

# UPSC

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(Specimen Answer Booklet - For Practice Purpose Only)

उम्मीदवारों को इस हार्शिए में नहीं लिखना चाहिए।  
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A man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back to the crowd

Once upon a time in the bustling city of Mumbai lived a 16 year old lad. Cricket ran through his veins like the swiftly flowing river and he dreamt of nothing short of conquering the cricket world.

When opportunity knocked on his doors, it came coupled with the voice of masses telling him that conquering the Pakistani bowlers would be a Herculean task. And so did it happen - in the very first over, he was struck by a swift delivery, with blood oozing from his nose.

The ~~thrust~~ <sup>thrust</sup> / hush crowd and the booing voice didn't deter him and he stood up and said - "Mai Khetega".

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Such grit, determination and self-belief made him the God of Cricket - Sachin Tendulkar.

This instance tells us that leadership, whether of the orchestra of cricket or of life, needs certain key abilities, most important of which is to turn your back to the crowd.

The crowd tends to serve as an equalizer of potentials by pulling down the talents who want to escape the matrix. All the stones hurled at the individual tend to dip their own confidence and plant a seed of self-doubt. This further stifles the opportunities for self growth and achieving of full potential as people bow down to the whims of the crowd and tend to get lost in its ocean of mediocrity.

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However, successful are only those who are able to ignore such voice and uphold their self confidence to create islands of glory in the sea of normalcy.

This takes us to the corporate world where Steve Jobs was trying to make Apple a success. Risk aversion promoted by the mass opinion didn't deter Jobs from taking the road not taken and with his attitude of taking well-calculated risks, he made Apple the cherry on top of <sup>the</sup> corporate cake.

Not just self confidence but also creativity is needed in all walks of life. The mind-boggling banality and stifling homogeneity of the crowd tends to kill all innovation. One of the factors here is religious dogmatism.

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as seen with Galileo. The beliefs of the Church and the Christian masses suppressed the breakthrough of heliocentricity in order to safeguard own ideological hegemony. Such suppression killed the scientific temper of the society and stunted development during the Dark Ages.

Similarly, greatness too doesn't stem from following the herd. Just like Galileo, Raja Rammohan Roy too went against the turbulence of crowd psychology to uphold not just own morality but also to uphold the rights of women as a human being. The torture of sati filled him with grief and in those tears of blood; he took the resolve to liberate women from

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this bigoted concept of religious purity. The ensuing campaign not just led to women empowerment but also set the standards of leadership for the coming generations.

These standards motivated the various political leaders to turn their backs to the crowd and social inertia to eliminate social ills and achieve true liberty which gives opportunity to all to develop their personalities to the fullest. The struggles of Nelson Mandela against the Apartheid shows how it needs the heart of a lion to go against the established system of white superiority and demand racial equality.

All these reasons from self growth to innovation to social welfare

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motivate us to go against the flow and turn a deaf ear to the crowd's noise. Yet, we see that leaders are rare and followers in abundance. This makes us ponder what makes the individual conform to the social inertia?

Prime reason for this is given by Darwin's Origin of Species. The instincts have been shaped by evolution for survival and what better than the dictum of "safety in numbers". The pleasure of receiving outside validation provides a cherry on this cake.

Another psychological reason is the person's character which lacks courage of conviction and self belief. That person would always question their path whenever he/she deviates from the "normal" and finally, correct his/her

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course to match that of the masses.

This exhorts the common man to shed the path of self-doubt and overpower ~~the~~ <sup>their</sup> instinct of conformity to become great like Mandela or jobs.

This primarily requires development of fortitude to go against the tide and uphold the dictum of "Ekla Chalo Re" by Rabindranath Tagore. It also calls for developing a strong adversity quotient which triumphs over self doubt in any event of adversity.

Secondly, it also calls for clarity of own thought as Aurelius points in book "Meditations" that the essence of stoicism lies in clear understanding that the crowd's applause or abuses should not dictate our actions and that larger goal of

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justice needs to be followed with integrity

However, still this is just a half baked cake as one needs to question if one always needs to turn their back to the crowd? Can there be a leader without catering to the needs of the masses? This needs further exploration.

A leader of an orchestra without a cheering crowd is like flesh without blood. It is an utterly disappointing sight and has the potential for complete travesty of commons. Not catering to the crowd's needs and lack of empathy for what they wanted led to birth of leaders like Hitler who not only plunged Jews to the grave but also lit the whole world on fire. Such a case of morally empty leadership is best avoided for harmony in society.



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Seeing eye to eye with this is the fact that voice of the crowd many times holds the social wisdom built over generations. This can be seen from the dichotomy of liberty and the rise of OnlyFans in USA. The flawed perception of mindlessly opposing the mass morality is subjugating these women to the sexual fantasies of the same delirious men from whom they wanted liberty !!

Flipping through all these pages and looking at both sides of the coin makes us realize that one must develop prudence and wisdom to decide when to turn their back to the crowd and when to adhere to the customary morality. One way to develop this is to follow the Socratic dialectic path of rationality whereby

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questioning followed by synthesis between opposing views can help choose the best alternative. Gandhi's decision to call off Non Cooperation movement post the Chauri Chaura incident was borne from similar considerations.

In the end, Gandhi's mantra of "Be the change you want to see in the world" motivates one to start developing prudence and courage from within. This would help us get respect like Gandhi and Buddha as the crowd only respects and follows those who know the way, go the way and show the way.



