

(Please do not write anything except the question number in this space)
 कृपया इस स्थान में प्रश्न संख्या को अतिरिक्त कुछ न लिखें।

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BEAUTIFUL DAYS DO NOT COME
TOWARDS YOU. YOU MUST WALK TOWARDS
THEM

It was a day of celebration in the Duvvuru family. A beautiful girl child was born and their happiness knew no bounds. However, the tragedy is yet to unfold.

Soon after, the baby girl was diagnosed with Diabetes -I. As a result, the parents had to prick the tender little hands of their baby and draw out blood to monitor blood glucose levels. It was an emotional pain too big to endure.

The girl, Duvvuru Varshita, who grew up bearing physical pain and witnessing her parents' emotional pain was determined to do something. After years of taking way, she finally

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invented a device which can monitor blood glucose without need for a prick. She pitched ~~per~~ her product on Shah Tank and her product as well as story received great applause. Though she wasn't fortunate enough to witness beautiful days in her child, she kept walking and whined in an era of beauty, not just for herself but for every diabetes patient's life, by its very nature is random, uncertain and unpredictable. At times, it can test us by putting us through testing times. But if we have faith and keep going with patience and perseverance, beautiful days would be waiting for us. At the same time, we must also realize there is beauty all

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around us and we must not miss
the beauty during the walk.

As human beings, we are
paennial struivas, just like Sisyphus
in Greek mythology. We keep chasing
our version of beautiful days, be
it success, wealth, fame or happiness.
These are attained not by accident
but by a long and arduous walk
which shapes us as a person.

This long walk is necessary
because we are all born into
varied circumstances. It is only
through continued perseverance do
we gather the ammunition required
to rise above our circumstances.

Lionel Messi, who was born with a
growth hormone deficiency and
Christiano Ronaldo was born in

abject poverty in Portugal. Yet it

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is their passion and dedication that made them reach the pinnacle of beauty in their sport.

This long walk, filled with trials and tribulations brings along a lot of suffering. Yet, it is this very suffering that forges the character of an individual. It is no coincidence that in both Ramayana and Mahabharata, the protagonists had to undergo long and arduous periods of Vanavas (forest life) before fulfilling their duty.

Just like walking strengthens the muscles of the leg, this long walk builds the muscles required to achieve success. When a caterpillar undergoes metamorphosis, it has to struggle a lot to break out of the cocoon. It is this very

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struggle that strengthens its wings and helps it become the beautiful butterfly we see.

And just like it is natural for a toddler to fall down while learning to walk, we would also inevitably face some setbacks. We must ^{then} get back, dust ourselves and continue our walk. Japan became a global power after Meiji restoration only to fall back to the ground with nuclear bombs dropped on it. Yet like a phoenix rising from the ashes, it bounced back within just a few decades.

This whole journey filled with setbacks and failures also inculcates a sense of humility among us. This also instills a sense of

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empathy towards fellow walkers. This is why every religion includes some sort of voluntary suffering, be it the long pilgrimages in Hinduism or fasting for a month during Ramadan in Islam. This suffering builds empathy and respect towards everyone chasing their own version of beauty.

But is this falling down and failing a necessary checkpoint on our path to beautiful days? Not necessarily. At times, ~~be~~ life might itself bless us with beautiful days. But without the long walk, we wouldn't have the muscles required to sustain it for long. Many countries in the world struck a geographic lottery with oil reserves beneath them. ~~But~~, most of them wouldn't

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Capitalistic on them as they didn't have the necessary institutional strength, generally built through decades of patience and resilience.

Also our walk doesn't end once the beautiful days arrive. We need to continue walking to sustain them. Nature can be a great source of learning in this regard. During the warmer days, ants and squirrels accumulate food so that eventually when the cold winters arrive, they can continue to stay comfortable.

But even with the best of our efforts, as the cycle of life rolls on, the beautiful days come to an end. This is when, during these periods of darkness, we require the guidance of a guide, teacher or

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a mentor. This is why many accomplished individuals of the past have had Gurus who they could turn to. Examples include Chanakya for Chandragupta Maurya, Ramakrishna for Swami Vivekananda and Ramkrishn Achrekar for Sachin Tendulkar.

At times, the long chase for beautiful days demands that we have individuals who support us.

