



GENERAL STUDIES

Name Of Candidate	G Harishankar		
Roll No.	1910091201	Date:	

Time Allowed: Three Hours

Maximum Marks: 250

INDEX TABLE			INSTRUCTION	
Q. No.	Max. Marks	Marks Obtained	<p>1. Please do furnish Name, Email, Roll No and Mobile in the answer sheet.</p> <p>2. There are TWENTY questions printed in ENGLISH & HINDI, all questions are compulsory.</p> <p>3. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.</p> <p>4. Answers must be written in the medium authorized in the admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-Cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided.</p> <p>5. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum Answer Booklet must be clearly Struck off.</p> <p>Any specific messages for ForumIAS Mentors/Evaluators with respect to your copy? Write it here.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>	
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Total:	250			
Evaluator's Discretion:			For Student Only	
			Start Time 9 am	End Time 12 noon
Total Marks:			Mode Of Examination:	Online <input type="checkbox"/> Offline <input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluator's Discretion: This is the marks awarded at the discretion of the evaluator based on your overall impression, on the basis of (but not limited to) your handwriting, presentation, use of diagrams, flowcharts, facts and figures or absolutely anything that he/she liked in your copy.			For Office Use Only	
			ECN CODE:	EG:
			Evaluation Date:	

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HE WHO HAS A 'WHY' TO LIVE FOR,
CAN BEAR ALMOST ANY 'HOW'

In Homer's great epic "Odysseus".
it's eponymous hero Odysseus has been
banished thousands of miles away from
his beloved family. Perilous seas, grave
threats of enemies, countless wars and
hours of despondence separate him from
his tribe. But he braves all through this
because each moment of despondence is
dispelled by his "why" - to see the loving
face of his wife.

In another story from the
Greek Mythology, Sisyphus is banished
by the god Zeus to roll a rock up a
mountain and push it down. Then
roll it back up. Sisyphus considers him-
self the most unfortunate man. All
this distance but no displacement.

Now if we ask ourselves as to which of these men were more burdened - the answer is clearly the latter. Rolling the rock up the hill is significantly less burdensome than the perils Odysseus faced. However, not knowing the "why" to live so, made the process, the "how" unbearable.

Knowing the purpose, propels our perseverance to partake in any process. Thus a mindful manifesto of life is the antidote to the activity trap of our lives.

This universal truth is the root cause for the ascetic journey's of great men like Budha and Jama Mahavira. They sought meaning to life braving extreme deprivations and wantlessness on the way. But the cause towards enlightenment paved their way through difficulties.

However, the virtue of purposeful life is not limited to few select heroes alone. Look around you, you will find nurses who braved COVID infection towards societal health, police men who risk their lives towards "Sadrakshamaya" (protect the good), or even our parents who symbolise sacrifice towards the 'why' of children's future.

Ac anthropologist, Yuval Noah Harari in his book "Sapiens" argues that it is this common commitment to a belief that separates us from our tree swinging chimpanzee cousins. By assigning a 'why' or rationality of actions humans accumulate in societies and reinforce social capital.

Imagine what would have happened if we instead inhabited a world of animalistic reactionary actions?

Such life without "why" would be chaotic. If we do not have the goal of professional advancement, we would lack the hunger of hardwork.

If we do not attach value to achieving love from our relationships, we will never give any love. Soon, the basic constructs and foundations of society would start dismantling.

Whereas, commitment to a greater cause brings out the best and the bravest in us. Case in point, is Param Veer Chakra Awardee Captain Vikram

Batra. Living for the defense of his nation he roared in the face of death and displayed superhuman like qualities when we annihilated enemies in Kargil war, 1999 despite grave bullet injuries.

It is this complete submission to the cause of nationalism which prompted Bhagat Singh and his troop

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of martyrs to endure over a month of starvation. For them the pain beared was a small price to pay for their greater cause.

Knowing one's "teleos" or objectives also helps one to choose the desired "how" as per Aristotle. Even Mahatma Gandhi proposed in his Talisman that when one faces the dilemma of how to proceed in a situation one should think of the poorest man seen in life. Alleviation of their pain should form the "why" of our life which will then guide our means.

Would the steelframe of our country, the bureaucracy not benefit from realising the above thesis? Once a civil servant identifies "Kartavya" or duty of service as the "why" then their will be conviction and integrity of "how". Transfers would not matter,

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inducements would be immune when the ends are placed. Lucid.

