

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

For lakhs of students each year, becoming a Civil Servant (IAS, IPS, IRS and 20 other services) is their ultimate dream, and they often spend years, multiple attempts and lakhs of rupees in preparing for this highly competitive and prestigious exam. But except for the few hundred each year who crack this exam, for the remaining aspirants it is a shattered dream, often having to go back to the starting line. And with each passing year, the dream appears more and more elusive. So what makes some students crack this exam while for many others it is a struggle? To seek answers to this puzzle, Israel has spent many years trying to understand what exactly determines success. This book is a result of that journey of discovery, one that distills the findings into five never before understood nor revealed 'secret ingredients' that goes into the making of a 'Champion IAS Aspirant'.

Presented as a conversation between Raju and a Guru whom he has rescued, this book is at turns heart warming, eye opening and instructive, as it peels the layers around what it takes to crack this exam. A highlight of this book is the beautiful images, lovingly and painstakingly hand drawn that add meaning to the story and appear to leap out from the pages. This is one book that you won't want to put down. And when you come to the last page, you will find yourself energized in your quest to make your dream a reality.

the missing ingredients by Israel Jebasingh  
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## the missing ingredients

5 ancient secrets  
to crack the IAS exam



Israel Jebasingh  
(IAS, 2004)

This book, my very first, is dedicated to my ever loving and everlasting parents. I was not an extraordinary student by any means, but their love for me and belief in me made me think that I am extraordinary. They had sown the seeds in me to go ahead and dream about getting into the IAS, something considered unthinkable and even impossible. They were and are with me throughout the journey I have embarked on. Today whatever I am, it is because of my ever loving parents – Mr. Raja Daniel and Mrs. Joyce Lily. They are not physically present in this world now, but they are always with me as a guiding spirit.

I dedicate this book to the both of them – who made me to dream and who made me achieve my dream.



### **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to Vishwakiran Viswanathan and Shiva Shankar for their passion and efforts in giving life to the spark that I had and making this book possible.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Israel Jebasingh (IAS, 2004) is the founder and director of Officers IAS Academy, a highly respected UPSC coaching academy. After a decade as a Civil Servant handling challenging assignments in the Naxal affected parts of India, where he earned a reputation for integrity, compassion and out-of-the box thinking, Israel decided to quit and take up new challenges. Soon he realized that his passion was teaching, the IAS was in his heart and there was a dearth of high quality UPSC coaching institutes that knew what it took to crack the UPSC exam. Thus was born Officers IAS Academy.

This book has been a lifelong dream of his and he would love to hear from the readers and aspirants at [jebasingh.israel@gmail.com](mailto:jebasingh.israel@gmail.com)

To know more about these secrets and putting them to work in your preparation visit [www.secrets2crackias.com](http://www.secrets2crackias.com)



**Founder & Director  
Israel Jebasingh**

## ABOUT OFFICERS IAS ACADEMY

Officers IAS Academy is the only UPSC (Civil Services) coaching institute that is founded and run by a team of former Civil Servants. These highly accomplished and respected individuals together with the industry's top faculty are committed to teaching and mentoring UPSC aspirants, and equip them with the winning edge to crack this prestigious and highly competitive examination.

Making all this possible is our 'kendraka' or nucleus - our unique teaching pedagogy - that in addition to our pedigree includes precision delivery of the syllabus, a rhythm of testing, evaluation and feedback, 'Hansei', a unique mentoring program, a 'Dream Team' faculty and our unique course material and test series.

But we also driven by our enduring purpose 'Creating Better Civil Servants'. We do not merely prepare the students to crack the exam, instead it is our intent to produce officers who have compassion for the poor and the needy, possess integrity, act with impartiality and never waver from the path of what is right. In short make our students stand for something and make a difference.

Little wonder then that within a short period, Officers IAS Academy has established itself as a force to reckon with in the UPSC coaching industry, and the place where one goes if their dream and destination is LBSNAA.

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Dear IAS aspirant.

You have decided to pursue your dream of being an IAS Officer or equivalent Civil Servant. Congratulations. That was the easy part. The toughest journey is now ahead of you. Preparing and taking the Civil Services Exam conducted by the UPSC is nothing short of a marathon, with several challenges along the way, and many hurdles to cross (Prelims, Mains and Interview) before you join the elite Civil Service. Success requires planning, time management, a sound reading strategy among a number of other key ingredients.

I should know it, because like you, I took the Civil Services exam and was successful twice. And subsequently served with great distinction in the IAS, in one of the most inhospitable and Naxal affected parts of India. And throughout my preparation I was guided by a strong burning desire to make a difference to society, and developed a 'Mindset' that helped me succeed and fulfill my dream.

In the next stage of my life, I am coaching and guiding thousands of aspirants like you, equipping them with the skills they need to succeed and instilling in them the 'Mindset of a Champion IAS Aspirant'.

