

(Please do not write anything except the question number in this space)

कृपया इस स्थान में प्रश्न संख्या के अतिरिक्त कुछ न लिखें।

# UPSC

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उम्मीदवारों को इस हाशिए में नहीं लिखना चाहिए  
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4)

YOUR VISIONS CAN BECOME CLEAR  
ONLY WHEN YOU CAN LOOK INTO YOUR  
OWN HEART

A young school going kid Navcen got an opportunity to become a member of the school drama team. Performing dramas year after year, he fell in love with it so much that he wanted to pursue it as a career. But owing to lack of family support, he killed his dream and became an engineer.

Fast forward 10 years, Navcen is now a graduate of NIT Ropar working in a high paying job in London. But one day, he got reminded of his deepest desire. Immediately, he quit his job which led to issues ranging from family rifts to social disapprovals. But he kept on listening to his heart and finally started revisiting

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years of perseverance. He is none other than Naween Polishetty, a renowned Telugu lead actor who played the Aid character in Chichore!

From the time we are born, the world starts its job of conditioning us, starting ~~to~~<sup>from</sup> which career we must pursue to which God we must pray. In the midst of too many voices, it is the heart which can clear our vision as it is personalised to us and is guided by universal principles. Yet we must ensure that the voice of heart is itself not corrupted by the world.

The task of decision making is generally referred to as a battle between the mind and the heart. The mind is filled with external knowledge and gives its suggestions

based on the popular stand that, it

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is the heart which gives personalised insights uniquely customised to us. The movie Idiots depicts an education system constantly forcing the students to run an imaginary race. Yet, the one who wins at the end, Rancho is the one who listened to his heart and pursued his natural curiosity.

The voice of heart can guide us correctly because it knows us better than anyone. It has all the answers because it knows our values, our strengths and our fears. In the book, 'The Alchemist', the protagonist Santiago sets out on a treasure hunt. After a long journey without success he finds the treasure beneath his starting point. Our story is no different as we keep seeking external validations and opinions when in fact we should be looking inward.

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When we look inward, the answers we get act as a fulcrum of support. When times get challenging and eyes get blurred, this inner voice acts as the North Star to guide us. India's Independence, <sup>Indian democracy</sup> has <sup>seen</sup> <sup>gone</sup> various witnessed many setbacks, some even undermining democracy itself. Yet the judiciary, with the Constitution as the guiding light kept doing the necessary course correction.

When we march along a path, it is easier to get lost as we tend to get attracted towards shiny objects on the way. ~~It~~ It is our heart which reminds us of our purpose and keeps us focused. The likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid could stay at the top as they stayed true to the

love of the game. be true to your

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stories of athletes, from Unod  
Kambli to Prithevi Shah who got  
distracted and fell off along the way.

The voices of the world are  
so loud and its demands so  
consuming that it is easier to get  
caught in an endless cycle. Just  
like Sisyphus in Greek mythology  
who keeps pushing a boulder up  
the hill only to see it roll down,  
we many of us are stuck in endless  
pursuits without a direction. It  
becomes vital to take a pause  
to deeply question ourselves and  
realign our paths.

Just because we try looking  
into our heart doesn't mean the  
answers will emerge immediately. ~~It~~  
At times, it requires enormous  
patience to first silence the

pre-conditioned voices of the mind to

Page

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allow the answers to emerge. This is why many spiritual leaders, from Buddha to Mahavira, from Krishnamurthy to Ramana Maharshi had to embrace prolonged solitude in their journey of self-realisation.

Also, while the world conditions us based on calculations of loss and profit, the heart guides based on universal principles of love, respect and compassion. This gives us a renewed sense of purpose in pursuing our vision. ~~Where~~ a country like China pursues methods like debt-trap diplomacy to further its self-centred ambitions. However India listened to its heart and pursued initiatives like Vaccine Maitri and Operation Bad keeping its vision of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam alive.

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At times, our visions get blurred because a lack of courage clouds our vision. It is only when we look deep inside do we gather the courage required to keep going. From Copernicus to Galileo who championed the cause of truth, from Vishwanathan Anand to Nithin Kamath who pursued offbeat career paths, they all had to listen to their heart to gather the courage needed to keep moving. And at times, we purposefully put on a blindfold and continue to live in denial. It is the only the heart which can show us the mirror because we can fool the world but not ourselves. Countries which live in denial change denial and the organisations which pursue a path live

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इस हार्जिए में  
कोई लिखना  
नाहिए।  
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Greenwashing, are in most cases, aware  
of the real picture. But it is  
only when they listen to their  
conscience can they put their vision  
above short term pressures.

