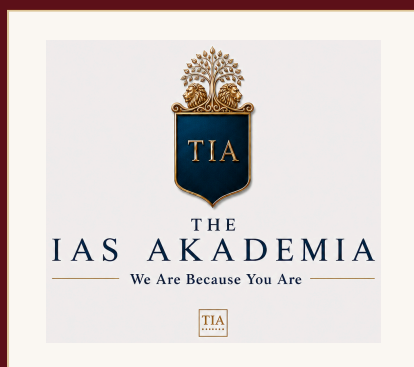




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UPSC CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION · 2026

*Two Complete Forecast Papers*

# EXPECTED QUESTIONS 2026

PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL · PAPER I & PAPER II

BY VIKASH SIR & THE IAS AKADEMIA TEAM

TELEGRAM CHANNEL

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Sir

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## HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

## Two Papers, Then Two Tiers Of Insurance

The two papers that follow are built to the verified 2025 specification — eight questions in two sections, five to be attempted, Question Nos. 1 and 5 compulsory, and no declared internal mark splits. Sit each one under three-hour conditions before reading anything else in these pages.

**The Reserve Forty are close substitutes.** Each lost its place in the papers to a marginally stronger candidate from the same area of the syllabus. If the setter takes the other branch, the question is here. Prepare them in the order printed.

**The Black Swan Twenty are the quiet ones** — syllabus-named, load-bearing, long dormant, and easy to skip. These are the questions that wreck an otherwise well-prepared candidate. One hour on each is cheap insurance.

**Order of work:** Paper I timed · Paper II timed · Priority Map to fix the revision order · Reserve Forty as answer outlines · Black Swan Twenty as one-page notes.

*This is a probability-based academic forecasting exercise derived from twenty-five years of UPSC previous-year papers. No claim is made that any question here will appear in the 2026 examination.*

28

QUESTION-PARTS · TWO FULL PAPERS

40

RESERVE QUESTIONS

20

BLACK SWAN QUESTIONS

25

YEARS OF PYQS READ

REVISION ORDER · WHERE THE HOURS SHOULD GO

OI

# The Priority Map

*Weight of expectation for 2026, area by area, across both papers*

# Western & Indian Metaphysics

|                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Nyāya–Mīmāṃsā epistemology         | ●●●●● |
| Advaita (Śaṅkara) metaphysics      | ●●●●● |
| Kant — critical philosophy         | ●●●●● |
| Plato & Aristotle                  | ●●●●● |
| Vaiśeṣika categories               | ●●●●● |
| Wittgenstein (later)               | ●●●●○ |
| Heidegger — Dasein                 | ●●●●○ |
| Buddhism — Yogācāra / Mādhyamika   | ●●●●○ |
| Sāṅkhya — satkāryavāda, guṇas      | ●●●●○ |
| Hume · Hegel · Logical positivism  | ●●●●○ |
| Jaina · Yoga · Aurobindo           | ●●●●○ |
| Husserl · Sartre · Kierkegaard     | ●●●○○ |
| Leibniz · Strawson · Mādhva        | ●●●○○ |
| Moore · Russell · Quine · Spinoza  | ●●○○○ |
| Cārvāka anumāna · Mīmāṃsā prāmāṇya | ●○○○○ |

*The last two rows are cold only because 2025 exhausted them. Their schools remain very hot.*

## Socio-Political Philosophy & Religion

Proofs for the existence of God

● ● ● ● ●

Sovereignty (Kautilya, Austin, Bodin)

● ● ● ● ●

Caste — Ambedkar & Gandhi

● ● ● ● ●

Problem of evil & theodicy

● ● ● ● ●

Religious language

● ● ● ● ●

Notion of God — attributes

● ● ● ● ●

Justice — Rawls, Sen, Nozick

● ● ● ● ●

Secularism & multiculturalism

● ● ● ● ○

Crime & punishment

● ● ● ● ○

Gender & feminism

● ● ● ● ○

Anarchism & the individual v. State

● ● ● ● ○

Religion & morality

● ● ● ● ○

Mysticism & religious experience

● ● ● ● ○

Marxism · democracy · development

● ● ● ○ ○

Religious pluralism · religion without God

● ● ● ○ ○

*Six clusters — sovereignty, caste, gender, an ideal, secularism, punishment — take roughly two-thirds of Section A every year.*

EXPECTED PAPER · SIT THIS UNDER TIMED CONDITIONS

02

## Philosophy Paper I

*Eight questions, two sections, five to be attempted — the 2025 specification*

EXPECTED PAPER · CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION 2026

## PHILOSOPHY (*Paper I*)

TIME ALLOWED : THREE HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS : 250

There are **EIGHT** questions divided in **TWO SECTIONS**. Candidate has to attempt **FIVE** questions in all. Question Nos. **1** and **5** are compulsory and out of the remaining, **THREE** are to be attempted choosing at least **ONE** question from each Section. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it. Word limit in questions, wherever specified, should be adhered to.