I am proud to place in your hands, this ebook that finally lifts the curtain on what it takes to succeed. If you have any doubts, or want to be guided on your journey please write to me at [jebasingh.israel@gmail.com](mailto:jebasingh.israel@gmail.com) - me and my highly experienced and passionate team will be only too happy to help.

Now. On to success.

*Israel Jebasingh*

Raju is a 21 year old enthusiastic boy who lives with his father, mother, younger brother, sister and his grandfather in the holy town of Kanyakumari.



His life has been a struggle to get to where he is and he remembers all too well the pain and sacrifices his parents have undergone in bringing him and his siblings up.

## MY PLAN TO WIN

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## MY PROMISE

I will develop the 'Mindset of a Champion IAS Aspirant' so I can prepare, take and pass the Civil Services Exam and get the rank I need so I join the Civil Service of my choice. And once I become a Civil Servant, I promise that I will \_\_\_\_\_

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## EXERCISE

Congratulations. You have decided to take up one of India's most competitive entrance exams – Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC, and once successful, be a part of one India's most sought after jobs – the elite Civil Services cadre.

Over the next 12-18 months, you are going to prepare with single minded focus, unwavering dedication, consistency and calmness. In short you are going to develop the 'Mindset of a Champion IAS Aspirant' and this is your plan to win.

### DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

My burning desire to become an IAS/IPS/\_\_\_\_\_ is because I want to \_\_\_\_\_

My strengths are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The areas I need to improve are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

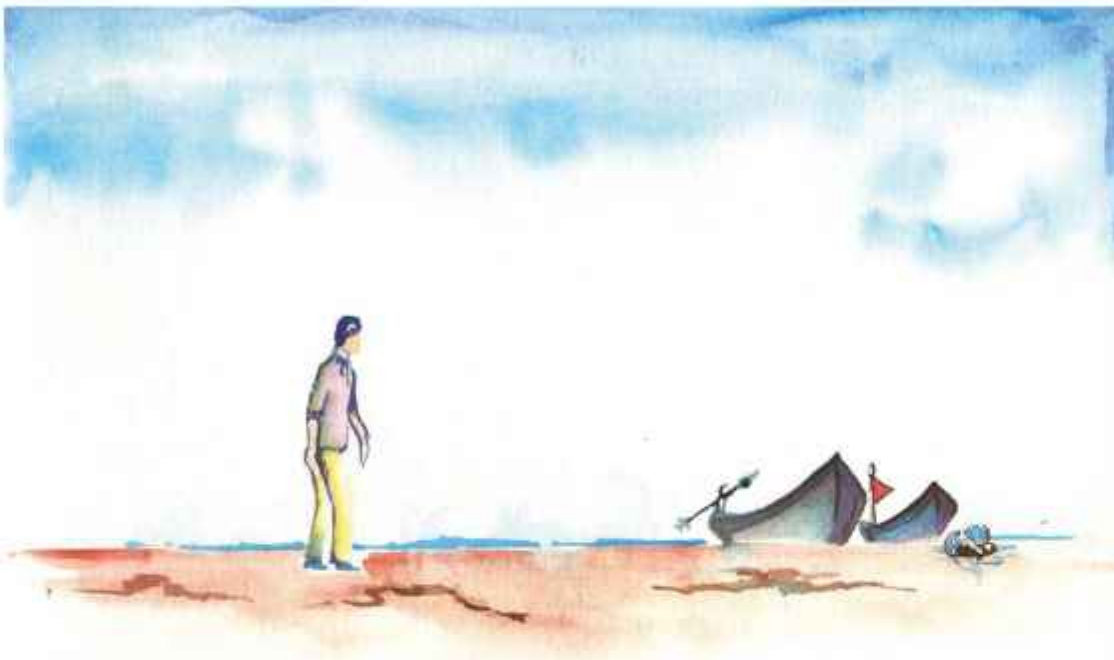
My support system consists of \_\_\_\_\_ and I will use them for \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My study strategy consists of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will not stress myself unnecessarily and instead unwind by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Now having passed his degree he decided to appear for the UPSC Examination to become an IAS Officer and in turn do good to society. Yet despite his efforts and hardwork, he was struggling to complete the portions and with the Prelims exam taking place in a few weeks, he was in a state of panic...



Raju was walking on the sands of Kanyakumari beach and was oblivious to the sun beating down mercilessly making the hot sands even hotter, the waves crashing against the shores and the noisy crowds thronging the beach.

And yet Raju walked on, tears streaming down his face and filled with panic.

It was obvious to any passerby who saw Raju that something was troubling him and that he was scared.

## .. and for some pearls of wisdom from our own 'Gurus' - The rule of 5

It is a myth that preparing for the UPSC exam is tough and unpredictable. Sadly, most aspirants come to believe this. The reality is neither myth is correct, rather it is the very basic mistakes students commit during preparation that leads to this impression. Follow these five pearls and see the difference they makes to your preparation and ultimate success:



Put in your hard work. There is no shortcut - do not blindly follow the "herd".



