

खण्ड-A / Section-A

- Q1 Reason has always existed, but not always in a reasonable form.  
तर्क सदैव अस्तित्व में रहा है, परंतु हमेशा युक्तियुक्त रूप में नहीं।
- Q2 The opposite of poverty is not wealth.  
गरीबी की विपरीत स्थिति केवल दौलत होना नहीं है।
- Q3 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।
- Q4 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।

REASON HAS ALWAYS EXISTED, BUT  
NOT ALWAYS IN A REASONABLE FORM

British rule in India germinated in the 1700s and had firmly rooted itself on Indian soil by the mid-nineteenth century. It was in essence an exploitative colonial rule aimed solely at the betterment of the British.

The British had their own reasons for this atrocious act - to satisfy the growing needs of their populace, as well as to accumulate wealth and establish India as a market for their own goods. But these reasons were

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unreasonable - for no one has the right or authority to harm millions just for their own gain.

The British gave us their 'reasons' too - The White Man's burden, and how they were carrying out their divine duty by civilizing the unruly and regulating their lifestyles. These reasons seemed to have some amount of benevolence in them, but were actually a bed of lies. This then made their pretend reasons as unreasonable.

Whether we look at the British rule, or life at 10,000 BC, or scrutinize the 21<sup>st</sup> century bustling with events, we are bound to find reason in everything. Sometimes, however, that reason is not justifiable or reasonable.

In this essay, we will delve upon the meaning of 'Reason', how it has always existed, and why often it may not be in a reasonable form. Finally we will attempt to reconcile the two and seek to apply this wisdom to our day-to-day lives.

## THE OMNIPRESENT 'REASON'

A reason refers to a logic, intention or purpose behind a certain action. Rene Descartes, the man behind the phrase 'I think therefore I am', propounded in his 'Wax Argument Theory' that all actions are guided by reasons, and that the reason itself is the most important aspect.

When, for example, a middle class family saves money so that their children can get educated, they are doing so with a reason, and it is indeed a very reasonable decision. On the other hand, if a child steals money from parents to play games, the child's reason is unreasonable.

The entire history of mankind has very similarly been guided by unique reasons - some of which were highly reasonable, while some were not. When humans started gathering food

and collecting resources, their reasons were justified. When however, they started hunting and exploiting other species, their actions became debatable.

When Gautama Buddha started his journey and new religion, he did so with the noble reasons of giving spiritual training, enlightenment and guidance to the common masses.

When however Hitler decided to persecute Jews, his vengeful reasons were completely immoral.

Evidently, reason has always existed but it has not always been reasonable. It can still be construed that existence of reason stems directly from the want of an 'end'. Such as when in 1991 India finally opened up its economy, it was to meet the goal of solving India's economic crisis. Immanuel Kant, though, insisted that reason alone cannot justify an action, and he gave a 'categorical imperative' that the ends cannot always justify the means, especially when it comes to treating humans as a means.

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Consequently, it becomes vital to not only look at the reason, but also the reasonableness of the reason. Let us now analyze why reasons are not always reasonable.

### IMPERFECT PURPOSES

As we saw before, often the reasons behind actions are inappropriate or unwarranted. The very essence of this can be seen from the fact that humans are imperfect beings, so what follows from their rationale cannot be perfect.

When Greta Thunberg or Mrs. Sunita Narain campaign for climate change awareness, their reasons are valid. Yet, it is an undeniable truth that economic development can at times be at loggerheads with the environment yet must be carried out, so that we witness poverty alleviation and inclusive growth. The reasons here are unreasonable due to their idealistic nature which may neglect reality.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, Polity as a system of government (as preached by Plato) is unreasonable, despite the right reasons of public participation, due to the infeasibility of its implementation.

Again, forging peace with our neighbourhood Pakistan has the benevolent reasons of promoting peace and fostering cooperation, but it is unreasonable due to the complicated nature of our relations, as well as the associated risks.

At other times, a good reason might be unreasonable simply due to it being the 'suboptimal' choice. For instance, businesses tend to cut corners in goods' production so as to maximize profit. If they start to value each process and goods accurately, it would present for them an 'opportunity cost'.

Sometimes, such opportunity costs may not be a matter of luxury and profiteering <sup>12</sup> but one of

livelihood, such as it being partly unreasonable to expect farmers to grow crops based on their long-term sustainability, when for the farmers, subsistence requires them to prioritize immediate money.

Having explored the various reasons for reasons often being unreasonable, let us now make an effort to find the solution in such ambiguous scenarios.

### SOLVING THE PUZZLE

Often in life we may be faced with a situation where we have strong reasons to pursue an action, but those reasons are unreasonable. Whether as an individual we are bargaining the cost of groceries, or as a society are contemplating decisions over ~~lowering~~ raising the age of marriage of women or the validity of same-sex marriage, it is crucial to ensure reasonability of reasons.

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One solution for the same is to identify certain uncompromisable values while going ahead with the decision. For Gandhiji, truth was such an uncompromisable value which could then allow defiance of authority too.

Our next priority should be to actively consider and discover novel solutions. As the saying goes, 'Necessity is the mother of invention', thus such conundrums call for new inventions. This could manifest in the form of new technology, such as Blockchain to promote data privacy along with enhanced interactions, or in a simple set up as Drip Irrigation to aid farmers without raising costs.

Finally, in case the dilemma persists, the suitable course of action could be to follow the Madhyam Marg, or the Golden Mean as suggested by Aristotle. Just how nascent<sup>14</sup> India adopted



the mixed economy rather than leaning heavily on either capitalism or communism.

Now that we have formed a blueprint for resolving the fight between reason and reasonability, let us apply the wisdom to our present scenario.

### THE ROAD AHEAD

As Bruce Lee famously said, "knowing is not enough, we must do." The world around us is filled with issues, ranging from gender-discrimination and economic inequality to terrorism, violence and pandemics. The 'reason' to solve these problems is clear; divergence occurs when it comes to the 'means' to adopt, which can be considered as reasonable by everyone.

For instance, gender-equality requires a gradual empowerment of women via education, skilling and opportunities. Otherwise, it might become an unreasonable goal.

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The need of the hour is to supplement our noble and just reasons with a reasonable form and route.

Whether we do so after long discussions to arrive at consensus, or by outlining our priorities and making an 'Action Plan' which is reasonable to all, the key is to follow up our intentions and reasons with practical, implementable and 'win-win' based solutions, thereby augmenting their appropriateness and reasonableness.

As they say, "well begun is half-done", hence it is now our responsibility, as citizens of this country and the world, to step up and act in a fair manner against all unreasonableness, and to make the world a better place to live in!