



Professor Emeritus Soumitra Sharma (b. 1941, India) was educated at the University of Agra. He earned his Ph. D. in Economics from the University of Zagreb in 1967. He served Economics Faculty of Zagreb University until 2002, when he joined the faculty in Pula. He has been a(an) guest/exchange professor at various prestigious universities in the US, Europe, Japan, China and Australia. So far, he has authored some 25 books and over 75 articles and research papers. His major works include: (1988) *Economic*

Development and World Debt, Macmillan, London; (1989) *Growth & External Debt Management*, Macmillan, London; (1992) *Development Policy*, St. Martin Press, New York; (1995) *Macroeconomic Management*, St. Martin Press, New York; (1997) *Restructuring in Eastern Europe: Microeconomics of Transition Process*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, Lyme (USA); (1998) *John Maynard Keynes: Keynesianism in 21st Century*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham (UK); (2002) *Economics Does Matter: About Economics and Economists*, Mikrorad, Zagreb; (2010) *Reflections on the Philosophical Foundations of Economics*, Mikrorad, Zagreb; (2015) *Economics in an Awkward Corner*, University of Pula. Currently he is Senior Editor of the *Journal of Philosophical Economics and Social Sciences*.

In December 2016, The Croatian Parliament has conferred upon him the *Lifetime Achievement Award for Scientific Work in Social Sciences*.

Soumitra Sharma: 3 Essays on Ancient Civilizations

Soumitra Sharma

3

Essays on Ancient Civilizations

2018

3 Essays on Ancient Civilization

Soumitra Sharma

*Emeritus Professor of Economics,
Juraj Dobrila University of Pula (Croatia)*

3 Essays_{on}
ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

2018

No copyright restrictions.
Please feel freely to use the text by making proper references.



Reviewed by:
Professor Marinko Škare
Assistant Professor Daniel Tomić
English Editor:
Associate Professor Moira Bobanović



Printed in Croatia by Sveučilišna tiskara d.o.o., Zagreb

ISBN 978-953-7320-67-6.

*CIP available in digital catalogue of the University library in Pula,
No. 141015058 978-953-7320-67-6*
First Published 2018 by the University of Pula

Preface

Human civilizations have a long history and have a record of their continuous evolution. Throughout the history, there is only one constant i.e. the human nature and his behaviour. Naturally, according to the changing circumstances – socio-economic, political, environmental, and technological – humans have constantly adapted themselves. Such a process of development of societies and thereby that of civilizations had been gradual and continuous. Very rarely, these changes had been abrupt, and if these did occur, they were mostly circumstantial, e.g. due to wars or environmental disasters, etc.

Humans have always craved for a better future. But, it is noteworthy, that future has always depended on the past. System of progress and development has moved onwards according to the principle of continuity. Recorded history suggests that civilizations rose to their zenith and faded slowly to give way to the new emerging cultures.

Although, I am an economist by training and profession, but in my early youth, I did study a bit of history and philosophy. It was this background that towards the end of my life, I have been motivated to think about the socio-economic life of the ancient people, their religious beliefs, philosophy and religion. My special interest was in studying as to how the triad of philosophy, religion and economics did work.

Following essays are the product of my never fading interest in human history and development of civilizations. I had always wanted to learn if, when, why and what contributed to the state of human mind and his behaviour over the course of last five thousand years. As such, I have made all possible efforts to consult books, articles, internet sources to gather information on historical facts, and tried to put the same on paper in current form. These are definitely not the final words on the subject. Since, these essays are written by consulting a relatively small number of books and articles on history, religion and philosophy, a vast ocean of literature has remained untapped. Hopefully, my colleagues and other interested scholars would, in future, explore the subject further and possibly improve upon it.

Topics for this volume are selected *ad hoc* and written from the standpoint of scholastics. Since many ideas of others are presented in my own way, I am conscious of the fact that in my effort for objectivity, I may not have done full justice with them. Naturally, I am conscious of errors and omissions, but these are surely due to my ignorance and are unintentional.

I must also acknowledge at the outset that I have composed these essays for a certain type of readers of economics, a great majority of who might be

VI

making their first acquaintance with the philosophical and historical foundations of the subject. My objective here has primarily been that of supplying them with a work that should lead the young to think somewhat differently than they usually do after reading the standard textbooks on economic doctrines. Furthermore, these could, to some readers, may, perhaps, serve as an incentive to consult details from other sources. I must, however, admit that the first two essays and the appendices, are sheer compilation of historical facts gathered from various sources, whereas the third essay is entirely the product of my mind. My aim here is not the discovery of a truth not hitherto revealed, but to create an awareness of the issues.

While preparing these essays, among many cited sources, I have found a couple of books highly useful and thought inspiring. These being: *The Rig Veda: An Anthology Selected Hymns*, London: Penguin Books (1981); Braudel, F (1993) *A History of Civilizations*, New York: Penguin Books; Dunand, F and C Zivie-Coche (2004) *Gods and Men in Egypt*, Itacha: Cornell University Press; Hausman, D (1992) *Essays on Philosophy and Economic Methodology*, Cambridge: University Press; Kautilya, *The Arthaśāstra*, New Delhi: Penguin Books (1992); Radhakrishnan, S (1923) *Indian Philosophy, Vol. I.*, London: George Allen and Unwin; Raju, PT (1982) *Spirit, Being and Self: Studies in Indian and Western Philosophy*, New Delhi-Madras: South Asian Publishers; and Vernon McFarland S, Cairns G, and DC Yu, (1969), *Religions of the World*, New York: Random House. It must also be mentioned that some relevant useful information and facts have also been gathered through internet sources e.g. hieroglyphs, tetragrammatons, and original inscriptions in ancient languages etc.

My sincere thanks are due to the reviewers of the manuscript: Marinko Škare and Daniel Tomić, at FET Pula, and Professor Valentin Cojanu at the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies (Romania), for their critical comments that have helped me to improve upon the subject matter of the book.

Finally, I must also express thank to my colleagues for their l comments and suggestions especially to Sanja Blažević Burić, Mieta Bobanović, Lorena Mošnja Škare, Lela Tijanić, at Pula; and Tomislav Gelo at EF Zagreb. I also owe a debt to my friends' abroad particularly Professor Sudhir Sharma at CCS University, Meerut (India), and my brother-in-law Professor P. D. Sharma, who have read these essays with great enthusiasm. Further, I would be failing in my duty, not to express my thanks to colleagues at the J. D. University of Pula (Croatia), who have made it possible that these essays see the light of the day.

Pula, 26 January 2018

Soumitra Sharma

Contents

Introduction	1
<i>Appendix: A Note On the Meaning and Content of Civilization</i>	11
I. Socio-Economic Life in Asian River Civilizations	15
II. Humans, Their Religion, Gods, Culture, and Art	41
<i>Appendix 2.1. A Note on the Myths of Creation</i>	97
<i>Appendix 2.2. Ancient Deities in Different Civilizations</i>	107
III. Ancient Civilization's Trinity: Religion, Philosophy and Economics	121
<i>Appendix: 3.1. A Note on Crime and Corruption in the Ancient World</i>	141
<i>Appendix: 3.2. Some Highlights: Philosophy, Religion, and Economics</i>	163
Readings	171

Introduction

The humans, their religion and their gods¹ have a long common history. So had metaphysics, theology, philosophy, history and economics (as a thought) a common ground.

Since the inception of civilizations, humans have devised their faith (belief) in *Super Being* and invented and celebrated their gods so as to provide solace and comfort to their soul, when they felt happy or, felt awe-inspired, or faced suffering and disease and so on. Their reactions, whether they are of confidence or joy, freight or terror, were in response to the moods that they sensed in the nature itself. While on one hand, religious humans celebrated their participation in the creative life of the world by constructing temples for the worship of their gods, observing religious rites and festivities, etc., on the other hand, religion also reflected their frustrations and failures, illness, old age and death. Humans have always been beset with fear and anxiety, being aware as of their un-holiness, profanity, doubts and guilt and thus sought comfort in it. Nevertheless, in their religion, humans kept searching for light, for truth, for hope – and finding them. It is with such things as these that all religions have been concerned with.

¹ In professional literature, it is customary to use capital letter ('God') referred in monotheistic religions, and small letter (god(s) or (goddess(es) in polytheist religions. We shall use both the forms, as and when needed. However, note that it is only in 19th and 20th centuries that we have started identifying the god of the antediluvian patriarchs of the 'first time'.

Our humans were *homo economicus* and were the foundation upon which the economies of these societies were based upon. Economic men represented solely as beings, desired to possess wealth, and those who were capable of judging the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end, drove these civilizations forward. The central idea behind them was not merely attaining material pleasures, but also involved other goals such as accumulation (capital formation), leisure, luxury and procreation that are embedded in the pursuit of *wealth*. Human beings, by merely acting on their own self-interest, although unintentionally, did at times promote public interests as well. However, their freedom of pursuing self-interested gains was narrow because the division of labour and unfettered competition were non-existent in societies of those times.

Every civilization (since 3100 BC onwards) had their intellectual, spiritual leaders – the philosophers, who led the societies to new heights. On their path to progress and development, societies needed organized government, administration, and codes of conduct. Talented and capable people became military and/or political leaders. From social organization point of view, most ancient cultures were affiliated tribes, with chieftains and their associates. Socio-economic life being basically agrarian, rested upon physical and animal labour. Indigenous technology to support the economy developed. In early stages of development, barter trade prospered. Later, all civilization attained their zenith and downfalls becoming history only. Every part of the earth that has been inhabited by humans has at some time witnessed a development of various aspects of socio-economic order, culture, and religion.

Based upon various sources and gathered information about facts on these *great* ancient civilizations of the *old world*, in these essays, we shall attempt to provide an insight into the socio-economic life of the people, their history, religions and beliefs in gods. The approach we follow can be called phenomenal-geo-historic. It should be noted that since, all ancient civilizations had a plurality of gods, with the exception of Hebrew faith, we would practically be dealing with polytheistic religions.

While the first essay narrates the development of great Asian river civilizations (Mesopotamian, Indus Valley, Early Vedic, Khmer and Chinese) providing an insight into their geography, history, economics and their dominant religions; the second essay, tries to explore the then prevailing faiths and the deities that were worshiped in these civilizations; the third essay critically examines the triad relationship between philosophy, religion, art and economics. This essay argumentatively tries to develop a case against the then existing thesis that there

exists a symbiosis amidst these basic domains of human life. The essay is an attempt to show that there was no mutual harmonious relationship as it was a *pure thought* of intellectual minds.

In this volume, since we shall be adopting a conceptual approach explaining the contents of the subject of our study, it is essential that at the very outset we define and explain the contents of various phenomena such as civilization, religion, culture, society and the similar.

The term *Civilization* is full of content and is used frequently. Many different elements must come together before a human community develops to the level of sophistication commonly referred to as civilization: existence of settlements towns or cities; availability of food, water, transport etc.; specialized economic activities; organized religious faiths, institutions, legal and administrative framework, civil service etc.

Religion refers to a cultural system of set behaviour and practices, texts, sanctified places and organizations that relate humanity to the supernatural or transcendental. Religions relate humanity to what anthropologist Geertz² calls a *cosmic order of existence*. In religious context the phenomena of totemism and animism should be differentiated.

While, *Totemism* refers to a system of belief in which humans are said to have kinship or a mystical relationship with a Spirit-Being, such as an animal or plant. It is a complex of varied ideas and ways of behaviour based on a worldview drawn from nature. The entity, or totem, is thought to interact with a given kin group. The term has been used to characterize a cluster of traits in the religion and in social organization of many peoples. Totemism is manifested in various forms and types in different populations whose traditional economies relied on mixed farming with hunting and gathering, or emphasized the raising of cattle. *Animism* is the religious belief that objects, places and creatures possess a distinct spiritual essence. It is the oldest known type of system of belief in the world that even predates paganism. It is still practiced in a variety of forms in many traditional societies. Although each culture has its own different mythologies and rituals, animism is said to describe the most common, foundational thread of indigenous peoples' *spiritual* or *supernatural* perspectives. The term is an anthropological construct.

² Geertz, C (1993) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London: Fontana Press. pp. 87–125.

Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviours, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society. Thus, culture includes many societal aspects: language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organizations, and institutions. Common institutions are the family, education, religion, work, and health care. The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement are also a part of culture.

Societies are formed out of social groupings at varied levels. Within such societies people tend to form particular cultures, form set of ideas, follow certain customs, and social behaviours that make them distinct from other groupings.

Human behaviour refers to the potential and expressed capacity for physical, mental, and social activity during the phases of evolution of human beings – successive phases of growth, each of which is characterized by a distinct set of these behavioural features. It is array of every physical action and observable emotion of individual being. In addition to being dictated by age and genetics, behaviour, is driven in part by thoughts and feelings including religious orientations. It is an insight into individual psyche, revealing among other things their attitude and values. It is influenced by culture, social interactions, ethics, surrounding, authority, rapport, persuasion, coercion etc.

Human nature refers to the fundamental dispositions and traits of humans – natural and acquired form of learning or socialization. It can also be defined as distinguishing characteristics—including ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. It can be regarded as both a source of norms of conduct or ways of life, as well as presenting obstacles or constraints on living a good life. One traditional question centred on whether humans are naturally selfish and competitive, or social and there is a complex interaction between genetically inherited factors and developmental, religious and social factors. Basic drives shared are related to food, sex, security, play, and social status³.

Now, to begin with, let us ask ourselves a few questions such as:

Who were these ancient Humans? For an answer we must look into the development of history of the *Homo sapiens*. The *first of its kind* (lat. *primitus*), recorded in all ancient

³ For an elaborate study see Hobbes, T (1994 [1651/1668]) *Leviathan*, edited by Edwin Curley (Hackett, Indianapolis) and Locke, J (1823) *The Works of John Locke*. London: Printed for T. Tegg in 10 vol.

civilizations, applied to individuals could be taken to describe the Hebrew *primitus Adam* (אָדָם), the Hindu *Manu* (San. manuśraddhādeva), The Chinese *P'an-ku* (Ch. 盤古) or the Japanese *Jimmu Tenno* (Jap. 神武天皇), and the similar – each of whom, in his own sphere, was the first *leading* man. Culture of these ancient people was preliterate; if it existed among such people it was carried by an oral tradition passed down to the next generation. In the early stages of civilizations, except for matters of customs each new generation of ancient people had to start at the beginning for their society was static due to the lack of finding the means to achieve rapid cultural progress. Whatever instruments and tools a member of these societies possessed were things of nature: stones, pieces of wood, horns, shells etc. There was no science, engineering or technology, means of transport and communication etc. in modern sense of the terms. Human beings were only equipped by nature. People lived close to nature and felt a kinship, a rapport with nature. In religious sphere the *primitus* and his associates invented deities and the rites to create the primitive religions of the societies.

What was the significance of religion in ancient civilizations? Historically, all civilizations had multiple beliefs that may be categorized as animism, totemism, religion, cult or myths. The word *religion* covers different realities differing according to whether one is considering an ancient polytheistic religion, a revealed monotheism or animism. Still, these realities undoubtedly have something in common, for it is always a question of the attitude of the human kind in the face of invisible, of modalities of human's relationship to the imaginary realm of religion that one must try to understand from the inside, following an approach proper to each culture. The study and analysis of the phenomenon of religion which in human affairs touches on the invisible, are subject either to subjectivism or in the currents of thought that prevail at a time.

If we set aside the divergence of polytheistic religions and monotheism, one must try to penetrate into the way of living of the ancient people and their thinking, knowing that across time and space the human community has always faced some of the same questions and fears in a way that has not radically differed and that can still be easily apprehended: the anguish of death and anxious questioning about what lies beyond it, the search for an explanation of the forces that govern the world, the need to do something in the face of precariousness of life, etc..

Relative freedom of thought granted to the theologians in any culture that was nevertheless highly codified and obedient to strict norms perhaps explains the fact that the system did not function like that of a revealed religion. The gods were what

they were. This was not an article of faith, but a physical reality that imposed itself like day and night. But at the same time, all pronouncements of this reality were possible. No god proclaimed his existence; it was people who proclaimed it in their own way, and their ways were many.

In an explosion of religious thought the multiplicity of approaches to the divine have ended in fragmentation. The first theologians at the dawn of history spoke and wrote in their own way, of the origins of the world, the succession and multiplicity of the gods, and their destiny. This diversity eventually burst forth from one temple to the other and each town boasted of *its own god or goddess*, who was greater than all the others. In addition, the forbidden acts attached to the cult of a given deity did not usually extend beyond the home where the deity was revered, and to which god or goddess was often native.

In view of such facts, it is logical to maintain that in some civilizations there was no single religion expressing a coherent imaginary system that was proper to that culture, but rather a plurality of juxtaposed religions, rubbing shoulders and sometimes interacting with one another. Furthermore, the opposition between the religion of the temples, of the thinkers, of an elite devoted to intellectual pursuits and capable of soaring to spiritual heights, and that of people, ignorant and filled with superstition.

Study of the phenomenon of religion seeks to define religion, isolate its essential elements, to discern its general pattern. Doing so brings within its purview the characteristic and dominant interests of entire cultures, religious practices and beliefs. A classic book on the subject by Rudolf Otto⁴ (1917) *Das Heilige* (Engl. trans. 1929) deals with the essence of all religion in the phenomenon of the *holy* viewed as bipolar mystery which combines *mysterium fascinans* and *mysterium tremendum*. As mystery, the holy can never be brought fully into the range of comprehension and in this sense it has its roots in irrationality. Nevertheless, it plays a creative role in human existence. Otto considers it to be the unique factor of all religions. Understanding of any religion is impossible until one uncovers the hidden depths where the holy dwells. In his book, *The Dynamics of Faith* (1957), Paul Tillich suggests

⁴ Following Otto and expanding his concept Mircea Eliade stresses the idea of the *sacred* and the *profane*. Martin Buber approaches the problem of essence of religion through analysis of human personality in the concepts of *I-thou* relationship. He holds that the self is free only in *I-Thou* relationship, in which one enters into true spiritual life. In every such relationship man touches the fringe of the Eternal Thou, which truly creates man and makes him a real person.

that religion is best understood as faith, which is an ultimate concern and implies an ultimate reality. Tillich holds that faith confronts man with a demand, a threat and a promise. It demands submission of the human will to what one regards as ultimate; it threatens nonbeing to one who rejects its demand; and it promises fulfilment to all who accept it. Religion has to do with true being.