Ensure that you set aside 1 day a week for periodic revision. It is extremely important that you consolidate all that you have read.



Your best reading is in the early morning - when your mind is the freshest and most productive (Rule of thumb: Morning Study x 2 but Night Study ÷ 2).



Know the syllabus and prepare accordingly - running a 100m race by preparing for a marathon is a sheer waste.



Rotate subjects every day to avoid monotony from setting in.




“Ouch” Raju exclaimed as he stepped on something and he winced in pain. He saw lying on the sand was a copper bottle.



He picked it up and from the looks of it, he could make out that it was a very very old bottle, possibly centuries old. He shook it a few times and was about to hurl it back to the sand, when he heard faint sounds coming from inside the bottle.



It was a quote from India's most beloved leader, the former President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.



**“Dream is not the thing you see in sleep, but it is that thing that doesn’t let you sleep.”**

Raju smiled as he wiped the tears that were streaming down his face. But soon realized that these tears were no longer from fear and sadness. Instead they were tears of relief and joy.

He now knew the path forward. And what he had to get done to fulfil all the dreams. As he walked on the sand towards the road, he saw a poor man beg for alms, a child plead for food, a sick man lying uncared for...

Raju shouted out aloud “Hang in there. Change is on the way!”



“All students, with few exceptions, try to read as many topics as possible, from a number of books and try and cram everything. This is a sure shot way of not being successful. You have to read smart and balance coverage (breadth) with depth.”

It was time for the guru to take leave and Raju could feel a lump in his throat. In the most critical time of his life, the most unexpected person had seemingly appeared from nowhere (actually an ancient copper bottle) and changed his trajectory and very likely his destiny.

“You are a smart, hardworking and passionate sishya and with a few changes to your attitude and preparation, and sincerely following and embracing these secrets you will fulfil your dream. I must leave now, you have been a most wonderful student.”

“But before I leave, here take this...”, and saying so, the guru Rishi thrust the original parchment that revealed the five secrets into Raju’s hand. And poof - he vanished as suddenly as he came into Raju’s life.

Raju grasped the parchment carefully. And suddenly saw another piece of paper fall to the ground. He picked it up to see what it was.



Or was it? Raju was sure the combination of lack of sleep, the heat of the midday sun, and pangs of hunger was making him imagine things.



# STUDY STRATEGY

# 5

As he was about to throw it back, the sounds came again. Faintly first, and then louder. "Raju. Raju! Help me. Save me!!"



It is all too easy to get swamped during the course of preparation. There seem to be an endless number of books that you must read, a seemingly infinite number of topics that you need to be aware of, and time (or the lack of it) always seems to be breathing down your neck. The result? You get unnecessarily stressed, lose energy and end up demotivated.

The best way is a reading strategy focussed on a manageable set of books (NCERT), balance between selective and intensive reading, and time management. And one skill that is invaluable - Quick Reading.



In fright Raju dropped the bottle and the lid opened out and there stood before him an elderly man with long hair, flowing beard and wearing a dhoti. A Gurul

The guru clasped Raju's hands and profusely thanked him. "Thank you so much for setting me free from this dungeon. I have been waiting for this day when someone will finally release me."



Raju stood still, staring blankly at the guru, his mouth wide open. Whatever fear he had was now replaced by puzzlement.

"I am Guru Rishi, a learned man and a teacher of scriptures and wisdom to thousands of students who went on to achieve greatness in life. But one day due to my temper, I angered a sage who cursed me and condemned me to this copper bottle."



Raju wanted to make a difference to the lives of the helpless and the downtrodden. And if becoming an IAS Officer was what it took, he would not rest till he went to LBSNAA!

He noticed suddenly that the talkative guru had become silent. He looked at him and saw the guru was staring at the setting sun.

"I don't have too much time to spare", he cried, "My students await me!"

"But I do have time for revealing to you one last secret ingredient. This is the one where most USPC aspirants tend to fail, for they lack a strategy to read."

“I have been trying to escape ever since then. Been screaming myself hoarse. No one hears me. Always busy with your smartphones!”, he cried.

Raju knew that it was never a problem in his case. He had seen first hand his father struggle to make ends meet. His mother going hungry for days so her children could eat. His grandfather suffer due to the lack of timely and proper medical care.

Many people are driven to pursue and become an IAS Officer for various reasons. For Raju, it was deeply personal.



“I must be on my way. My students await me, wondering where I am. But before I go, to express my gratitude to you, I grant that any wish you have comes true.”



“Tell me what is it you want?”

Raju stared blankly at him. Shook his head and continued his now interrupted journey over the hot, boiling sand.

# BURNING DESIRE

4

Suddenly Raju felt a strong hand placed on his shoulder and pulling him back.