### SECTION 'A'

- |       |                                                                                                                                                                     |         |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1.    | Answer the following questions in about 150 words each :                                                                                                            | 10×5=50 |
| 1.(a) | “The Good is not itself Being, but is beyond Being in dignity and power.” Elucidate Plato’s conception of the Form of the Good and its relation to the other Forms. | 10      |
| 1.(b) | Present an exposition of Aristotle’s doctrine of the four causes. Does the doctrine of the final cause commit Aristotle to teleology in nature ?                    | 10      |
| 1.(c) | Explain Leibniz’s principle of the identity of indiscernibles and show how it is required by his doctrine of monads.                                                | 10      |
| 1.(d) | What does Husserl mean by intentionality ? Discuss its role in arriving at the meaning of an object.                                                                | 10      |
| 1.(e) | Why does Kant describe his own method as a “Copernican Revolution” in philosophy ? Discuss.                                                                         | 10      |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

Slots filled — Plato in Q1 (6/8) · Aristotle (8/8) · Leibniz (seven-year dormancy, syllabus-named) · Husserl (8/8, on a dormant angle) · Kant (8/8). Family spread: Greek 2, rationalist 1, phenomenology 1, German idealist 1 — matching the observed partition rule.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |    |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 2.(a) | How does Kant attempt to establish the objective validity of the categories in the Transcendental Deduction ? Critically examine whether the transcendental unity of apperception is sufficient for this purpose. | 20 |
| 2.(b) | “There is properly no simplicity in the mind at one time, nor identity in different.” Examine Hume’s account of the self in the light of this statement.                                                          | 15 |
| 2.(c) | Explain Hegel’s notion of the concrete universal. How does it differ from the abstract universal of formal logic ?                                                                                                | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

The modern-system-builder 20-marker. Kant has not held a 20-mark slot since 2022; Hume is 7/8 with the bundle-self dormant since 2017; Hegel is 7/8 with the dialectical method saturated (2021, 2022, 2025) and the concrete universal untouched in the window.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3.(a) | “To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.” Explain the role of the notion of a form of life in the later Wittgenstein’s account of meaning, and consider whether it commits him to relativism. | 20 |
| 3.(b) | Do the logical positivists succeed in showing that value judgements are neither true nor false ? Discuss with reference to the emotive theory of ethical terms.                                              | 15 |
| 3.(c) | Explain Strawson’s distinction between M-predicates and P-predicates. What bearing does it have on his claim that the concept of a person is logically primitive ?                                           | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

The contemporary-analytic 20-marker. Wittgenstein is 8/8, but the picture→use transition is saturated (2023, 2025), so the forecast moves to form of life — present only at 10 marks in 2022. Logical positivism is 7/8 on a never-asked angle. Strawson runs on a clean two-year cycle, two years elapsed.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 4.(a) | Why does Heidegger approach the question of Being through an analysis of Dasein ? Explain his notion of ‘being-in-the-world’ and examine how far it constitutes a refutation of the Cartesian subject. | 20 |
| 4.(b) | Explain Sartre’s notion of bad faith. Is the possibility of bad faith consistent with his claim that man is condemned to be free ?                                                                     | 15 |
| 4.(c) | How does Kierkegaard’s ‘leap of faith’ follow from his critique of objective reasoning ? Critically discuss.                                                                                           | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION · HIGHEST CONVICTION

The phenomenology and existentialism 20-marker, and the paper’s single highest-conviction prediction: Heidegger is absent four consecutive years and was a 20-marker in three of his four appearances. Sartre was absent in 2024, with bad faith dormant since 2018; Kierkegaard was absent in 2025, and the leap of faith has never been asked in the window.

