



Essay for Mains 2023

Essay Test - 03

Time Allowed: 1.5 Hour

Max Marks: 150

Name: **ANINDYA PANDEY**

Test Date: **13/08/2023**

Email Address: _____

Mobile: _____

Important instructions:

Write an essay on any one of the following topics:

- Stick to the word limit: **1100-1200 words.**
- Ideal time: **1.5 hours.**

Overall Remarks:

Dear Student,

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A good life is one inspired
by love and guided by knowledge.

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One of the most
thought on topics in philosophy
has been the notion of
good life. What constitutes a
good life? Is it material
wealth or spiritual awakening?

A more fundamental question
has been, is it even possible
to have a good life? How love
and knowledge are connected to
good life?

In this essay we
will try and discover answers

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to the above questions.

for Socrates, the father of philosophy, knowing what is right is not enough, one must act as well. Hence for him a "good life" is that life where a person does the right thing.

A natural question arises, how will one know what is the right thing? Well to know what is right one has to put his/her beliefs to test, which later came to

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be known as dialectics. So we can say that for Socrates gaining knowledge ^{of what is right} and acting upon it will lead to a good life.

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Now let's try to understand what a good life is from Indian ^{philosophical} perspectives. Gautama Buddha preaches the "Maddhyam Marg" [middle path] as a way to achieve good life. He advises to refrain from the extremes and stick to the middle path.

On the contrary, the Charvakh philosophy talks about extreme indulgence.

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It propogates that one should simply focus on the physical fulfillment and should have no regard for any spirit. ["Take loan, make money"]

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Now lets try and explore the deeper meaning of the words "love" and "knowledge". Love, simply put, is a feeling of affection towards someone or something. But love is much more than a feeling, it is a driver of action. It makes a person do things, which in normal situations one would avoid.

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Love is a component of the heart, i.e. a person often does not let his/her mind ~~to~~ interfere when the actions are guided by love.

Knowledge on the other hand is the capacity to understand what is right and what is wrong? It is based either on empirical analysis or on rational thinking.

Knowledge is often thought of as a component of the mind, i.e., when a person thinks rationally and analyses the pros and cons before acting.

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A life only guided by
love is not a desirable one
as this might lead to woefully
bad decisions. For instance, a
person having love for skydiving
but no knowledge about operating
a parachute will certainly end
up harming himself/herself.

On similar lines, if
a person relies only on
knowledge and disregards the
component of love, ^{he/she} will most
likely end up being a robot
in this human world.

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So we can say that a good life is a balance between heart and mind i.e. between love and knowledge. People like Medha Patkar and Sundar Lal Bahuguna show that how their love for environment and knowledge about the power of social movements helped them overcome the climate injustice. This ensured a good life for the locals as well as the society at large.

Mahatma Gandhi transformed the entire society based on his doctrine of truth and non-violence. He was knowledgeable

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of the fact that the Indians were ~~a~~ no match to the British forces. Thus his acts were inspired by love for truth and non-violence and guided by the knowledge of the strength of "Unity" of voice & purpose.

Another telling example is that of Akbar whose life was ~~guided~~ inspired by love for unity and his acts were guided by knowledge in the form of Din-i-Ilahi and Sul-e-Kul. Akbar's policy of religious tolerance and acceptance is the reason why he is called Akbar-The Great.

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By now we have seen enough examples as to why love and knowledge are quintessential for a good life. But a basic question remains yet to be answered, i.e. love for what? and knowledge of what?

Hitler had extreme love for German land and was knowledgeable in the field of warfare. His actions too were guided by love and knowledge. But this resulted in the killing of millions of innocent Jews.

On similar lines,
John Oppenheimer was in love

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with science and probably the most knowledgeable man in the field of atomic research. Yet his actions resulted in deaths of lakhs of Japanese civilians.

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Both these instances are written with blood in the books of history. This is because despite being inspired by love and guided by knowledge, they could not distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. And this has made all the difference.

Love and knowledge are celebrated virtues so much

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so that Socrates calls an unexamined life as not worth living. Hence one has to put his/her beliefs to test and ^{should be} open to refutation. Had Hitler put his beliefs to test, we would not have seen the horrors of the World War II.

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Similarly love is ^avery powerful as Jini Hedrick's says "When we will overcome the love of power and understand the power of love, the world will know peace".

In conclusion we can say that, knowledge

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and love are like 2 horses pulling the chariot of a "good life". However we should rely on our conscience to understand what is right love and right knowledge, else the results can be disastrous!

"In a world which is used to the sound of gunshots, we should sing songs of love.

In a world which is clouded by preconceived notions, we should spread true knowledge"

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