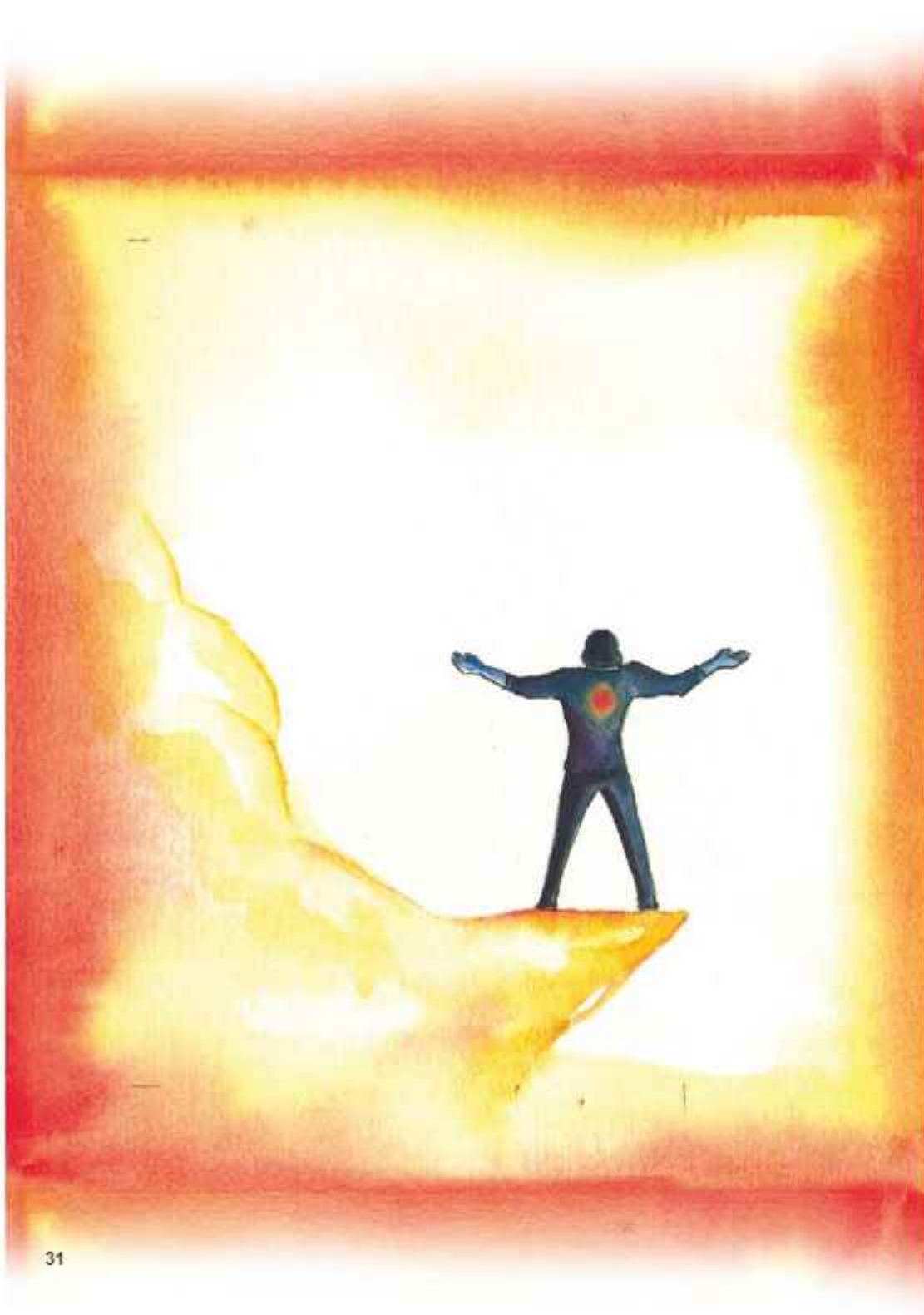
“Tell me what you want”, the guru cried.

“What is it that worries you and makes you so sad?”

“I must be mad, imagining things”, Raju thought himself. The over preparation was really getting to him now. Was he losing his sanity, he wondered to himself.

When you look at history, many of the greatest and most successful people across fields, be it military, business, science, politics or sports, have had one thing in common – a “Burning Desire” to succeed. To accomplish what no one thought was possible.

Much like them, you too need to have within yourself, a burning desire to achieve the ultimate dream you have set for yourself – becoming an ‘IAS Officer’. It is this desire that will allow you to focus, work hard, overcome every challenge that comes your way and finally crack the exam. And it is this desire that will allow you to make a difference once you join the Civil Service.



“Are you scared if you will clear the IAS exam and become the officer you always wanted to be?”, shouted the Guru.

### I.A.S

Hearing those three letters, Raju stopped in his tracks and turned around to face the Guru.



“How does this Guru so know much about me? My name. My dreams. And my worries.”

