

## NEXT IAS

## खण्ड-A / Section-A

- 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।

6 IT IS THE PROVINCE OF KNOWLEDGE TO SPEAK AND IT IS PRIVILEGE OF WISDOM TO LISTEN २०

In the epic of Mahabharata, the battlefield conversation of Lord Krishna and Arjuna provide many gospels of truth. Out of the many, the last chapter of Bhagavadgita provides a wonderful insight on knowledge and wisdom.

After Arjuna patiently listens to Lord Krishna on why he must continue the holy war as it is DHARMA or duty,



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He states that Lord Krishna (or himself) spoke from position of true and complete knowledge of everything.

However, the entire privilege of curiosity, surrendering and understanding the knowledge given by Lord Krishna was the wisdom of Arjuna. This is because he did not try to react but tried to actively hear and apply it for solving his moral dilemma.

Building on this example, an attempt is made through this essay to substantiate why it is from position of knowledge that we speak and from position of wisdom that we listen, certain examples that differentiate knowledge from wisdom, if it is always the case, before concluding on applying wisdom for a caring and pragmatic society in different walks of life.



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### SPEAKING AND LISTENING - SYMBOLS OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

In "HOMO SAPIENS", Yuval Noah Harari terms speaking as core facet of human progress. This is because, with communication of one's knowledge, collaborative effort became possible leading to revolution after another.

The ability to communicate clearly, concisely, concretely is speaking and it normally showcases our knowledge. Dale Carnegie in his book "Power of communication" terms speech as most effective way of showing one's knowledge.

"TRYST with DESTINY" <sup>is</sup> speech of Jawaharlal Nehru enunciated the knowledge of what AUGUST 15, 1947 means for a country of billion dreams like self respect, independence and sovereignty of people. Similarly, Martin Luther King Jr's "I too have a dream" showcases his knowledge of racial oppression and that a society can exist without it.



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It is through voicing our knowledge that we build a societal repository of commonsense. Today, at G20 Forum level India is voicing work done by it in enhancing digital public goods such as Jan Dhan accounts, CoWIN platform for vaccines, PM Kisan Suidha, DigiLocker for documents and Agustash for Farmers to name a few.

In a contrast, wisdom or position of analysis, deep understanding is built on facet of actively listening to what others have to say. Socrates held that wisdom or true wisdom for that matter builds on "one knowing that they truly know nothing".

By building on Socrates's definition, it can be seen that wisdom builds on accepting our inadequacy of knowledge and respecting others points of view to enhance our own understanding with actively engaging in a dialogue but prioritizing listening over speaking.



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PLATO in "The Republic" talks of PHILOSOPHER KING who utilizes wisdom to make decisions by actively listening instead of speaking.

Wisdom from Eastern philosophies also builds on need to embrace listening to others. The tale of "elephant and five blind men" tells us that everyone may be correct and absolute truth could have been deciphered if the 5 blind men were ready to listen to each other.

For statescraft, Kautilya in Arthashastra outlines the importance of state's wisdom lies in its position to listen to most marginalised. Today's events of Mann ki Baat, Pariksha pe charcha, Vayo shreshtha samman, People's Padma are ways government is showing citizens that their voices are being heard.

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This can be applied to current day society too. It is from the knowledge of electorate, their population and demography that candidates make electoral speeches and promises. But it is wisdom of electorate built on listening to many speeches that they cast their vote.

Similarly, many marketing firms use knowledge asymmetry to make deceptive ads and greenwash their products. But ultimately popular wisdom builds on listening to multiple such ads and testing products to arrive at the truth.

It is often truly said that "Higher you rise in position, longer must be your time to listen". Gandhiji exemplified this by opening his doors to only listen to Dhaka riot victims on eve of independence without talking.



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This also leads us to question if this is always true and if there is any alternate understanding to it.

IS IT ALWAYS FROM KNOWLEDGE that we speak and From wisdom we listen?

Firstly, an adage "EMPTY VESSELS MAKE more noise" can be applied to show that people can also speak from ignorance and arrogance.

In "Autobiography of a Yogi", Paramahansa Yogananda gives an example of a disciple who continues to talk of his level of intelligence only to be put in place by guru's simple question "WHO ARE YOU?"