## SECTION 'B'

|       |                                                                                                                                         |         |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 5.    | Answer the following questions in about 150 words each :                                                                                | 10×5=50 |
| 5.(a) | Explain the Cārvāka doctrine of dehātma-vāda (identity of the self with the body) and state the principal objections raised against it. | 10      |
| 5.(b) | Present an exposition of the Vaiśeṣika theory of atomism (paramāṇuvāda) and explain the role of adṛṣṭa in the process of creation.      | 10      |
| 5.(c) | Explain the relation between anekāntavāda and syādvāda in Jaina philosophy. Is the doctrine self-refuting ?                             | 10      |
| 5.(d) | What are the five kleśas in Yoga philosophy ? Explain the means prescribed for their removal.                                           | 10      |
| 5.(e) | State the pañcavidhabheda of Madhva and bring out its philosophical significance for his Dvaita system.                                 | 10      |

### WHY THIS QUESTION

Q5 obeys the observed five-school spread. The Vaiśeṣika slot (7/7 in every Q5 read) moves to atomism: padārtha, abhāva, samavāya, sāmānya and causation are all used up in the window. Madhva fills the three-year Dvaita dormancy.

|       |                                                                                                                                                            |    |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 6.(a) | Explain the Nyāya conception of vyāpti. Examine the adequacy of the methods by which vyāpti is said to be known, and the role of tarka in establishing it. | 20 |
| 6.(b) | How do the Mīmāṃsakas establish the eternality and impersonal authorship (apauruṣeyatva) of the Veda ? Critically examine.                                 | 15 |
| 6.(c) | Present the Prābhākara doctrine of akhyāti (non-apprehension) and contrast it with the Nyāya theory of anyathākhyāti as an account of error.               | 15 |

### WHY THIS QUESTION

The Nyāya–Mīmāṃsā epistemology 20-marker, unbroken in every year checkable at slot level. Vyāpti has been dormant since 2013 and apauruṣeyatva since 2019; the theory of error is a standing favourite whose Prābhākara branch was last taken up in 2022.

|       |                                                                                                                                                           |    |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 7.(a) | How do the Yogācāra Buddhists establish that consciousness alone is real ? Explain the function of ālayavijñāna and examine the realist objections to it. | 20 |
| 7.(b) | Explain the Sāṃkhya doctrine of satkāryavāda and defend it against the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of causation.                                               | 15 |
| 7.(c) | Explain Sri Aurobindo's conception of the Supermind and its place in the double process of involution and evolution.                                      | 15 |

### WHY THIS QUESTION

Buddhism is 8/8, but kṣaṇikavāda and pratītyasamutpāda are saturated (2022, 2024, 2025), so the forecast moves to Yogācāra — last touched in 2019, with ālayavijñāna dormant since 2015. Aurobindo occupies his invariant 15-mark slot.

|       |                                                                                                                                            |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 8.(a) | Explain Śaṅkara's doctrine of adhyāsa. How does it ground the distinction between the vyāvahārika and the pāramārthika orders of reality ? | 20 |
| 8.(b) | How is Rāmānuja's dharmabhūtajñāna different from Śaṅkara's svarūpajñāna ? Explain.                                                        | 15 |
| 8.(c) | Does Śaṅkara's conception of Brahman leave room for a personal God ? Discuss the status of Īśvara in Advaita Vedānta.                      | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

The Vedānta 20-marker. Adhyāsa is the standout — a load-bearing Advaita doctrine, six appearances in the bank, and dormant since 2014. The Īśvara-versus-Brahman question was last taken up in 2016.

EXPECTED PAPER · SIT THIS UNDER TIMED CONDITIONS

03

## Philosophy Paper II

*Socio-political philosophy and philosophy of religion, to the 2025 specification*

EXPECTED PAPER · CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION 2026

## PHILOSOPHY (*Paper II*)

TIME ALLOWED : THREE HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS : 250

There are **EIGHT** questions divided in **TWO SECTIONS**. Candidate has to attempt **FIVE** questions in all. Question Nos. **1** and **5** are compulsory and out of the remaining, **THREE** are to be attempted choosing at least **ONE** question from each Section. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.

### SECTION 'A'

- |       |                                                                                                                                |         |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1.    | Answer the following questions in about 150 words each :                                                                       | 10×5=50 |
| 1.(a) | Explain Rawls' difference principle. Can it justify economic inequality in a democratic society ? Discuss.                     | 10      |
| 1.(b) | Distinguish between negative and positive conceptions of liberty. Which of them better serves the ends of a democratic State ? | 10      |
| 1.(c) | Examine Austin's monistic theory of sovereignty in the light of the pluralist critique.                                        | 10      |
| 1.(d) | Can affirmative action by the State eliminate caste-based inequality ? Give reasons and justification for your answer.         | 10      |
| 1.(e) | Distinguish between liberal and radical feminism. Which of the two is more relevant to Indian society ? Discuss.               | 10      |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