Now, some further questions that we face are: *who are the gods? Did they exist?* Evidently, it is a fairly complicated task to deal with. Anyway, let us try to bring the issue closer to our understanding.

To enter the world of *homo religiosus*, the world of the imagination that humans tried to decipher and explain, first it is essential to consider the notion of god⁵. The gods existed. Every study in the history of religions entails this premise⁶. We must emphasize that for the ancient humans, the assertion that *the gods exist* had an entirely different connotation. In their imaginary realm, they nevertheless had as much physical reality as the elements of nature, because they could be defined as *emergences from the maximal concentration of diffused forces that constitute the universe*⁷. The reality of gods was thus *al par* as that of the sky, of the air, of the land, and of living beings. Since, the gods were phenomenological realities that belonged to the physics of universe, and in this regard were imminent in it, it was absurd to believe or not believe in their existence.

For a moment, the question, naturally, arises: Did people doubt the existence of gods? Probably, some must have doubted and cursed the gods at one time or the other, especially the efficacy of one or of other deity, when and if, the events became sour and came to contradict the theory of organized cosmos, or when disorder reigned demonstrating the relativity of the power of the gods, etc.

Multiple gods have existed. Evidence suggests that in most ancient religions, throughout the old world, except in Judaism, Jainism, and Buddhism, the gods were

⁵ The earliest written form of the German word *God* (always, in this usage, capitalized form comes from the 6th century *Christian Codex Argenteus*. In English language, capitalization is used for names by which a god is known, including 'God'. Consequently, the capitalized form of *god* is not used for multiple gods (polytheism) or when used to refer to the generic idea of a deity.

⁶ One need not to be bothered, if the gods existed or how to prove it. Though they did not belong to real world, for the historian, they nevertheless have no less reality than any other classic historical phenomena: war, political succession, famine, and so forth. They existed because they constituted the skeleton of the imaginary realm of the people.

⁷ Derchain, P. (1981), 'Divinite: Le Probleme du divi et des dieux dans l'Egypte ancienne' *Dictionnaire des mythologies*, ed. Y. Bonnefoy, vol. 1. Paris, pp 324-30.

multiple. The gods were personified: they had their names, their appearance, their images, their function and their assigned duties in the cosmic world. However, the fact remains that each polytheistic religion recognised the existence of the Supreme Being (Chief God). Some scholars have interpreted this as an attempt to display the monotheistic⁸ character of religion.

The gods too were mortal. They even had various ways of being mortal. The study myths suggest that they died according to an anthropomorphic process. Just as they existed on historical level as the image and reflection and concepts, so they died one day. These gods no longer had devotees and are nothing more than objects of study.

These introductory reflections bring us quite naturally to the wonderful apocalyptic prophecy of Hermes Trismegistos made in his *Asclepius*, so often cited⁹, although referring the Egyptian gods (Netjer: which who is buried), but valid universally all ancient polytheistic deities):

⁸ In monotheism, God is conceived of as the Supreme Being and principal object of belief. The notion of God, as described by the theologians, generally includes the attributes of omniscience (infinite knowledge), omnipotence (unlimited power), omnipresence (present everywhere), divine simplicity, and having an eternal and necessary existence, Omni-benevolence (perfectly good) and all loving. God is most often held to be immaterial, and to be without gender, yet the concept of God actively creating the universe has caused many religions to describe God using masculine terminology.

In theism, God is the creator and sustainer of the universe, while in deism, God is the creator, but not the sustainer, of the universe. In pantheism, God is the universe itself. In atheism, God is not believed to exist, while God is deemed unknown or unknowable within the context of agnosticism.

There are many names of God, and different names are attached to different cultural ideas about God's identity and attributes. In the ancient Egyptian era of Atenism, possibly the earliest recorded monotheistic religion, this deity was called *Aten*, premised on being the one *true* Supreme Being and creator of the universe. In the Hebrew Bible and Judaism, *He Who Is, I Am That I Am*, and the tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH pro. JEHOVAH), are used as names of God. In Judaism, it is common to refer to God by the titular names *Elohim* or *Adonai*. In Hinduism, *Brāhma* (ब्रह्मा) is often considered a monistic God. In Chinese religion God is conceived as the progenitor – first ancestor of the universe: *Shang-ti*, intrinsic to it and constantly ordaining it. Other religions have names for God, for instance Ahura Mazda in Zoroastrianism.

⁹ Translation based on that of A. Nock and Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, vol 2 (Paris, 1945), chapter 24, pp. 326.

“And nevertheless, because a sage should know all future things in advance, there is one thing you must know. A time will come when it will seem that in vain did Egyptians honour their gods, in the piety of their heart, with an assiduous cult: all their holy adoration will fail, ineffective, and it will be deprived of its fruit. The gods will leave the earth, will regain the sky, they will abandon ... and not only will there be no care for observances, but, the most painful thing of all, it will be commanded by would be laws, under pain of prescribed punishments, to abstain from the religious practice, from every piety or cult towards the gods ...”

Appendix

A Note on the Meaning and Content of Civilization

Any study of civilization(s) imminently involves the history of a geographical area, history of civilization as society, and as a way of thought. To define the idea of civilization¹⁰ requires a combined effort of all social sciences.

Civilizations, vast or otherwise, can be located on a map and an essential part of their character depends on the constraints or advantages of its geography. This of course will have been affected for millennia by human effort. So doing humanity itself has been transformed i.e. *the decisive shaping of self by self*. To discuss a civilization is to discuss its space, land, climate and natural aspects. It is also to discuss what human kind has made of these basic conditions. Note that the natural and man-made environment, cannot predetermine everything, but it greatly affects the inherent or acquired advantages of a given situation. To take inherent advantage, every civilization is born of immediate opportunities rapidly exploited. Thus in the dawn of time, river civilizations flourished; so did the civilizations around the Mediterranean, Baltic and the North Sea. These classic instances reveal the importance of communication making possible the physical, material and cultural mobility.

¹⁰ Although, the word *civilization*, in its modern meaning: *the process of becoming civilized* appeared in France in 1732, from the pen of the French economist Anne Robert Jacques Turgot. In print, it occurred in 1756 in *Treatise on Population* by Victor Riqueti Marquis of Mirabeau. In its new sense, it meant opposite of barbarism. In its use, in Europe, the new word *civilization* was accompanied by an old word *culture* which was taken as equivalent, as Cicero used *Cultura animi philosophia* est. Thus for long, the words were taken as synonyms. Hegel used them interchangeably. Unto the mid XIX century, while the word *culture* had come to imply a set of normative principles, values and ideals, moral and ethical concerns; the word *civilization* embraced the mass of practical and technical knowledge in dealing with nature. In the second half of the century German word *Kultural* came to sum up the whole content of civilization (or a culture) such that it meant the total of its cultural assets, its geographical area, its history, and what one civilization transmits to another i.e. the cultural legacy – material and intellectual.

There can be no civilization without the societies that support and inspire their tensions and their progress. Society and civilization are inseparable. A society implies a wealth of content: its moral and intellectual values, its ideals, its habits and tastes, its tensions and its contradictions, etc. If a society stirs and changes, the civilization based on it changes too¹¹. Levi-Strauss, identifies civilizations with societies by arguing the difference between primitive and modern societies by contending that primitive cultures are fruit of egalitarian societies, where groups are settled once for all and remain constant, whereas civilizations are based on hierarchical societies with wide gaps between groups hence shifting tensions, social conflicts, political struggles and continual evolution¹².

Every society, every civilization, depends on economic, technological, biological and demographic circumstances. Material and biological conditions have always helped determine the destiny of civilizations. Demographic, economic or technological rise and fall deeply affect the cultural and social structure.

Economic life never ceases to fluctuate. Business cycles have been an inherent characteristic of every society and civilization. Whether in boom, or in slump, interestingly enough, economic activity always produces a surplus. The squandering of such surpluses has been one of the indispensable conditions for luxury in civilization and for certain forms of art (architecture, sculpture, portraits, etc.). Civilization also reflects a redistribution of wealth in a society. Accordingly, subject to the mode of circulation of money and wealth, civilizations acquire different characteristics, first at the top and then among the masses by making possible an access to education, culture, and social progress thereby creating civilizations of high quality.

Civilizations as a way of thought depend upon collective psychology, awareness, and mental aptitudes of the people. Commenting on this point Braudel (1987, pp 22) very well writes,

“Dictating a society’s attitudes, guiding its choices, confirming its prejudices and directing its actions, is a fact of civilization. Far more than the accidents or the

¹¹ This point is well illustrated in Goldmann, L (1955), *Le Dieu cache*, Paris: Gallimard. Goldmann contends that every civilization, draws its essential insights from the ‘view of the world’ it adopts. And in every case this view is coloured, if not determined by social tensions. Civilization simply reflects them like a mirror.

¹² Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1958) *Anthropologie structurale* (trans. Structural Anthropology, Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, 1963).

historical and social circumstances of a period, it derives from the distant past, from ancient beliefs, fears and anxieties, which are almost unconscious – an immense contamination whose germs are lost to memory but transmitted from generation to generation”

These basic values, these psychological structures, are definitely the features that civilization can least easily communicate one to another. These are what isolate or differentiate them. These do survive the passage of time, and change too slowly and unconsciously. Here religion is the strongest feature of civilizations, at the heart of both their present and their past (e.g. in India, all actions derive their form and their justification from the religious life and not from reasoning).

Finally, every civilization always involves a past, lived and still alive. The history of a civilization is then a search for ancient data. Immediate manifestations of every civilization are its philosophy, art and architecture, scientific discovery, technological advance, religious beliefs etc. These manifestations, it must be noted from history, are always short-lived. These are, in fact, subject to a relentless change. From one period to the other, these changes project the world in a different perspective¹³ just like an episode. Turning points, events, heroes, all do help to clarify the special role they might have played in history; but usually most are forgotten over time. Only those that endure and are identified an enduring reality really count in history of civilization. Thus may be discerned, through the screen of familiar historical events, the emerging outlines of more continuous reality.

Looking at historical periods produce only a transient picture. If we look for permanent features behind these changing images, we will perhaps find other simpler realities. Some were short-lived others endured, for several centuries. Historians call these realities *structures*. These underlying structures are generally ancient and long-lived and always distinctive and original. They provide civilizations their essential outline and characteristic quality that they hardly exchange or replace them. For majority of people, these enduring traits, these inherited choices, these reason for rejecting other civilizations, are generally unconscious.

¹³ Renaissance is the finest example. It had its own themes, its own colours and preferences, even its own mannerism. It was marked by intellectual fervour; love of beauty, and free, tolerant debates in which wit was another sign of enjoyment. It was also marked by discovery or rediscovery of the works of classical antiquity, a pursuit in which all of Europe enthusiastically joined.

1.

Socio-Economic Life in Asian River Civilizations

In the early part of the 3rd millennium, civilization, in the sense of an organized system of government over a comparatively large area, developed nearly simultaneously in the river valleys of Nile, Euphrates-Tigris, Indus, Ganges-Yamuna, Mekong and the Yellow River. We know a great deal about civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, for they left us written material, which has been successfully deciphered. Even then much is yet to be learned. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the remaining civilizations is inadequate in many respects, and sources scant, and thus must be classed as prehistoric, for these have no history in the strict sense of the term.

In following pages, we will try to depict briefly the history and main contents of the great river civilizations of Asia. These being: Sumerians on Tigris-Euphrates; The Harappan's on the Indus; *Rig Vedic* Aryans in The Indus-Brahmaputra Basin; Khmers on the Mekong; and Chinese on the Huang-Ho river.

Babylon and Sumer on Tigris-Euphrates

From about 4500 BC there are settlements on the edges of the marshes where the Tigris and the Euphrates reach the Persian Gulf – the area known as Mesopotamia, a region between these two rivers being one of the world's grand pre-historic civilizations. Unlike Egypt, where a stable society was established along hundreds of miles of the Nile, Mesopotamia will be characterized by constant warfare and a succession of shifting empires. Towns here shelter within thick protective walls. Sumer, close to the mouths of the Tigris and the Euphrates, is where the first Mesopotamian towns developed.

Over the next 1500 years or more, Mesopotamia goes through many periods of chaos, with small city-states struggling for power or for survival. But there are also times of imperial stability, when centralized control was re-established. The two centres, on which the greatest empires of the region are based, are Babylon and Assyria. There are also periods when much of Mesopotamia was controlled by powers outside the area and eventually the Persians who overwhelmed Babylon in 539 BC brought the independence of Mesopotamia to an end.

Babylonia was an ancient Akkadian-speaking state and cultural area based in central-southern Mesopotamia. A small Amorite-ruled state emerged in 1894 BC, which contained at this time the minor administrative town of Babylon. It was greatly expanded from the small provincial town, during the reign of Hammurabi in the first half of the 18th century BC, becoming a major capital city. During the reign of Hammurabi and afterwards, Babylonia was called *Māt Akkadī* - the country of Akkad). It was often involved in rivalry with its older fellow Akkadian-speaking state of Assyria in northern Mesopotamia, as well as Elam to the east, in ancient Iran. Babylonia briefly became a major power in the region but it rapidly fell apart after the death of Hammurabi and reverted back to a small kingdom.

The earlier Akkadian and Sumerian traditions played a major role in Babylonian and Assyrian culture, and the region would remain an important cultural centre, even under its protracted periods of outside rule.

The famous Hammurabi code, discovered at Susa (drawn out around 1756 BC), is definitely not a series of arbitrary enactments invented by the Babylonian king but a redaction of old local codes and customs derived directly from the Sumerians. This code seems to be based upon the code of king Dungi of Ur in the III dynasty. The

kings of Isin had codified *the laws of Nishaba and Hani* the fragments of which have been found at Nippur and Erech.

Moreover, every city had its inheritance of law founded on decisions of the courts and these were either incorporated by Hammurabi or not superseded by him; thus in deciding a legal case, judges of his time could give as their ruling. The fact that the Semites had descended to entire Mesopotamia by now the old Sumerian codes were modified in Semite spirit such that exacting severer penalties for certain offences, especially against the sacredness of the family ties. The actual working of the laws can be followed from numerous discovered clay tablets¹⁴.

There were civil and religious courts and every temple was a place of justice and every priest was entitled to pronounce a judgment. But there were also regular judges appointed by the king and certain higher official (probably city mayor or a provincial governor). In all cases, however, appeal was to the king's person. A judge was forbidden to reverse his decisions once that have been recorded. Constables attached to the court would see the execution of sentences often fine or confiscation of property, but in case of assault and injury to the person, *an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth* was carried out by the government officials. It is evident that in ancient Sumer justice was within reach of every person and the State did its best to check the abuse of the courts. But all men were not equal before the law. There were three classes: the patricians (*amelu*) that included government officials, priests and soldiers; the burgher class (*mushkinu*) incorporating the merchants and shopkeepers, schoolteachers, labourers, farmers and artisans – free people but inferior to the first category. At the bottom were the slaves. The law observed this distinction and favoured the superior class. Though the slave was the property of the master such that the fine for killing or maintaining one was payable to the master, yet the law provided him the right to protest against his sale. He could give evidence, own property, engage in business, borrow money and buy his freedom. On the other hand, he might be branded, flogged and punished for escaping.

Prisoners of war, who might be Sumerians of good family from a neighbouring state, were liable to be ransomed and would hardly, form a despised class. Sumerian customs which at first sight appear callous: not only was the free-born citizen

¹⁴ Practically every act of civil life, of purchase and sale, loans, contracts, legacies, adoption, marriage, divorce, was a matter of law, recording and confirming by seals of witnesses. A dispute required presenting in court documentary evidence (sometimes supplemented by a witness on oath).

punished for offences by reducing to slavery, as when an adopted son repudiated his foster-parents, but a man and wife might sell their own child as a slave to his creditor for a period of three years. If a freeman took a slave as concubine and had children by her, she might not be sold, and on his death both she and her children were automatically enfranchised, though without a specific act of adoption, they were not his heirs; and if a free woman married a slave, the children inherited the mother's freedom and on their father's death could inherit half his property.

One of the criteria by which a society can fairly be judged is the position, which it accords to women. In Sumer monogamy was the law of the land, though in practice it was modified by a tolerance of concubines, yet the status of the legitimate wife well protected such that the principle was not impugned.

Marriage was arranged by the elders and the betrothal was signaled by the presentation from the groom to his future father-in-law of a money gift, which he forfeited if he broke-off the engagement and could claim double if the bride changed her mind. Probably there was more freedom of intercourse between youth of both sexes. A man who seduced a girl was obliged to ask her in marriage from her parents and a betrothed girl might before marriage take abode in the house of her future father-in-law. The wedding ceremoniously seems to have consisted in writing and sealing of the tablet. Upon marriage bride assumed possession of betrothal gifts and dowry by bride's parents and relatives. A special clause in marriage contract could secure her property against creditors with whom her husband might have been involved before marriage. In no case husband could dispose of her property without her consent. In husband's absence, unless there was a grown-up son, she administered his property. Upon husband's death she inherited an equal share of it along with his children. She could also re-marry and could take her dowry but had to relinquish the inherited share. On the other hand, she suffered certain disabilities as against the man. A husband could, under certain circumstances sell her, hand her over for a period of three years in payment of his debt, or divorce her on slight ground. Her barrenness could lead to dissolve of marriage. For her a divorce was a far more complicated matter unless adultery was in question.

By Sumerian law children were under the authority of their parents who might at will disown and disinherit them. Adoption of unrelated children was very common. A deed had to be drawn up securing the position of the child *vis a vis* child

born to the foster-parents. Adoption seems to have been common of the practice of temple prostitution¹⁵ and that was encouraged and safeguarded by law.