Conversely, it is not always from wisdom that we listen. We can be coerced, manipulated or tricked to listening. This can be due to individuals or even our circumstances.

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In the movie "Taare Zameen Par" (Stars on the ground), we see the father of the autistic child listening finally on seeing the beautiful painting made by the child in a painting competition.

Thirdly, it can also be contested that speaking and listening are two parts to one indivisible concept of COMMUNICATION. without speaking, we cannot build a knowledge base.

Also, without listening, we may never understand the entire truth. If we were to again re-look at Bhagvad Gita dialogue, we can reverse the roles as Lord Krishna showing wisdom of listening to exact problem of Arjuna in taking up weapons against his brother.



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Similarly, it was Aejuna who talks of his immense knowledge on Astras, arrows and weaponry. This example highlights that listening and speaking both occur together and both form part of knowledge and wisdom.

However, it can be seen from examples that wisdom prioritises listening and thinking before speaking. Aquinas thus says "it is the wisdom when one knows when to speak and when to listen".

### APPLICATION OF PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM IN REALITY

Knowing that listening is core facet of wisdom, this can be applied to enhance active listening in schools with peer to peer learning and participative teaching in school on values of respect, empathy and sensitivity.

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Similarly, it is for Forest official to listen to tribal concerns, their livelihood issues over talking on Laws for Forest Conservation, Forest rights. This can help in reducing mistrust between people and authorities.

Similarly, Alternative Dispute Resolution builds on need for active listeners such as NEGOTIATORS and CONCILIATORS who can build trust between two parties through non-partisanship and objectivity.

At a Society level, there is a need to uphold ancient wisdom over "LISTENING before talking". Such an approach reduces conflict tendency and leads for empathy and respect for fellow members.



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At a global level, India is playing both the roles of listening and speaking. While India is speaking on its practices on digital and financial inclusion, it is also actively listening to issues of global south countries on poverty, climate change and resource exploitation.

India is not stopping at listening but is creating conducive platform for a continuous interaction in form of FIPIC, IRIS, IDRA, IDNS to name a few in interests of finding solutions.

Hence, it can be surmised that an action oriented, problem solving and ever learning individual, society or nation chooses path of listening for actionable steps over speaking to show one's position.

This core facet of listening is what builds the India's ancient wisdom of YASUDAIVA KUTUMBAKAM or world is one family.



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## खण्ड-B / Section-B

- Q5 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।
- Q6 Art is I; science is We.  
कला मैं है; विज्ञान हम है।
- Q7 Only the dead have seen the end of the war.  
केवल मृतकों ने ही युद्ध का अंत देखा है।
- Q8 Act as if it were impossible to fail.  
कार्य ऐसे करें जैसे कि विफल होना असंभव ही था।

“ACT AS IF IT WERE IMPOSSIBLE TO FAIL”

8th August 1942 is remembered as the day when Mahatma Gandhiji gave the clarion call for “Do or Die” to fellow Indians. This was ultimatum to British to Quit India and it was the end of long colonial era.

Gandhiji's decision was seen by many as bound to fail as British was busy in World War - II, Indian economy was in perils, rampant famines and unrest, rise of All India Muslim League (AIML) to name a few factors.

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Yet, his decision to act like there is no scope to fail led to an INTENSE QUIT INDIA movement. Parallel governments were formed, protests, radio shows were carried out with goal of "NOW or NEVER" ultimately leading to India's Independence on August 15<sup>th</sup> 1947

Building upon the example, the essay will explore why one must act resolutely, what are certain examples that showcase such action, how can one act in manner that showcases no failure and if it is always possible to act in that manner before concluding on use of this approach in solving certain current day problems.

### ACTIONS WITH INTENTION OF ONLY SUCCESS

It is said that actions speak louder than words. By prioritising actions in such a manner as if there was no chance of failure, we are creating a "virtuous cycle" of positivity.



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This aura of positivity builds our strong resolution to see only one outcome as orientation. Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay were able to scale Mount Everest with this very resolution.

Secondly, Psychologists such as

Adler highlights that there is truth

to "SELF FULFILLING Prophecy" which

means that we become what we think

and what we do consistently.

