

GENERAL ENGLISH

Full Marks : 100

Time : 3 hours

The figures in the margin indicate full marks for the questions

1. Prepare a report as a correspondent of a newspaper on any *one* of the following topics :

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(a) Tree felling in the urban areas of your State

(b) Celebration of a literary festival

(c) Flash floods in Guwahati and the plight of its citizens

2. Read any *one* of the given passages carefully and answer the questions that follow :

Passage—A

Like Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the *Mahabharata* can see both sides of war. It glories in immortal feats of courage, daring and self-sacrifice like those of Abhimanyu. It looks on with admiration of Arjuna's *aristeia* (a hero's moment of greatest glory). The relentless battle scenes of the epic yield 'the finest poetry of the epic'. Yet, the epic is also aware that these valiant acts that it honours are also feats of lunacy. The same

Mahabharata condemns the approaching war in Book V in the most savage terms. While lamenting the failure of the peace negotiations, Yudhishtira leaves no doubt about what he thinks will be the consequences. He expresses his feelings so forcefully that one wonders if Krishna might have given his message to the wrong Pandava in the *Gita*.

“War is evil in any form ... To one who is killed, victory and defeat are the same ... the victor too is surely diminished ... and behold, when he has lost his strength and no longer sees his sons or brothers, a loathing for life will engulf him completely, Krishna. It is the modest warriors, noble and with a sense of compassion, who are killed in war, and the lesser men escape.”

Chastened by thirteen harsh years of exile, Yudhishtira has begun to adopt a more pragmatic view of the world. As we have noted, he has become a prudent ruler of the middle path. His pragmatism should not be confused with an aggressive world view, its default position (in accordance with ideas about reciprocal altruism) is to be friendly and collaborative. Unlike Dhritarashtra, he does not merely weigh amorally the pros and cons of victory and defeat. The considerations of Dharma are a part of

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deliberations of the prudent ruler of the middle path. He is weighed down with moral concerns during the peace negotiations even as he is more and more resigned to the inevitability of war.

(From *The Difficulty of Being Good* by Gurcharan Das)

Questions :

- (a) How does the *Mahabharata* see the two sides of war? 5
- (b) Why is victory and defeat same to the one who is killed? 5
- (c) How is the victor 'diminished' in war? 5
- (d) In what ways are Yudhishtira and Dhritarashtra different in their approach to war? 5
- (e) Explain the title of the book, *The Difficulty of Being Good* from your reading of the passage. 5
- (f) Make sentences with any two from the following : $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2 = 5$
- (i) Lunacy
- (ii) Feats
- (iii) Prudent
- (iv) Reciprocal

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(Turn Over)

Passage—B

This single stick, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner was in a flourishing state in the forest. It was full of sap, leaves and boughs; but now in vain does it pretend to vie with nature—the busy art of man—by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk. It is now the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down; it is now handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery and by a capricious kind of fate, destined to make other things clean, and be nasty itself; at length, worn to the stumps in the service of maids, it is either thrown out of doors or condemned to the last use—of kindling a fire. When I behold this I said within myself, “surely mortal man is a broomstick!” nature sent him to the world, strong and lusty, in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, till the axe of intemperance has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk; he then flies to art, and puts on a periwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs; but now should this broomstick pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, through the sweepings of the finest lady’s chamber. We should be apt to

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ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellencies, and other man’s defaults!

Questions :

- (a) Why is it said that mortal man is nothing but a broomstick? 5
- (b) What is the fate of man in everyday life? 5
- (c) Find out a word in the passage that stands opposite to the word ‘withered’. 2
- (d) Find a synonym for ‘a young woman’ from the passage. 2
- (e) Write the meanings of the following words : $1 \times 2 = 2$
- (i) Drudgery
- (ii) Capricious
- (f) Make sentences with the following expressions : $2 + 2 = 4$
- (i) vie with
- (ii) lopped off
- (g) What kind of foolishness a mortal man does? 5
- (h) How are the images from the natural world employed to compare man’s journey from youth to old age? 5

3. Elaborate on any *one* of the following :

- (a) Every cloud has a silver lining
- (b) Do not bite the hand that feeds you
- (c) When in Rome, do as the Romans do
- (d) A stitch in time saves nine

4. Use the following phrases and idioms in your own sentences to express their meanings clearly. Do not change the form of the words (any *five*) :

2×5=10

- (a) Pull someone's leg
- (b) Cut corners
- (c) Turn a blind eye
- (d) Break the ice
- (e) Call it a day
- (f) Kick the bucket
- (g) Bury the hatchet

5. Make sentences with the following pairs of words to differentiate their meanings (any *five*) :

2×5=10

- (a) Illusion/Allusion
- (b) Eminent/Imminent
- (c) Sheen/Scene
- (d) Flair/Flare

- (e) Desert/Dessert
- (f) Complement/Compliment
- (g) Canon/Cannon

6. Do as directed :

2×5=10

- (a) My teacher said, "Go home at once!"
(Change into indirect)
- (b) He congratulated me.
(Change into direct)
- (c) He told me that he would go but I should stay.
(Change into direct)
- (d) Ram said to me, "Who are you? What do you want?"
(Change into indirect)
- (e) She said that she had completed the project already.
(Change into direct)

7. Change the voice of the following :

2×5=10

- (a) The company hired new employees.
- (b) My mother is preparing the meal.
- (c) Fire burnt the shed to ashes.
- (d) This book must be read by every student.
- (e) They knew that their king would never rest till he understood the matter.

until & unless ~~the~~ ~~king~~ ~~understand~~ the matter
he will not rest

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