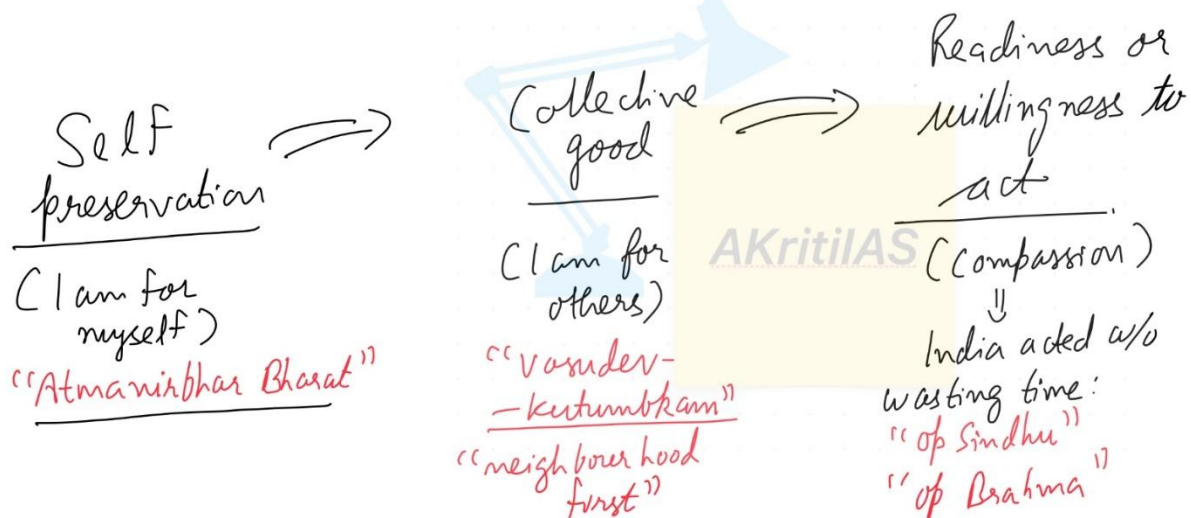




Prateek BHATT
AKRITI IAS

If I am not for myself, who else will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? and if not now, when?

The above quotation is a **clarion call to the mankind, groups, institutions, and nations** alike. It highlights the virtue of **self-preservation** but at the same time **emphasize on the importance of compassion, collective good**.



Learn and Grow

The first statement of the quote, highlights the **virtues of self-preservation**:

1. The relevance of the quote can be understood from the various **movement by the people across the country** for preservation of their **local culture, traditions, and also environment**. E.g., **Padyatra by Sonum Wangchuk from Leh to Delhi** for inclusion of Ladakh in Schedule 6.
2. External stimulus, such as **enabling policies or hand holding efforts**, bring outcome only if one has **core competencies to leverage the same**. E.g., **prerequisite hard work and academic excellence** to leverage affirmative actions.
3. The above quote also rings true in **realisation of individual and group rights**. E.g., **Dalit panther movement**, wherein the Dalits stood up against the **caste-based atrocities and discrimination**.

4. **Comprehensive National Power:** The ability to stand for itself is vital for a country to develop its **Comprehensive National Power**. E.g., After denial from Russia, **India self-developed Semi Cryogenic technology**.
5. The quote also highlights the **importance of adversity quotient**. E.g., **ISRO scientist Nambi Narayan** redeemed himself from the **false espionage charges**.

The second part of the quote delves upon the **importance to think beyond oneself**:

1. The meaning of the above quotation can be **best understood** in the **teachings of Indian philosophers/leaders**:
 - a. **Mahatma Gandhi** through example highlighted that the **best way to find oneself** is by getting **lost in the service of others**.
 - b. **Vivekananda** exhorted the masses to live “**beyond the idea of self**” by underlining that “**the service of Jiva is the worship of Siva.**”
 - c. **Mother Teresa** dedicates herself, heart, mind, and soul, for the upliftment of those standing at the last mile.
2. **In law**, an individual is required to **look after only his/her immediate family**, but **in ethics**, a person is **obligated to prioritise collective good**. E.g., **community service done by individuals/families** during COVID-19.
3. **Enlightened national interest**. E.g., **Operation Brahma** in Myanmar; **Operation Sindhu**- India brought back **Nepalese and Sri Lankan citizens** also from the **conflict torn Iran**.
4. Alone one can go fast, but to go far, it is an **imperative to proceed together**. E.g., **Bhoodan and Gramdan movement** to bring in **social equity**.
5. **Coordination and cooperation** always reap better results and outcome than working in silos. E.g., **Op Sindoor**, a **tri-service operation** carried out by joint efforts of **Army, Navy, and Air Force**.

The last part of the quotation relates to the **willingness and readiness** of the subject-**individual, organisation, or the state**-to help others **earnestly and swiftly** without losing time:

1. The above quotation reflects the importance of **immediately extending help** where and when it is needed. E.g., **Anand Mahindra** immediately extended help to a 10-year-old, who was in distress, and was **selling rolls by the roadside**.

2. The quotation also highlights the **redundancy of extending help** when the requisite moment has passed. E.g., **Pakistan's denial** of the request of a civilian Indigo airline plane to **access its airspace** to prevent a **crash-like situation**.
3. The quotation is rooted in the **traditional Indian philosophy** of **recognizing the pain of others (peed parai)**. E.g., More than **33 crore covid vaccines** given by India to **about 99 countries**.
4. **Scenarios of medical emergencies**. E.g., importance of good Samaritans in saving lives in events of road accidents.
5. The aspect of **"if not now, when?"** where careers are at stake. E.g., **Supreme Court stepped in for a Dalit boy who could not submit the admission fees** of IIT on time.

The **true essence of an individual** indeed begins at becoming self-sufficient, but it does not stop there. It **further extends** to stand at **unison with society, and by extension the humanity**; it is here that one can **achieve the true state of being**.

The logo for AKritiIAS, featuring the text 'AKritiIAS' in a stylized font with a red underline.

Learn and Grow