All five of the section's standing slots in one compulsory question: an ideal (justice), liberty, sovereignty, caste, gender. Rawls runs on a two-year cycle, now two years elapsed; the negative/positive liberty distinction has been dormant since 2007, feminism since 2018.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                       |    |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 2.(a) | Does Marxism regard rights as bourgeois illusions ? Critically examine the Marxian critique of liberal rights and consider whether a Marxian State can accommodate individual rights. | 20 |
| 2.(b) | Discuss the anarchist claim that the State is inherently coercive. Can a stateless society secure justice ? Give reasons.                                                             | 15 |
| 2.(c) | Does democracy necessarily degenerate into majoritarianism ? Discuss with reference to the idea of constitutional morality.                                                           | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

Marxism is 7/8; alienation (2024) and historical materialism (2023) are saturated, so the forecast routes to the rights critique — which pairs the Marxism and rights slots in a single part, exactly the setter's economy. Anarchism returns after two skipped years.

|       |                                                                                                                                                              |    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3.(a) | Is Indian secularism better understood as 'principled distance' from religion than as strict separation between religion and the State ? Critically examine. | 20 |
| 3.(b) | Is retribution a morally defensible ground of punishment ? Discuss.                                                                                          | 15 |
| 3.(c) | Is sustainable development compatible with the demands of social justice ? Give reasons and justification for your answer.                                   | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

Secularism and multiculturalism is 7/8, absent only in 2021; 'principled distance' is the standard Indian formulation and has never been used. Punishment is 7/8, and retribution is the one theory the window has not taken up — deterrence 2024, reform 2021, proportionality 2023.

|       |                                                                                                                                                         |    |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 4.(a) | Do the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau yield incompatible accounts of political obligation ? Critically discuss.                 | 20 |
| 4.(b) | Does the ideal of equality require the redistribution of resources ? Discuss with reference to the distinction between formal and substantive equality. | 15 |
| 4.(c) | Does globalisation weaken the sovereignty of the nation-State ? Discuss.                                                                                | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

Social contract has appeared at 10 marks (2024) and 15 (2021) but never as a 20-marker in the window, and Rousseau is four years dormant. Part (c) gives sovereignty its customary second appearance in the paper.

## SECTION 'B'

- |              |                                                                                                                              |                |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>5.</b>    | Answer the following questions in about 150 words each :                                                                     | <b>10×5=50</b> |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                              |                |
| <b>5.(a)</b> | Explain the distinction between Deism and Theism. Can Deism accommodate a God of grace and devotion ?                        | 10             |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                              |                |
| <b>5.(b)</b> | Present the cosmological argument for the existence of God and examine Kant's objection to it.                               | 10             |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                              |                |
| <b>5.(c)</b> | Can religious statements be falsified ? Discuss with reference to the debate on the falsifiability of religious belief.      | 10             |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                              |                |
| <b>5.(d)</b> | State the chief characteristics of mystical experience. Can mystical experience be regarded as a valid source of knowledge ? | 10             |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                              |                |
| <b>5.(e)</b> | Does the view that morality consists in obedience to divine commands make moral obligation arbitrary ? Discuss.              | 10             |

### WHY THIS QUESTION

Five of the section's standing clusters in one question: notion of God (absent in 2025 — the first gap in a decade), proofs (24 of 26 years, with the cosmological dormant since 2017), religious language (falsifiability dormant since 2015), mysticism (six years dormant) and religion and morality (8/8).

- |              |                                                                                                                                       |    |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>6.(a)</b> | Explain the free-will defence as a response to the problem of evil. Does it adequately account for natural evil ? Critically discuss. | 20 |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                                       |    |
| <b>6.(b)</b> | Is the doctrine of karma compatible with freedom of the will ? Discuss.                                                               | 15 |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                                       |    |
| <b>6.(c)</b> | Examine the adequacy of Galloway's definition of religion. Is it wide enough to include the anti-theistic religions ?                 | 15 |

### WHY THIS QUESTION

Evil is 8/8; 2025 took process theodicy, and the free-will defence is its natural unused counterpart. Part (c) fills the 'religion without God' slot through the definition of religion rather than the Buddhism formulation used in 2024.