Suddenly he couldn't control himself anymore and he began weeping. "Yes I am", Raju said softly.



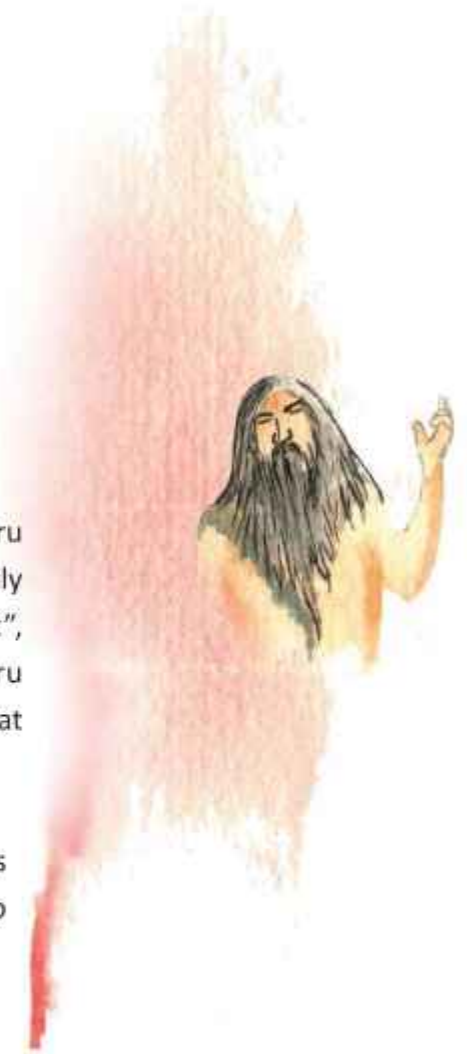
"My family is having such high hopes on me. Hoping that I become successful. And help my siblings avoid the life my parents and grandparents led."

"I am scared that I will let them down. And be a failure."

Raju looked up and saw the guru standing outside a corn stall, hungrily chewing into one. "What's that", asked Raju. "It's corn", the guru remarked, seemingly perplexed that Raju could not identify it.

"No! No!!", Raju exclaimed. "What's the ingredient #4, which I need to have from within? "

"It is called Burning Desire - the hunger and the passion to not stop till you march and reach your destination, your dream, your goal."





“Remember Raju, your support system should include not just friends and family, but you should make it a point to have mentors, especially those who have appeared for the UPSC exam and cleared the various stages.”

“Even better if they have been selected and served in the IAS, for only they know what it takes to prepare, pass and serve, and they appreciate even more the efforts, the sacrifices, the pain and the joy of delayed gratification.”



By now, the crowds on the beach were staring at a young man speaking to no one in particular, all excited and animated and walking aimlessly.

Raju could care less. He was too engrossed hearing the wisdom of the guru, and found his sorrows and diffidence being replaced by growing self-realisation and confidence. Finally he knew what he had been doing wrong up to now.

“But there is one ingredient I cannot give it to you, for it has to come from within”, the guru’s chirpy voice cut through Raju’s thoughts.

The guru smiled. He had after all taught thousands of students. And a look of compassion and empathy came over his wizened face.



Placing his hand around Raju, he said softly “Come with me. Let me tell you a way out of this predicament.” “But

first I am thirsty”, and gestured to a coconut water stand. “Trapped in that bottle for an eternity has made my lips dry and mouth parched.”

As they walked to the stand, the guru Rishi pulled out from his small bag, a tattered parchment and showed it to Raju.



“Do you know what this is?”, he asked Raju excitedly. “It is the secrets that will help you crack the IAS exam and accomplish all the dreams your family has for you.”

