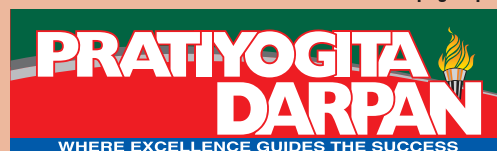




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C O N T E N T S

Regulars

- 1720 To Our Readers
1723 Editorial

News & Events

- 1724 Nation this Month
1732 World this Month
1739 Regional News
1743 National and International Updates

Current Affairs

- 1750 Sports World
1752 Science & Technology
1753 Memorable Points
1755 Economic Scenario
1763 Interim Railway Budget, 2009-10
1766 Interim Union Budget, 2009-10

Career News

- 1771 Employment and Career News
1772 Forthcoming Competitive Examinations

World Panorama

- 1774 Carnage in Gaza
1777 WTO and International Trade Negotiations
1779 Pakistan : A Failed State
1780 Bolivia : The Country Refounded

Inspiring Youth : Interviews

- 1782 (i) Rakesh Kumar—Topper : 47th B.P.S.C. Combined Competitive Exam. (1st Rank)
1785 (ii) Sanjay Kumar Safi—Selected in S.B.I. P.O. Exam., 2008

Articles

World Economy Article

- 1787 Oil Price Rise : Geo Political Implications

Economy Article

- 1789 Prospects of India's Trade Relations with the ASEAN Countries

Commerce Article

- 1792 Total Quality Management : An Overview

Public Administration Article

- 1794 The Civil Society : Meaning and Role

Environmental Article

- 1798 Environmental Concerns in India : Problems and Solutions

Legal Article

- 1801 Law Prohibiting Smoking in Public Places

Vividha

- 1802 Compendium
1805 **State : At a Glance** — Haryana

Annual Report 2007-08

- 1808 Present Status of Health and Family Welfare : At a Glance

Profile : International Organisation

- 1811 The Commonwealth of Nations
1813 Current Questionnaire
1815 Trade and Industry

Question Papers

Subjective Type Question Paper

- 1817 Andhra Bank I.T. Officers Exam., 2008

Optional Papers

- 1819 R.A.S./R.T.S. (Pre.) Exam., 2008 : Geography
1827 Uttar Pradesh P.C.S. Special (Pre.) Exam., 2008 : Public Administration

Other Papers

- 1838 Madhya Pradesh P.S.C. State Service (Pre.) Exam., 2008 : General Studies
1847 R.A.S./R.T.S. (Pre.) Exam., 2008 : General Knowledge and General Science
1852 Bank of Baroda Agriculture Officers Exam., 2008 : General Socio-Economic and Banking Awareness
1856 Andhra Bank P.O. Exam., 2008 : Reasoning
1864 State Bank of India P.O. Exam., 2008 : Reasoning
1869 Allahabad Bank P.O. Exam., 2008 : Quantitative Aptitude
1873 Union Bank of India P.O. Exam., 2008 : Quantitative Aptitude
1877 S.S.C. Tax Assistant Exam., 2008 : General English

Your Pages

- 1882 Essay Contest
1884 Debate Contest
1887 Results
1888 Concentric Quiz
1891 Test Your Knowledge

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LET LONELINESS MAKE YOU STRONG

Let not loneliness scare you. It seems a curse. But it is only apparently so. Actually it is a boon, because it is in loneliness alone, in a atmosphere of solitude and seclusion that the mind of an intellectual works most. Deep concentration and the resulting meditation are possible only in seclusion. The lives of all great men are an eloquent testimony to the fact that great things of life, be it art, science, literature, culture or philosophy have been achieved by men who forced themselves into self-imposed loneliness and solitude and brought out gems of thought humanity is proud of. Let us convert loneliness into an opportunity and let loneliness make us strong.