- |              |                                                                                                                                                                                    |    |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>7.(a)</b> | Distinguish between exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism as responses to the conflicting truth-claims of different religions. Which of them is philosophically most defensible ? | 20 |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                                                                                    |    |
| <b>7.(b)</b> | Is faith a species of knowledge or its opposite ? Discuss the relation between reason and revelation in the light of your answer.                                                  | 15 |
| <hr/>        |                                                                                                                                                                                    |    |
| <b>7.(c)</b> | Why does Sāṃkhya deny the existence of God while Yoga admits Īśvara ? Examine the philosophical grounds of the difference.                                                         | 15 |

### WHY THIS QUESTION

The pluralism 20-marker: the exclusivism / inclusivism / pluralism triad was last set in 2018, and 2025 approached the cluster from the Vedāntic side only. Part (c) is the cross-paper link the setter has used repeatedly — Nyāya's God in 2023 and 2025, Yoga's Īśvara in 2025.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                        |    |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 8.(a) | Explain the account of the numinous as the distinctive object of religious consciousness. Does it succeed in distinguishing religious experience from moral and aesthetic experience ? | 20 |
| 8.(b) | Explain the distinction between the sacred and the profane. Is it essential to the definition of religion ?                                                                            | 15 |
| 8.(c) | Does the growth of the sciences make religious belief irrational ? Discuss.                                                                                                            | 15 |

#### WHY THIS QUESTION

Religious experience is a standing 20-mark slot — Radhakrishnan in 2025, Advaita in 2024. The numinous itself has been dormant since 2007, the sacred/profane distinction since 2019, and religion and science since 2020.

CLOSE SUBSTITUTES · PREPARE IN THE ORDER PRINTED

04

## The Reserve Forty

*Each of these lost its place in the papers to a marginally stronger candidate from the same area*

1. Kant's refutation of the ontological argument, and whether existence is a predicate.
2. Locke's doctrine of substance and the difficulties it creates for his empiricism.
3. Berkeley's *esse est percipi*: does it escape solipsism ?
4. Descartes' criterion of clear and distinct ideas and the charge of circularity.
5. Spinoza on freedom and necessity: "that thing is free which exists from the necessity of its own nature".
6. Hegel's master–slave dialectic and the emergence of self-consciousness.
7. Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas, and the missing shade of blue.
8. Russell's theory of logical constructions as an account of physical objects.
9. Moore's refutation of idealism and the charge that it begs the question.
10. Quine on the indeterminacy of translation.
11. Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations and the private-language argument.
12. Ayer's elimination of metaphysics and the self-refutation objection.
13. Husserl's epoché and the charge of a residual Cartesianism.
14. Sartre on the look and the being of the Other.
15. Nyāya's anyathākhyāti versus Advaita's anirvacanīya-khyāti.
16. Nyāya proofs for the existence of the self, and the Buddhist reply.
17. Mādhyamika catuṣkoṭi and the charge of nihilism against śūnyavāda.
18. Sāṃkhya's proofs for the plurality of puruṣas.
19. Rāmānuja's seven objections to māyā, and the Advaitin's reply.
20. Jīvanmukti in Advaita: liberation as the attainment of the already attained.

1. Is Amartya Sen's capability approach an advance on Rawls' primary goods ?
2. Nozick's entitlement theory and the Wilt Chamberlain objection to patterned justice.
3. Kautilya's saptāṅga theory of the State and its bearing on sovereignty.
4. Bodin and Austin compared: is sovereignty divisible ?
5. Ambedkar's 'annihilation of caste' against Gandhi's defence of varṇa.
6. Does reservation offend the ideal of equality of opportunity ?
7. Gandhian swaraj and the anarchist critique of the State.
8. Is civil disobedience compatible with political obligation ?
9. Plato's critique of democracy and its contemporary force.
10. Aristotle's conception of distributive justice and proportionate equality.
11. Are group rights compatible with individual rights in a multicultural State ?
12. Does the death penalty violate human dignity ?
13. Is the family the primary site of gender injustice ?
14. Corruption as a failure of institutional design rather than of individual virtue.
15. The ontological argument and Kant's objection that existence adds nothing.
16. The moral argument for the existence of God and its Kantian form.
17. Tillich on symbol: does symbolic language say anything at all ?
18. Immortality of the soul in the Bhagavad Gītā and in Plato compared.
19. Is religious experience self-authenticating ?
20. Nyāya arguments for God, and the Buddhist and Sāṃkhya replies.

