

Précis 1: CSS 2022

Q.2: Write a précis of the following passage and suggest a suitable title: (20)

The fear of human being 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 supervisor powers which they believed regulated the universe and determined their own fates. Knowledge for 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 sings or signals sent by the gods.

The soothsayers uttered their oracles by interpreting flashes of lightening, 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 scarified, 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 Tarsiers, Calchas, Helenus, Amphioxus 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 message with the intervention of Apollo, while the oldest that of Dodona, functioned with the assistance of Zeus.

How to make précis? Procedure:

Q.No. 2

The weakness of human beings in contrast to of vast nature cultivates the urge to communicate with divine.

The divine who determines their fates and regulate the universe. Whereas, the wishes of gods have been guidance for human behavior. The soothsayers in ancient Greece helped humans by giving oracles. Their oracles were based on understanding of signals from god. Those signals include direction of fire, flashes of lightning and rolls of thunder. Tarsiers, Calchas, Helenus, Amphioxus and Cassandra were famous soothsayers. They decoded the wishes of god. Sometimes gods did not deliver messages by signs rather they spoke directly. The prophet or prophetess by entering in state of ecstasy delivered their messages. However, each oracle was directly associated with any god like Apollo or Zeus.

Role of Soothsayers and Their Oracles