Least alone while all alone. This paradoxical statement is attributed to one of the men of wisdom, who when asked to elaborate the implications of his statement, said with a smile that you can not be said to be alone when you are busy with something, yourself or your thoughts. Moreover, those persons are always with you whom you remember or with whose thoughts your mind is occupied. When you are engrossed in thoughts, you become unaware of your physical body. In this case the question of your being alone or in some body's company does not arise. The flight of thoughts may take the man round the world, may make him soar high up in the sky or make him comfortable on the waves of the sea. Does such a man miss any body's company or to be practical, does he need someone to talk to ? To give an illustration, when you are busy with preparations for your examination, you do not want that anyone should come to you and disturb your concentration. Only a disturbed and empty mind needs company because one needs company when one has nothing at hand to be occupied or to be busy with.

While in isolation, persons often try introspection and during this period, the mind stops chattering and wandering. In the words of John Milton, "The mind, when itself and in its own place, can make a heaven of hell." Obviously a man, who has withdrawn himself from the crowd and whose mind is at rest, is in heaven, no matter, whether he cares or tries for it or not.

Another great thinker, W. E. Canning spent most of his time in library. He liked most the company of books, since to him books were like a multi-purpose friend, guide, helper, teacher, philosopher and what not. For development of faculty of intelligence, the discipline of meditation is

prescribed. Contemplation is the next step in this direction, which leads to evolution of consciousness. Isolation provides the proper atmosphere for carrying on and practising this discipline. It was for this reason that the ancient Rishis and Munis were reclusive and lived in their Ashrams far away from the din, noise and turmoil of the society. Nature was their company and gods were their friends, who used to interpret in silence the dictates of the inner voice. Every particle of nature seemed to tell them something new. Day and night, they heard the music of silence. Who would say they were alone, although they lived alone ?

All great persons like Buddha, Confucius, Moses, Mansoor, Jesus, Mohammed, Newton, Ramanuj, Madam Blavatsky, Vivekanand, Gandhi etc. received their light in seclusion. All of them had to be alone for sometime, when their higher selves divulged to them the secrets of life. It is also a fact of life that the toppers at different examinations and competitions used to read and study with doors of their rooms closed and kept aloof from all sorts of disturbance. Their goals of life were their guides and the books their friends. Animals as well, to get nourishment from the food and fodder they eat, do chewing the cud in silence. Introspection and self study are done best in seclusion. If you do so, you will be surprised to see new vistas of knowledge and new pathways of progress opening before you. A poet rightly exclaimed, "O Solitude ! Where are Thy Charms ?"

In a big crowd, there is hardly anybody to help or to lift the person, who has fallen down. Then how one could say that he is not alone in a big crowd ? It sounds paradoxical but is a fact of life. The crowd saps the vigour of the mind and its possessor is at a

discount to make use of it. So, avoid crowd and shun becoming a part of it.

This famous line of Poet Laureate Tagore is very popular and inspiring एकला चलो रे. The words contained in the line have inspired many a person to go alone on the path they thought right. Mahatma Gandhi was also one of them. To him the inspiring and assuring words contained in this piece of Tagore's advice were dear and on occasions more than once he had to start almost alone for the cause dear to him. He ever felt the presence of God around him and, therefore, he never felt or feared that he was alone. H.D. Thoreau also said once that the man who goes alone can start today but he who travels with another must wait till the other is ready. It has been rightly said that "The strongest man in the world is he who stands alone."

Vacuum is against the Law of Nature . One receives only by giving. A controlled mind, born of meditation in aloofness, will tell us that by sending out good and helpful thoughts, we get the good and helping hands of others. In this way, the still mind keeps in constant company of good and thoughtful individuals. These words of Samuel Rogers are worth a heap of gold, "He only is alone, who lives not for others. Come what will, the generous man has his companion still." When alone, one cannot sit idle, one must do one thing or the other and mostly constructive. The best things are produced under undisturbed conditions be they works of art, scientific invention, philosophies of life etc.

Nature tells us the green grass is busy in searching for its companions and keeps low, while the tree in isolation goes high to make explorations in the sky above.