Along with a domestic life carefully regulated by law, the rights of individual so far as those do not conflict with that of the family were upheld.

Temples of Sumer were the centres of education. Attached to most, there were schools where boys and girls were trained to profession of scribe. The writing of cuneiform with hundreds of signs was an art not to be mastered by everyone, but because Sumer was a commercial country, thus correspondence was large, and because by law every transaction of life had to be recorded in writing, the number of professionals and citizens must have been large. Many school tablets survive and illustrate the course of study. The tablets show short sentences, the grammar, and paradigms of verb and declension of nouns. In mathematics, tables of multiplication and division, extraction of square and cube roots, and exercise in geometry were common. List of weights and measures, the dictionary of Sumerian and Semitic synonyms, books of hymns and litanies, business accounts of the institutions, provide an idea of the life and thought of the time. Some students went into government or used their accomplishments in private businesses and specialized professions, e.g. doctors¹⁶, architects etc.¹⁷ An available regional geographical map, presumably drawn on royal order, has been discovered that illustrates the conquests of Saragon of Akkad (2700 BC).

The prosperity of Sumer largely depended upon its agriculture and commerce. The carefully irrigated fields produced amazing crops of barley and spelt, onions

¹⁵ Temple prostitution was wide spread. Attached to the temple there was a body of women that constituted god's household (by existing beliefs, he was credited with human needs). The chief of this body (*entu*) belonged to the highest class and was considered as the bride of the deity, the rest were the concubines and domestics.

Practically every act of civil life, of purchase and sale, loans, contracts, legacies, adoption, marriage, divorce, was a matter of law, recording and confirming by seals of witnesses. A dispute required presenting in court documentary evidence (sometimes supplemented by a witness on oath).

¹⁶ Medicine included surgery, herbalism and magic. Doctor was much a priest or a sorcerer as a man of science. Surgical operation, based on limited empirical knowledge of anatomy was regulated by law to check unskilled or over-rash parishioners.

¹⁷ The governor of Lagash (2400 BC) is shown in a tablet holding the plan of a temple, plans of estates and of canals, and of houses.

and other vegetables grew along the canal banks and as early as 2800 BC; date gardens were extensive. A good deal of land was property of temples, kings or governors; there were communal lands in common ownership. Individual rights on the land were very common. The possession or the transference of land was witnessed by written deeds of ownership. Though regulated by law, disputes over the use of canal water were common. A small-farm-holder could cultivate¹⁸ his land employing hired labour and paying wages in kind. If he was poor, he could borrow by mortgaging his land but received legal protection from his creditors until the harvest and should that fail through no fault of his, was excused of interest on the loan. Failure to cultivate the land was severely punished by the Crown. The grain was piled, thrashed and ground to flour between flat rubbing-stones. Wine was manufactured by dates. The cattle and goats provided milk, cheese, sour milk and butter. River and canals yielded coarse fish, and meat was probably rich-men diet. Thus Sumer was self-sufficient in so far as feeding of the people is concerned.

Wool was produced in abundance and cloth was produced in temple factories. Babylonian produced stuff was exported fetching a high price in foreign markets. Fabric named after Mosul (*muslin*) may have been in large demand. But everything else must have been imported. The riches of south country must have been largely due to the fact that its cities controlled the head of the Persian Gulf up through which came the merchant vessels bringing goods through sea routes. An east-west trade route led up to Syria through Euphrates. Timber, silver, copper ore, precious woods, lye and cystus-gum, ivory, fine stones were traded¹⁹.

The merchants of the south had their agencies in distant towns with whom they kept correspondence and did business by letters of credit. Accounts were properly maintained. Since, coined money did not exist in circulation thus all trade was through barter. Gold and silver were workable standards (1 unit of account of gold

¹⁸ The plough was used at a fairly time. It was furnished with tubular seed drill and was driven by a yoke of oxen.

¹⁹ . "People of the Indus valley had many contacts with the Sumerians and there is even some evidence of an Indian colony of merchants at Akkad. Conversely, a few Sumerian devices in art, Mesopotamian toilet sets, and cylinder seal were copied on the Indus. Trade was not confined to raw materials and luxury goods only. Fish was, regularly imported from the Arabian Sea-coasts that augmented the food supply of Mohenjo Daro". (See for details Gordan Child (1943), *What Happened in History*, Pelican Books: p. 112).

was equal to 8 units (*shekel*) of silver). Value had to be verified by the scales²⁰. On credits interest was to be paid in between 20 to a maximum of 33.3% per annum. In the interest of promoting export business governments were always trying to fix minimum interest rates.

Sumerian religion was polytheistic and gods were innumerable. All of them were recognized throughout the whole land, but in every city there was one patron and peculiar god. At Babylon *Marduk*, at Larsa *Shamash*, at Ur *Nannar*, at Nippur *Enlil*, at Erech *Ishtar*, was the owner of principal temple. Other gods could have their shrines in courts of his temple. While terrifyingly aloof, the gods were peculiarly close to men. The gods were but men *writ large* and the temples were their houses where they lived a normal human life. The Sumerians had no idea of any other life as for them there was no Hell or Paradise; the spirit of man lived after death but at best in a ghostly world from which there was no return. All the gods had originally their functions. *Enki* of Eridu was lord of the waters, god of wisdom, art and handicrafts, and writing. *Enlil* the lord of rain and wind; *Shamash* of justice; *Ishtar* the goddess of love and sons. The supreme god of each city tended to usurp the provinces of others and a good deal of confusion in pantheon resulted, even ancient legends had to be modified to suit the local cult²¹.

Astrology was one of the most important branches of magic arts. The Sumerians had already by observation acquired some astronomical knowledge since the sun; moon and the planets were identified with gods. The changes in the face of the heavens reflected the dispositions of the gods and were directly responsible for events on earth.

Sumerian state was essentially theocratic. The city god was in reality its king; the human ruler was simply his representative. Civil and ecclesiastical offices were not clearly distinguished. The deification of the kings on carried to its logical conclusion that they ruled in the name of god. Conversely, the high priest of one of the larger temples was a person of great political importance and was often chosen from the

²⁰ The Holy Bible mentions Abraham buying the cave at Macpelah that 'weighted ...400 shekels of silver, current money with the merchant'.

²¹ The pre-eminence given to *Marduk* in the story of Creation is due to this political bias – as Babylon became the capital of empire its patron god Marduk had likewise to take lead in the heaven. Notable is the fact that the picturesque depiction of stories of *Flood* and *Creation* in Gilgamesh Epic might appeal to an ordinary person, the learned might read into them philosophy, but it required more spiritual imagination of the Semites to transform them into religion.

royal house. Church and State were so inextricably mingled that while the state has to be regarded as theocracy, the Church must be regarded as a political institution and the state religion as a political instrument²². The chapels in the private houses and the little clay figures²³ found in ruins of the houses and graves simply shows that magic had come to homes and may bear a witness to a faith more intimate, more simple and genuine than contained in elaborate sacrifices and liturgies of the church.

Harappans on the Indus

In 1921-22, the archaeology revealed the existence of a pre-Aryan civilization in the northwest of India, known as Indus Valley Civilization, with its two urban centres at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, dating back cca. 3000 BC to cca. 1500 BC. Historical sequence of events suggests that the Indus Valley civilization declined and completely disintegrated when by 1500 BC, the Aryans migrated into northern India from Bactria and the northern Iranian Plateau.

Nevertheless, the archaeologists know this civilization of the Indus as the Harappa Culture²⁴. The area covered by the Harappa culture extends for some 1500 km. from north to south, and the pattern of its civilization was uniform such that even the bricks were usually of the same size and shape from one end to the other. Outside this area the village cultures of Baluchistan seem to have continued much as before.

This great civilization owed little to the Middle East, and there is no reason to believe that recent immigrants formed it; people who had probably been in the Indus Valley for several centuries built the cities. The Harappa people were already Indians when they planned their cities, and they hardly altered for a thousand years. Though, we cannot fix a precise date for the beginning of this civilization, but certain indications synchronize it with the village cultures of Baluchistan. From the evidence

²² It would be interesting to compare Summer and Akkad under Third Dynasty Ur and Akkad with the Roman Empire of the third century when the state worship of the gods of Rome and of the genius of Augustus, and the city was a symbol of profession of political loyalty, empty of religious content, and men, if they believed, believed in other gods.

²³ e.g. the *teraphim* stolen by Rachel in the story of Jacob narrated in The Holy Bible.

²⁴ Harappa – the modern name of the site of one of the two great cities, was located on the left bank of river Ravi in Panjab. Mohenjo Daro, the second city, is on the right bank of the Indus, some 400 km. from its mouth.

gathered by Sir R. Mortimer Wheeler in 1946, it seems that the city of Harappa was built on a site occupied by people using black and red pottery. There is no evidence of the date of the foundation of the other great city of Mohenjo Daro, for its lowest strata are now below the level of Indus as flooding has prevented the excavations.

Thus the Harappan Culture, at least in Panjab was later in its beginnings than the village cultures, but it was certainly in part contemporary with them. From the faint indications, which are all the evidence we have, it would seem that the Indus cities began in the first half of the 3rd millennium BC; and it is almost certain that they continued well into the 2nd millennium.

When these cities were excavated no fortifications and few weapons were found, and no building could be traced as a temple or palace. Initially, the hypothesis was put forward that the cities were oligarchic commercial republics without sharp extremes of wealth and poverty, and with only a weak repressive organization; but the excavations of 1946 and the later discoveries showed that this idyllic picture is incorrect. Each city had a well-fortified citadel, which was probably used for both religious and governmental purposes. The regular planning of the streets, and the strict uniformity throughout the area of Harappa culture in such features as weights and measures, the size of bricks, lay-out of the great cities suggest rather a single centralized state than a number of free communities.

Probably, the most striking feature of the culture was its conservatism. At Mohenjo Daro, nine strata of buildings have been revealed. As the level of earth with each flood of Indus rose, new houses were built on the old sites without any major change in the layout. For at least a millennium the street plan of the cities remained the same. The script of the Indus people was totally unchanged throughout their history. There is little doubt that they had contact with Mesopotamia, but there is no indication that they showed any inclination to adopt the advances of other progressive cultures.

The two cities – Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, were built on a similar plan. To the west of each was a citadel. This was defended by crenulated walls, and on an oblong platform were erected the public buildings. Below it was the town proper about 2 sq. km. in area. The main streets some 17 m. wide were quite straight and divided the city into large blocks within which were narrow lanes. In neither of cities stone buildings were found as standardized burnt bricks of good quality was the usual building material. The houses (average size being some 50 square meter, some being even larger) often two or more stories, varied in size were based on much the same plan – a square courtyard surrounded by rooms. The houses had bathrooms

provided by drains leading to underground sewers (a well-managed system, probably by some municipal organization) under the main road. Obviously, there were numerous well-to-do families in the Indus cities, which perhaps had a middle class larger and more important in the social scale than those of the contemporary civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. In Mohenjo Daro parallel rows of workmen dwellings of smaller size too have been found.

The most striking of the few large buildings is the great bath (like a tank of the Hindu temple surrounded by cells of priests) in citadel area of Mohenjo Daro that evidently had some religious purpose that indicates their strong belief in purificatory effects of water from a ritual point of view.

At Harappa, a granary has been discovered which was doubtlessly used for storing the corn collected as land tax from the peasantry. The main crops were wheat, barley, peas, sesame, and cotton. It is not certain if irrigation was known. The main domestic animals – humped and hump-less cattle, horses, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys, dogs and others – were tamed. On the basis of this thriving agricultural economy the Harappans had built their rather unimaginative but comfortable civilization. Evidently a well-organized commerce made it possible. The cities undoubtedly traded with village cultures, in Gujarat and southern parts of India. Silver, turquoise and lapis lazuli were imported from Persia and Afghanistan. Copper came from Rajasthan and jadeite from Tibet and Central Asia.

Though these civilizations seem to have little cared for water transport as only small boats have been found; however, their products did reach (either through river/sea or via land) to Mesopotamia²⁵.

Certainly, the Harappans did not inscribe their documents on clay tablets. They were not an artistic people. Their most notable artistic achievement was perhaps in their seal engravings, especially in those of animals, which they delineated with powerful realism. No doubt they had a literature, with epics similar to those of

²⁵ A number of typical Indus seals and few other objects from Indus valley have been found in Sumer at levels dating between 2500-2000 BC. The finding of Indus seals suggests that merchants from India actually resided in Mesopotamia; their chief merchandise was probably cotton, which has always been one of India's staple exports, and which is known to have been used in later Babylonia. It seems that every merchant had a seal bearing an emblem, often of a religious character and a name or brief inscription. The primary purpose was probably to mark the ownership of property. While the Mesopotamians did employ cylindrical seals the Harappan merchants had square or oblong plaques made of soft stone. Some 2000 seals have been found in the Indus cities so far.

Sumer and Babylon, but seem to have been lost forever to us. Architecture was austere and utilitarian as no trace of any monumental sculpture or large buildings have been found.

Though the Indus people had not completely given up the use of stone tools they did use implements of copper and bronze; but in many respects they were technologically inferior to Mesopotamia. The Sumerians had very early invented knives, spearheads and axe-heads with holes for the shafts, similar to tools of the Harappans, with the exception of a saw with undulating teeth, were comparably of poor quality.

The men wore robes, which left one shoulder bare, and the garments of the upper classes were often richly patterned. Beards were worn and men and women alike had long hair. Women loved jewellery, and wore heavy necklaces and earrings.

From our fragmentary knowledge of religion of Indus people, we come across some features suggesting those characteristics of later Hinduism, which are not to be found in the earliest stratum of Indian religious literature. The Mother Goddess, for instance, reappears only after the lapse of over a thousand years from the fall of Harappa. She was the divinity of people, and the upper classes seem to have preferred a god, who also shows features found in later Hinduism. The most striking deity of the Harappa culture was the horned god (known in later Hinduism as *Pashupati* – the lord of beasts). This is the well-known deity Shiva – the auspicious one) (San. शिव). Phallic worship was an important element of Harappa religion²⁶. Evidence suggests that invaders making the law and order less well maintained over populated Mohenjo Daro. When the end came, it seems that most of the citizens of the city had fled. The Indus cities too, fell to the barbarians who triumphed not only through greater military prowess, but because they were equipped with better weapons. The date of these great events can only be fixed very approximately from synchronism with the Middle East. Sporadic traces of contact can be found between the Indus cities and Sumer, and there is some reason to believe that these contacts continued under the First Dynasty of Babylonia. The barbarians, the Kassites, also overwhelmed the dynasty. After the Kassite invasion no trace of contacts with Indus cities can be found in Mesopotamia, and it is therefore likely that Indus cities fell at about the same time as the dynasty of Hammurabi. This could well have happened around 1600 BC.

²⁶ The *lingam* or phallic emblem in later Hinduism is the symbol of the god Shiva.

We find, thus, that Indus civilization was well connected and trading with its sister civilizations of Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, and superior to them in some ways. It was an urban civilization, where the merchant's class was wealthy and evidently played an important role. The streets were lined with small shops. It would seem to follow that the craftsman of the Indus cities were, to a large extent, producing *for the market*. What, if any, form of currency and standard of value had been accepted by society to facilitate the exchange of spacious and commodious private houses mark their owners as merchants. Their number and size indicate a strong and prosperous merchant community. A surprising wealth of ornaments of gold, silver, precious stones and faïence, of vessels of beaten copper, and of metal implements and weapons, has been collected from ruins.

Well-planned streets and a magnificent system of drains, regularly cleared out, reflect the vigilance of some regular municipal government. Its authority was strong enough to secure the observance of town planning, by-laws and the maintenance of approved lines for streets, and lanes over several reconstructions rendered necessary by floods.

What happened to this civilization and how did it end? Some scholars believe that there was a sudden end to it due to an unexplained catastrophe. The river Indus is well known for its mighty floods, which overwhelm and wash away cities and villages. Or a changing climate might lead to progressive desiccation of the land and the encroachment of desert over cultivated areas. Some other scholars believe that the Indus cities faced the danger threatened from the western horse-riding invaders. First to suffer were the Baluchistan villages, first by the roaming invaders (before 3000 BC) and later by burning and demolitions (around 2000 BC). After the barbarians had conquered the outlying villages the ancient laws and rigid organization of the Indus cities must have suffered great strain, and this great civilization must have ended abruptly.

Rig Vedic Aryans in the Indus-Brāhmputrā Basin

Historical sources suggest that the Indo-Europeans emerged from the Caspian Sea and the Southern Russian steppes, and gradually divided into a number of tribes which spread far afield in search of pasture, to Greece and Asia Minor, to Iran and to India, by which time they were called the *Aryans*. Vedic literature (that associated with the Aryans in India) came in for intensive study, and it seems likely that Aryans

arrived sometime in the 2nd millennium BC. It was during this period that the hymns of the *Rig Veda* (further *RV*) were memorized and collected. Although, our earliest source of literature is the *RV* (composed around 1500 BC), but the remaining Vedic literature – the *Sama*, *Yajur*, and *Atharva Vedas* (of later date) does help to the historical reconstruction of Aryan life and institutions. Based on hymns from the *Rig Veda*, we can draw the following conclusions about the socio-economic life of the Aryans:

The foundation of social life was the patriarchal family. In *RV* (I.24, 12-15 and V.2.7) a kind of absolute control by parents over children is suggested. The family discipline was strict is well illustrated by the case of *Rijrasva* who was deprived of his sight as punishment by his father (I.116.16). Similarly, in *RV* (X.34.4) we are told how his parents and brothers, in front of his creditors, disown the insolvent gambler. However, a father is looked upon as the type of all that is good and kind. The wedding hymn (X.35) indicates that newly married wife (by her love and affection) rules over her husband's parents, although she herself entertains a feeling of respect for them. This is a clear evidence of joint family life. After the death of the father, the eldest son took charge of the family. A notable feature of this etiquette of the *Rig-Vedic* age was the great store of set of hospitality. The frequent epithet of *Agni*, viz. *Athiti*, the beloved guest in human abodes, takes for granted the affection and respect generally shown to a guest. In later literature, hospitality to a guest is elevated to the rank of a religious duty as one of the five great daily sacrifices (*panch mahayajnas*).

