



# Mains Practice Question

## Essay Topics

1. Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth.
2. The enemy is fear. We think it is hate but it is fear.

03 May, 2025    Essay Essay

### 1. Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth.

#### Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- "Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth." **Albert Einstein**
- "There is nothing as purifying as knowledge." Bhagavad Gita
- "You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself." **Swami Vivekananda**
- "The unexamined life is not worth living." **Socrates**

#### Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- **Nature of Truth:** Truth is not a static gift from authority but a dynamic outcome of critical inquiry.
  - Blind belief in authority reinforces **hierarchical power structures**, suppressing dissent and innovation.
  - It contradicts the scientific temper mandated by **Article 51A** of the Indian Constitution, which calls for inquiry and rationality
- **In Indian philosophy: Tarka Shastra (logic and debate)** promotes reasoned skepticism to uncover truth.
  - While the **Upanishads emphasize atma-vichara (self-inquiry)** to transcend dogmatic beliefs.
- **"Na hi jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitram iha vidyate":** There is nothing as purifying as knowledge, this verse from **Bhagavad Gita** emphasizes on **purified knowledge** based on scientific and rational inquiry.
- **Satya-Graha:** The ethical principle of **satyagraha (truth-force)**, central to **Gandhian philosophy**, which prioritizes truth over obedience calls for rational truth.
- **The Kalama Sutta: A Buddhist discourse** emphasizing free inquiry and independent thinking.
  - It encourages people to evaluate teachings and practices based on reason and personal experience, rather than blind faith or tradition.
- **Theory of Banality of Evil:** Blind obedience sustains **authoritarian regimes**, as seen in **Orwell's 1984 or Hannah Arendt's 'theory of banality of evil'**.
  - Which examines how ordinary individuals, **driven by obedience and conformity**, can participate in **horrific acts** without necessarily being inherently evil.

#### Historical and Policy Examples:

- **Science progresses** through questioning established ideas, not blind acceptance. **Galileo's** advocacy of **heliocentrism** in the 17th century challenged the Catholic Church's **geocentric doctrine**.

- **Mahavira**, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, rejected blind belief in **Vedic orthodoxy**, advocating **Anekantavada** to embrace multiple perspectives.
  - His challenge to rigid priestly authority promoted intellectual freedom, influencing India's pluralistic ethos.
- **Caste System**, sustained for centuries through blind belief in scriptural authority and hierarchical order.
- **Adi Shankaracharya** (8th century CE) confronted blind adherence to ritualistic traditions within Hinduism.
  - Through **Advaita Vedanta** and debates with **Mimamsa scholars**, he emphasized self-inquiry and reason, revitalizing philosophical discourse and prioritizing truth over dogmatic practices.
- The **Right to Information Act (2005)** empowers Indian citizens to question governmental authority, promoting transparency.

### Contemporary Examples:

- **Fake News & Deepfakes:** People believing social media content without verifying facts leads to communal violence and misinformation.
- **Cult Followings in Politics:** Personality-driven politics often override institutional accountability.
- **Vaccine Hesitancy vs. Overtrust:** Both blind rejection and blind acceptance without inquiry lead to poor outcomes.

## Conclusion

A citizenry that blindly accepts what it is told becomes vulnerable to manipulation, exploitation, and moral decay. **Democracy, science, and progress** are built on dialogue, dissent, and rational inquiry. As the **Indian Constitution** begins with "We, the People," it entrusts truth not to rulers, but to collective, informed judgment.

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### 2. The enemy is fear. We think it is hate but it is fear.

### Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- "The enemy is fear. We think it is hate; but, it is fear." **Mahatma Gandhi**
- "Fear arises from attachment and delusion; courage arises from dharma." **Bhagavad Gita**
- "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it." **Nelson Mandela**

### Philosophical and Psychological Dimensions:

- **Nature of Fear:** Fear is a primal instinct, evolutionarily meant for survival but it often becomes irrational and counterproductive.
  - Hatred is often a **secondary emotion**, emerging from unaddressed **fear**, fear of change, fear of the 'other', or fear of loss.
  - **Xenophobia, communal hatred**, or even war often trace back to deep-seated fear.
  - While often **destructive**, fear can also be **a signal for reform or caution**. Fear of failure can motivate preparation, and fear of injustice can **spark activism**.
    - India's freedom movement was partly driven by **fear of cultural erasure**, but was transformed into a positive movement through **non-violence and moral vision**.
- **In Indian philosophy**, the **Bhagavad Gita**, describes 'a sage' as one who is free from **fear and anger**, suggesting that **overcoming fear fosters equanimity**.
- **Buddhist teachings** on **kleshas (afflictions)** identify fear as a root cause of suffering, fueling aversion and division.
  - Fear of the **unknown**, be it societal change, economic instability, or cultural erosion manifests as hostility toward perceived threats.
    - Addressing fear requires **empathy and understanding**, transforming it into courage and compassion.
- **In Gandhian philosophy**, Gandhi believed **fearlessness (abhaya)** to be the highest virtue for a satyagrahi. Non-violence itself requires inner fearlessness.

- **Modern Psychology:** The **Fight-or-Flight Response** explains how fear triggers emotional and physical reactions.
  - But chronic or socially-induced fear (e.g., fear of judgment, failure) leads to anxiety, suppression, and even hatred.

### Policy and Historical Examples:

- **Political and Social Fear: Totalitarianism** thrives on fear of dissent, surveillance, and punishment. As **George Orwell's 1984** shows, when fear becomes institutional, freedom vanishes.
  - Nazi Germany's **anti-Semitic campaigns** fueled hatred by instilling **fear of economic loss and cultural dilution** among the majority.
  - **India's Partition:** Communal violence was largely driven by **fear of subjugation**, not merely hatred of the 'other'.
  - **Civil Rights Movements:** Leaders like **Martin Luther King Jr.** confronted not just racial hatred, but the fear of integration among dominant communities.
  - **Cold War Era:** The arms race was driven by mutual fear, not hatred—leading to decades of tension.
- **Personal and Ethical Perspective:**
  - **Moral Courage vs. Fear:** Fear often stops people from doing what's right. Ethical action requires **moral courage**—to speak truth to power or act with integrity under pressure.
    - **E.g: Whistleblowers** like India's Ashok Khemka show the difficulty of acting ethically in the face of institutional fear (fear of transfers, reprisals, or career setbacks).
- **Spiritual and Cultural Dimension:**
  - In Indian traditions, fear is considered **an obstacle to dharma and moksha**.
  - In **Bhagavad Gita**, Arjuna's fear on the battlefield is symbolic of human hesitation before moral action. Krishna encourages him to overcome fear through **duty and detachment**.
  - Festivals like **Durga Puja** celebrate the **victory over fear**, symbolized by the goddess slaying the demon Mahishasura.
- **Economic and Developmental Angle:**
  - **Fear of poverty, loss of livelihood**, or market instability often leads to **reactionary policies, hoarding, or populism**.
  - Farmers may fear crop failure, pushing them to suicide—a tragic consequence of **policy gaps** and **economic insecurity**, not personal weakness.
  - **Startup ecosystem:** Innovation thrives only when **fear of failure is de-stigmatized**. Countries with strong entrepreneurial cultures have low fear of failure.

### Contemporary Examples:

- **Climate Change:** Fear of losing planet habitability is pushing **eco-anxiety**, but also driving **sustainability movements**.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Rising fears over job loss, surveillance, and disinformation could result in **reactionary regulations** or **techno-skepticism**, unless addressed with **balanced governance**.
- **Terrorism & National Security:** Global fear post-9/11 led to surveillance, racial profiling, and erosion of civil liberties.
- **Social Media:** Fear of missing out (FOMO), fear of judgment, and cyberbullying impact mental health more than outright hostility.

## Conclusion

**Fear enslaves, courage liberates.** The true path to peace and justice lies in overcoming fear through empathy, moral clarity, and courageous leadership. As the **Upanishads** remind us "**Abhayam Vai Janaka Prāpnoti**"- **He who becomes fearless, attains liberation.**