Not only does purpose fuel perseverance as seen above, it also lights up the bulb of innovation. Take for instance, ace innovator Thomas Edison, who was committed to bringing light to people's life. In the process, he faced 99 failures as the choice of filament in the bulb was incompatible. But driven towards his destination he kept ploughing till he discovered the right fit.

A valid question at this point however is around how to discover our why? Sure, purposeful existence allows us to persevere, resolve our dilemmas, innovate and even sacrifice ourselves to the altar of greater good as Vikram Batra did. But surely finding our "why" is not easy?

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Mitch Albom in his beautiful book "Tuesdays with Morrie" says that most of us are treading through life like floating particles of dust in air. We walk through our lives with eyes "half closed in ignorance". The answer a dying Morrie prophesizes is to realise and seek out.

Tools such as Vipassana can help us connect us with our true self, our Brahman and Atman. Once we are connected with our souls, we can contemplate the end we are moving towards.

In this regard our education system also has a crucial role to play. By focussing on rational experimentation rather than didactic focus on "how"; we can enable the future generations to find their goals.

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"We must not teach the children what to think but rather "how" to think"

- MARGARET MEAD
(Sociologist)

But goal set is only half achieved. One must possess the focus of Arjuna who could see nothing but the bird's eye. When we develop such concentration of a Karmayogi, our pains on the pathway will wither away.

In this process of commitment to cause, the threat of highest order in this 21st decade is that of instant gratification of social media. Nicholas Carr in his book "Shallow: What internet is doing to our brains" writes, the world wide web distracts us from greater goals such as social relations, knowing oneself and serving the community.

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The solution to this media menace is also to put it to good "why". For instance, take IAS officer Prashant Nair who with clarity about his purpose to serve the starving, used social media to galvanise public support in Kozhikode. Thus, where there is will one rightly puts to use one's skill.

At this stage, a committed, spirited and wily person may face challenges galore. One may be alone in his/her walk to their "why". In such cases one can derive solace from Guraji Rabindranath Tagore's rendition "Jha Chalo rey!" (walk alone if needed).

In this trust and trial towards our bulls eye we must however find balance. There is not a single why to our lives. Kaam, artha, Dharma, Moksha are all [Puruusharthas] that as

per Hinduism we must learn to integrate in our lives.

The quest for why is endless. It is the fundamental question which has driven philosophers, sociologists, scientist alike. Some like Swami Vivekananda may find it early in life while some strive till their death beds. The truth is that we may or may not realise our purpose of existence.

However, that is no reason for despondence. Till we find our "why", finding our "why" is our purpose.