The elaborate institution known as the caste system among the Hindus in India may almost be said to be without a parallel in the world, although there is hardly a country where classes or order of the society or grades of social distinction of some kind are not met with. A common origin, name, tutelary deity, occupation, and ceremonies generally distinguish one homogeneous caste-group from another, but today Indian caste is rigidly fixed by birth, and exclusive *commensality* and *connubium* between the members of a caste-group to the exclusion of all others are its outstanding and fundamental characteristics. Further, the concept of impurity communicable to a higher caste by contact with a lower one underlies this fissiparous tendency and has resulted in the untouchability of the so called *Sudra*, who by popular error is almost identified with the *panchama* (one outside the framework of the *Chaturvarnya*).

The extent to which caste system was developed in this *Rik Samhita* period is widely debated. The uncertainty regarding precise interpretation of basic words and phrases in *RV* and the relative chronology of scattered relevant passages makes it

difficult to arrive at conclusion. The most widely accepted common version is that which represents the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras to have been created respectively from head, breast or arms, the thighs, and the feet of the Creator (RV X.90)²⁷. The *Brahmins* or the priestly class dedicated themselves to the highly specialized occupation or profession of officiating at the sacrifices and preserving the sacred hymnology of the Aryans by conducting Vedic classes. The *Kshatriya* or *Rajanya* class naturally took the fighting profession. The *Vaishya* class had taken to agriculture, cattle breeding and other pastoral pursuits and the various crafts, arts and industries. The lowest i.e. *Sudras* were engaged in services of all kind. But the classes were not irrevocably bound up with specific occupations.

The transition from the casteless, though classified, society of the bulk of the RV to the elaborate caste system of the *Yajur Veda* is to be traced to the complication of life resulting from the further migration of the Vedic Aryans from Panjab to the east. There was a necessity of carrying on a ceaseless fight with and conquest of people by merger or fusion into centralized kingdoms, led to the emergence of powerful monarchs. The monarchy, moreover, needed now a standing army – recruited from the ranks of nobility of tribal princes and chief armed retainers of the king. This is the genesis of the warrior class. At the same time, the people of Aryan masses, settled down to a peaceful life devoted to agriculture, pastoral pursuits, trade and industry. They constituted the third class, the Vaisyas.

Side by side also grew a distinct community of priests. As the size of the kingdoms grew and military and administrative affairs kept the hands of kings and warrior class full, the rituals tended to become more complicated and elaborate, the need was keenly felt of a hieratic order, composed of intellectual elements among the non-fighters who could dedicate themselves to faithful and precise performance of the highly developed ritual, and to the preservation by word of mouth of the traditional formulae and sacred hymnology of the Aryans.

As regards *Sudras* it is mentioned for the first time in the *Purusha-sukta*. But RV knows *dasyu* and *dasa*, both as aborigines independent of Aryans and as conquered slaves. The latter may reasonably be supposed to represent the *Sudras*. But not all the defeated could have been absorbed by the royal household thus there must have

²⁷ Translation of the hymn says: "When (the gods) divided *Purusha*, into how many parts did thy cut him up? What was his mouth? What arms (had he)? What (two objects) are said to have been his thighs and feet? The *Brahmin* was his mouth; the *Rajanya* was made of his arms; the being called the *Vaisya*, he was his thighs; the *Sudra* sprang from his feet".

been whole villages of the aborigines under Aryan control. In course of time it included even dark skinned people who remained beyond the pale of Aryan state and who were virtually excluded from the religious and rituals of the Aryans.

The development of the caste system in a rigid form, with hereditary and mutually exclusive caste-group, did not take place till the time when the Vedic Aryans had settled down in the Middle Country and were already Brahmanized (from the *Brahmanas*)²⁸ enough to look upon the inhabitants of the North-West the home of the *RV*.

The frequent mention of unmarried girls like *Ghosha*, who grew up in the houses of their parents (I.117.7; X.39.3, 40.5.), the references to the ornaments worn by maidens at the festive occasions in order to win lovers (I.123.11; VII.2.5), to a youth's courtship of the maiden he loves (I. 115.2), to the lover's gifts (I.117.18), to their mutual love (I.115.2) – all this evidence speaks in favour of the custom of girls normally marrying long after they had reached puberty. The restrictions on the choice of in marriage were few. Marriage with the *dasya varna* was probably prohibited. Among Aryans only the marriages of brother and sister (X.10) and of father and daughter were banned. The *RV* certainly permits polygamy (as mentioned in various hymns throughout), though monogamy may have been the rule.

There seems to have been considerable freedom on the part of young persons concerned in selection of partners, as they generally married at a mature age. There is no evidence that the consent of head of the family was essential. This might appear on the scene after the parties had come to an understanding, and their participation as well as that of the wooer in the formal wooing was a mere formality, though it was an essential preliminary to the marriage ceremony. The uncomplimentary references to some son-in-law (VIII.2.20; I.109.2) suggest that in some cases a not very desirable son-in-law paid a bride price. Similarly, if the girl had some physical defect, dowries, it seems, had to be given (VI.28.5; X.27.12).

²⁸ The *Brāhmaṇa(m)* (ब्राह्मणम्) are a collection of ancient Indian texts with commentaries on the hymns of the Vedas. They are primarily a digest incorporating myths, legends, the explanation of Vedic rituals and in some cases speculations about natural phenomenon or philosophy. The *Brāhmaṇas* are particularly noted for their instructions on the proper performance of rituals, as well as explain the original symbolic meanings. Each Vedic school has its own *Brāhmaṇa*. Thus numerous *Brāhmaṇa* texts existed in ancient India, but most have been lost. The oldest is dated to about 900 BC.

A hymn in RV (X.85), gives us an idea of marriage ritual. The bridegroom and party proceed to bride's house (X.17.1), where the well-adorned bride remains ready (VI.58.9) to join the marriage feast. The guests are entertained with cow's meat slaughtered for the occasion (X.85.13). The groom grasps the hand of the bride and leads her round the fire (X.85.36 and 38). These two acts constitute the essence of marriage. Groom now the husband takes her by hand and takes her home in a carriage. Then follows the consummation, which is signified chiefly by the purification of the bride's garment (X.85.28-30, 35).

Perfect harmony and happiness are prayed for in conjugal life which is hoped will be long enough to bless the couple with sons and grandsons. The fulfilment of the desire for offspring in particular was the chief aim of the marriage. Abundance of sons is constantly prayed for along with cattle and land, but no desire for daughters is expressed. This desire for a son is natural in a patriarchal society. The son alone could perform the funeral rites for the father and continue the line. Sonlessness was as much deplored as poverty (III.16.5). The adopting of sons was recognized though not favoured.

There is very little evidence of the prevalence of *Sati* (self-immolation by the surviving wife) in the RV, though we may detect a semblance or reminiscence of this ancient custom.

There are few (doubtful) references to lovers and lovemaking. Women had to be under the protection of some guardian, e.g. in the care of their fathers until marriage, of their husband after marriage, and of their brothers if not married; still they enjoyed much freedom. They did not always remain indoors, but moved about freely, attended feasts and dances, and there are references to *fair ladies flocking to festive gatherings*.

In the RV there is no explicit reference to the ceremony of *Upanayana* (initiation), which is regarded as of great importance in later ages. But all primitive people have some kind of ceremony, signifying the formal admission of an adult youth to membership of tribe, and we may infer from the closely parallel Indo-Iranian ceremony of *Navjot* that the elements of this ceremony probably existed in the *Rig Vedic* age and even before.

Hymn (VII.103) gives us a glimpse of the education. The fifth verse gives a picture of the earliest Vedic school by the comparison of the croaking of the frogs to the chorus of voices heard when a teacher recites the Veda and the pupils repeat the words after him. Evidently, the entire instruction was orally given. Debates are also referred to (X.71).

It remains a debateable point whether the art of writing was known in this age. It is a well-known fact that no specimen of alphabets has been discovered in India that can be dated before IV century BC

Music, both vocal and instrumental was well known. Hymn (VII.103) refers to the musical chanting of Brahmins engaged in the extraction of *Soma* juice. Singing is often mentioned as chanting, reciting, hymning etc. Among instruments we find *Vina* (string instrument) and the drum. The dancing of maiden is mentioned. Chariot race was a favourite sport and source of entertainment. Race in general was popular. Fascination with gambling and the ruin caused by it is often referred.

Milk and its products formed the principal ingredient of food. Honey was consumed as sweetener. Grain was parched or ground into flour with a millstone and then mixed with milk or butter so as to make into cakes. Vegetables and fruits were eaten in large quantities.

Meat also formed a part of the dietary. The flesh of the ox, the sheep and the goat was normally eaten, after being roasted on spits or cooked in earthen or metal pots. Probably meat was eaten as a rule on occasions of sacrifice that were by no means rare. While, horsemeat was eaten only at the sacrifice festivities to gain the strength and swiftness, the cow is not to be killed and considered a valuable possession. As most precious possession, a cow might be sacrificed to please the gods and then the flesh might be eaten as a holy ritual.

Soma juice and *Sura* (some sort of a distilled drink) must have been a very popular inebriating drinks in the original home of the Aryans. These are frequently mentioned in the *RV*.

The dress consisted of two garments made of deerskin (*vasas* – the lower and *adhivasa* – the upper). Later the *nivi* – the under-garment came to be used in addition. Woollen clothing was in vogue. A sort of mantle or cloak is often mentioned. A kind of embroidered garment – *pseas* – seems to have been worn by female dancers. The bride at the marriage ceremony wore a special garment; it was later given to the Brahmin and is called *vadhuya*. There was a general fashion to dress well.

Several ornaments are mentioned in *RV*. The *Karnasobhna* – was a man's gold made ornament for the ear. Men often wore garlands desiring to appear to advantage (IV.38.6; V.53.4). The *Kurira* – was a head-ornament to be worn by women (especially the bride). The women wore *nyochani* (symbol of married women), *khadi* (armlet), *nishka* (necklace), *mani* (jewel) worn round the neck, and *rukna* (ornament over the breasts).

The hairs were kept combed and oiled. It seems that men also wore their hair plaited or braided. The beard and moustaches are mentioned so is mentioned the shaving. There was custom of women wearing the hair in braids or plates. A maiden had her made in four plates.

The physician is often mentioned with respect for his skill. Miraculous cures are ascribed to the twin-gods *Asvinis* who are the great healers of diseases and experts in surgical procedures. Hymn X.97 is addressed to the *Oshadhies* (the plants) with special reference to their curative effects. Thus herbs and plants figured prominently in the *materia medica* of this period. Prayers for long life are pretty frequent. The legends illustrating the reputed healing powers of *Asvins* give us an idea of ailments.

Agriculture made real headway during the *Rig Vedic* age, although the practice of ploughing can be traced back to Indo-Iranian times. As now, the operation of tilling the soil meant the cutting of furrows in the field with the wooden plough drawn by bulls, the sowing of seeds in furrows thus made, the cutting of corn with the sickle, the laying of the bundles of corn on the thrashing floor, threshing and finally sifting and winnowing. The exact nature of the grain, which was thus grown, and helped cultivation, may have been *barley* (*Yava*). Rice was not cultivated until the later periods.

The *Rig Vedic* Aryans were primarily a pastoral people and naturally cows and bullocks were their most valued possession. These constituted the chief form of wealth and the only original *dakshina* (sacrificial fee). The name of *Aghnya* (not to be killed), applied several times, shows that cow was regarded as a sacred animal. Cows were kept in stall during the night and in the heat of the day. They were allowed to roam freely in pastures at other times, and were milked three times a day.

There are clear references in the hymns (I.56.2) to trading in distant lands for profit. The prayers and oblations offered for *gaining a hundred treasures* (III.18.3) are also probably those of merchants seeking divine aid for success in trade. Apart from trade with foreign lands, there must have been quite an extensive inland trade but there are no definite details available. Haggling in the market was, however, well known. The exchange of commodities on the principle of barter seems to have been in vogue, but cow had already come to be regarded as a unit of value (IV.24.10). There must have been other recognized units of value too. Great importance is attached to one such unit *nishka* (a gold necklace).

Booty in battle was one of the sources of wealth to the State and consisted chiefly of flocks and herds. In individual economy, dowry and bride price played no small role. Movable property could change hands by gift or sale, which amounted to

barter. Land was not an article for commerce. Population being scanty and scattered over vast areas, fresh land could be easily obtained, if needed by family, which had grown to a very large size with several sons. The rivers of the Northwest are referred to as yielding gold.

Whether any sea borne trade was carried on during this age is a much-disputed issue. The arguments in favour that supports the thesis are: (i) *Rig Veda* mentions men who go to the ocean eager for gain (ii) there are some allusions to a trade more extensive than that implied by boats for crossing rivers (iii) verses I.116.3 tells us that the *Ashvins* rescued *Bhujyu* in the ocean with a ship of a hundred oars, and (iv) Hymn X.136.5 refers to eastern and western oceans.

It appears that the art of fashioning chariots for war and race, and carts for agriculture and transport, that carpentry was honoured profession. The workers toiled to produce metal smelted ore in the furnace. Household utensils were made of metal (iron, copper, bronze). Earthenware and wooden vessels were also used for purpose of eating and drinking. Among home and cottage industries may be mentioned sewing, the plaiting of mats from grass or reeds, spinning and weaving of cloth, chiefly done by women. Among other professions may be mentioned dancers (male as well as female), barber and vintner.

Hunting as a sport and profession was known. Nets and pitfalls were normal instruments of capture, bow and arrow was also employed. In this context *butcher* is also mentioned as a profession.

There is no distinct reference to the specification of slaves. They probably assisted their Aryan masters who did not think it below their dignity to practice all the arts and crafts needed by the society.

It is suggested that some kind of distinction between village and town existed (I.44.10 and 114.1). But, not much evidence of city life is available. The village was a group of houses, built close and surrounded by hedge as a protective barrier. It is difficult to determine the exact sense of *Pur* (a town) mentioned in the RV. It seems to have an earthwork fortification, protected by a palisade or stonewall. The frequent mention of the capture or destruction of such strongholds indicates that they were scattered around the country. Houses were made of wood and the beams being made of bamboo. The strongholds probably had a series of concentric walls.

The conception of *Pushan* as the guardian of the pathways gives occasion for numerous references of all kinds of traffic. Oxen, mules and horses drew chariots and carts. Travelling was fairly common. Prayers were offered to the gods to *give*

broad paths to travel safely. The reference to artificial waterway is makes it certain that some kind of an irrigation system was in place.

Such was the Vedic life.

Khmer's on the Mekong

Kwan Lun mountain area in Central Asia is the headwaters of Mekong River or Cambodia. It flows through South China, becomes border of Indochina and Thailand and thus constructs the Cambodia bay. The area, through which Mekong flows, such as Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, has made the land fertile and cultivable.

The ancient humans, in this part of the world, are supposed to have come from Central Asia. They spread-out to the seashore through rivers and the valleys. It is believed that they migrated around 2000 BC primarily because of the frequent disasters and diseases. Based on the fossils found, it is estimated that they belonged to some species of Papua Melanesoid, Mongoloid and Australoid. The mix marriages had produced the brown skin Malayan. Tonkin-bay area in Indochina was their second home from where they moved out to Cambodia, Thailand, and became the Austro-Asia nation, and many of them had gone to the islands and thus became Austronesian nation.

The Khmers were basically an agricultural nation that lived primarily around the waterways. They successfully practiced variety of agricultural techniques to cultivate, wet and dry lands. Much of their food did come from rice paddies, growing a variety of crop to keep pace with the rising waters in wet season. At harvest time, boats and rafts collected the rice.

From cultural point of view, there are two centres in Mekong river valley: Bacson-Hoabinh and Dongson. At the beginning, the civilization in this area was Mesolithic. The famous culture was Sumatra axe with Papua Melanesoid as the proponent. These people were extremely able in making boats (of wood and bamboo), cultivating irrigated land and producing beans, soybean, and corn (by using ploughs that were pulled by buffaloes or cows). Their astronomical knowledge too, was well advanced as Orion was used to navigate in sailing. Animism and dynamism were the beliefs they had well known. These beliefs produced the Wayang culture, grave veneration, etc.

The study of Khmer civilization in depth is not been easy for scholars. Most of the writings, found after the excavation of Angkor, were carved in the stones which

became the unperishable materials against time. Although these evidences are important for us to understand the basic constituency of Khmer society and its chronology but they were mainly concerned with religious rituals, king's praise, and literature of Indian epics of *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*. Unfortunately, there is very little to tell about the ordinary life of the local people.

Cambodian culture is deeply rooted in Indian culture and Buddhism and has incorporated elements from Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China and Java. Its two large neighbours — Thailand and Vietnam, both of whom established protectorates over Cambodia, have frequently pressured Cambodia.

In post-Christian era, in Cambodia, the second great Khmer Empire emerged after the fall of Funan — Angkor²⁹. This ancient Cambodian empire held power from the 9th to the 15th centuries. The city of Angkor was located in the modern Cambodian province of Siem Reap, which is in the northwest of the country. Khmer kingdom was the most powerful and architecturally prodigious culture in Southeast Asia. The Khmers had lived for over a millennium in this region, and had earlier kingdoms known as Funan and Chenla. These kingdoms were the superpowers of the region in ancient times. In later period two neighbouring powers China to the north, and Java to the south, controlled the life in Cambodia. In AD 802, a Khmer official in the Javanese court, returned to his homeland, declared full independence from Java and by pronouncing himself as the new god-king, and took the name Jayavarman II. He thus became the first of many deified kings of Angkor. Angkor reached its height with the ascension of Suryavarman II in AD 1112 who expanded the kingdom into Vietnam and Thailand, and built the famed Shiva temple of Angkor Wat. But the southern Vietnamese state of Champa would not be subjugated. In AD 1177, the Chams of Vietnam regrouped, and launched a counterattack on Angkor sacking and executing the king. But the Khmer were not done. Under the leadership of king Jayavarman VII in AD 1180 the Khmers won back Angkor. For the next four decades he ruled over the brightest period of history of Cambodia.