This walking as a group divides the burden and makes the walk more enjoyable. Moreover, we end up reaching destinations, which we might not have reached had we kept walking alone. Many of humanity's achievements like eradication of small pox, protecting ozone layer through world war

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a third world war have become possible because many countries joined hands to walk together.

Sometimes, the long walk gets indeed tiresome. The muscles start aching and we are tempted to give up. This is where we must remember that stagnation implies decay in an ever changing world. The likes of Kodak and Nokia, which were market leaders a couple of decades ago are ~~so~~ redundant today as they did not keep up the pace of the walk of the rest of the world.

The famous Chinese philosopher Confucius says "It doesn't matter how slow you go as long as you do not stop".

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When we are tempted to give up, we must ~~be~~ keep this quote in mind and keep moving.

Also, as the walk gets longer and the path gets steeper, it is natural to doubt ourselves if beautiful days are actually on the horizon and if the walk is actually worth it. It is during these times that we must remind ourselves of our purpose, give a meaning to our suffering and keep walking - Viktor Frankl, in his book, 'Man's Search for Meaning' writes that the prisoners who made it out of Nazi concentration camps are ~~not~~ those found a meaning in their small daily acts

and kept persisting with faith.

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But if we keep walking,
is there a ^{guarantee} ~~guarantee~~ that beautiful
days are waiting for us? The harsh
reality is that there is no such
guarantee as life might throw all
kinds of lemons at us. This is precisely
the message of ancient Greek
tragedies that bad things can happen
to good people and all we can
do is accepting it.

But then what is the point
of walking if nothing is a given?
The answer is that the true beauty
lies in walking. The recent interview
of Scottie Scheffler, the world champion
in golf, went viral. He says that
even the biggest trophy gives a high
only for a few hours and then it
is back to normal. He further says that
true happiness is found in his day to

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कोई निम्नलिखित
न लिखना
उम्मीदवारों
को प्रश्न संख्या में
कोई निम्नलिखित
न लिखना

day activities, being able to practice
and being a good family man.

When we are walking we are
so caught up in our imagined
destination that we tend to miss
the beauty around us. As we speak,
thousands of people are breathing
this last wishing they had just
a few more hours. Hence, we should
not ignore this blessing of life and
realize that beauty is all around
us, we just need to open our eyes!

The movie Forrest Gump has a
famous dialogue, "life is like a box
of chocolates. You never know which
one you are gonna get". There is ~~nothing~~
wrong we must keep striving for the
beautiful box of chocolates, yet
keep relishing every chocolate we
get along the way!

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FOR ONLY WHEN WE ACCEPT WHAT IS,
CAN WE BEGIN TO SHAPE WHAT MIGHT BE

NBA ... the basketball league of USA. It is the dream of every professional basketball player to play in the NBA. One of them was Steph Curry, the son of a former NBA player. Yet his path wasn't smooth.

His growth stopped at 6'2 wherein the average height of NBA players is 6'7. Moreover, he was lean and lanky. People wrote him off saying that he can't even go near the basket against heavy built defenders.

Steph wasn't deterred. He accepted that he can't drive to the basket. So? He started shooting from outside the three point line. He became so good at it that his team ~~became~~ won

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of the teams emulated Steph. One man's determination changed the way an entire spot is played. This became possible because Steph Curry accepted his flaws, recognised his strengths and shaped his own destiny.

Just like different positions on a dashboard, life keeps throwing various challenges. To face those challenges, we must first undertake a humble self analysis in an objective and dispassionate manner.

Once we understand ourselves and the problem, we give ourselves a better chance of solving it. This must be coupled with enormous self belief to keep striving even if the objective odds of success seem low.



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We all have dreams and goals that we want to achieve. But as it is said, the journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. Hence, we must undertake an objective analysis of our own situation and start from there. When the makers of our Constitution came together, they took a dispassionate ^{view} of all the problems of independent India. They drafted the constitution placing necessary safeguards which became the foundation of our republic.

Also, at times, we only have limited resources at our disposal.

Once we have a clear estimation of our resources, we can leverage them in innovative ways. IAS Armstrong came completing a road with public donations in Manipur or

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DAS Awanish Sharma's bike ambulance initiative stand as shining examples of achieving more with less.

Acceptance is the first step of progress. We must begin with the acceptance of the situation, both the good and bad acceptance. This lack of acceptance of WHO in the early stages of Covid-19 led it to being a full blown pandemic. And we seem to be repeating the same mistake by not accepting the danger posed by Artificial intelligence.

