

# VAJIRAM & RAVI

ESSAY PROGRAMME

Test - 1

ADMIN. NO.:

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**UPSC CSE 2024**

**AIR-97**

Overall Performance

Essay 1

Essay 2

VAJIRAM & RAVI

Evaluator Code and Signature:

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# VAJIRAM & RAVI

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## Section - A (Essay I)

- The only wealth which you will keep forever is the wealth you have given away.
- Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play

Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.

It was a Sunday afternoon with scorching heat in Sharmaji's household. With no electricity in the house, he and his five year old son were listening to the radio on their wooden chair in the verandah.

The radio exclaimed, "Niti Ayog presents another vision document on how to achieve

viksit Bharat @100." Excited after hearing this, his son asks him, "Papa!! Does that mean we will get electricity now?"

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Sharmaji laughed and said that the document is only the theoretical aspect of the strategy

~~he~~ He added that they would have to wait and watch how the implementation unfolds.

This incident highlights that theory is one thing but experience is altogether another. Without theory, experience would be blind because there would be an uncertain journey with uncertain outcome. Theory provides "tried and tested" methodologies to carefully navigate the course of experience. However, if experience does not follow theory, then the latter's purpose remains unfulfilled. In that case, theory

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remains a mere intellectual play, staying bottled up in textbooks and research papers. However, if the two balance and reinforce each other, then it becomes a transformative force towards bringing outcome oriented development.

Then, let's understand the role of theory in experience first. If experience is not backed by theory then it fails to develop clear foresight of challenges and negatives outcomes that crosses

the journey. It is unable to adapt to any impending disasters preemptively. For example, the Industrial revolution witnessed by the world in the 19th century<sup>3</sup> (and beyond)

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did not have a theory to highlight its negative impact on the environment. The experience continued to enrich economies and standard of living across the globe. However, due to insufficient risk analysis, the question of environment was ignored up until later half of 20th century. Thus the "blindness" of the experience led it to an irreversible point of climate change. Of course, theories are developing now to minimize the impact, but if proactive guidance and research accompanied the entire journey of experience, the threat would not have been this grave!!!

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Being blind, does not always need to yield suboptimal result. Some times, the peculiar and unprecedented situations call for solutions that are yet to develop theoretically. This is called "learning by doing approach", where experience becomes the ultimate guidance for constant improvement. ~~is~~ For example, India was faced with a peculiar problem of rural poverty and patriarchal mindset hampering women's growth. The solution it came up with was mobilizing women in Self Help groups and financially empowering them to start microenterprises. The initiative

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in its journey faced multiple setbacks, since it was a novel idea without much theory.

Yet, each setback made it stronger. ~~and~~ course correction like credit availability, skilling projects, technological support to the groups and the latest schemes of DRONE Didi and LAKHPATI Didi highlight the success of this blind journey.

Moving on, lets understand what happens if the experience does not follow the ~~journey~~ theory at all. The role of theory is to provide a backbone of estimated risks, methodologies, guaranteed course of success and predicted outcome.

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The glory of theory lies in its objectivity and vigorous scientific and logical reasoning.

But most importantly, its glory lies in its ability to yield successful experience. For,

example, Nobel laureate economist ROMER, theorized the role of research and development in

ensuring long term and resilient growth of economies. Many western economies like Israel,

USA, Germany invest heavily in research and development. Yet, the developing economies like

India ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> spend, even spend

0.5% of GDP on RnD, thus

failing to implement the theory of Romer. In such cases the purpose of theory

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remains unfulfilled and it remains a mere intellectual play.

This is, however, not to discredit the role of theory in entirety. It is still the beginning point of infusing romantic ideas and inspirations in pursuing the experience.

It nudges individuals to aspire for higher ideals and goal, following a predetermined path. Taking the case of

Gandhiji's theory of Ramrajya it aspires to create a classless society ~~but~~ with village as the political unit of self governance.

Even though the theory has not been realized in entirety, it aides in defining a collective vision for India@100.

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Moreover, several policy changes like giving constitutional status to Panchayats after 73rd amendment in 1992, can be said to have taken inspiration from it. Thus, even the "intellectual play" of theory plays a significant role in shaping new ideas defining civilization.

