shares similarities with torch. Both are symbols of light. Light is used to symbolise torch and truth. Another thing common in them is, more the basic foundations of lies and orthodoxy, better the truth is accepted in society. Just like vigorous movement of torch leads to each strand of torch's fibre embrace the fire, similarly breaking the foundations of lies and irrationality in society leads to more individuals to embrace it.

Truth can emerge when years of conditioning, prejudices, stereotypes and malpractices forming the foundation is broken. It cannot be broken in a single go. What is required is vigorous resistance, shaking the very foundations on which the irrational acts were built. The more we shake the base, the better as we are able to reach till the basic level.

Similar kind of attempts were seen in our national movement. The Britishers ensured their domination through myths of "superior race", Benevolent despotism etc. It took considerable efforts from various generations of leadership to ranging from Dadabhai Naoroji to Bhagat Singh to bring the truth of "Free India" by shaking the foundations of British imperialism.

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The Soviet Union was considered as a superpower which could withstand the tough competition of liberal world order led by USA. Soviet Union provided a facade by hiding the true reality of socialism and its inefficiencies. Could this truth be hidden for long? No, when the basic tenets of socialism were criticised from within the Soviet Union. The result was that the inefficiencies of socialism became starkly visible leading to disintegration of Soviet Union. Here truth emerged as a result of massive upheavals in established principles of ideology.

Sometimes truth becomes more acceptability and reverence when multiple attempts to falsify it fail. Didn't Kedarnath's sanctity among Hindus increased when it stood firm even when floods ravaged Uttarakhand in 2013?

Same is the case with truth. Truth overcomes the attempts of falsification, it gains more credibility and permeates better into society. Endless attempts have been made to disprove the theory of gravity. But has it ceded the ground? No, gravity stood firm in spite of the challenges made to falsify it. Today gravity is accepted as the universal law, law of nature governing universe.

Though the torch needs to be shaken to emerge brighter, can the torch be lit without fuel? Similarly can truth be used to drive away the darkness of ignorance if there is no desire for truth? The answer to both the questions is no. The torch of truth cannot sustain without our determination to uphold and pursue truth.

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TN Seshan's re-determination and commitment to truth ensured that flame kept burning. Hadn't he have any sincerity towards the value of truth, he would have succumbed to the pressure and whims and fancies of his superiors. It was his persistence for fairness in spite of several challenges he faced that made him stand out among the Election Commissioners of India.

Similar commitment can be seen through Yudhishthira's character in Mahabharata. Among all the characters, he stands out as most virtuous, most ethical earning the title of "Dharmaraja". Even the great Arjuna couldn't dwarf the aura of Yudhishthira. Why was it so? It was because Yudhishthira stood steadfast to the value of truth even while he was in exile or death was visible to him in

Kurukshetra war. In the final journey, Yudhishtira remains the last man standing because he stood the test of 'Yama dharm' without any hesitation, in spite of numerous difficulties faced.

Thus truth emerges and becomes brighter when the foundations are shaken. However one must also keep in mind that excessive or excess of anything is also dangerous. It can lead to catastrophic outcomes. If we shake the torch vigorously, it can extinguish the fire. Similarly too much radicalism can prevent truths from emerging.

The Tianmen Square protests strived to bring out the excessive nature of Chinese political system. There was widescale protests led by students, shaking the foundations of Communist Party. What was the result?

It led to large scale repression of the movement which strengthened the grip of party over China. Today China has become more opaque and more controlled.

Sometimes we must be careful that the torch does not burn ourselves. While being the torch bearers, we must not get corrupted while searching for the truth. On the very act of leading the search for truth must not be for self interests. The end result would be similar to that of Robespierre of France who was guillotined by Jacobins, a club founded by Robespierre to fight absolutism. Interestingly he was executed by the same group on charges of absolutism which he sought to eliminate.

What is required for truth to continue burning like an eternal torch?

It is focus on the torch and torch bearer both. Torch bearer of truth must cultivate

high standards of behaviour to ensure that the flame is burning and it becomes brighter, though it may appear a difficult task,

the likes of Gandhiji, Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela show that it's not

impossible. In the movie Kantara,

the protagonist also uncovers truth by reforming himself to highest standard

and at the same time ensuring the flame of truth is continuously kindled by looking for truth. Thus truth

emerges when lies are shock to the core and it becomes universal when

it withstands challenges of time.

Time can wither away great monuments as in Ozymandias poem, but it can't wither away truth.