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There is more to life than simply increasing its speed.

"Dheere dheere re mana,  
dheere sab kuch hoje,  
maali seeche sau ghada,  
ritu aay phal hoje".

[meaning - go slow in all aspects of life just like gardener can plant hundreds of pots but only <sup>the</sup> right season leads to blooming.]

This quotation presents to us an alternative to the current world of rush where are running after speedy results and trying to increase the speed of gaining satisfaction but all in vain.

Life is a gift and the essence of which has been wrongly equated by some to an ill ~~thing~~ thought out meaning of accomplishment and by some

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to the achievement of material resources  
as quickly as possible.

This often leads to the adoption  
of unethical means to achieve quick  
fulfilment of ambitions. Be it the  
Yes Bank scam or the recent Pooja  
Singhal case from Jharkhand; all show  
how moral corruption becomes the  
first step towards doom. The desire for  
quick material possession eventually  
pushed them into the depth of gallows  
while stripping them of their reputation.

As the revered Dalai Lama  
had said - "judge your success by  
what you had to give up in order to get  
it", people are often ready to  
sacrifice their character for speed in  
life. Many a times such a sacrifice

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also eats away possibilities of a happy and fulfilling life in the future.

This thought reverberates with the modern era of instant gratification. Be it the modern hookup culture or the fast food revolution, all are means to provide immediate satiety to the senses. However, the long term pain of obesity (and even cancer) or the rewiring of the brain hindering ability to engage in meaningful relationships (by hookups - National Sexual Health Institute (USA)) kills the hope for a life of satisfaction for the individual.

A similar murder happens of the societal sanity as highlighted by Erich Fromm in his "Sane Society".

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It talks about how the modern race for consumerism is destroying not just the definition of human success but also harming the environment via waste dumping.

All such ills of speedy life forces us to stop, relax and ponder upon what life means to us. Is it just the relentless pursuit of bigoted progress or the fulfilment of living in the present. One needs to think if the loads of one's hoarded cash is more fulfilling or the aroma of freshly brewed coffee being sipped to the sound of laughter of loved ones!!

Researches have shown that the most important parameter of human happiness is the relationships they create and nurture during their

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lives. When one is lying on one's deathbed; one often regrets not having spent enough time with loved ones and rarely <sup>frowns</sup> about unaccomplished material success.

This exhorts us to question what is the true essence of life if it isn't speed and why ~~has~~ humans tend to still get caught in the rat race? The answers lie in the quote - "an unexamined life isn't worth living".

The true essence of life lies in examination of one's potential, one's true passion and one's core values. Post that one needs to align one's actions with one's beliefs. This opens the path for a meaningful and fulfilling life. This is best shown by the life of Buddha, who after seeing the old man, sick man and dead

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went onto a path of austerity and reflection in hope of finding his purpose in life. Such a refusal to adhere to the rat race of princes trying to become kings made him the Mahatma that we know today.

Apart from examination, one needs to also learn temperance from Buddha. Limited needs often lead to a strong character and helps a person to be of value to the society. Sticking to the mantra of "service to jiva is service to siva", the Tatas donate 5-7% of their profits to the welfare of society. The resulting love and respect not just help in better business but also help to fulfil the higher order needs of self-actualization.





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Another aspect of this self actualization is the Taoist philosophy of the flow state. It tells us that the tighter we close our fist to bind the sand within, the faster it flows away from our palms. The desire for control is flawed and for speed in such control is hopeless. This can be seen by contrasting the examples of nervous and calm candidates trying to win a race. The person who is calm tends to focus on his performance and live in the present while the result-oriented nervousness of the other racer increases his probability of committing a mistake.

Despite such wisdom, we very often see a mass psychosis of people running after promotions, big houses, foreign trips and quick money. This

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leads us to the question which was impending - why humans are caught in this ~~rat~~ rat race?

The answer to this lies in our herd mentality and the dopamine circuitry of reward in the brain. Our figment of imagination has equated accomplishment to ~~what~~ <sup>how</sup> our neighbour perceives happiness. This leads to the mindless pursuit of quick gains eventually resulting in long term losses.

The result is often stress, burnout and a degrading sense of mental health. The condition is so grim in India that gallup poll showed that 76% respondents are not happy with their jobs and are doing it just for maintaining their standard of life and the pace of their financial flows.



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Yet, the question that remains is — does speed always play the role of the devil? However gruesome it may sound but speed in life is necessary. India learnt it the hard way after loosing the Chabahar — Zahedan railway project due to bureaucratic delays. The old adage of "make hay while the sun shines" tells us the importance of timeliness in our daily life endeavours.

Similar is the case with the issue of climate change whereby if we don't act now, we may lose our planet forever. Thus speed not only is needed for reputation but also for basic survival needs.

This leads us to question — how to balance the necessity of speed with the lack of its sufficiency?



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The answer lies in the dialectic method of Socrates. Prudence and the human capacity of judgement can be honed for identifying when to speed up and when to slow down and enjoy the serenity of life. It can be useful in gaining the right mindset to question the projected reality and find own solace in this fast moving world.

In the end, waiting for the right season is essential for blooming to happen but in the meantime its equally necessary to prepare by adding necessary inputs like wisdom filled water and rationality rich fertilizer to our tree shaped mind so that it can effectively enjoy the present while being ready to strike hard when the iron is hot!