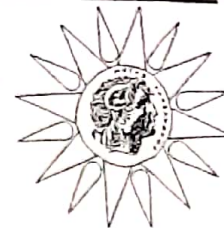


The "oath" of Alexander the Great



The "oath" of Alexander the Great (Opis, 324 BC)

"It is my wish, now that the wars are coming to an end, that you should all be happy in peace. From now on, all mortals live as one people in fellowship, for the good of all, see the whole world as your homeland, with laws common to all where the best will govern regardless of their race. Unlike that narrow minded, I made no Distinction between Greeks and Barbarians.

The origin of citizens, or their race into which they were born, is of no concern to me I have only one criterion by which to distinguish them. VIRTUE. For me any good foreigner is a Greek and any bad Greek is worse than a barbarian. If disputes ever occur among you, you will not resort to weapons but will solve them in peace. If need be, I shall arbitrate between you. See God not as an autocratic despot, but as the common father of all, and thus your conduct will be like the lives of brothers within the same family.

I, on my part, see you all equal whether you are white or dark-skinned. And I should like you not simply to be subjects of my commonwealth, but member of it, partners of it. To the best of my ability, I shall strive to do what I have promised.

Keep as a symbol of love this oath, which we have taken tonight with our libations".

*Arrian Anabasis of Alexander
6th Book. Plutarch, Moralia*

A. Comprehension questions

1. What ever-lasting messages does Alexander's wish contain ?
2. The oath shows that there were some criteria on which people would be considered inferior or superior. What were they?
3. What does "virtue" in Alexander's oath mean? Does it have the same meaning for the ancient Greeks?
4. Alexander the Great, in his oath, expresses a new concept of God. What is it? Do you think that it approaches the contemporary idea of God?
5. What does Alexander the Great mean by saying "subjects" and "members or partners" of his commonwealth?

6. Alexander's oath seems to have been made more by a religious leader than by an army leader. How is this proved in the oath?
7. Alexander's oath, perhaps in an early time, predicts a global society. What characteristics of globalization can you distinguish in it?

B. Vocabulary

Match the words with the appropriate definition:

1. fellowship
 - a. standard by which sth is judged
2. mortal
 - b. to turn to for help
3. concern
 - c. to act as a judge in (an argument)
4. criterion
 - d. ruler with unlimited powers/tyrant
5. dispute
 - e. companionship
6. occur
 - f. to struggle hard
7. resort to sth
 - g. offering of wine etc. to a good in former times
8. arbitrate
 - h. a human being
9. despot
 - i. happen
10. strive
 - j. an agreement or quarrel
11. libation(s)
 - k. thing that is important or interesting to sb

C. Writing

1. Do you think that people, despite their different origin or culture can peacefully co-exist and co-operate? How? (answer in not more than 50 words)
2. Do you think that our country tends to be a multicultural, multinational country? (40 words)
3. What has caused the phenomenon of xenophobia in modern societies and how can somebody combat it? (40 word)
4. Describe Alexander's personality as it appears in the oath (50 words)