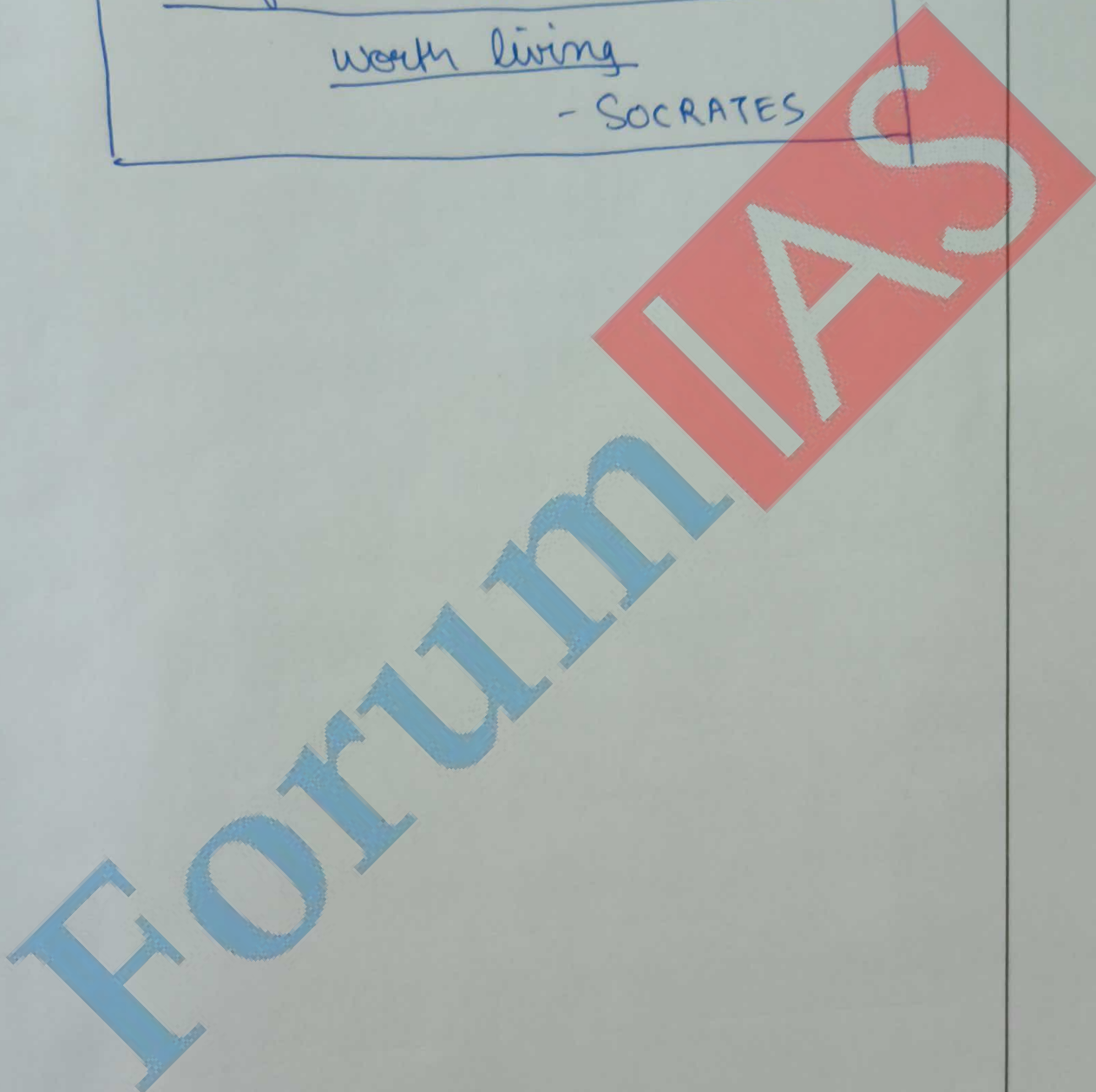
This process of gaining insight to eventual end may be difficult but we will not back down from this "how".

Each of us has the choice to bear our lives without even trying to find a "why" like Sisyphus or to discover it as did Odysseus. The latter is the path

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of mindful manifesto to a meaningful
life.

A life unexamined is not
worth living
- SOCRATES



Topic

A MIND THAT IS STRETCHED
BY A NEW EXPERIENCE,
CAN NEVER GO BACK TO ITS
OLD DIMENSIONS

A young girl, blind, deaf and mute stared at abyss. The walls of her mind had been too narrow for any knowledge whatsoever due to her crippling disability. She stumbled, physically because of her lack of sight and mentally because of lack of ~~of~~ sensory experience's light.

One day, her tutor Anne Sullivan made her touch water. Then she blew into her hand "W-A-T-E-R". Wureka! the little girl overjoyed, now knew what to call the liquid. In the next few days, she would expand her dimensions of mind by experiencing flowers, fire, thorns, trees and her own body parts!

The young child grew up to become the Hellen Keller we know. Her mind, now stretched by the experience of knowledge was forever displaced from the prior darkness of ignorance. Learning, then became the mission of her life which she called "endless adventure".

It is not only the specially abled though who expand the horizons of their mind. Philosopher and political science thinker John Locke believed that each of us are born "Tabula Rasa" or blank slates. We are then nurtured, fed with new experiences and dimensions of life to develop our final potential.

Even Hindu Philosophy stipulates that through our life we move through four stages namely Brahmacharya, Grhastha, Vanprastha and Sanyasa. Each stage stretches our experience and we can not

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go back to the previous stage.

Thus, the unidirectional expansion of our mental faculties by herald of new experiences is a natural part of human life.

Realisations propelled by new experiences leave an indelible mark in our lives. Case in point is the Great Ashoka, who, on experiencing the destruction of Kalinga war (Bheri-ghosa) metamorphosised into a peace-loving king. Once adopted, Ashoka never stepped back on his means of Dhamma.

The thing about novel stimuli is that they enlighten us. They may even falsify what we thought we knew in the previous dimensions of our thought matrix.

This is specifically true about the expanding vistas of science.

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Take for instance Copernicus who having discovered that the earth revolves around the sun rather than the reverse, did not track back even when faced with fear of death.

Such is the power of ideas.

Victor Hugo remarked,

"No force can stop an idea whose time has come."

Thus once an idea enters the metaphysical web of thought, it can not simply be wished away.

