

VAJIRAM & RAVI

ESSAY PROGRAMME

Test - 1

ADMIN. NO.:

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NAME:

KSHITIJ ADITYA SHARMA

*Mobile No.:

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UPSC CSE 2024

AIR-58

Overall Performance

Essay 1

Essay 2

Evaluator Code and Signature:

Essay 1:

	Parameters	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
Introduction	Context building; Thesis Statement; Scope				
Body	Presentation (Handwriting etc)				
	Macro Dimensions				
	Micro Dimensions - Arguments				
	Supporting examples/facts				
	Objectivity				
	Content Relevance				
	Continuity/flow in writing				
Conclusion	Overall Summary; Vision; Tone etc				

Essay 2:

	Parameters	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
Introduction	Context building; Thesis Statement; Scope				
Body	Presentation (Handwriting etc)				
	Macro Dimensions				
	Micro Dimensions - Arguments				
	Supporting examples/facts				
	Objectivity				
	Content Relevance				
	Continuity/flow in writing				
Conclusion	Overall Summary; Vision; Tone etc				

Evaluator/Reviewer Suggestions













8

The only wealth you keep forever is the wealth you give away.

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The greatest crisis of the 21st century is a crisis of collective identity. Our myopic notions of well-being often create a veil of ignorance, leading us to focus on amassing personal wealth rather than ensuring collective well-being. However, our true wealth is not what is amassed, but what is given away in the service of others.

History, too, teaches us the same lesson. The great king Ashoka chose the path of renunciation of power, prestige and personal prosperity

to pursue Dharma based on the well-being of all. For this great act of giving away, he has been immortalised in the annals of history.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to then ask - why do we dwell so much upon personal wealth and enrichment? Let us try to explore this seeming contradiction.

The worldly ways of wealth

In our modern society, the temptation of self-enrichment has been elevated to a virtue and capitalism seems to have become a religion unto itself.

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This arises from a narrow conception of well being which, though apparently rational, is merely a mirage. Often, our fear of deprivation and the existing inequality clouds our judgment where we fail to see the big picture.

To illustrate this point, one may note how developing world is facing the consequences of the developed nations' refusal to uphold the spirit of climate justice and the Paris agreement.

Similarly, Pharma companies denying drug licenses during the pandemic, and rising wage disparities also point to an emergent moral crisis.

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However, this approach has its inherent limitations, as we shall now examine in some detail.

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Why solipsism is self-defeating

In his magnum opus Ozymandias, the great poet Shelley explores the fading into oblivion of the once great king who had amassed great wealth and built imposing monuments.

In a similar vein, the global challenges of climate change, ozone depletion and terrorism cannot be solved by one country alone, however wealthy it may be. They require a spirit of cooperation and

collective concern shared among all,
by all and for all.

Further, when wealth becomes an
end in itself, it pushes us towards
greed and egoism. This then creates
a cycle of disvirtue that creates
problems like social inequality, rising
crimes and erosion of collective
conscience.

Hence, we must examine the true
meaning of wealth, which goes well
beyond our monetary means.

The true meaning of wealth

In Hindu philosophy, Artha is
one of the four purusharthas of human
life, yet it is seen only as a

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means towards the achievement of
the higher goal of moksha.

Parallely, our scriptures also
emphasise on the non-material forms
of wealth like the wealth of friendship

that Krishna gave to Arjun, or
the wealth of service given by
Lord Hanuman to Lord Rama.

Similarly, the success of Alexander
as a world-conqueror was enabled
by the wealth of wisdom of Aristotle.
This wealth is not something that
can be taken away.

More contemporarily, the wealth
of love and care of Kailash Satyarthi
towards children is something that

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humanity will always remember him
by, not to be forgotten easily.

The holders of this wealth should
try their best to give it away
not for their own fame or recognition
but towards far greater callings.

Service to humanity through true wealth

The poet Longfellow has said in
'A Psalm to life' that "the soul is
dead that sleeps". Thus, one who
lives for himself cannot create
a permanent mark on the palimpsest
of humanity.

Above all else, as Indians, it
is our fundamental duty to promote
a spirit of humanity and our

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composite culture, as directed by our constitution.

Further, giving away our true wealth also helps build social capital and create a more inclusive society, as exemplified by Mother Teresa's act of giving her wealth of care and compassion to others.

Even at a personal level, the spirit of giving away freed us from our desires and material attachments, as the Mahabharata of the Buddha teaches us.

Having examined the importance of this spirit of paropkar or giving away, let us now examine the means to do so.

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The various paths of service

The poet Tulsidas has said that "Parhit saris dharam nahi bhai" or that there is no greater religion or duty than the service of others.

In our individual lives, the aspiration for giving to the society can be met through small acts of charity, or through means like shram daan (donation of labour).

Organisations can similarly strive to uphold the spirit of corporate social responsibility, community development and responsible procurement and production, as done by the Tata group of companies.

