

## NEXT IAS

## खण्ड-A / Section-A

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- 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।

2) Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers.

Questions are the reflections of human ingenuity and creativity. They show the capacity of human mind to break the barriers and limits of information, venturing out into the deep unknown. When man feels empty in that vastness, feeling entirely new, he begins to ask questions. Questions are like torch of fire to search for truth that is answers. Curiosity is the spark and Question becomes the flaming torch. One looks at the torch because

in awe and curiosity and making inferences of his leadership skills and other capabilities.

Torah signifies brightness but is a symbol of light. Questions are the symbols of light which is used to dispel the darkness of ignorance. Questions by a person shows his inquiry to know the unknown, it reflects his original thinking reflecting his moral integrity. It shows the man's ability to engage in critical thinking, possibilities to going beyond what is given and known. Questions are like ships which carry man on a voyage of discovery. ~~Apart from such character~~ Apart from intellectual characteristics which questions reflect, they are also indicative of an important personality trait in Human beings - Humility. Asking questions is a sign of humility because it conveys man's emptiness which he

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seeks to fill through questions. Questions indicate man's ignorance and the same are conveyed to the society when he asks questions. A person who continuously asks questions without any regret or shame is a humble person, reflecting his urge to fill in his mind with treasure chests of knowledge.

Humility and Humanity in scientists ~~is~~ is a great virtue. Albert Einstein was one such scientist. When asked about his achievements, his reply was "I am standing along the shore of the vast ocean" which is left to be explored." The statement is enough to prove the humility of greatest scientist world ever saw. His journey of greatness did not begin from finding answers, his journey began by asking questions. He was such a persistent question seeker that his teachers ran out of patience and asked him to leave the class. Even after such discouragement Einstein continued asking questions. Today his questions became the answers for the mysterious which humanity sought to demystify.

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Similar to the geniusness of Einstein, there was Socrates, separated from Einstein by more than a millennia ~~sp~~ temporally and spatially but united in the urge to ask questions. Socrates is known to the world for asking questions - questions to the young, to the old, to the wealthy, to the destitute, to the mighty king, to his stablesman. In fact his whole journey was filled with asking of questions to his fellow Athenians. The Socratic dialectics was a result of questions put forth by him. He sacrificed his life at the altar of state for asking questions for which he is remembered even today.

Contrary to the consequences which Socrates faced, economists like Amartya Sen, John Keynes were hailed as heroes of welfare and altruism when they raised questions on "Free Hand" doctrine of classical economics. The rising inequality and poverty contrary to expectations of trickle down approach led these economists to question the classical theory

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Today the world sees and equates them as  
angels of social safety net, upliftment and  
retrogression due to their questions. In fact their  
humane economics reflected humaneness in them.

Another tower of humanity is  
the great Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar who  
worked tirelessly day in and out for the  
well being of Dalits. Baba Saheb's personality  
of rationality and reason was displayed  
when he questioned the dark age  
practice of untouchability which entailed  
primitive ideas like drinking from separate  
wells, living in ghettos.

Apart from Humanity, reason,  
courage of conviction is yet another important  
trait which questions reflect. Questioning  
a superior for misbehaving with a colleague,  
or questioning a police officer for seeking  
bribe shows a person's high ethical  
standards and a strong courage of conviction  
to stand by those morals. Persistent

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Questioning even at the cost of self interest shows the person's public spiritedness even during adversity. This is what Indian National Movement leaders did when facing the British.

Questioning the superior and authority can make them accountable. It is also worthwhile to think what would happen to the world if there were no questions. Lack of questions would lead to bankruptcy of critical thinking and skills. This would prevent the flow and synthesis of new ideas and prevent further new questions. A vicious cycle of ignorance perpetuating ignorance due to absence of questions is created

when there are no new ideas and thinking, the society becomes stagnant. It leads to rise of "yes men" who just nod to whatever is said to them. Man becomes a mere machine, a feeder of data without any critical thinking.

There would be no difference between man and ChatGPT. In fact, ChatGPT would be better off as it would have some "artificially" created intelligence which humans would lack.

Sadly, the fear of Human ChatGPT seems to be the destination where humans are headed to. The current education system values answers more than questions. Questions are extinguished even at the lightest spark. Rote learning and answer reproduction has become the metrics to gauge a student's performance. The lack and ideality of original research, original questions will haunt humans in future when the road to progress comes to a dead end.