At the start of Swachh Bharat Mission, the goal to revolutionize Indian

Sanitation looked Daunting. But in exactly

5 years, more than 22 crore toilets were built

and all districts declared Open Defecation

Free (ODF) showing the power of

STERN actions.



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Also, Swami Vivekanand called for youth to have "MINDS of STEEL" to be able to act with strong intentions. His call for "Arise, Awake and stop not till goal is reached" signifies need for prioritising undefeatable mindset.

Additionally, it is believed that when one acts in a manner of being invincible, he/she create an attitude towards "PERFECTION". and it is rightly said that ATTITUDE and not APTITUDE that decides our capability to achieve.

The Movie 1983 showed Kapil Dev's attitude to only win which remains unwavered along the upheals of World Cup with India ultimately winning its maiden CRICKET world cup.



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in his work "MINDSET of WINNING"  
 Dr Iyer talks about importance of such  
 a mindset for leaders to act like they  
 will never fail to drive ground level  
action.

Today's entrepreneurs like Elon  
 Musk, DYO's Reitesh Agarwal are examples  
 of acting like there is no chance for  
economic losses. Bringing new business models  
restructuring TWITTER or changing the board  
for different vision for company are some  
 examples.

Such actions also carry strong  
perseverance to achieve which make  
 them crucial for long term goals  
 and in turn being resolutely persistent  
 to achieve results.

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Today, India's Panchamrit goals at Glasgow COP 26 are aimed at being Net Zero by 2070 which is being prioritized with steps like renewable energy capacity enhancement, green technology and forest cover enrichment.

This leads us to question HOW CAN ONE ACT AS IF IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO FAIL?

Our Upanishads talk about "SAMKALPAM" or strong intention as core to one's actions. These intentions ensure that our actions remain in line.

Bhagat Singh, Rajguru were able to remain persistent because of strong intention of seeing INDIA free from British control.



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Similarly Mahatma Gandhi states that consistency of MANASA VACHA KARMANA of mind, word and actions ensure that we remain on path of no failure.

Recent movie by Christopher Nolan shows OPPENHEIMER as a man who never took 'NO' for an answer and kept finding innovative solutions to fulfill mandate given to him in creating Atom Bomb under MANHATTAN project.

We can also learn from Horses in Horse race course where vision is blinded on sides for only running ahead on crack of whip.

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Also, we can learn from reflecting on stories of leaders and role models, paths of a country. Success of INDIA in Kargill war was victory mindset of able soldiers, air force in reclaiming what was rightfully our territory.

This leads us to the question

IF WE CAN ALWAYS ACT IN THAT MANNER?

It may not be possible to be act without the fear of failure always. We are seeing student suicides in fear of failing their Board Examinations or IIT-JEE entrance due to heavy competition in society



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Also, pitfall of an infallible mindset is that one has no backup plan in case of failure. Today society, we witness scams and rogitive economic offenders who once took loans without ~~loans~~ making PLAN and Pendent framework.

Additionally, we must also accept that circumstances and context also have a role to play in our ultimate success or failure.

Despite myriad preparations, Chandrayaan-II faced crash landing due to Moon's gravity which was very difficult to anticipate.

Hence, it may be seen that there can be certain pitfalls of an "ALWAYS <sup>WIN</sup> MINDSET" but the positives outweighs the negatives giving us reason to prioritise such a mindset.

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HOW TO UTILISE SUCH ACTIONS FOR PRESSING GLOBAL PROBLEMS?

There is need for global level action to end Poverty and Hunger once and for all. it can be achieved through radical policies, investment in education and skilling along with creating robust social security net.

This is also needed for bringing gender equality even as GLOBAL GENDER gap report shows 100 years timeline to reach parity with actions of women led development, creative conducive workplace and investing in mindset change of next generation to achieve it before time.



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This mindset is also needed for Regional solutions such as recent ethnic conflict in Manipur. actions of state to bring peace with sustained negotiations, making affirmative plans, bringing perpetrators of crimes to courts of law are some actions that will not fail.

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In conclusion, INDIA's ancient wisdom on Nishkaam Karma talks about "dispassionate actions" only with intent of not worrying about result but it also cautions us that we must not become apathetic and irresponsible and here lies the need for "sustained actions", one where we prioritize only positivity, good for all and good for society.