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Further, as a society, we should be guided by Jesus' teaching of "love thy neighbour" and to give back to others more than we get.

lastly, at a global level, nations should aspire to give back through the spirit of common but differentiated responsibilities and upholding the values enshrined in the UN charter for global peace and security.

Thus, by giving away the wealth of mutual care, responsibility, love and cooperation, we can create an enduring and ever-lasting foundation for it.

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To conclude, the crisis of collective identity discussed earlier can be resolved through giving away our true wealth to others. This foundation of shared prosperity will create an enduring basis for the elimination of all inequity and inequality and promote the timeless goal of sarve Bhavanhi Sukhinah.

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VAJIRAM & RAVI

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

The year was 1919. As the leaders of the most powerful nations gathered in Versailles, France and declared the end of the "war to end all wars", they swore to take measures to prevent another such war. And yet, in another 20 years, the World War II broke out in 1939, demonstrating our failure to learn from history.

It is said that "those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it". The unfortunate cycle of suffering continues as a

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result of our failure to learn the lessons that history teaches us.

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However, it is important to examine the lessons of history before we can appreciate our own inability to learn from them.

History - The strictest Teacher

It is said that the past is a mirror to the present. In some shape or form, we are forced by history to confront our own egoistic attitudes, hubris and myopia.

History gives us a wealth of examples to emulate. For instance,

the vedic society during its early period was an exemplar of gender equality as highlighted by great thinkers like Apala, Lopamudra, Yargi and Maitreyi.

Similarly, the history of medieval trade teaches us how the quest for global connectivity and exchange unleashed grave horrors in the name of slavery, and then colonialism.

Further, the correlation of peace and progress is shown by societies like Gupta era India, the Roman empire and Safavid era Iran.

Yet, it seems that we are bound or even destined to repeat the same

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mistakes today, in a world plagued with gender inequality, racial divisions and rising threats to peace. Let us try to understand why.

The hazy mirror of the past

More than anything else, it is our own failure to challenge our beliefs that leads us to tragedy.

As highlighted by Raja Ramohan Roy, attempts at reform are often seen as a threat to our understanding ~~of~~ of our "culture", that often includes various dogmatic values.

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our greed and ad-hocism is another reason. The 2008 global financial crisis came at a time when we had started to forget the lessons from the great depression in the 1920s.

Further, our apathy too, drives us towards this failure. The Rwandan genocide is a harsh reminder of this collective global apathy, even though the world swore "never again" after the Holocaust.

Finally, we may simply fail to understand the true extent of the threat. Nothing can be more relevant than this in our ongoing tussle with climate change.

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At this juncture, it would be useful to understand how history teaches us its lessons.

The lessons of history

Karl Marx once said that "history repeats itself, first as tragedy, and then as farce." Like life itself, the lessons of history are learnt through lived experiences.

Take the COVID-19 pandemic for example. The tragedy struck as we had forgotten the lessons of the Spanish Flu a century ago and let our public health systems fall into disarray.

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Similarly, the joshimath landslide,^{subsidence} was the consequence of our own farical understanding of past lessons at the same site.

Equally relevant is our failure to take structural reforms in the domain of sports training and talent nurturing, a lesson that repeats every four years at the olympics through our underwhelming performance.

Nothing will change if we change nothing. The need of the hour is to learn from these lessons to avoid repeating them. Let us see how.

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Learning the lessons of history

It is said that the best way to learn is to learn from the mistakes of others. We should focus on mutual learning, reform and course correction to ensure future resilience and adaptation.

At the outset, we need to realise the true scale of the threats we face. Given the scale of the hazards created by global warming, we need to urgently commit ourselves to action.

Similarly, we need to avoid dogmatic views and a narrow view of our own culture and traditions.

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such as in the case of LGBT rights and social acceptance.

Further, we should strive to learn from the lives of great leaders like Martin Luther King, who had themselves realised the need to learn from history.

However, even as we strive to do so, we should not undermine the progress already made, which have made the world a better place.

The march of history - the lessons learnt

In many ways, our world today is the product of our cognisance and appreciation of the lessons

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of the past and our desire to learn from them.

For instance, the creation of the United Nations has made the world a safer and more peaceful place, having learnt from the League of Nations' failures.

Our Constitution, too, strives to create an egalitarian society based on socioeconomic justice for all, in recognition of past failures and schisms.

Along a similar vein, the Tsunami of 2004 was a turning point which led us to create a robust institutional architecture to address various disasters and

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calamities in the spirit of being proactive and well prepared.

Thus, it is exactly this kind of action-oriented approach that history demands of us through the myriad lessons it teaches us.

To conclude, the theatre of global wars and suffering can only be reduced through an open-minded, collaborative and inclusive approach. While the lessons of history are tough and demanding, we cannot bury our heads in the sand like an ostrich. Rather, we should collectively commit ourselves to action based on a shared vision of "one earth, one family and one future."

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