PAPER I • TEN

1. Kant's schematism: how do the categories get applied to intuitions at all ?
2. Leibniz's pre-established harmony as a solution to the mind–body problem.
3. Aristotle's account of the unmoved mover and its place in his metaphysics.
4. Plato's *Parmenides* problem of participation: the 'third man' regress.
5. Wittgenstein on the saying/showing distinction and the status of the *Tractatus* itself.
6. Heidegger on the 'destruction' of the history of ontology.
7. Vaiśeṣika viśeṣa: is an ultimate differentiator logically defensible ?
8. Mīmāṃsā apūrvā and the mechanism of Vedic injunction.
9. Nyāya upamāna (comparison) as an independent pramāṇa.
10. Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika compared on the knowability of external objects.

1. Robert Paul Wolff: is acceptance of State authority inconsistent with the duty of autonomy ?
2. Is there a right to civil disobedience in a just State ?
3. Free speech and the independence of the judiciary from the executive.
4. Is monarchy defensible where the monarch stands above politics ?
5. Skill-based education and the idea of human development.
6. Prayer and worship: their distinct place in religious life.
7. Miracles: is the concept coherent ?
8. Are the paradoxes of omnipotence resolvable ?
9. Anselm's second version of the ontological argument, and Gaunilo's reply.
10. Sarvadharmasamabhāva, samanvaya and sadbhāva distinguished.

READ THIS PAGE AGAIN THE NIGHT BEFORE

06

## Overdue, Dangerous, Unexpected

*What is most due to return, what is most expensive to skip, and where the surprise may come from*

#### THE EIGHT MOST OVERDUE

*Long dormant, syllabus-central, and due a return.*

1. **Heidegger** — four years absent, a 20-marker in three of his four appearances.
2. **Śaṅkara's adhyāsa** — dormant since 2014, on a load-bearing Advaita doctrine.
3. **Mysticism** — six years dormant on a syllabus-named topic.
4. **Notion of God and His attributes** — the first missing year in a decade.
5. **Leibniz** — seven years absent, and named in the syllabus.
6. **The justice theorists** — Rawls two years, Sen and Nozick four.
7. **Anarchism** — a slot filled six years in seven, now skipped twice.
8. **Madhva's pañcavidhabheda** — dormant since 2015.

#### MOST DANGEROUS TO IGNORE

*Not the same list. These look exhausted by 2025 — but their slot is unbroken, so they return in another form.*

- **Vaiśeṣika categories** — present in every compulsory Q5 read. Skipping this is the single most expensive omission available.
- **Proofs for the existence of God** — 24 of the 26 years since 2000.
- **Kautilya on sovereignty** — six years in eight, and again in 2025.
- **Caste, gender, secularism** — three near-guaranteed parts of Paper II every year.
- **Religious language** — twice in each of the last three years.
- **Aurobindo** — every year at 10 or 15 marks, never a 20-marker. Cheap and certain.
- **Theory of error in Indian philosophy** — asked in 2019, 2021 and 2022 in three different branches.

# Four Openings The Setter Has Left Himself

| A CROSS-TRADITION 20-MARKER | AN APPLIED FRAMING IN PAPER II                                                                     | NIETZSCH AS A FIXTURE |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Precedent                   | 2025 framed corrupt practices as a tension between particularistic and universalistic norms.       | 2025                  |
| exists                      | Data privacy, artificial intelligence or environmental justice could enter through that same door. | asked                 |
| —                           |                                                                                                    | his                   |
| Aquinas'                    |                                                                                                    | critique              |
| five                        |                                                                                                    | of                    |
| ways                        |                                                                                                    | religion              |
| against                     |                                                                                                    | and                   |
| Nyāya                       |                                                                                                    | morality              |
| (2018),                     |                                                                                                    | —                     |
| Plato's                     |                                                                                                    | effectivel            |
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| the                         |                                                                                                    | substanti             |
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| (2010)                      |                                                                                                    | since                 |
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| five                        |                                                                                                    | that                  |
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| Kant                        |                                                                                                    | rather                |
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| Nyāya,                      |                                                                                                    | a                     |
| or                          |                                                                                                    | one-                  |
| Hume                        |                                                                                                    | off,                  |
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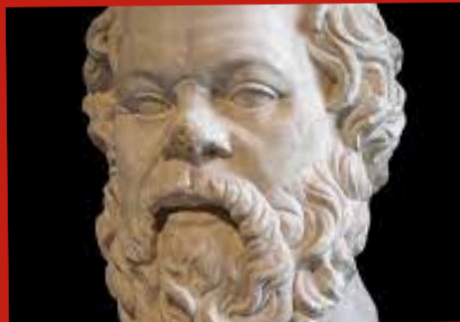
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