The force is then unleashed when the ideals and logical exposition of theory meets the might of experience. The two reinforce each other in a stronger union. The case study of IAS Sushant Gaurav in gharkhand exemplifies the transformative outcome that can be ushered in with their

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union. He used the theoretical wisdom of dryland farming and millet cultivation, and turned it into actionable outcome. Along with his his "experience" as an administrator aided him in persuading farmers to shift to millets, from rice. In the process though, the setbacks like lower yield, lower adaptation and building market helped him to come up with innovative solutions that strengthened the theory. The model now ready to be implemented in several other districts demonstrate the inseparable relationship between theory and experience.

Different sets of values and policies, however

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nurtures ~~research~~ theory and experience distinctively. For theory development, its pertinent to develop research culture in our schools and universities, foster a culture of speech and expression and spend higher share of GDP on research and development. On the other hand, for pursuing meaningful experiences, values of hardwork, perseverance and commitment are necessary to be built. Further, adopting "Karya Sanskriti" (work culture) and "Kartavya Path" (Path of duty) ensures, action driven and outcome oriented attitude.

Thus, to give wings to the Niti Ayog document of India@100, we must

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Strive to find that delicate balance between ~~research~~ theory and experience and now to only tread forward.

In words of H.W. Longfellow,

"Let us then be up and going with a heart for any fate still achieving, still pursuing learn to labour and to wait."

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## Section - B (Essay II)

- a. The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history  
b. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world

The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.

India's glorious civilizational history is a witness to some of the world's greatest empires. Some kingdoms were resilient in the face of adversity, while the others crumbled without realizing their real potential.

Be it the Mauryan empire of ancient India or the Gupta empire of Northern India or even the Delhi Sultanate of the medieval times, every time an empire tried to overcentralize power in one core, it faced rebellion in the regional parts. Ultimately,

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leading to their breakdown due to clashes by local chieftains. Although this pattern is present throughout history, leaders across time and space commit the same mistake of dismissing regional aspirations and following policy of decentralisation. Thus it's fair to say that the only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from it.

Humans, societies and nations are found committing the same mistake that gave disastrous results in the past. Failing to learn the valuable lessons that history teaches us, it is possible for a society to remain stuck in the vicious cycle of backwardness.

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The question then is that if the consequence of not learning from history is so grave, then why do we <sup>instead learn from it</sup> not ~~do that~~? It is because the basic nature of humans and their vices have passed down through generations!!

Rousseau, a philosopher from medieval times, argues that even though humans are born with a "blank slate", the process of socialization, turns them into self serving individuals. This nature of putting one's own needs before others clouds the rationality of the mind. Thus, individuals "choose" to avoid or blissfully ignore the truth that

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History echoes. History has time and again echoed the victory of justice over immoral, corrupt and extractive acts.

For instance, there was a time when slavery was the norm. Rampant slave trade, subhuman treatment of slaves and their constant exploitation marked much of the history till the 19th century. Ultimately, it led to threatening of social fabric and national security of countries in the lead west.

Although slavery is no more the norm, the capitalist model of development failed to learn from the lessons of the past. and it New forms of slavery at the workplace, growing debt divide between the capital owner and worker

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class yet again pose threat to social fabric and national security. Riots and protests due to joblessness and inequality are growing across the globe.

Thus, what is needed is to learn from history and adapt the capitalist model of development in ways that addresses aspirations of all.

Moving on, another aspect where we have failed to learn from history is

in our quest for power. ~~for~~

Since time immemorial, power struggle has been a constant

reason for human misery.

It has often lead to different forms of warfare, but its

very nature remains constant.

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The destruction witnessed by the world in the first world war was not enough to put an end to this futile arms race and usher an era of peace, cooperation and diplomacy.

The destruction in WWII was even worse as choice of weaponry shifted to nuclear technology. Fast forward to the year 2024, we have yet again failed to learn from history!! Fast paced development of space warfare, digital warfare, technology warfare is obvious to the horrific consequences of aggressive arms race. The cries and despondent faces of those who lost their loved ones in the Ukraine-Russia war or the Israel-Hamas conflict must

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be a wake-up call for the whole of humanity to finally start learning the irreplaceable values that history teaches us.