Also, the long term costs  
of not listening to the heart can  
be immense. This is because no  
individual or organisation can live  
for long without out of consonance with  
its values. The events such as  
the American Revolution and the

French Revolution took place,  
because for too long, the rulers  
ruled without paying heed  
to the voice of the society.

Sometimes, we might  
actually want to look into our  
heart to clear our vision but

end up listening to our ambition. It is

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during those situations that we benefit from having a mentor or a teacher by our side. Just like how Lord Sri Krishna guided a confused Aryuna or how Aamir Khan spotted the kids innate talent in Tare Zameen Par, we would benefit at times having a mentor by our side.

However, this process of seeking answers from within comes with a cautionary ~~take~~. This is because it is possible to misinterpret the fleeting momentary feelings driven by fear and pleasure as the voice of the heart. The cautionary tales of millions of people who lost their hard earned money in stock market or get rich quick schemes serve as cautionary tales to not make decisions based on greed or fear.

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Also, what if the voice of heart itself is corrupted? This possibility is always there because the moral values of our heart are also shaped by the society. The existence of brainwashed terrorists resorting to terrorism to fulfill their "life's mission" or parents killing their own daughters to "protect the honour of family" shows that the voice of heart should also be tempered against an ethical gauge.

So far, we have seen ~~why~~ how our visions get clearer and aligned with our purpose by seeking answers from the heart. Thus, we must always strive to stay true to our inner self while at the same time critically examining ourselves to

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ensure that our inner self ~~manifests~~  
reflects our true values.

So how do we create a  
society which encourages every  
individual to stay true to one's  
heart. ~~As~~, Nelson Mandela said,

"If you want to change the  
world, start with children". Hence

education system should ~~not~~ <sup>ensure,</sup>  
not conformity but the blossoming  
of every child in line with their  
innate talents and inner spirits.

Also, media and social  
media should reframe narratives  
to highlight trailblazers who  
defied the norms of society and  
went on to achieve success. Such  
stories would end up motivating  
an entire generation and lead



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them courage to follow the vision dictated by their heart.

The famous Bhakti poet Kabir has a saying, "God is inside you, inside each one of you". So instead of chasing external opinions, we would all be well seeking guided by seeking inner guidance from our heart. In pursuing such a path, we might succeed or fail but we would surely be happy and satisfied living a life in consonance with our values. And if everyone does so, the society will be a much happier place and humanity as a collective will continue to scale greater heights.

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## BECOMING IS BETTER THAN BEING

It was the time of Mahabharata war. Abhimanyu was just killed and Arjuna vowed to avenge him by killing Jayadratha, ~~the~~ the one who killed Abhimanyu. Jayadratha, fearing the battle prowess of Arjuna asked Dronacharya, "Arjuna and I were equally talented during our time at your Gurukul. How did Arjuna end up being much better than me?"

Dronacharya replied, "Arjuna never stopped learning. While the rest of you were satisfied being where you at your current level, Arjuna kept on becoming a better version of himself. Doing so, Arjuna became an archer who is peerless

in the history of Bharatavarsha."

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This story conveys us the power of 'striving to become better'. As human beings, we are born improving. Yet, after a certain point, we stop improving ~~owing to~~ and start approaching life in a passive manner. Yet is the one who continuously becomes <sup>better</sup> who achieves her highest potential. At the same time, we should never underestimate the power of being i.e. the appreciating the beauty of our current situation.

Darwin's theory of evolution suggests that we evolved from apes. Scientific studies point out that we share 97% of our DNA with apes. Then what makes us so different from them? The answer is while apes were contented being who they

are humanity <sup>Page</sup> kept on becoming better.

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This created a ~~gap~~ <sup>gap</sup> significant gulf between humanity and the rest of primates.

This process of becoming better keeps plugging our loopholes. It ends up making more well rounded and a better version of ourselves.

For instance, efforts put in by NGO Nikes brought about RTI making the Indian democracy a more robust one. Similarly, efforts by NGO Usakha brought about the POSH Act making workspaces safe for women.

Becoming and being are basically two different mindsets. While the state of being breeds stagnation, the state of becoming encourages taking on of new challenges. This is similar to what

Carol Dweck wrote in her book, Mindset

Page

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She describes the fixed mindset as  
one fearful of challenges and failure.  
On the other hand, growth mindset  
propels people towards pushing their  
comfort zone. Needless to say, it is  
the latter who end up more successful.

It becomes unproductive to  
keep becoming better because only  
then we can end up reaching  
our highest potential. If a seed  
is satisfied with being a seed,  
we wouldn't have seen the  
enormous tree. Similarly, it is  
only because the caterpillars kept  
striving that it became the  
beautiful butterfly that amazes us.