The French Revolution (1789) was one such idea. Having expanded the dimensions of French citizen's life towards Democracy, it became synonymous soon with the country. Sure, the change faced setbacks in form of Jacobins and Napoleon but it was only time before the newly experienced democratic ethos permanently displaced

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old dimensions of feudalism and monarchy.

In this aspect, new experience are like glass not rubber. The glass when expanded gets moulded. The rubber being elastic, strikes back to original shape.

One such enriching experience is education. Kabir was a weaver, before he was enlightened by knowledge from his guru. Soon he moulded into a philosopher, seeking new dimensions for the brain and also expanding those of others around him.

Similar is the case of Dr. -
B. R. Ambedkar, the ace architect of our Constitution. Having being forcefully confined to the old dimensions of Caste prejudice, he broke away his shackles to never be confined again. He was armed with the acquired experience of liberty of thought in his foreign education.

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What is true for the individual is also true for the society. A society having expanded its schema of values continues to progress in that direction in the long run. Such progress may face friction but surely it does not relapse.

Anandi Bai Joshi, in the pre-independence India despite being married at the age of eight years, achieved the distinction of becoming India's female doctor. This stretched society's misconceptions and expanded its value to include that the hand that rocks cradle, can also rule the world!

Now we see Kiran Mazumdar Shau of Biocon and Gita Gopinathan of IMF pushing further the old dimensions of glass ceiling.

In fact, the ability of mankind to expand the confined spaces of our

understanding is what defines human optimism.

Rabindranath Tagore is the epitome of such progressive motion.

Once a fierce nationalist, Tagore was moved by the plight facing humanity due to narrow definition of "us". He committed then towards "Humanism" as the wider cause, never to return back to his previous formulation.

Such progression is viable though only when the experiences are internalised. Take for instance our interface in dealing with traffic police. We know that integrity requires us to pay the fine on jumping the light. We do as per the status quoist formulation of bribe giving. Thus this thesis is true only where the experiences and knowledge are truly realised and made integral part of one's attitude.

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Also, not ~~or~~ all new experiences which are intractable are benign. Take for instance the drug dilemma facing the society. Young adults seeking psychedelic experiences expose themselves to substances which then ~~enslaves~~ them to substantive addiction. For most, there is no going back.

Similar is the addiction of social media. It has unlocked a new dimension of connectivity, one which transcends our old physical dimensions of social interactions. In the Netflix documentary "Social Network", former designer Tristan Harris confesses that social media platforms promote fake positivity to increase engagement. Your relapse to addiction to your phone is by design.

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Thus, we must be cautious in exposing ourselves to new experiences too. Beneath seemingly pleasurable and gratifying experiences may lie highly hooking negative dimensions.

This brings us to the next logical question. - how to expose oneself to altering experiences which help one's stream of thoughts widen the banks?

Rationalist and enlightenment era thinkers Voltaire and Rene' Descartes point inwards. Descartes believed that your mind has all the knowledge you need. Similarly in his book 'Candide', Voltaire asks us to cultivate our mind's garden.

This approach of finding new dimensions within oneself is an enlightening experience. One can rely on the crutches of meditation to

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peel of the superficial layers of mental dimensions to expose deeper and more meaningful dimensions. Stretching thus is not necessarily outwards, it can be inwards too!

The diametrically opposite approach is that of experience by experimentation as proposed by Gandhiji. In his book "My experiments with truth" Gandhiji mentions how once exposed to the virtuous dimension of Satya (Truth) while confiding to his father about stealing, he acquired the courage to never lie again. He was a turned over leaf.

A excellent way to expose and experiment to stretch one's dimensions is travelling. By exposing oneself to the cultural Kaleidoscope one broadens their world view. From

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Adi Shankaracharya to Marco Polo, the experiences acquired through travel has the alchemist effect of enriching us.

In this entire process of finding the novel, one needs the virtue of openness. A closed mind can not accept the magnamously complexities and diversities of life.

Fortunately and unfortunately, our time on this earth is limited. We have a choice, of whether to remain confined like a frog in the well of traditional understanding or take up this endless exciting journey of discovery.