The issue of power struggle is further compounded by myopic world views of individuals. History is full of lessons that "until everyone is safe, no one is safe". It thus proposes a wider world view in the spirit of vasudhaiva kutumbakam (one world family.) For instance, in the [COVID-19] pandemic, the outbreak could not be controlled until immunization drive reached every house and every country. India's

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Policy of "vaccine mafias", to gift the free vaccines to its partner nations, was a step to realise the same lesson from history. However, the phenomenon of "vaccine hoarding" by several countries made the situation worse. The ongoing M-Pox outbreak is yet again repeating the same mistake. Although started in Africa, its now spreading across the world as African nations haven't been able to access the vaccines from the nations that have them. Yet again, ignoring an important lesson from history and holding onto myopic worldviews is costing the global public good and basic human rights.

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The above arguments must ~~be~~ not become a universal truth. If there are cases where we have not learnt from history, there are also visionary leaders who were wise enough to use historical precedents as their superpowers. Be it, Nelson Mandela who was inspired by Gandhiji's Satyagraha or Jyotiba Phule who developed the resolve to fight untouchability, after Abraham Lincoln's victory in the USA. What is really needed is COURAGE to introspect on the truth that history echoes.

It's wisely said that one's journey towards success can be highly shortened if

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they learn from the experiences and failures of others. There is NO TIME or the luxury for us to keep making the same mistakes again and again. It's time to turn towards that vast repository of wisdom, knowledge and experiences ~~that~~ and have the courage to accept the truth. Because, ultimately, only

"Satyameva Jayateh"

(Truth alone wins).

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The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.

Index

## Overcentralization

Thesis

⇒ Repeated mistakes, failed to imbibe learning <sup>Basic</sup> human nature. ⇒ ~~universal~~ ~~truth~~

↳ ⇒ Self serving narrative  
1) Ignore to see the truth  
→ Slavery ⇒ Backlash  
→ failed to evolve the capitalist model enough  
↳ Ineq, social clashes.

2) Power Struggle - inherent nature  
↳ NSG → 23 !!  
↳ new modes of warfare

3) Myopic view ⇒ outbreaks → ineq within nation  
↳ COVID, MPOV  
↳ lockdown affect

4) Not universal truth

↳ wise man ⇒ History  
↳ Nelson Mandela ⇒ Gandhi  
↳ Phule ⇒ Lincoln

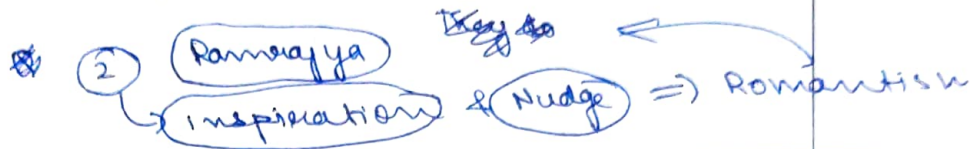
5) course correction, tragedies  
↳ urge  
\* Ruanda \*

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## Space for Rough Work



### Q3) Need of both

- 1) Mutually Reinforcing  
 ex) League of Nations & UN

### 2) own place

#### Theories

- intellectual thinking
- education
- FOSE
- R+D

#### Experiences

- Action driven
- PPP
- committed bureaucracy

ex) IAS <sup>Sushant</sup> Sushant Gawrani

knowledge + but a wish

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45

Only wealth which you will keep forever is the wealth you have given away

(Interview => Ashoka)

Thesis => Bob Marley => wealth of a meaningless life.

15.5 ③

③ Goodwill -> vaccine + Meitai.

② Put -> Loyalty => TATA => career

① Individual -> Satisfaction / Character + Self satisfaction  
-> Princess Diana

④ Sound Conscience => wealth of long life.  
-> whistles => Meiga

⑤ Sacrifices => made => Buddha or Tirthankar or gandhi  
-> greater cause  
-> wealth of legacy

⑥ life => myopic => Material  
-> broaden => "Real wealth" -> fulfilling the purpose of life

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⑥ + 1 + 1 + 1  
-> ③