Khmer civilization had a strong interrelation with Thai and Indonesian people for ethnical, cultural and economic reasons. Indian and Chinese influence too was fairly strong due to religions and trade.

Thailand lies at the converging point of the empires of China, India, Burma, the Khmers and Vietnam. Little is known of the earliest inhabitants of what is now

²⁹ The word *Angkor* is derived from Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language of *Nagara* which means *City*. Angkor Wat literally means *City of Temple* and Angkor Thom *The Magnificent City*.

Thailand, but 5,000-year-old archaeological sites in the north eastern part of the country are believed to contain the oldest evidence of rice cultivation and bronze casting in Asia and perhaps in the world. In early historical times, a succession of tribal groups controlled what is now Thailand. The Tai, a people who originally lived in south-western China, migrated into mainland Southeast Asia over a period of many centuries. The Mon and Khmer peoples established powerful kingdoms that included large areas of the country. They absorbed from contact with South Asian peoples religious, social, political, and cultural ideas and institutions that later influenced the development of Thailand's culture and national identity.

The oldest known mention of the Thai people and their existence in the region by the exonym *Siamese* is in a 12th century inscription at the Khmer temple complex of Angkor Wat, which refers to *syam*³⁰, people (from the San. *śyāma* meaning *dark*, referring to the relative skin colour of its native people), as vassals of the Khmer monarch. In 1238 a Tai chieftain declared his independence from the Khmer and established a kingdom at *Sukhothai* in the broad valley of the Mae Nam (river) Chao Phraya, at the centre of modern Thailand. Sukhothai was succeeded in the fourteenth century by the kingdom of Ayutthaya. The Burmese invaded Ayutthaya and in 1767 destroyed the capital, but two national heroes, *Taksin* and *Chakkri*, soon expelled the invaders and reunified the country under the Chakkri Dynasty.

Geographically, Indonesia is located on cross-position between two continents (Asia and Australia) and between two oceans (Indian and Pacific). Indonesia, with over 18,000 counted islands, is by far the largest and most varied archipelago on Earth. It spans almost 2 million square kilometres between Asia and Australia. With a current population of about 250 million, Indonesia shares land borders with Malaysia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea. Its major islands are: Borneo, Java, Sumatra (Swarna Dwipa), Sulawesi, Timor, Maluku and New Guinea. The position of the country that is made of islands made it easy for them to adopt the religion and culture from all sides.

On the island of Java, the *Taruma* and *Sunda* kingdoms in the west appeared in the 4th and 7th centuries respectively, while the Indian *Kalinga Kingdom* sent embassies to China starting in 640 AD. However, the first major principality was the *Medang Kingdom* that was founded in central Java at the beginning of the 8th century. Medang's religion centred on the Hindu god *Shiva* and the kingdom produced some of Java's earliest Hindu temples. Around the same time, the *Sailendra dynasty* rose to

³⁰ The country's designation as *Siam* came from the Portuguese.

become the patron of *Mahayan Buddhism*. This ancient kingdom built monuments such as the 9th century *Borobudur* and *Prambanan* in central Java. Around the 10th century the centre of power shifted from central to eastern Java. The eastern Javanese kingdoms of *Kedri*, *Singhsari* and *Majapahit* were mainly dependent on rice cultivation, but also pursued trade within the Indonesian archipelago, and with China and India.

It is from the Chinese records, dated around 600 AD, that we learn of two Sumatran kingdoms, one based in Palembang and the other in Jambi. Austronesian people, who form the majority of the modern population in Sumatra, are thought to have originally been from Taiwan and arrived in Indonesia around 2000 BC. The first of the Indonesian kingdoms on the island of Sumatra, that we know anything about, is *Srivijaya*. It was an ancient Malay kingdom at around AD 500 that started to develop around the present-day town of Palembang. It seems that the kingdom of Srivijaya was a coastal trading centre and a maritime power. But it did not extend its influence, much beyond the coastal areas of the various islands. However, people of the in-land areas of these islands, were pretty much unaffected by the Srivijaya. From the 7th century CE, this powerful naval kingdom flourished bringing Hindu and Buddhist influences with it³¹.

Chinese on the Huang-Ho

China is a country in East Asia whose culture is considered as one of the oldest. The name *China* comes from the Sanskrit *Cina*³². The Romans and the Greeks knew the country as *Seres* - *the land where silk comes from*. The name China does not appear in print in the west until AD 1516 in Barbosa's journals³³ narrating the travels of Marco Polo who familiarized China in the west 13th century by referring the land as *Cathay*.

³¹ As a stronghold of Buddhism, Srivijaya attracted pilgrims and scholars from other parts of Asia. Included in these was the Chinese monk Yijing, who in 671 AD and again in 695 AD, made lengthy visits to Sumatra on his way to study at Nalanda University in India. In 775 AD, the last Srivijaya king retreated to east Java, in the face of the rising power of the central Javanese *Shailendra* kingdom, they were followers of *Mahayana* and *Tantric* forms of Buddhism.

³² The word is derived from the name of the Chinese Qin Dynasty, which was translated as *Cin* by the Persians and seems to have become popularized through trade along the Silk Road. In Mandarin Chinese, the country is known as *Zhongguo* meaning *central state* or *middle empire*.

³³ The *Book of Duarte Barbosa* (*Livro de Duarte Barbosa*) c. 1516, making it one of the earliest examples of Portuguese travel literature.

Some early cultures in the area are known to exist in Bronze Age of Yin and Zhou dynasties. An ancient Chinese civilization that prospered in a middle and lower basin of the Yellow River is known as Huang-Ho, or Hwan-huou. It has generally been accepted that the cradle of Chinese civilization is the Yellow River Valley that gave rise to villages sometime around 5000 BC. While this has been disputed, and arguments have been made for a more widespread development of communities, there is no doubt that the Henan province, in the Yellow River Valley, was the site of many early villages and farming communities. This farming populace that started living and cultivating the flooded valley, through flood control and irrigation techniques led to the development of cities where political power found its roots.

From these small villages and farming communities grew centralized government; the first of which was the prehistoric Xia Dynasty (cca. 2070-1600 BC). Bronze works and tombs clearly point to an evolutionary period of development between disparate Stone Age villages and a recognizable cohesive civilization. Yu the Great who worked relentlessly for thirteen years to control the flooding of the Yellow River, which routinely destroyed the farmer's crops, founded the dynasty. After he had controlled the flooding, Yu conquered the Sanmiao tribes and was named successor (by the then-ruler, Shun), reigning until his death. Yu established the hereditary system of succession and, so, the concept of dynasty, has become most popular. The ruling class and the elite lived in urban clusters; while the peasant population, which supported their lifestyle, remained largely agrarian, living in rural areas. Yu's son, Qi, ruled after him and power remained in the hands of the family until Tang, who established the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BC), overthrew the last Xia ruler, Jie.

Tang was from the kingdom of Shang who assumed power by leading an uprising. He proclaiming providing land-ownership, lower taxes, suspending grandiose building projects and ruled with such wisdom and efficiency that art and culture were allowed to flourish. Interestingly enough, writing developed under the Shang Dynasty as well as bronze metallurgy, architecture, and religion.

Around the year 1046 BC, King Wu, rebelled against King Zhou of Shang and defeated his forces, establishing the Zhou Dynasty (cca. 1046-256 BC). The Duke of Zhou, King Wu's younger brother, to legitimize the revolt, invoked the *Mandate of Heaven*. It was defined as the gods' blessing on a just ruler and rule by divine mandate. When the government no longer served the will of the gods, that it would be overthrown. Further, it was stipulated that there could be only one legitimate

ruler of China and that his rule should be legitimized by his proper conduct as a steward of the lands entrusted to him by heaven. Various rulers entrusting succession to unworthy progeny would later often manipulated this mandate.

Under the Zhou, culture flourished and civilization spread. Writing was codified and iron metallurgy became increasingly sophisticated. The greatest and best known Chinese philosophers and poets, Confucius, Mencius, Mo Zu, Lao-Tzŭ, Tao Chien, and the military strategist Sun-Tzŭ, all come from the Zhou period in China and the time of the *Hundred Schools of Thought*. The chariot, which was introduced to the land under the Shang, became more fully developed by the Zhou.

During the *Spring and Autumn Period* (772-476 BC), the official chronicle of the state at the time, the Zhou government became decentralized in their move to the new capital at Luoyang. This is the period most noted for advances in philosophy, poetry, and the arts and saw the rise of Confucian, Taoist, and Mohist thought. At the same time, however, different states were breaking away from central rule by Luoyang and proclaiming themselves sovereign. This, then, led to the so-called Warring States Period (476-221 BC) in which seven states fought with each other for control.

Sun-Tzŭ, probable author of the famous work, *The Art of War* suggested reforms in the warfare as formerly it was considered a nobleman's game of skill with very set rules dictated by courtesy and the perceived will of heaven. One did not attack the weak or the unprepared and one was expected to delay engagement until an opponent had mobilized and formed ranks on the field. Sun-Tzŭ advocated total war in pursuit of victory and counselled taking the enemies' forces by whatever means lay at hand.

From the *Warring States* conflict, Ying Zheng (221-206 BC) emerged supreme, subduing and unifying the other six states under his rule and proclaiming himself as Shi Huang-ti – *The First Emperor* – of China. He ordered the destruction of the walled fortifications, which had separated the different states and commissioned the building of a great wall along the northern border of his kingdom. He also strengthened the infrastructure through road building, which helped to increase trade through ease of travel. He expanded the boundaries of his empire, built the Grand Canal in the south, redistributed land and, initially, was a fair and just ruler. However, while he made great strides in building projects and military campaigns, a heavy hand in domestic policy increasingly characterized his rule. Claiming the *Mandate from Heaven*, he suppressed all philosophies save the legalism which had been developed by Shang Yang and, heeding the counsel of his chief advisor, Li Siu,

he ordered the destruction of any history or philosophy books that did not correspond to Legalism, his family line, the state of Qin, or himself.

With the fall of the Qin Dynasty, China was plunged into chaos. At the Battle of Gaixia in 202 BC, proclaimed himself as emperor (Emperor Gaozu of Han). The Han Dynasty (which derives its name from Liu-Bang's home in Hanzhong province) would rule China, with a brief interruption, for the next 400 years.

Trade with the west began during this time and arts and technology increased in sophistication. Great advances were made under the Hans in every area of culture. The Yellow Emperor's *Canon of Medicine*, China's earliest written record on medicine was codified during the Han Dynasty. Gunpowder, which the Chinese had already invented, became more refined. Paper was invented at this time and writing became more sophisticated. Liu-Bang embraced Confucianism and made it the exclusive philosophy of the government, setting a pattern, which would continue on to the present day. Literature and education flourished under his reign. He reduced taxes and disbanded his army who, nevertheless, rallied without delay when called upon.

Han Wu Ti the Great (141- 87 BC), embarked upon his enterprises of expansion, public works, and cultural initiatives. Education, roads, development of trade, public projects, employed millions in these undertakings. After Wu Ti, his successors, more or less, maintained his vision for China and enjoyed equal success.

2.

Humans, Their Religion, Gods, Culture, and Art

Almost all humans have, at all times, in all cultures, believed in some god or goddess. They have worshiped their deity with respect observing elaborate rituals, religious laws and decorum. In early history, there were the only nature gods, who were later joined by the human gods. While intellectuals and philosophers debated among themselves issues such as matter and spirit, soul and the Supreme Being, confusion engulfed the masses. Superstitions and mysticism enveloping the deities developed. To sort it out and comfort the preliterate people, religious leaders and clergy developed elaborate system of rituals, hierophany and eschatology. Cults and religion emerged. Temples were erected where worshipers paid tribute to the deity (the religious leaders). This was the general pattern in all civilizations of the ancient world. From Egypt to Sumer, from Persia to India and Far East, various types of faiths, beliefs and cults developed since 3100 BC. In following pages, the author wishes to elaborate some of the basic features of religion observed by the humans. Various gods and goddesses that were worshiped by people are referred.

Mesopotamia

It was the name given by the Greeks to the strip of land in between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. It was this land, made fertile by the intelligence and energy of men who knew how to get water to the otherwise dusty, poor soil by means of canals between the two rivers that made possible the extraordinary civilization that arose here in ancient times. The region was a paradise; the envy of ancient world and it produced the richest and most powerful nations of that part of the world for some two thousand years.

When the peoples of Mesopotamia were not at war among themselves, they were, nevertheless, not free from raids of invading Arabs and northern people. Unfortunately, little is known about the prehistoric tribes that roamed this arid region. First village settlements stood there not later than 5000 BC, but it took around a thousand years that the shoreline of Persian Gulf receded sufficiently to allow a settled culture to develop in Babylonia. From 4000 BC on, there is a continuous record of civilizations in this area. Biblical cities Ur, Uruk, Lagash, and Eridu were located here. The Sumerians were a non-Semitic, agricultural people of certain origin who began to occupy southern Mesopotamia around 4000 BC. They irrigated the land, formed city-states and imposed their language upon the area. A great achievement in Sumerian culture was the invention of cylinder seal, as it led to invention of writing (on soft clay tablets later baked), which occurred around Uruk. This not only facilitated long-range communications but also made it possible to record legal transactions and made other records of many kinds including those of religious rituals and theology. The creation of libraries was now possible and it contributed enormously to the growth of knowledge and development of civilization.

As early as 2600 BC Semites began to infiltrate and soon dominated Mesopotamia. The earliest concentration was on north of Euphrates at Mari. This was followed by Akkad, Babylon (at Euphrates) and Nineveh (at Tigris). Babylon and Nineveh conquered each other in turn, at times, establishing kingdoms that included all of the Mesopotamia and reached as far beyond Syria and Palestine³⁴.

³⁴ The power of these kingdoms was not broken until Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

The religion of Mesopotamia derived its early structure from the fact that the social and political life of that area was centred on individual states, each of which had its own king and was independent of all the others. Associated with each capital city were the surrounding villages and farms, the area extending as far as military and political control could be maintained.

The organization of religion was similar to that of a political state. In each capital city there was a chief deity who had a goddess wife. The two were assisted by other deities, both male and female, each had a specific function³⁵. At first the king himself served as high priest, in time, however, an elaborate professional priesthood arose. In each city, the chief deity, had his own shrine, and the subordinate deities usually had theirs.

There was little difference between the religions of the different cities of Mesopotamia. This was especially true of the delta region in the south, where cities were close, and so the cultural kinship between them which was the result of their constant social, commercial, and political contacts.

Over and above the gods worshiped by each city there was also a triad of deities who appear to have been accepted by all the cities. This triad included: *Anu*, god of sky; *Enlil* (Sum., cuneiform: 𒂗𒂗𒂗 ^den-líl i.e. *Lord Storm*), ruler of human affairs on earth; and *Ea* (Sum., ^dEN.KI(G) 𒂗𒂗), god of waters. When a city like Babylon or Nineveh became powerful to conquer any other city, and it was ruled over as one kingdom, the gods of the conqueror either replaced or absorbed those of the defeated. Thus, great gods as *Marduk* (cuneiform: 𒂗𒂗𒂗 ^dAMAR.UTU; Sum., *amar utu.k* i.e. *Calf of the Sun*) and *Ishtar* (cuneiform: 𒂗𒂗 ^Dištar, goddess of love, beauty, sex, desire, fertility, war, combat, and political power) at Babylon came to achieve the supreme status. It now became possible to conceive of a pantheon that included the deities of all the Mesopotamian cities living harmoniously together with *Marduk*, or with some other god, as their divine king.

One of the most characteristic features of Mesopotamian religion was its development along the lines of magic. Divination of the intention and will of the

³⁵ As the Mesopotamian culture came to its maturity, so a tendency towards an elementary monotheism. In some documents one finds the same deity referred to as female and male. One also finds texts in which names of deities are used interchangeably, demonstrating that the divine names are thought of as no more than different way of designating the same spiritual being.

gods was undertaken in many ways. One of the most popular was inspection of vital organs of animals that had been sacrificed in the temples. Another was the observation of heavenly bodies, which were believed to be gods themselves; and from their movements it was believed to be possible to discover what was to happen in human affairs. Elaborate rituals for the control and expulsion of evil spirits that were regarded as the cause of illnesses and other misfortunes produced a flourishing practice of exorcism performed by experts on the matter.

Mesopotamian law always had a religious basis. The code of Hammurabi, best known of all legal formulations of that ancient culture, as shown in tablets, receives the code from the sun god *Shamash* who presides over justice. The code deals with both civil and criminal law. Much of the code has to do with polygamy and sex: rape, incest, and adultery.

Temples were common. Circular structures, some with rectangular antechambers, are believed to have been shrines. Large number of plaster female figurines seems to indicate that fertility cult flourished there since 4500 BC. Later, around 3500 BC, *mound top* (*ziggurat*) temple construction became common in Sumerian Babylonia. Some of the prevalent myths of the civilization relate to fertility rites, creation, the great flood, and the hereafter, etc.

- In the most ancient religions, the fertility cults revolve about the concept of sexual generation at all levels of life – vegetative to human. One of the oldest is the story of *Enki* and *Ea* reflecting the ancient thought that lies behind the sexual rites that were often included in temple worship. Religious prostitution was well-recognised practice performed by the Mesopotamians as the temple brothels are mentioned in law codes³⁶. The fertility rites apparently had a sacramental meaning. In his sexual ecstasy a devotee believed that he attained a mystical union with his deity that was not otherwise attainable. The sacrament he performed at the temple was believed to arouse the divine pair of deities so that they would continue to make fertile, the fields, flocks and herds, and human beings. Out of this sort of

³⁶ e.g. Statute 14. of the *Middle Assyrian Code*. In the Code of Hammurabi relates about a dozen statutes relating to temple prostitution. A sacred slave retained her property rights in her father's estate, and she was not regarded as being any sense inferior or degraded. Temple prostitution was considered as part of religious devotion and it did not make a *hierodule* (a slave or prostitute in the service of the temple) ineligible for marriage.

apprehension of the divine has come the concept of divine marriage, a courtship between the God and the human soul.