The beautiful thing about acceptance is once we completely accept our own flaws and own them up, we can end converting them into our unique strengths.



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Japanese Kintsugi pottery lacks the cracks in vases with gold lacquer giving it a beautiful design. Thus, its cracks which were supposed to be its flaw ended up being its niche.

This acceptance is not just limited to the self but also extends to the situation. It means having a holistic understanding of the problem at hand. When Prof. HC Verma taught Physics, he identified that a key problem with Western books was a lack of cultural resonance with Indian students. This insight made him center his books around applications of Physics in Indian surroundings making it one of the best sellers in Physics.

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This whole process of looking oneself in the mirror is tough. This is because it reveals parts of ourselves or facets of the problem that we don't like facing. When Arjuna had to face his cousins during Mahabharata, he wanted to leave the battlefield to escape the moral conflict. However, as Sri Krishna advised Arjuna, we must summon up courage and accept the issue in all its facets.

This process of facing the situation with courage and accepting gives us deep inner strength to tackle the problem. This in fact, forms the central part of Stoic philosophy. Marcus Aurelius, in fact advises to visualize the and

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accept the most negative outcome possible so that we get the courage to face any problem.

In addition to courage, the criticality of the situation may fill us with a ~~best~~ strong motivation. When ^{NGO} Goonj founder Anshu Gupta went around on a photography tour, he saw a small girl hugging a dead body to keep herself warm during the harsh winter. This chilling sight opened his eyes to the problems of clothing for marginalised communities culminating in the formation of Goonj.

Also, it is only when we understand the constraints we have to deal with, can we find

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ways to mitigate them helping us shape what might be. It is understanding of ISRO's budgetary constraints that pushed them to achieve Mangalyaan on an economical budget. And it is the digital literacy constraints that ^{forced} NPCI to make UPI an easy to use app which became reason for its success.

And this process of analysis and acceptance is an ongoing one. This is because the time and situation keep changing and ~~so~~ it becomes vital to keep evolving.

This is best demonstrated in the case of Indian judiciary which keeps adding various checks and safeguards for progressive realisation of rights in time with the changing society.

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This approach of continuous analysis also helps us to bounce back after setbacks. It helps us understand the reasons behind our failure and gives us a better chance to correct it. When the likes of Abhinav Bindra and Vijender Singh failed to clinch medals at the 2004 Olympics, they ~~were~~ ~~be~~ corrected their flaws and stood on the podium 4 years later.

At the other end of the spectrum, lack of acceptance and living in a utopian world would eventually result in a fall. This is seen in the case of many startups in recent times going for IPOs for premium valuations. However the reality soon resulting in plummeting of their stock value.

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But then arises a question? Weren't all the renowned innovators considered delusional at one point of time? When Steve Jobs spoke of a keyboardless phone or Elon Musk spoke of interplanetary travel, people dismissed them off as delusional. But is their confidence stemmed from sound understanding and just principles thinking. However, at times, a kind of delusional self belief becomes necessary. The movie 'Bee' starts with a quote, "By all laws of aerodynamics, a bee shouldn't be able to fly. But it flies ~~anyway~~ anyway because it doesn't concern itself with the opinions of humans."

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Though the quote is likely fictional, it drives home an important point. We must not be too bogged down by existing analysis as they might be incorrect. Netflix, ~~was~~ in its early days, was tuned down for an acquisition and VC's sneered at AirBnB's idea of strangers sleeping on your couch. Yet they kept going the analysis of experts turned out to be wrong.

Also, our analysis is just limited to current circumstances. And who knows, they might change in our favour. In our childhood story of the rabbit and tortoise, objectively it makes no sense for a tortoise to challenge the rabbit for a race. Yet it kept on putting

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and ended up clinching an unlikely ^{win}
all of this brings us to the
famous Stockdale Paradox. When
Admiral Stockdale was asked how
he survived the as a war prisoner
in Vietnam, he ~~was~~ said it was a
mix of two thought processes -
an understanding of graveness of the
current situation and yet having
unwavering faith that it will
all work out in the end.

This is the exact thought
process that we all ought to adopt.
i.e. having a holistic acceptance
of the current situation yet believing
in our ability to shape our
destiny, just like Steph Curry ended
up shaping the entire sport of

basketball to his riches

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