The necessity of becoming  
better everyday is seen all around.  
It is only those who undergo

continuous improvements are the ones

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who survive. This is evident in the ideological debate of capitalism vs communism. ~~while~~ capitalism, on one hand encouraged becoming and thus became a successful model. Whereas, communism emphasized on the state of being and ended up taking a backseat.

also <sup>through</sup> this mindset of becoming, we end up being a positive multiplier on others. It is because that only we become capable enough that we can help others.

India's mindset of becoming helped it become one of the largest economies. As a result, it is able to play a positive role in the world through its developmental assistance to weaker countries.

Moreover, it is not just through tangible efforts but also through

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inspiring others that we contribute in a positive manner. A person who strives to become better inspires others to become their best versions as well. The stories of Phurbhai Ambari and Jamshedji Tata Island as shining testaments to this fact.

Often, through this process of continuous striving, we end up becoming a version ~~version~~ diametrically opposite to our older version. In other words, we end up

reaching heights we didn't think were possible. This ~~is~~ improvement

is what transformed the likes of Virat Kohli and Novak Djokovic from just talented <sup>youngsters</sup> to the legends we know them today.

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This mindset also becomes vital because flaws keep popping up time to time. While a state of being ignores these flaws, a mindset of becoming undertakes prompt corrective measures. The Mandas in ancient times were a prosperous dynasty. Yet it is their inability to correct their flaws that led to their eventual toppling by Chandragupta Maurya.

At its core, becoming is not even about improving having measurable improvements. Many a time, it is just about the efforts put in. The likes of Jyothiba Phule and Dr. Ambedkar kept doing their work even in the face of enormous social resistance. For years, they had little to show but eventually, all their efforts added up to be a fruit.

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In fact, we can safely say that there is no state of being at all. There is only becoming, either becoming better or becoming worse. The likes of Kodak, Nokia and Yahoo adopted a state of being after becoming market leaders. However, in a changing world, stagnation implies decay and they soon vanished.

In some cases though, individuals have indeed attained a perfect state of being. The likes of Buddha and Mahavira have achieved perfect states of being at peace. However, for the vast majority, if we don't become better, the destructive tendencies of the mind takes over and destroy us. The fact that 40% of NBA players end up getting

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bankrupt shows that the mind can destroy us if we allow it to. Thus it is prudent to take the path of becoming.

However, this process of becoming puts an enormous pressure on oneself. The constant pressure to become someone or reach somewhere becomes suffocating, especially if imposed by the external world. The instances of student suicides in Kota show the downside of this mindset of always becoming.

Also, we need to ask ourselves what happens after we become the version we aspired to be? The honest answer is nothing changes much. This is famously known as the Arrival Fallacy where we keep postponing our happiness to an

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imagined future whereas in reality  
it is never found in the deterministic.

This brings us to a vital  
realization - there is power and  
beauty in being as well. At this  
very moment, there are thousands  
of people who are breathing their  
last wishing they had a few  
more hours to live. We need to  
acknowledge the fact that every  
moment is a blessing and we  
should not postpone our happiness  
to some future imagined scenario.

~~Thus~~, This brings us to a  
situation similar to the  
Stockdale Paradox. When Admiral  
Stockdale was questioned as to  
how he was able to survive in  
the Vietnam as a Prisoner of War,

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he replied, "It is mix of two paradoxical thought processes. On one hand, it is accepting the given of situation. On the other hand, it is about having an unshakable faith that a great future is waiting for me."

We need to adopt a mindset similar to this. On one hand, we need to be grateful for everything we have. Yet, simultaneously, we need to keep striving for a better future version. It is only then that our efforts for becoming stem from a place of gratitude and not from a sense of lack.

This mindset is crucial to increase the happiness quotient of the individual as well as the society. Hence, the workplaces, media

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नहीं लिखना  
चाहिए।  
Candidates  
must not  
write on this  
margin

and society should learn to value  
not just the final achievement  
but the effort. Once we start  
valuing efforts over results, we can  
truly unlock ~~the~~ <sup>our true</sup> potential.

The Japanese Kintsugi pottery  
has a unique concept. It takes pots  
with cracks and fills the cracks  
with gold giving it a beautiful  
pattern. We are all cracked pots  
with many shortcomings in our  
lives. We need to accept them  
in their entirety with gratitude.  
Yet, we must continue to make  
it better just like the Kintsugi  
technique. If we all adopt this  
mindset, we will make our  
society a place filled with  
improvement and filled with happiness