The solution to overcome the problem of education lies in questioning the system itself. What is it that the education seeks to achieve? If it

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seeks to create humans with data fed similar to factory lines then no changes need to be done. If the objective is to refine our best humans, endowed with their uniqueness and critical thinking, then education must make Questions the new normal:

Metric of testing must also include the capabilities of students to ask questions which can incentivise them to question. Testing conceptual clarity through answers must be supplemented with words asking students to provide five questions which their mind synthesises. It will ensure that conceptual competence is achieved by students as questions are an indicator to know more. At the same time learning outcomes would be improved because students feeling free ask questions can get their basic doubts also clear. It is a win win situation for all.



It is not enough to light the torch, one must walk the path and use the torch to lead to the destination. It is in good character to question, but ~~it~~ it is wisdom to find answers to the question as well. It shows the commitment to find solutions, commitment to lead others and commitment to achieve welfare of all.

Socrates and Plato, though they put forth their questions, they never ended their conversation in question mark. They made sure that they dispelled ignorance by seeking out the answers for the questions they put. The ideas of "Ideal State", "Theory of Knowledge" are answers to the questions concerning "what is good life" put forth by them. The Greek thought reveres Socrates and Plato more than Hercules because they asked questions and sought answers to the very same questions.

similar reverence of Moderate leaders of Indian National Movement can be found in Indian history. The Moderates raised the question on poor economic condition of India even after having ample resources. Their journey did not end with the question. In fact their journey began with the question, culminating in the "Drain of Wealth Theory" - the answer to the question which they were seeking. Such was the power of the question and answer that "Drain of Wealth" formed the basis for mass mobilisation.

Just like the moderates questioned the British government, it is important to question the government of the day. It would ensure that government truly remains "By the people, of the people and for the people." It is easy to question

and criticise the government. Any Tom or Harry can do that. But the real idea is to provide answer and solution to the questions and problems which have been raised against the government. This would ensure the greater good of public welfare. E-governance tools like My Gov application, twitter allow to do that.

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There should be a flow of New Questions like a perennial river. New Questions will lead to new answers. These answers would become the norm. After a time lapse, new questions again arise leading to new ideas. It is a constant virtuous cycle. In fact the journey of Humanity has been a constant cycle of questioning and seeking answers. Man's question for safety lead to fire. The question to control fire led to control over rivers. The question

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of controlling rivers led to huge dams. Thus the progress of mankind is nothing but a journey of seeking question and answer. This has helped humanity to go from ancient to medieval to modern to post-modern.

What lies beyond postmodernism is itself a big question which man has set out to answer. Perhaps the biggest judgement one can make of man through his questions is the human ambition to know the truth, to know the unknown and to conquer what no one else has conquered.

## खण्ड-B / Section-B

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- 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।

5) The whole purpose of Education is to turn mirrors into windows.

Education is the most powerful weapon which can transform a nation. A nation is a collection of individuals. Therefore it would also be correct to say that education can transform an individual. It can turn an ignorant brute to a philosopher, a lonely destitute to a wealthy, a morally bankrupt person to a highly virtuous being. If education can accomplish this feat, then it would not

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be a surprise if education can turn a mirror into window.

Though window and mirror are made of same material - the glass, there is an essential difference between them. The mirror is opaque, not allowing light to pass through it while window is transparent, allowing all rays of light to pass unobstructed.

Education is the magic which can turn mirror into window. Our minds are like mirrors, reflecting ourselves our values and thoughts. The opacity of mind prevents new rays of knowledge and light entering. This can lead to stagnation of human minds. Education breaks the opacity. It ensures that our minds are open to new ideas, new beliefs and new truths.

Education teaches the value of pluralism, tolerance, respect. It ensures that multiple spectrums of light in form of new ideas, new knowledge, new beliefs permeate our heart and mind. The result is progress of human beings and human society by embracing diversity as humans turn to each other for their well being.

The acceptability to new ideas ensure that reason permeates within the society. The power of reason can be used to dispel the evil of ignorance which has manifested itself in forms of many social evils like caste system, child marriage, patrilarchy etc. The ability & purpose of education to turn mirrors to window ensure that light of rationality enters our minds and society to herald in

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an era of reformation.