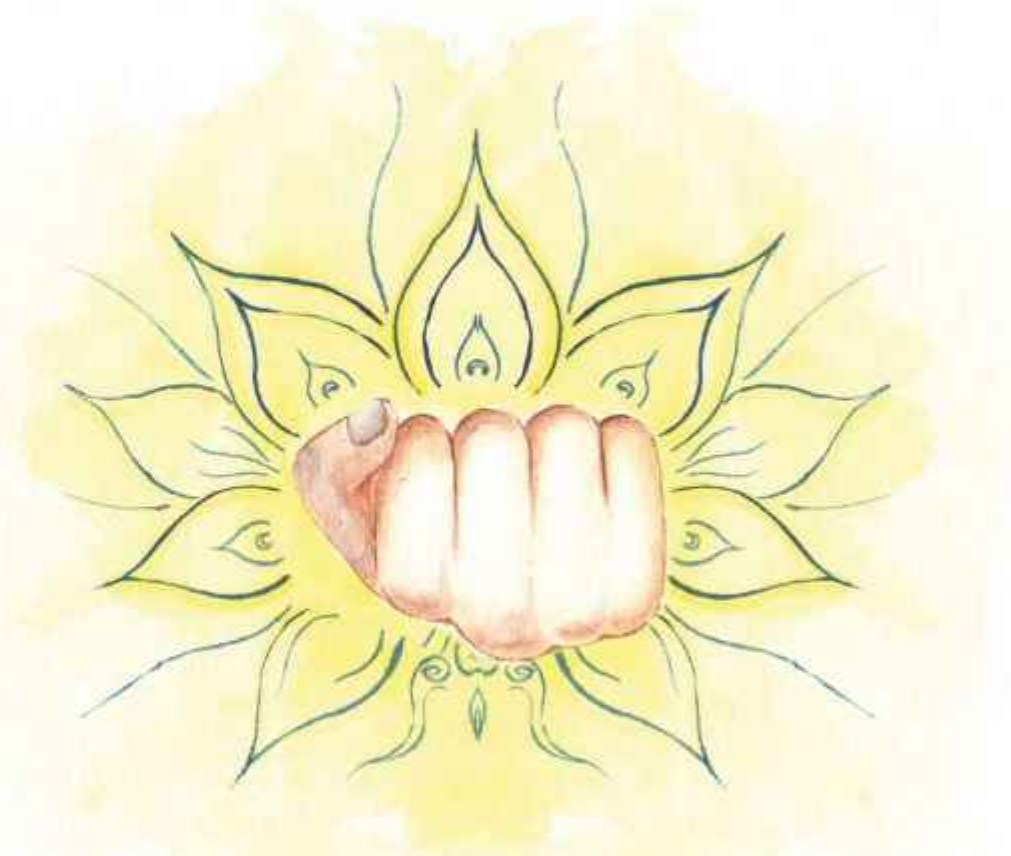
# 3

# SUPPORT SYSTEM

The UPSC exam is like running a marathon. And you need to stay in peak form through every lap – the Prelims, the Mains and finally and most crucially, the career defining Interview. To be successful requires you to have a support system that is there for you every step of the way. A team of well-wishers who encourage you, lift your spirits when you are down, who push you forward and are with you every step of the way, till selection. And then beyond.



Raju glanced at the parchment. It read  
“the missing ingredients: ancient secrets  
that will help you crack the IAS exam.”