- Mesopotamia produced different stories of creation. The old Sumerian myth ascribes creation to *Anu*, *Enlil*, *Enki* and *Ninhursag*. These gods gave shape to the people, to vegetation³⁷, and to animals. Another myth is associated with Akkad of Babylonia that ascribes creation to *Marduk*, where he cuts *Tiamat's* (goddess of salt-water sea) body in two parts, one half he fixes in position as sky, and the other half he establishes as the flat earth resting on a subterranean sea. Similarly, the myth of the descent of *Ishtar*, the earth mother to the underworld in quest of her child or lover (*Tammuz*) is a poetic account of the spirit of vegetation, which dies every autumn and rises from the dead every spring. Its death and resurrection, however, are also symbolic of the continuing life-death-life cycle throughout the biological world.

- The story of great flood in Mesopotamia is noteworthy. Hebrews borrowed in a revised form. While in southern Mesopotamia floods were not unusual. One in particular was so destructive that record of it, with a theological interpretation, was preserved in Mesopotamian literature³⁸.

- The general view in Mesopotamian religion is that death is final end; there is no hope beyond. While, if and should one survives, the destiny is the dark domination of *Ershikigal* inside the earth, where all are accepted and from which no one is allowed to leave. Here the function of religion is to provide for the present life; it has nothing to offer after death.

The art of Mesopotamia has survived in the archaeological record from early societies (10th millennium BC) on to the Bronze Age cultures of the Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian empires. Widely considered to be the cradle of

³⁷ The Sumerian myth of *Enki* and *Ninhursag* relates that *Uttu* (the great-granddaughter) gave birth to plants.

³⁸ There are two versions of the myth. In the oldest version, when the gods had decided to destroy the mankind with a flood, a friendly deity, warns saintly *Ziusudra*, who builds himself a ship. In that way he survived flood and also saved the seed of mankind, as well as other forms of life. A latter and fuller version occurs in the Akkadian form of the epic of Gilgamesh. Here the hero is *Utnapishtim*, the friendly god is *Ea*, who presides over waters. Here, the *Utnapishtim's* ship with precious cargo survives. The hero and his wife, in the end, are granted an abode far away at the mouth of the rivers, where the sun shines; and they never die.

civilization, Mesopotamia brought significant cultural developments, including the oldest examples of writing. The art of Mesopotamia rivalled that of Ancient Egypt as the grandest, sophisticated and elaborate in western Eurasia from the 4th millennium BC until the Persian Achaemenid Empire conquered the region in the 6th century BC. The main emphasis was on various, very durable, forms of sculpture in stone and clay; and few paintings that have survived. Painting was mainly used for geometrical and plant-based decorative schemes, though most sculptures were also painted. Cylinder seals have survived in large numbers, many depicting complex and detailed scenes despite their small size.

Mesopotamian art survives in a number of forms: cylinder seals, relatively small figures in the round, and reliefs of various sizes, including cheap plaques of moulded pottery for the home, some religious and some apparently not. Favourite subjects include deities, alone or with worshippers, and animals in several types of scenes: repeated in rows, single, fighting each other or a human, confronted animals by themselves or flanking a human or god. Stone stelae, devotive offerings, or ones probably commemorating victories and showing feasts, are also found from temples, which unlike more official ones lack inscriptions that would explain them.

The Protoliterate or Uruk period existed from the prehistoric times to Early Bronze Age period (4000-3100 BC), following the Ubaid and succeeded by the Jemdet Nasr period (3100–2900 BC) saw the emergence of urban life in Mesopotamia, and the beginning of Sumerian civilization and also the first great creative age of Mesopotamian Art. Significant works from the southern cities in Sumer proper are complex multi-figured scenes of humans and animals. There are a number of stone or alabaster vessels carved in deep relief, and stone friezes of animals, both designed for temples, where the vessels held offerings. Cylinder seals are already complex and very finely executed and, as later, seem to have been an influence on larger works. Animals shown are often representations of the gods, another continuing feature of Mesopotamian art.

The Early Dynastic Period (2900–2350 BC) art is marked by an emphasis on figures of worshippers and priests making offerings, and social scenes of worship, war and court life. Copper becomes a significant medium for sculpture, probably despite most works having later being recycled for their metal. A group of 12 temple statues show gods, priests and donor worshippers at different sizes, but all in the same highly simplified style. All have greatly enlarged inlaid eyes, but the tallest figure, the main cult image depicting the local god, has enormous eyes that give it a

fierce power. Later in the period this geometric style was replaced we see fluid transitions and infinitely modulated surfaces".

Akkadian Empire was the first to control not only all Mesopotamia, but also other territories in the Levant, from about 2271 to 2154 BC. The Akkadians were not Sumerian, and spoke a Semitic language. In art there was a great emphasis on the kings of the dynasty, alongside much that continued earlier Sumerian art. In large works and small ones such as seals, the degree of realism was considerably increased,

Old Babylonian period (an interlude under the rule of the Kassites, and other periods) ended with the decisive advent of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911 BC), life was often unstable, and non-Sumerian invasions a recurring theme. During the period Babylon became a great city, which was often the seat of the dominant power. The period was not one of great artistic development, these invaders failing to bring new artistic impetus, and much religious art was rather self-consciously conservative, perhaps in a deliberate assertion of Sumerian values.

Gudea ruler of Lagash (reign cca. 2144 to 2124 BC) was a great patron of new temples early in the period, and an unprecedented beautifully executed 26 statues of him have survived. These ooze out a confident serenity.

An Assyrian artistic style distinct from that of Babylonian art, which was the dominant contemporary art in Mesopotamia, began to emerge around 1500 BC, well before their empire included Sumer, and lasted until the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC. The conquest of the whole of Mesopotamia and much surrounding territory by the Neo-Assyrians created a larger and wealthier state than the region had known before, and very grandiose art in palaces and public places, no doubt partly intended to match the splendour of the art of the neighbouring Egyptian empire. From around 879 BC the Assyrians developed a style of extremely large schemes of very finely detailed narrative low reliefs in stone or gypsum. The precisely delineated reliefs concern royal affairs, chiefly hunting and war making. Predominance is given to animal forms, particularly horses and lions, which are magnificently represented in great detail. Human figures are comparatively rigid and static but are also minutely detailed, as in triumphal scenes of sieges, battles, and individual combat.

Persia³⁹

The very name is derived from Fars⁴⁰, a small province in the Zagros Mountains of southwest of Iran whose capital was Persepolis. After Persia became a great power its kings transformed Persepolis into one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world. Aryan people are presumed to have penetrated from Turkestan into Iran around 1400 BC. Some of the Aryan tribes turned eastward and entered into India, while others continued westward into Asia Minor and Europe. In Iran, Aryan people first settled in Bactria region, then they took territories in the north central area and later the southern province Fars. Bactria is believed to have been the land that produced *Zoroaster*.

The economic life of Persia was primarily based on agriculture and commerce. Enjoying their strategic location people did participate in caravan trade between India, Turkestan, Persia, Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean lands. One of the caravan trails⁴¹ led from India through Khyber-Kabul-Bactria-Bukhara and Samarkand. Another highway went westward from Kabul-Rhagae-Ecbatana. From these cities of Media, routes went to Isfahan, Persepolis and Susa. Caravans made their way from Nineveh and Babylon to northern Mesopotamia and westward from Mesopotamia to Syrian cities of Palmyra, Antioch and Damascus; into Phoenician cities of Tyre, Byblos and Sidon; to the Hebrew cities of Samara and Jerusalem; and to the metropolises of Egypt.

³⁹ The current name of the country *Iran* is derived from the Avestan *airayana*, meaning Aryan.

⁴⁰ According to legend, king Achaemenes established the state of Fars in about 700 BC. About 550 BC, Cyrus the Great, ascended to power that greatly extended his empire to Israel and Judah, Asia Minor and Aegean, Babylon. In 525 BC, successor of Cyrus, Cambyses, conquered Egypt, Cyprus and Samos. Later Darius (521-486 BC) added Libya to the empire, but failed to win Scythian territories around Black and Caspian Seas, and defeat the Greeks at Marathon.

⁴¹ These caravan routes served economic as well as military purposes. From Ectabana and Rhagae on these routes the Median armies had good mobility in all directions.

The Persians worshiped god *Ahura Mazda* (اهورامزدا)⁴², and goddess *Anahita*. They also worshiped sun, moon earth, fire, water and winds⁴³. Since the nomadic ancient Aryans lived close to nature worshiped *Mithras* as god of light. The stars were his eyes as he looked down on the earth. He was an active, vigorous god, and stood for morality, truth, and loyalty.

In Persian tradition, Prophet *Zarathustra* (660-583 BC) enjoys a special place. He pleads for the privilege of seeing Ahura Mazda himself and taking counsel with him. Like many of great prophets he yearns to see his God face to face. In the same vein, the prophet refers to himself as Ahura Mazda's friend, pleading with the Wise Lord to reveal his secrets to *a friend such as I am*. Throughout, the *Gathas*, the poems he wrote, Zarathustra shows that he is vigorous, active and optimistic man who looks to a future in which all evils will be eliminated and happiness of the righteous will be complete and endless⁴⁴. His faith embodies monotheism, dualism, and eschatology, ethics being the dominant element in each of these categories in a naive pre-philosophical language. The basic theme that run through his poems is the struggle to overthrow the nature polytheism (represented by the *Daevas*) of ancient Persia.

Goddess *Anahita* was of considerable importance in late Zoroastrian pantheon. She was goddess of waters and women, as well as soldiers and heroes. Her worship was popular throughout the Persian Empire, and her statues were set up in temples around in Babylon, Susa, Ecbatana, Bactria, Damascus and Sardis.

Ancient Persian or Iranian art has one of the richest art heritages in world history and has been strong in many media including architecture, painting, pottery, calligraphy, sculpture etc. At different times, influences from the art of neighbouring

⁴² The strength of Zoroaster's prophetic message lay in his concept of God. He affirms that *Ahura Mazda* is the only God – a god of goodness, justice and morality. He is also referred as Heiman اهوریمن and in Modern Persian form of Angra Mainyu, and Hormzad هرمزد (Persian mythology) i.e. Persian form of Ahura Mazda.

⁴³ The reliability of the essentials of this report is confirmed and illuminated by the Indian *Rig Veda*, which reveals a strikingly similar picture of the religion of those Aryan tribes that entered into India through the Khyber Pass and conquered the north. Herodotus seems to have imposed these names on Persian deities. *Zeus* was no doubt substituted for *Ahura Mazda* and *Aphrodite* for *Anahita*.

⁴⁴ The general name for the sacred writings of the Zoroastrians is *Avesta*. *Avesta* is written in ancient Persian to be the revelations to Zarathustra by Ahura Mazda.

civilizations have been very important, and latterly Persian art gave and received major influences as part of the wider styles.

From the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC) for most of the time a large Iranian-speaking state has ruled over areas similar to the modern boundaries of Iran, and often much wider areas, where a process of cultural Persianization left enduring results even when ruler ship separated. The courts of successive dynasties have generally led the style of Persian art, and court-sponsored art has left many of the most impressive survivals.

In ancient times the surviving monuments of Persian art are notable for a tradition concentrating on the human figure (mostly male, and often royal) and animals.

Evidence of a painted-pottery civilization around Susa has been dated to 5000 BC. Susa was firmly within the Sumerian Uruk cultural sphere during the Uruk period. An imitation of the entire state apparatus of Uruk, with Sumerian motifs, and monumental architecture, is found at Susa. As such, the periodization of Susa corresponds to Uruk periods.

Shortly after Susa was first settled 6000 years ago, its inhabitants erected a temple on a monumental platform that rose over the flat surrounding landscape. The exceptional nature of the site is still recognizable today in the artistry of the ceramic vessels that were placed as offerings in a thousand or more graves near the base of the temple platform. Susa style was very much a product of the past and of influences from contemporary ceramic industries in the mountains of western Iran. The pottery is carefully made by hand. Although a slow wheel may have been employed, the asymmetry of the vessels and the irregularity of the drawing of encircling lines and bands indicate that most of the work was done freehand.

Cylinder seals, small figures of worshippers, gods and animals, shallow reliefs, and some large statues of rulers are also found. There are a small number of very fine gold vessels with relief figures. Lorestan bronzes, small cast objects decorated with bronze from the Early Iron Age have been found in large numbers in Lorestan Province of west-central Iran. They include a great number of ornaments, tools, weapons, horse-fittings and a smaller number of vessels including situlae (ancient funeral rite objects), those found in burials. They probably date to between about 1000 and 650 BC.

The bronzes represent the art of a nomadic people, for whom all possessions needed to be light and portable, and necessary objects such as weapons, horse-harness fittings, pins, cups and small fittings are highly decorated over their small

surface area. Representations of animals are common especially goats or sheep with large horns, and the forms and styles are distinctive and inventive.

Achaemenid art includes frieze reliefs, metalwork, and decoration of palaces, glazed brick masonry, fine craftsmanship, and gardening. Most survivals of court art are monumental sculptures. Although the Persians took artists, with their styles and techniques, from all corners of their empire, they produced not simply a combination of styles, but a synthesis of a new unique Persian style. Cyrus the Great in fact had an extensive ancient Iranian heritage behind him; the rich Achaemenid gold work, inscriptions suggest, which may have been a specialty of the Medes, was for instance in the tradition of earlier sites.

The large carved rock relief, typically placed high beside a road, and near a source of water, is a common medium in Persian art, mostly used to glorify the king and proclaim Persian control over the territory. The Behistun relief and inscription made around 500 BC for Darius the Great, is on a far grander scale, reflecting and proclaiming the power of the Achaemenid Empire.

Egypt

The culture and civilization of ancient Egypt, which rivalled that of Mesopotamia in importance and surpassed it in splendour, owed its very existence to the Nile, itself more magnificent than either the Tigris or Euphrates. The Egyptians were quite well aware of the deserts that walled them in rainless and cloudless sky, and hot and dusty winds rushed in out of southwest. But it was the Nile that they knew best and loved it most. It was their source of living, bringing them water and food and provided work. The great cataracts of Nile protected Egypt against invaders from Africa. The delta is a triangular area of fertile soil of great depths – perhaps one of the best farming region in the world. The very nature of the Nile was such as to arouse a sense of wonder, of awe, in the hearts of those ancient people. It was a vast stream of water coming from some mysterious source. To them, the river appeared to be charged and moved by some spirit, a god, who generously provided for the inhabitants of the valley. Thus the Nile became enshrined not only in their hearts, but also in their legends and myths, their religion. It became perhaps the most significant single element in the production of arts, sciences and philosophy.

The remains of Neolithic village along the borders of the Nile prove that humans had started to settle in this fertile area as early as 5000 BC; the village type of life shows that the people who lived there had already made considerable progress

beyond the nomads. The use of copper and beautiful pottery attests to the rapid advances of the Nile culture by 4000 BC. Boats made of papyrus plants converted the river into a highway, and hunting and fishing along it were facilitated; the exchange of produce developed between different regions; villages became more subject to attacks by marauders from other districts; and the foundation was laid for extensive conquests. Widely separated communities could now be wedded together by military power, and small states with orderly governments became possible for the first time.

Two powerful states eventually emerged, one in Upper Egypt and other in Lower Egypt. The former included communities between the first cataract and the delta; the latter was the delta itself. The kings of Upper Egypt wore tall, white pointed crowns and used lotus as their symbol; the rulers of Lower Egypt wore a diadem of red wickerwork, and papyrus plant was their symbol.

Menes, the king of Upper Egypt, in 3110 BC, founded a unified empire by conquering the Lower Egypt. He is credited with building Memphis as the new capital of the united country. It witnessed an extraordinary development of Egyptian culture, leaving monumental evidence – the great pyramids at Giza. About 2100 BC, with the decline and fall of the Old Kingdom at Memphis, power shifted back to the south. Thebes, became the new capital of the Pharaohs, and it remained dominant until 1000 BC, when the rulers moved their headquarters back to the delta, not only because of new commercial developments in the area but also the increasing dangers of military invasions by the Syrians, Mesopotamia and Mediterranean nations. The capital remained in the delta area during the period of decadence, when Egypt was conquered first by Assyria, and then Persia and later by Alexander the Great, and finally absorbed by Rome in 30 BC.

The Egyptians worshiped a multitude of gods⁴⁵; the actual number and diversity almost defy clear comprehension and presentation. Some were the gods of entire nation; others were local gods devoted to a particular region⁴⁶. This complexity

⁴⁵ If one wishes to indulge in paradox, it could be stressed that in the language of the land - Egypt, whose inhabitants Herodotus said were the most religious peoples, there was no equivalent to our word *religion*. The Egyptians undoubtedly had no need to forge such a concept, for the domain of the religious was in no way delimited and assigned to a precise place in their life; rather, it had some of the characteristics of what we call philosophy, morality and politics.

⁴⁶ The Egyptians evidently hardly ever deemed it necessary to establish and adhere to canonical texts. Egyptian religion was a religion of books but it was not the religion of the Book.

appears to result from the diverse ways in which the belief in different gods arose. Egyptian were no longer primitive by the time his or her recorded history began. However, one can hardly doubt that the veneration of animals must have been derived from a totemism brought by primitive tribes that settled in the Nile valley in prehistoric period. Many of the oldest monuments, inscriptions, pictures and sculptures testify to the place of animals, birds and insects⁴⁷ in Egyptian religion.

From one end of Egypt to other, access to temples and the conduct of the cult obeyed the same carefully codified norms, though, of course, the dates of festivals differed according to the deity who was worshiped. The unity of mental structure was in close conformity with the politico-economic structure, which was solidly crafted. Where differences can appear, it is in time. In fact, one must not be surprised when we compare the religious practices of the Old Kingdom to those attested in the Ptolemaic era; one finds they were not identical. Even in a culture that had been highly structured from the moment of its origin, there was an evolution over time.