It is not a co-incident to note that rise of educated middle class intelligentsia coincided with the rise of reformation in 18<sup>th</sup> century India. Armed with the power of education, reformers like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar were able to transform the society by spreading the idea of girl education, widow remarriage in 18<sup>th</sup> century India where the society was highly patriarchal and sexist.

What Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar did by brightening the lives of girls is what a window does. By allowing the light to pass through, it can illuminate even the darkest of the rooms. Education creates that window. It provides everyone with a window of opportunity, window of hope and window of exposure to improve people's



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lives and elevate them.

This becomes more relevant when the talk is about the poor and the destitutes. Education remains the only window for them to escape from poverty and scarcity to the world of exuberance, wealth and plenty. Instances of a manual scavenger's son studying from JNU and making it to top executive positions in World Bank or daughter of a poor labourer becoming a CEO show that education's true purpose is to transform mirriors to windows so that everyone has an opportunity and a hope.

Window and Mirror share yet another distinction. While the mirror shows the reflection of the person, filling him with self aggrandisement and making him believe that he is the center of earth. The window on other

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shows the true world - a world beyond man's existence, a world beyond man's reach.

This leads to the belief that man is just a tiny speck in this vast cosmos making him more grounded to earth.

Education by turning glass mirrors to windows ensures humility within the human beings. It ensures one is grounded to the earth, grounded to the realities and circumstances where one came from. The NEP 2020 which focuses on inculcating humility among pupils shows that the prime purpose of Education is to create humility in the minds of people.

Education ensures that man's self centeredness transforms to society centeredness. Through the idea of developing a responsible citizen, an empathetic human being, education

tries to ensure man sees beyond himself,  
cognizant of a world which is existed outside  
his ego. Cognizance of the world would lead  
him to work for the well being of others.

The education of constitution, of history,  
of struggles, of science would fill human  
minds with rigour and compassion to work  
for others. This is the main reason why  
~~the~~ society exists. If selfishness was the  
norm then the society would be in a  
case of chaos and anarchy proving  
Hobbes correct.

Though education has its power  
and purposes, education in wrong sense  
has its own problems. It can turn the  
existing windows into mirrors forming  
a kaleidoscope of mirrors only. This  
can be not in the good interests  
of the society.

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Education on fundamentalism, education on racism, on fascism can lead to indoctrination of young minds. The selective and wrong interpretation of religious texts has created the large scale problem of terrorism as the many terror attacks suggest. It has prevented the light of reason, tolerance from entering the minds of indoctrinated. This is the issue of education without awareness.

Just like a kaleidoscope can amplify a single grain to form different patterns, a single instance of negative experience would be amplified and shown as great injustices forming false patterns creating deep illusions within heart. This is what education can cause if it is done in wrong intentions.

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Much more dangerous than being a kaleidoscope is the very act of destroying the house where window was placed. Precisely that is what happens when education is used for wrong purposes. Envisaged as a means to uplift the society, just like window is to brighten the house, wrong use of education can destroy the society.

Three centuries worth of education in physics culminated in the creation of atomic bomb. The world has seen numerous destructions in form of tests, bombings on Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

The society is always on the brink of annihilation due to threat of nuclear wars and nuclear winters. Mahatma Gandhi had called it the most diabolic use of education.

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Yet another diabolic use of education is in sex selective abortion and female foeticide. Education helped in development of SONAR, RADAR, sound imaging. However the use of education and human ingenuity was put to satisfy the irrational myths that humans created. Greater technology allowed pre-birth sex determination, giving way to female foeticide. The reports of rising female foeticide in urban areas show that prejudices and myths still trump reasons.

Summing up, it can be inferred that education alone does not guarantee that mirrors become windows. The purpose of education remains to achieve the same, however whether education will

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be able to achieve its target depends upon its use. A blade can be used to clear a field for agriculture and at the same time it can be used to slaughter. The former signifies natality, later shows mortality. Similarly, education remains a powerful weapon, perhaps the most powerful weapon. It can be used for construction, just like atoms being used for renewable nuclear energy powering the society, or education can be used for destruction - the same atoms being used to create the deadly atomic bomb.

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