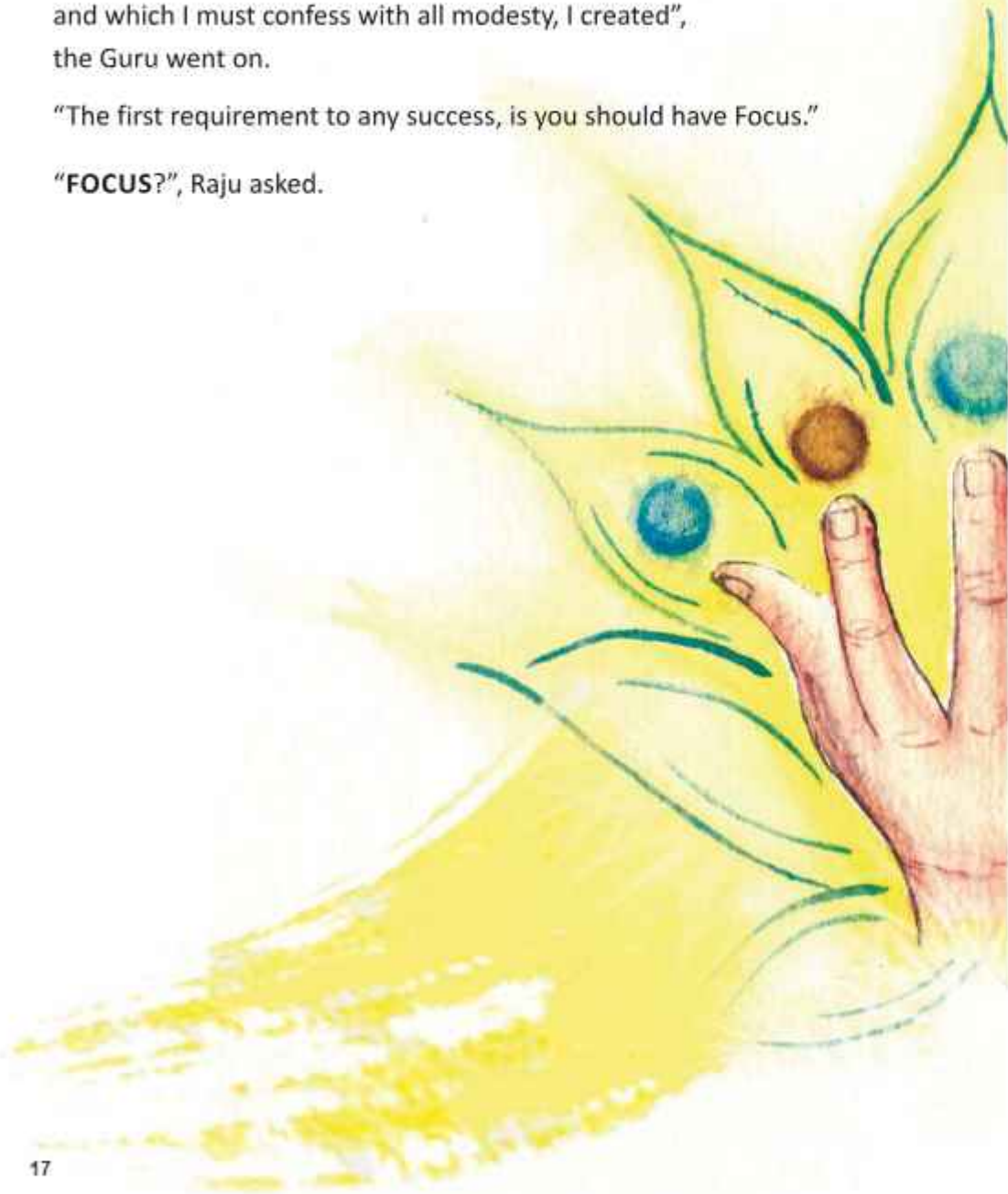


“How could any ancient piece of paper, thousands of years old, have something on the IAS which was a recent phenomenon?” Raju was flabbergasted as he thought to himself, but was also overcome with curiosity.

"Let me explain to you the secrets of the Gurukul system that churns out highly successful students, and which I must confess with all modesty, I created", the Guru went on.

"The first requirement to any success, is you should have Focus."

"**FOCUS?**", Raju asked.



"Raju, if your dream is good, and intentions are noble, then the universe will conspire to make it come true. Sit down with your parents and explain to them why this is important."

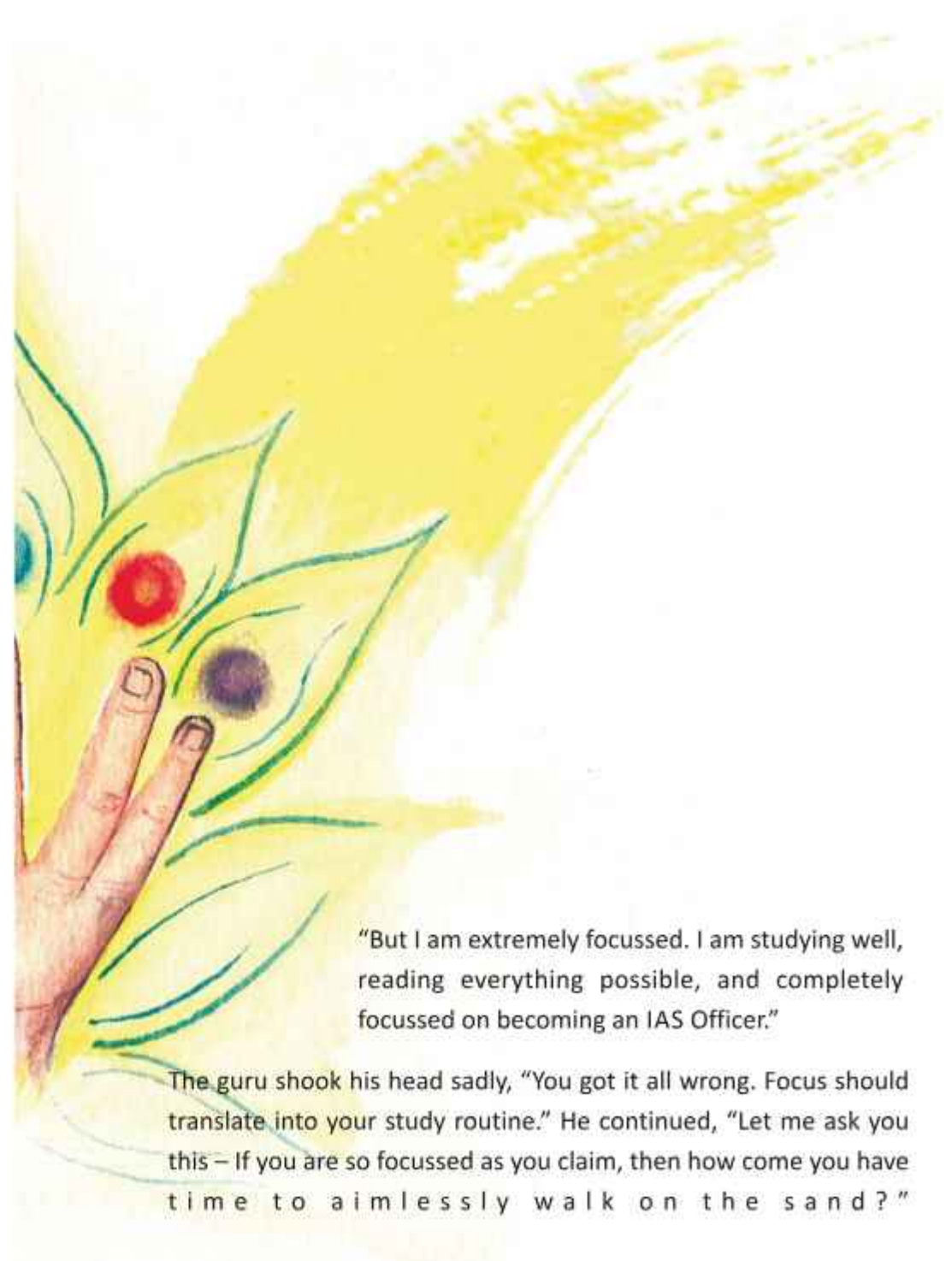
"Excuse yourself from your responsibilities and duties and seek their blessings."