Egyptian theology is characterized by confusing vagueness⁴⁸ with which, many deities are delineated and the popular syncretism that made possible the substitution, merging, and absorption of gods. These came about from changes in social and political life and mental outlook. For some deities, the source of their

Far from wanting to limit their theological reflection by stopping it once and for all and by declaring it untouchable and dogmatic they preferred to keep their texts open to reflection according to their method of association and accumulation; it was as though their approach to the divine drew ever greater strength from the multiplication of combinations, borrowing here and there to unite and compare the multiplicity of viewpoints.

⁴⁷ Herodotus gives an interesting report on the Egyptian veneration of animals. Bulls, he says, are sacred to the god *Apis*, cows are sacred to *Isis*, and pigs are considered unclean yet are sacrificed to *Isis* and *Osiris*. The ram is sacred to *Amon*. Certain animals are more sacred than others. For example, if an ibis or a hawk is killed the penalty is death. Cats and dogs are given burial in sacred cemeteries.

⁴⁸ The available sources are fragmentary, and some have been lost in their entirety. Those that remain are difficult to interpret. The sources are thus biased. Egyptian sources are written. In the area of religion, the oral tradition is certainly more important than generally acknowledged. Though cult and festival rites carried out in the temples are minutely described on papyrus or stone, one often knows myths by allusions to them. A brief notation was enough to call a myth in all its details to the mind of a literate person or a priest. There are also texts alluding to secrets regarding deities not to be divulged. One must thus imagine that those who knew these secrets passed them orally.

destination was their geographical or cosmic location and varied functions. *Pthah*, god of earth, was associated with Memphis above the delta. *Khnum*, was god of the cataract area; *Sobek*, the crocodile god, belonged to Faiyum; *Nut*, was the goddess, whose back supported the sky; *Geb*, was an earth deity. *Re*, was god of sun; so were at times *Atum*, *Aton*, *Osiris* and *Horus*. *Maat*, was the goddess of goodness, truth, justice; *Bes*, the goddess of household and childbirth; *Sekhmet*, was, the god of war and disease. These could be blended, however, so that *Thoth*, was at one and same time the god of Hermopolis, the moon, and wisdom. *Hathor*, goddess of Dendera, was also the goddess of the sky and love.

Yet out of this, rather complicated picture, emerge a group of nine gods: *Atum* - the creator, had two children – *Shu*, god of air, and *Tefnut*, goddess of moisture. This pair produced *Geb*, earth god and *Nut*, sky goddess, who became the parents of *Osiris* and his sister-wife *Isis*, forces of life and regeneration. *Geb* and *Nut* were also the parents of *Seth*, who was the destroyer of life, darkness, desert or evil in general, and *Nephtys* – a nymph double of *Isis*, who was protector of the dead.

In the later period *Ennead*, *Osiris* and *Isis* emerged as most important deities of Egypt. The myths in which they are protagonists gather together many of the typical elements of Egyptian religion. *Osiris* had two faces: the god of the dead, and god of the sun⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ According to popular myth, *Osiris* is the divine king of Egypt, with *Isis*, his sister-wife as queen. *Horus* is their son. *Seth*, the envious brother murders *Osiris* and seizes the throne. The sorrowing *Isis*, after many hardships, finds the body and revives her husband to go normally into the realm of the dead. A final judgement establishes his uprightness, and being made king of the underworld rewards him. *Horus*, in the meantime, bravely challenges his guilty uncle, overcomes him in combat, and himself takes the throne.

Some images in Hieroglyphs:



Belief in the hereafter with both rewards and punishments was one of the notable features of Egyptian religion. The belief appeared as early as the Middle Kingdom. The *Book of the Dead*, makes it clear that what a person faces in the hereafter is based largely on his moral character: honest, generous, and the like. The destiny of the King, in particular, was related to this idea. Final judgement was important belief⁵⁰. The power that this faith came to hold over the Egyptians is shown by the enormous energy and wealth they devoted to the construction of their temples and tombs, all of which, are oriented toward life beyond grave. This is evident from the grand pyramids, the underground mansions for the dead, and the temples.

Ancient Egyptian art is the painting, sculpture, architecture and other arts produced by the civilization of ancient Egypt in the lower Nile Valley from about 3000 BC to 30 AD. Ancient Egyptian art reached a high level in painting and sculpture, and was both highly stylized and symbolic. It was famously conservative, and Egyptian styles changed remarkably little over more than three thousand years. Much of the surviving art comes from tombs and monuments and thus there is an emphasis on life after death and the preservation of knowledge of the past. Egyptian art is famous for its distinctive figure convention, used for the main figures in both relief and painting. Very conventionalized portrait statues appear from as early as Dynasty II, before 2780 BC, and with the exception of the art of the Amarna period, and some other periods such as Dynasty XII, the idealized features of rulers.

Symbolism can be observed throughout Egyptian art and it played an important role in establishing a sense of order. The pharaoh's regalia, for example, represented



(Source: Britannica.com)

⁵⁰ Usually, *Anubis*, the jackal-headed god, leads the deceased by the hand into the judgement hall, where a pair of balanced scale is waiting. He then places the heart of the dead in one pan of the balance and *Maat*; a feather, in the other pan, represents justice. Standing by *Thoth*, the ibis headed god, with a tablet and stylus ready to record the judgement. Standing by may be *Horus*, to lead those who pass. *Amemit*, waits for the failing to devour the deceased.

his power to maintain order. Animals were also highly symbolic figures in Egyptian art. Some colours were expressive: blue or gold indicated divinity because of its unnatural appearance and association with precious materials, and the use of black for royal figures expressed the fertility of the Nile from which Egypt was born.

Thanks to the extremely dry climate, many ancient Egyptian paintings have survived in tombs, and sometimes temples. The paintings were often made with the intent of making a pleasant afterlife for the deceased. The themes included journey through the after world or protective deities introducing the deceased to the gods of the underworld (such as *Osiris*). Some tomb paintings show activities that the deceased were involved in when they were alive and wished to carry on doing for eternity.

Egyptian paintings are painted in such a way as to show a profile view and a side view of the animal or person at the same time. Their main colours were red, blue, green, gold, black and yellow. Paintings showing scenes of hunting and fishing had lively close-up landscape backgrounds of reeds and water, but in general Egyptian painting did not develop a sense of depth, and neither landscapes nor a sense of visual perspective are found, the figures rather vary in size with their importance rather than their location.

The monumental sculpture of ancient Egypt's temples and tombs is world-famous, but refined and delicate small works exist in much greater numbers. Egyptian pharaohs were always regarded as gods, but other deities are much less common in large statues, except when they represent the pharaoh as another deity; however, the other deities are frequently shown in paintings and reliefs. For example, the famous row of four colossal statues outside the temple at Abu Simbel each of Ramses II, Great Sphinx of Giza is exceptionally large. Massive statues were built to represent gods and pharaohs and their queens, usually for open areas in or outside temples.

However, temples in Amarna, did not follow traditional Egyptian customs and were open, without ceilings, and had no closing doors. In the generation after Akhenaton's death, artists reverted to their old styles. In Ptolemaic period in ancient Egyptian city of Heracleum include a 4th century BC, unusually sensual, detailed and feministic (as opposed to deified) depiction of *Isis* marking a combination of Egyptian and Hellenistic forms beginning around the time of Egypt's conquest by Alexander the Great in 332-331 BC. However, this was untypical of Ptolemaic sculpture, which generally avoided mixing Egyptian styles with the general Greek style, which was used in the court art of the Ptolemaic Dynasty. Marble was

extensively used in court art. Ptolemaic royal portraits are generalized and idealized, with little concern for achieving an individual portrait. One Egyptian trait was to give much greater prominence to the queens than in other successor dynasties to Alexander, with the royal couple often shown as a pair. This predated the 2nd century.

By Dynasty IV (2680–2565 BC) at the latest the idea of the *ka* statue was firmly established, and were placed in tombs as a resting place for the *ka* portion of the soul. Early tombs also contained small models of the slaves, animals, buildings and objects such as boats necessary for the deceased to continue his lifestyle in the after world. There were also large numbers of small-carved objects, from figures of the gods to toys and carved utensils.

Very strict conventions were followed while crafting statues and specific rules governed appearance of every Egyptian god. For example, the sky god *Horus* was essentially to be represented with a falcon's head, the god of funeral rites *Anubis* was to be always shown with a jackal's head.

Egyptian glazed ceramics, made from sand and chemicals, produced relatively cheap and very attractive small objects in a variety of colours, and was used for a variety of types of objects including jewellery. Ancient glasswork and highly decorated small jars for perfume and other liquids are often found as grave goods. Ancient Egyptians used carved small pieces of vases, amulets, images of deities, of animals and several other objects. Ancient Egyptian artists also discovered the art of covering pottery with enamel. Different types of New Kingdom pottery items (1400 BC) were deposited in tombs of the dead, representing interior parts of the body, which were removed before embalming. A large number of smaller objects in enamel pottery were also deposited with the dead.

Papyrus was used by ancient Egyptians for texts to illustrate all dimensions of ancient Egyptian life and include literary, religious, historical and administrative documents. The *Book of Dead* was written on papyrus.

India

For millenniums, India was the largest part of a subcontinent that included Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. Since, this northern part of the subcontinent is watered by three river systems: Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra, its highly fertile land always had concentration of population that depended primarily on agriculture. Ethnically, three major groups of people have long inhabited these lands: Aryans in the western and northern plains, Dravidian in the south, and Indo-Mongolic people in the mountainous and eastern region of Assam and Myanmar. Ancient inhabitants of India, probably spoke in proto-Dravidian languages. Apparently, the Aryan invaders brought Indo-Iranian languages with them, and by incorporating borrowed *cerebrals* from proto-Dravidian languages formed the language of the Vedas⁵² – *Sanskrit*. Sanskrit cultural tradition has been the foundation stone of Indian culture, and the Vedic religion has been the foundation of this great tradition. From the Vedic religion have sprung India's dominant philosophies and religions and much of its significant literature and art.

Prehistoric research suggests that Palaeolithic humans have occupied this land. Based on archaeological evidence it is suggested that by fourth millennium BC, some of the Indo-Iranian people, moved eastward to Baluchistan and in third millennium BC into northwest India to occupy the valley of Indus River and its tributaries. Rapidly an amazing civilization called Indus Valley⁵³ or Harappan (culture as great

⁵² The *Sanskrit* language attained a fixed form around 500 BC. Alongside Sanskrit there were spoken dialects. According to one survey, it is claimed that, today, some 180 different languages and over 544 dialects are spoken in the subcontinent.

⁵³ The Indus Valley civilization flourished during 2500-1500 BC. It was a prosperous and creative culture whose boundaries extended from Gujarat in western India to the banks of Yamuna at the border of Panjab. The cause of its decline is uncertain, but it is likely that it was destroyed by the incursions of Aryan invaders around 1500 BC. Early hymns of the *Rig Veda* refer to battles against the enemy (Harappans, no doubt): buildings burned, inhabitants slaughtered and treasures carried away. Probably some of the survivors of the Indus valley culture escaped to the south. Not only that there must have been intimate contacts, perhaps even intermarriages between Aryans and Harappans might have also took place.

as that of Mesopotamia and Egypt), developed and flourished from 2500 to 1500 BC⁵⁴.

Historians seem to agree on the chronological sequence that begins around 3100 BC. Historical periods are defined as that of: The Flood and *Manu Vaivasvata* cca. 3100 BC; *Yayati* (cca. 3000-2750 BC); *Mandhatri* (cca. 2750-2550 BC); *Parusrama* (cca. 2550-2350 BC); *Ramchandra* (cca. 2350-1950 BC); *Krishna* (cca. 1950-1400 BC); and The *Mahābhārata* (cca. 1400 BC)⁵⁵. By the time of *Mahābhārata*, Aryan culture had spread through plains of Ganges and Yamuna rivers. The social organization revealed in the epic, indicates a change from the old tribal type of government to a more developed society of numerous little kingdoms. The significant feature of the society, that remains alive even today, was the division of society into four classes (*varnas*).

The incursions of Aryan invaders are said to be around 1500 BC. The *Rig Veda* speaks of battles against the enemy and destruction inflicted upon. The period of two great Indian epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* is estimated between 900-500 BC, the time of full affirmation of Aryan's culture throughout the Indian plains. Persian influence on Indian culture was a lasting one. It is through Persians that the Greeks knew India. Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) conquered Bactria (Afghanistan) and then proceeded across the Indus River but was forced to retreat because of a tough resistance. However, more significant is the history and culture of India that followed, reaching its zenith in the early 321 BC and lasted unto AD 550, what has come to be called as the golden age of Ancient India.

From its earliest days India was the seat of a great civilization and a hot bed of different religions, faiths and beliefs. Many of them were born in India and transmitted to the other parts of the world. It also embraced and integrated in its own the foreign religions. Today, perhaps it is the only land in the world, where practically all the major religions of the world are practised. Religions that originated in India are: The Vedic religion, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and later Sikhism in late 15th century. However, followers of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam had lived in India for many centuries. All these religions have flourished and nurtured their original ideas but have influenced each other greatly.

⁵⁴ Heretofore, it had been thought that the invading Aryans had encountered and overcome a primitive population. Now the opposite view had to be accepted: The Aryans were the barbarians and the Harappans the civilized people.

⁵⁵ See chapter by A. D: Paluskar in R. C. Majumdar et al. ((1950) *Advanced History of India*, Vol. I-3, London: Macmillan.

The Vedic Religion: Since the arrival of Aryans in India, male cosmic gods were the main deities. Linguistic expertise shows that the word for 'god' in *Rig Veda* (earlier Indian Aryan text) is *deva* (देव); in *Avesta* (in earlier Iranian text) it is also *daeua*, both being cognate with Latin *Deus*. The original great sky and father god of the Indo-Europeans turns up in the *Rig Veda* as *Dyaus-pitar* in the Greek and Latin classics as *Zeus* (Διός) and *Ju-pitar*. Among the subjects of worship were the deities Sun (*Surya*), Fire (*Agni*), Thunder/Storm (*Indra*), and other personifications of nature. The closest kinship between *Avestan* and *Rig Vedic* deities is the evidence of common Indo-Iranian religion before this group divided.

The great sky god of the Aryan Indo-Iranians was *Varuna* who was associated with both the cosmic and the moral order. Other common Vedic deities (in Sanskrit/Persian) were *Mitra* (Mithra), *Indra* (Indra), *Nasatyas* or *Ashvins* (Nanhaithya), *Vayu* (Vayu), *Soma* (Haoma), and *Yama* (Yima). In the *Rig Veda*, *Varuna* and *Mitra* are among the deities called *asura* (Ahura) and others as *deva* (Daeva).

The Vedic religion is to be distinguished from Hinduism: the former characterized by its emphasis on the ritual of sacrifices, the latter by devotion to particular deities. Although Hinduism may have been the dominant religion of the masses from earliest times, our only sources of evidence of the religion are the Vedas (composed during 1500-600 BC), which were in the charge of priestly class who served the aristocracy.

The general Vedic view of life after death was that those who performed rites during the lifetime and had not offended *Varuna* beyond forgiveness went to heaven of Yama, the delightful *Heaven of Fathers* and feasted joyfully forever. Evil men went to the *House of Clay*. In book X of the *Rig Veda* we find the beginnings of the developing philosophical thought, arriving at climax in the *Upaniṣadas*. Monotheism is shown in Hymn 121, where *Prajapati* the lord of creatures is portrayed as creator of all things and one God above all the deities. Monism is brought out in the *Puruṣa Hymn* (90) and *Hymn of Creation* (129).

Vedic religion was primarily one of the sacrifices to the deities, in order to obtain favour from them. Sacrifices were of two types: food and Soma (vine) offerings. Animal sacrifices and fire cults were an important part of the ritual.

Hinduism: has concisely been defined as *a complex of culture, religious practices, myth, and belief that are felt to be a continuation of Vedic tradition*⁵⁶, as it holds sacred the

⁵⁶ JAB Van Buitenen, in his, 'Sanskrit and Indo-Aryan', University of Chicago, 1963, provides this definition.

four Vedas and the Vedic pantheon. It differs from that tradition, however, in its emphasis on meditation and release from this world and also in its devotional worship of deities both in home and temples. Hinduism, with loving devotion to *Shiva* or *Vishnu* deities, had replaced the sacrificial ritual. Worship of *Shiva* and the mother goddess⁵⁷ had probably continued at the popular level since the time of Indus Valley Civilization, but it was after era of the early *Upaniṣadas* that the orthodox Brahmins accepted these deities. The *smṛiti* literature of Brahmins – the epics *Mahābhārata*, and *Rāmāyana*, and the *Purāṇas* – absorbed these deities and *Vaiṣṇav* (from *Vishnu*) gods into the religion known as Hinduism.

The doctrine of *ashramas*, that adapted the new *Upaniṣadic* ideal – a life of renunciation for the purpose of liberation (*moksha*) – to the more traditional Vedic way of life, is a good example of the way that Brahmins accepted new ideas and absorbed them into a continuing tradition.

The hierarchy of values, in relation to the aims of human life, gives a humane, dignified, and an ordered place to man's major desires, while it points to a final aim of high spirituality, to be achieved by those who desire this supreme good. Hinduism has several paths (*margas*): path of knowledge (*jnan marg*), way of action (*karma marg*), way of devotion (*bhakti marg*), and path of penance (*yoga marg*).

A significant feature of the early Hinduism is the division of society into four classes (*varna*) that was expounded around 900 BC, and fully developed by 400 BC. The word *varna* (colour), perhaps first became associated with class when the invading Aryans used colour as a distinguishing feature to separate themselves from the indigenous people. It was difficult to rise to a higher class but was easy enough

⁵⁷ The *Devi Sukta* of the *Rig Veda* (10.125.1 through 10.125.8), is among the most studied hymns declaring that the ultimate metaphysical *Brahma* is a *Devi*:

"I (*Devi*) have created all worlds at my will, without being urged by any higher being, and I dwell within them".