“To leave one's nest,
To shun comfort of rest,
and leave for new adventure,
may seem to terrify,
but the new sights on the venture,
will surely satisfy”

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and when you experience
the vast oceans,
you would want more,
and hardly would dream
of the mundane shore

(self composed)

ForumIAS

He who has a 'why' to live for
can bear almost any 'how'

Tuesday's
Introduction →

Conclusion →

- 1. ~~Key~~ Main
 - what is why of life
 - how to find why
 - how can be overcome
 - counter point

2. Social media has ~~inter~~
taken away why [delicious
desire]
↳ Nicholas Carr - "Shallow:
what internet does to our brain"

↳ Marshmallow experiment

3. Why is why up

→ Sisyphus Story vs that of
Odyssey by Homer

4. → Activity trap vs mindful
manifesto

5. Anthropocene

↳ Book - Revolution and its

↳ Yuvak Neek Haran.

↳ John - Thomas

Elva Edison

↳ dedicate,
find the way out

2. Sparks

↳ Virat Kohli

understood goal
= ~~become~~ gave

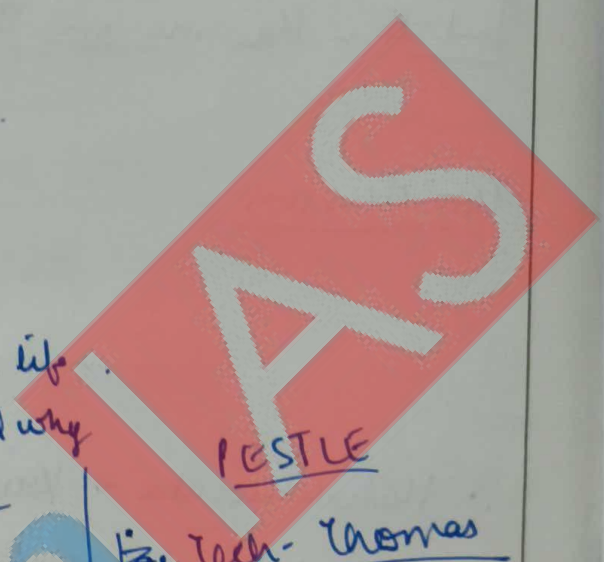
3. ~~Work for~~
up great sacrifice

3. An unexamined

life is not
worth living
locates

4. Poor family

↳ How



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6. ~~Captain~~ Commit to greater Cause - Captain Vikram
Batra

7. Preserve Social Capital.
eg) Sudha Mehta, Karmayogi
celary simple
"wise & otherwise"

8. Uncompromising and
rational choices.
↳ Gandhi duty dharm
dharm (1994) Mandela
(Truth Reconciliation)

9. Lal Bahadur Shastri gave
up his one meal.

10. Objective of Dharma in
Mahabharata → do whatever
it takes ⊕ Talisman

CLARIFIES DILEMMAS

11. Organisation → Mission is clear
& vision.
↳ people forego everything

eg) Winston Churchill

12. If we do not know the why

13. Helps which path to take. → how near to family
→ dilemma
→ path ~~is~~ shows itself
(Edison)

14. Persistence as a result of why
↳ Grata Thunberg knows her why

8. Rationality!

9. Bhagat Singh

↳ "deaf nationalism"

when 'why' is
known you
make it work

↳ Talisman.

ANNE FRANK

knew her
why "deaf"
m.

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be do

A mind stretched by a new experience
can never go back to its old dimensions

Intro → Hellen Keller → blind deaf mute, -
↳ breathed into hard ad - - - -

Conclusion → keep stretching

- what are our dimensions? →
- why can't it go back?
- what's new experience

↳ New dimensions ~~are~~
enlighten → ASHOKA

2) Socrates → Integrity
Copernicus → one experienced
knowledge . can not go back

3) Natural process of development
↳ this is why 4 stages of
life in hindu
↳ Brahmachary, Grihastha,
Vanprastha, Sanyasa

4) May lead to resurgence but
never fully (Political
democracy)
eg → French revolution,
↳ Napoleon
↳ Perseus

Ashoka

Science

↳ the high of

→ role of
relapse

5) ~~the~~ Importance of travel for new experience ~~eg~~

6) Urban Indians → detached from roots → take to the pleasures

7) ~~John~~ John Locke "Tabula Rasa" → blank slate write metaphysical concepts

8) Light of knowledge → education
(Dr) BR Ambedkar.

9) ~~the~~ Social evils →

10) ~~the~~ Mind stretching method → experience
→ ~~the~~ tend to your garden

11) Psychodelics usage → addiction

↳ Social media → delicious disease

12) Fear of death overcome → eg -

13) Women empowerment → Collective conscience

↳ Andardi bari Toshi →

14) Sustainable govern

15) Will face resistance → forming atomic

habits - 21 days - family structure

16) ~~the~~ Rabindranath Tagore → novels
→ humanism