But then he thought about his home situation and became all the more sad. The pressure to help his father who toiled in the farm land from dawn till dusk and beyond, having to take care of his aged grandfather, educate his siblings.... the list went on.



“You need a support system, one that will help you prepare for these exams without distraction or feeling guilty”, guru Rishi’s words reverberated.

Raju looked at him in stunned silence, “How did he know....”, his thoughts trailed off.



“But I am extremely focussed. I am studying well, reading everything possible, and completely focussed on becoming an IAS Officer.”

The guru shook his head sadly, “You got it all wrong. Focus should translate into your study routine.” He continued, “Let me ask you this – If you are so focussed as you claim, then how come you have time to aimlessly walk on the sand?”



2

# PERSISTENCE

Rome was not built in a day. And so is getting your desired Civil Service choice in the exam. Success will not come overnight. Rather you need to have patience, and more importantly, perseverance.

Think of it like planting and tending to a sapling. It takes time, and much patience, but ultimately the fruits of the labour are there for all to see. In this journey, you will face many obstacles, and disappointments. But you have to persevere and slog on. Because the prize is bigger than your challenge. And nothing pushes you further than delayed gratification.

## 1

Just as a champion athlete is focussed on winning the biggest prize in his or her sport, you too need to be singularly focused on not just clearing the UPSC exam but getting a high enough rank so that you can join the Civil Service of your dream.

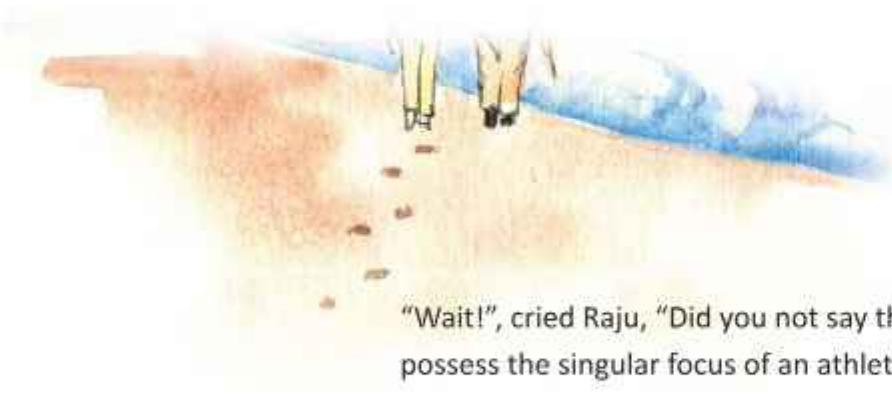
But for that to happen you have to eliminate all the distractions and the noise that you face in your quest and ensure you are focussed on reading the right books, the right material, taking the tests and preparing really, really hard. Remember it is all too easy to get derailed in this long journey, and the only factor that helps you stay on track is focus. But not just any focus.

Singular focus.



Guru Rishi continued, "Yes. You are focussed on becoming an IAS Officer. But I don't see you focussed on doing the things needed to be successful." "You are allowing distractions to push you further and further away from your goal. And the noise that your mind produces, by incessant worrying, clouds your thoughts."

"But Focus alone is not enough for you to succeed", said the Guru.



"Wait!", cried Raju, "Did you not say that I should possess the singular focus of an athlete?"

Irritation crossed the Guru's face. "Does your sambar come only with one ingredient? No! It takes many ingredients mixed in the right proportion for the delicious sambar to be served."

"In the same way, your success depends on many other secret ingredients working together in harmony." "Along with Focus, you must have loads of Perseverance." By now the guru was shouting in excitement.



"Remember Raju, the whole preparation for the IAS exam is like running a marathon, you surely need to have focus to start with but do you have the perseverance to see this through to the end?"

Raju nodded in silence. He could see what the wise Guru meant. What he lacked was the mental toughness to see the entire journey to the last stop, from Prelims, Mains to the Interview and finally LBSNAA.

He looked at the waves lashing at the shore. He could now realize why he was such a wise man. He was precisely telling Raju, all of his weak points.