

When we survey our lives and efforts we soon observe that almost the whole of our actions and desires are bound up with the existence of other human beings. We notice that whole nature resembles that of the social animals. We eat food that others have produced, wear clothes that others have made, live in houses that others have built. The greater part of our knowledge and beliefs has been passed on to us by other people through the medium of a language which others have created. Without language and mental capacities, we would have been poor indeed comparable to higher animals.

We have, therefore, to admit that we owe our principal knowledge over the least to the fact of living in human society. The individual if left alone from birth would remain primitive and beast like in his thoughts and feelings to a degree that we can hardly imagine. The individual is what he is and has the significance that he has, not much in virtue of the individuality, but rather as a member of a great human community, which directs his material and spiritual existence from the cradle to grave. I

Man's life depends upon the existence of other human beings. He is like a social animal who relies upon others for food, clothes and house. Moreover, he acquired knowledge from others through language. He cannot develop human-like traits if left alone. Although man is important as an individual, but more as a member of society which directs his material and spiritual existence.

(63 words)

Title :- "Man - A Significant Member of Society"

To tread the path of philosophy is to seek after truth and follow a way of life. Before a man sets out on the quest after truth, he must fulfil certain conditions. First, there must be discrimination between the real and the unreal. The statement means, not that a man must possess complete knowledge of absolute reality, which is attained only after long practice of meditation, but that

he must unfailingly subject the nature of things to a rigid analysis by discriminating between what is transitory and what is abiding or between what is true and what is false. The second condition is detachment from the selfish enjoyments of life. The aspirant must learn that the highest good is realised not through worldly pleasure, but through a continuous search for the infinite, the enduring joy. This ideal of renunciation must be realised by a gradual purification of the seeker's heart and mind. A third condition is that the student must acquire tranquility of mind, self control, patience, poise, burning faith in things of the spirit and self surrender. These are called the six treasures of life. The thirst for release is the fourth condition. Deliverance from spiritual darkness, entrance upon the path of illumination comes only through annihilation of the false ego. When the ego dies, all troubles cease says Sri Ramakrishna. Such a condition of being does not imply the loss of one's individuality but rather the attainment of a great individuality, -For we can lose nothing that is real. Kalidasa, the great poet and dramatist, has beautifully expressed this truth. He says that the ideal of renunciation consists in owning the whole world while disowning ones own self. (280 words)

The philosophical approach towards life is attained by striving for truth and adopting a way of life based on certain conditions. The first condition is to distinguish b/w the real & the unreal by acquiring knowledge and analyzing the nature of things. Secondly, man should purify his inner self by freeing himself from worldly desires. Moreover, achieving the six treasures of life is essential. Lastly, as Sri Ramakrishna said, letting go one's ego will illuminate his path, leading towards the attainment of greater individuality. Kalidasa expressed that abandoning one's self while accepting the world is the real form of struggle.

(100 words)

[words of passage = 280]

Title :- Attaining Greater Good - The Real Struggle in Life

2. Write a précis of the following and suggest a suitable title:

(20)

The fear of human beings when faced with the mysteries of life and their weakness by comparison with the vastness of nature created in them a need to communicate with the divine, with the superior powers which they believed regulated the universe and determined their own fates. Knowledge of wishes of the gods was always a sure guide for human behavior. In ancient Greece, the precise nature of these wishes was 'decoded' by the art of giving oracles, practiced by soothsayers who had the gift of understanding the signs or signals sent by the gods.

The soothsayers uttered their oracles by interpreting flashes of lightning, rolls of thunder or the flights of certain birds of prey (omens); alternatively, they might observe the direction in which the fire burned when a sacrifice was made, examine the entrails of animals which had just been sacrificed, or base judgments on the sacrificial beast's willingness to approach the altar. The interpretation of dreams was popular too, and so was palmistry. The most notable soothsayers of ancient Greece were Tiresias, Calchas, Helenus, Amphiaraus and Cassandra.

However, there were abundant instances in which the gods did not manifest themselves to the faithful in the forms of signs but spoke directly to an intermediate who for a short time was overcome by a 'divine mania' and transcended his own human essence. Here the prophet- or more usually the prophetess- entered a state of ecstasy in which he or she delivered the message from the gods to the suppliants.

These practices for foreseeing the future were the basis on which the ancient Greek oracles operated. Each oracle was located within a properly-organized sanctuary and was directly associated with one or other of the gods. Apollo was the archetypal soothsayer for the Greeks, the god who was responsible for conveying to mortals the decisions pronounced by Zeus. The most important of all the oracles, that at the Delphi, delivered the messages with the intervention of Apollo, while the oldest that of Dodona, functioned with the assistance of Zeus.

Being exposed to the mysteries of the vast nature, humans felt the need to communicate with the supreme authority. ~~Their behavior was directed by gods' wishes.~~ So they started behaving as the gods wished. The gods' wishes were interpreted by soothsayers who practiced oracles after observing certain signs and symbols. Additionally, dream analysis and palm reading held significant importance^{in this regard}. The gods were sometimes believed to speak directly to the prophet or prophetess, who then transferred messages to the people. Oracles were operated based on these rituals of foreseeing the future. Many notable Greek soothsayers operated the oracles in the past, and some significant oracles were of Delphi and Dodona, that required the assistance of Apollo and Zeus respectively, to deliver messages.

Words of the passage = 340

Words of the precis = 117

Title:- Communicating with Gods in the Ancient Times