"I permeate the earth and heaven, all created entities with my greatness, and dwell in them as eternal and infinite consciousness".

—*Devi Sukta, Rig Veda 10.125.8*

Along with *Lakshmi* (goddess of wealth and prosperity) and *Saraswati* (goddess of knowledge and learning), she forms the trinity of Hindu goddesses. *Parvati* is the wife of *Shiva* - the destroyer, recycler and regenerator of universe and all life. She is the mother of Hindu gods *Ganesha* and *Karttikeya*.

to fall. It was an occupational distribution of society based on purity. It was only after AD 700 that we find the caste (*jati*) beginning to emerge. It had as its characteristics: endogamy (marriage permitted within group); commensality (food to be received from and eaten in company with the group or higher group); and occupational exclusiveness, which made it a powerful institution. On a positive side, it provided each individual a place and definite status in the community and has prevented conflicts and tensions caused by the competitiveness that has characterized other societies.

The rituals that mark the significant stages in the life cycle of the Hindus are followed with appropriate ceremonies – sacraments (*samskara*). Practically all ceremonies i.e. birth, adulthood, marriage, death, and post-natal ceremonies are performed in presence of a Brahmin priest at altar of fire with food offerings to the deities.

Jainism: Jain religion seems to have its origins in the old Indus Valley Civilization. It gained strength during 322-183 BC. *Jains*, the followers of the faith, believe that there is no supreme God and the world operates with its own innate laws. They further believe that the world is everlasting and the *Avsarpini* (downward) and *Utsarpini* (upward) cycles keep on repeating themselves. The laws that are inherent in the cosmos control all objects and processes in nature, including the living. Thus from doctrinal point of view it is atheistic. The entire doctrinal system of Jainism is contained in seven basic principles (*tatvas*): soul (*jiva*); matter (*ajiva*); influx of action – karma (*asrava*); bondage (*bandha*); stoppage of the influx of action (*samvara*); subtle body (*nirjara*); and liberation (*moksha*). The Jains observe the Hindu domestic rites of birth, marriage and death; follow the caste system; and have temples with the idols of their twenty-four Tirthankars (teachers/prophets) that are worshiped by them. The last Tirthankar was Mahavira (540-468 BC).

The three main steps in the *Samovar* process are called *Three Jewels* (*Triratna*) of Jainism. These are faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. These three jewels centre around *Five Great Vows* – *Mahavrata*. These being Non-injury to all forms of life (*Ahimsa*); Truthfulness; Non-stealing; Chastity; and Abstinence from all attachment to sense object. Other requirements essential for *Samovar* are meditation in yoga posture; ascetic practices such as long fasts; internal austerities such as penance and confession; and attainment of serenity, purity, greedlessness, and perfect conduct.

Buddhism was born in India in the sixth century BC. It spread outside India, and became the principal religion of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos,

China, Japan, and Mongolia. Vedism and Jainism had already existed in India at the time when Gautama Buddha – Prince Siddhartha (560-480 BC) preached, thus must have had their influence upon him.

In the times of Gautama Buddha, the Vedic deities were already accepted and Upaniṣadas had become the philosophical study of the higher casts. Although Buddha's teachings and Vedism differed, they nevertheless shared some beliefs. Gautama Buddha assumed the basic Hindu doctrine of rebirth, but interpreted as the residual effects of the previous life into the new body, and the continuity of the same self⁵⁸. But the indefinite transmission of self – *Nirvāṇā*, was basic for Buddha, who also accepted the principle of action. However, his attitude towards the inexorable law of *karma* was an optimistic one.

Gautama wanted to eliminate the metaphysics of and sacredity of Vedism. This he did: First, by denying the reality of soul and rejected the monism that views changeable phenomena as appearances of the unchanging 'absolute'. A unique emphasis of Buddha was his insistence on the impermanence of all things. He refused a metaphysical Being beyond the changeable process. He confined himself to a programme of personal enlightenment. Second, by offering a philosophy and practical method of *Four Noble Truths* to overcome the rebirth before reaching emancipation (*Nirvāṇā*) that could be achieved in the present life. Third, by devising a programme, including the monastic, made the religion open to men of all castes.

The Four Noble Truths as preached in by Gautama were: (1) suffering (*dukkha*) the sources of that being: birth, sickness, old age, death, separation from what one loves, desire for what one is unable to get, and bondage to what one dislikes; (2) desire (*tanha*) that causes suffering; (3) existence of a way to eliminate suffering; and (4) The *eightfold path* itself. These eight elements are: right knowledge, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right efforts, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Buddhist scriptures the *Sutras* were not written until sometimes in the first century AD, when Gautama had already been elevated to divine status. For four centuries the tradition of the life and teaching of the founder had been transmitted orally.

⁵⁸ One problem that puzzles students of Buddhism is how Buddha can repudiate the reality of soul while still accepting the doctrine of rebirth. Is not that which is reborn the antecedent self? Buddha's reply is that what passes on from the old to the new body is not the soul but the *karmic* matter.

In mythological and legendary context there are many Buddha⁵⁹, they all reveal the same truth as taught by Gautama. Buddhists believe that the *Truth* deteriorates in cycles of time. When it is at the lowest ebb, a Buddha arrives in the world to revive it.

The doctrine of no self (*anatta*) is fundamental in Gautama's thought. As long as one holds the view of the self – making it an object of craving no enlightenment is possible, and hence one will continue to be reborn. Gautama was aware of the difficulty of explaining no self, partly because he still accepted the doctrine of rebirth (*samsara*) and because the belief in self (*ātman*) is a Hindu heritage. But since Buddhist salvation required the negation of self, it was imperative for him to explain why self is non-existent. This resulted in his doctrine of five aggregates in order to explain the unreality of the self. Man, for Gautama, is composed of five aggregates: body, feelings, perceptions, dispositions, and consciousness. Gautama believed that what man ordinarily calls *self*, *ego*, or *personality* is nothing more than the combination these five aggregates that change from moment to moment, there being no permanent entity lying behind them.

There can be no doubt that originally the only objective of Buddha's *dharma* was to show to the mankind the way to salvation i.e. *nirvāṇa*. Gautama Buddha did not accept the concept of an eternal soul (*ātman*) nor did he approve of ascetic practices advocated by Mahavīra. The Buddhist concept of universe may best be described as the concept of 'constant and continuous processes governed by unchangeable laws in short *dharma*.

There exists, however, no permanent substance nor eternal soul nor an almighty god nor anything else, which could escape from the law of impermanence. Again, from this impermanence follows that everything is subject to the law of suffering. Since, there is no eternal *self*, we must realise three basic characteristics viz. suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (*aniccata*) and being not the *self* (*anattata*). It is only with the

⁵⁹ The term Buddha (*The Enlightened One*) was used in early Buddhism to being of a certain type – the number of such beings varies, according to different schools – who attained enlightenment after numberless rebirths through which they progressed towards Buddhahood. Because of the infinite number of years required for making a Buddha and because of aspirant's austere preparation for the final triumph his arrival is an event of cosmic significance. A Buddha was called *Bodhisattva* during the previous lives, beginning with the time when he took a vow to be a Buddha. Gautama was *Bodhisattva* in his previous lives.

realization of this true nature of the universe that we may escape from the endless cycle of rebirth or *samsara* and may attain *nirvāṇa*.

The early Buddhist society was conceived as a strictly non-political religious movement. Any entanglement of *sangha*⁶⁰ (association of blessed ones) in worldly affairs would have contravened the main goal of the religious life itself i.e. reaching *nirvāṇa*. Gautama Buddha gave instruction to kings that they should practice righteousness and should observe peace. The principle of non-violation of all beings (*ahimsa*) must be recognised as a superior principle of ethics, in spheres of life inclusive of political and communal life.

Emperor Aśoka was the first Indian ruler to elaborate a well-defined religious policy in great Indian Empire. It was during his reign that Buddhism has emerged as a leading spiritual force under the protection a great political authority. Aśoka, though personally a follower of Buddhism did not make it a state religion. It is visible from the exactly dated written edicts and writings that Aśoka did not propagate Buddhism, but an understanding of *dharma*. *Ahimsa* was declared as an ethical principle binding for the individual citizen as well for the political power. The king no longer needed victories (*digvijaya*) by force, but the victory of *dharma* – the principles of morality, which is to replace the power struggle as it was provided by/for secular political theory. The king, within his empire, accepts full responsibility of ruler and state for the well-being of all his subjects. Aśoka's rule, as described in his inscriptions, may be characterized as the first welfare state in history, as building hospitals and many other institutions to assume social responsibilities for welfare and relief of the people, were declared to be the main task of the ruler. Soon after Aśoka, Buddhism became a state religion in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Laos.

The political teachings of traditional Buddhism were not handed down in compendium of statecraft like *The Arthaśāstra*⁶¹. The principle of divine kingship was dominant in Hindu India and Nepal. Buddhism propagated the concept of *chakravartin*, i.e. there was a golden age in the past and that, in the cyclical evolution

⁶⁰ *Sangha* a body of monks is supposed to be established in the fifth century BC by Gautama Buddha himself.

⁶¹ A 15 book text with 13 appendices (See L. Rangrajan, 1993) that covers numerous topics viz., the King, code of law, foreign policy, secret and occult practices and so on, was written by the classical India's greatest mind – the famous Indian strategist, Kautilya, around 321 BC. A significant part of the compendium has to do with the science of economics and statecraft.

of the world, and that there will be golden age in the future. Chakravartin has become the official title of Buddhist kings in Khmer kingdom, and Thailand. However, Aśoka remains the model king.

Any worthwhile cultural pattern attaches great importance to the dynamism and vitality of social, political and economic growth. Among the early cultures, the Greek and Roman cultural systems stood in addition, for the development of the rational, ethical and aesthetic faculties in man. In India, spirituality has been the dominant strain in her culture. Ancient Indian culture stood for an infinite variety of symbols and rituals.

The fine arts were valued in ancient India primarily for their capacity to reveal something of the beauty and sublimity of the Divine. Perhaps, India is the only country with the largest and most diverse mixture of tradition and culture. The nation is so enticing where the exotic monuments and enchanting destinations speak volumes about the tradition and culture of Indian people. India is home to many of the finest cultural symbols of the world, which includes temples, forts, performing arts, classical dances, sculptures, paintings, architecture, literature etc.

The culture of India is one of the oldest in the world, which is rich and diverse. Indian culture was moulded throughout various eras of history. It is a medley of amazing diversities and startling contradictions, but above all, it represents the multifaceted aspects of India as a whole. India is the birthplace of renowned religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism, which had a strong prevalence and influence not only over India, but also the whole world.

Indian culture has a long and continuous history extending over 5000 years. The country has managed to preserve its culture and traditions through the ages, all the while absorbing customs, traditions and ideas from both invaders and immigrants. Many cultural practices, languages, customs and dances are examples of this comingling over centuries. Thus, Indian culture is a composite mixture of varying styles and influences. Rare is a country in the world that has such an ancient and diverse culture as India. India's cultural history of several thousand years shows that the subtle but strong thread of unity which runs through the infinite multiplicity of her life, was not woven by stress or pressure of power groups, but the vision of seers, the vigil of saints, the speculation of philosophers and the imagination of poets and artists, and that these are the only means which can be used to make this national unity wider, stronger, and more lasting.

The most outstanding feature that has made Hindu culture a living force is the tradition of tolerance. Indian culture is primarily and fundamentally religious. The

religious note generally permeates all the intellectual and artistic creations of the Hindus. Hinduism believes in *universal* toleration and accepts all religions as true. The Hindu mind is all embracing. This is seen in the word *manava dharma* or *manava samskriti* or human culture, which the Hindus gave to their culture. Indian culture is comprehensive and suits the needs of everyone, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. It has universal appeal and makes room for all. It has the modesty to admit the propriety of other points of view.

From the earliest times, India followed a policy of *live and let live*. She was not averse to contact with foreign cultures. In fact, it is her contacts with the outside elements that have added to the richness and variety of her culture. Besides the earliest races like the Negritos, Proto-Austroloids, Dravideans and Aryans, who have contributed a good deal to her composite culture, India saw the advent of many foreign hordes like the Indo-Greeks, the Scythians or the *Sakas*, the *Pahlavas* or the *Parthians*, the *Kushans*, the Huns, the *Gujars* and others from the second century BC. They all were welcomed and absorbed in its best elements of culture. India also gave shelter to the Jews and the Zoroastrians who were forced to leave their lands. They still live in India today quite in harmony with other communities by pursuing their avocations without any let or hindrance.

Another characteristic feature of Indian culture is its harmony with nature. Indian culture is vibrant due its incredible understanding of the nature of man and his relationship with other beings in the universe. The association of man with the bio-diversity is indicative of a healthy attitude towards nature. The same holds true of mountains and rivers, which are treated in a higher pedestal in Indian life. The influence of the majestic Himalayas in shaping the life of Indians is worth mentioning. Many holy places are situated in the mountains. The rivers are also considered sacred. On the banks of the sacred rivers numerous religious congregations and celebrations are held drawing hordes of pilgrims participating with lot of enthusiasm and devotion. Even trees occupy a significant place in the religious life of Indians (e.g. the Buddha tree under which Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment is worshipped and treated with awe and respect). The practice of *totemism* was prevalent in India.

The essence of Indian culture is assimilated by many factors outside the ambit of Sanskrit language, literature and records. This culture has a fundamental unity. In spite of different languages, customs and political disunity, a uniform cultural stamp was printed upon the literature and thought of all the different units of India. There has been a basic unity of literary ideas, philosophy, conventions and outlook upon

life throughout the country. The cultural unity and homogeneity is also reflected in the social ceremonies and the religious rites, festivals and modes of life, which are the same in both, the north and the south. The sanctity of the family, the rules of the castes, the *sanskars*, the rite of cremating a dead body, the cleanliness of kitchen, etc., are common to all the communities and sects.

India's national culture consists of two elements: the common temperament and outlook, which constitutes the Indian mind and the intellectual influences of various movements and cultures, which have been incorporated harmoniously with the national mind. Amongst these are included cultures that existed in India in the prehistoric period, those with which the country had a temporary contact, those which came from outside and made India their home, and lastly the revolutionary intellectual movements which developed in the country itself from time to time. From time immemorial, agriculture has been the main occupation of the people in India. Under the influence of the physical features and forces, India's economic life developed on an agricultural pattern and this had a marked influence on the shaping of her culture as a whole. It stressed the values of peace and constructive activity more emphatically than those of wars and destruction. Manifestations of this spirit can be met throughout the history of Indian culture. The influence of climate and economic resources on the material aspects of culture, i.e. food, dress, modes of living, etc., is too obvious to need any discussion. No one would deny the fact that the material aspect of Indian culture is also moulded on the pattern of its physical and economic environment.

Thought has always had a high place in the scale of values in India's cultural history. But, it was not purely abstract or speculative but emotional thought, i.e., not a mere conception of the universe but its direct intuitive apprehension in which the thinker finds himself steeped in love and reverence for the object of this thought. Such thinking is more religious than philosophical. That is why religious philosophy has always occupied a central place in India's cultural life.

About a thousand years after the beginning of the ancient period, a national culture was for the first time established in India. This was the Vedic Hindu culture, which came into being as a result of the interplay of the Vedic Aryan, and the pre-Aryan cultures. After some time, there was a reaction against certain aspects of this culture and Buddhism formed the basis of the new national culture. Although Buddhism had a deep influence over Indian mind, the culture based on it did not last as the national culture for any length of time. Its decay was followed by the rise of a new Hindu culture, which was again the result of harmonizing many conflicting

tendencies in the cultural life of the country. To distinguish it from the earlier Vedic Hindu culture, it may be called the *Puranic* culture. At the end of the ancient period, long before the advent of the Muslims, the cultural life of India had again become disorganized.

Art is a very precious heritage in the culture of a people. It is more so in India, where the story of art is as old as the history of the human race - a panorama of five thousand years. The essential quality of Indian art is its preoccupation with things of the spirit. Art in India did not aim at objective presentation of the human or social facets of life. It was primarily the fruit of the artist's creative meditation and effort to project symbols of divine reality as conceived and understood by the collective consciousness of the people as a whole. It is a vast, unending social and religious endeavour of devotees to depict the forms of the gods and goddesses they worshipped.

Understanding the real significance of Indian art requires patience to go to the length and breadth and savour deep of the symbolic meanings that make up a world of their own. Just as Indian religion does not yield its secret to one who only skims the surface, so is with its mysterious, secretive essence of art of India. The essential truth in the art of India is the tribute to the abstract and un-manifest power behind the material world, the primeval source of all things. The Indus Valley people were prolific in the arts of house building, stone and clay statuary, bronze-casting, making of ornaments of gold and silver, and cutting of beads in various semi-precious stones like agate, carnelian, chalcedony, ivory-carving and weaving. The beautiful objects of domestic use that have been unearthed reflect the refined taste of their makers.

The symbolism of Indian art attained its highest expression in Buddhist and Vedic art. The tradition of folk art was supplemented in the *Mauryan* period by a court art of great vitality and technical competence. Mauryan art is notable for the bewildering variety of its creations – there are pillars, railings, parasols, capitals, animal and human sculptures and several other motifs. It was during the Sunga age (185-75 BC) that sculpture and architecture witnessed a new efflorescence. Art was developed at many centres. A similar art movement flowered during the Kushana period (30-375 AD) and Mathura emerged as the new centre of art. During the period of the Kushana emperors an exceedingly active school of sculpture and architecture flourished in Gandhara, that is, from Taxila to the Swat Valley.

During the Saka-Satavahana period (BC 7-2 AD), an aesthetic movement of great magnitude expressed itself in the form of several monumental stupas loaded with sculptures and bas-reliefs of exquisite beauty. There was a grand upsurge of the

national art during the golden age of the Gupta emperors (320-550 AD). Gupta art is beautiful in both its outer form and its inner inspiration. Beauty and virtue served as the ideals of the age. Both the sculpture and architecture of the *Kailash* temple at *Ellora* bear testimony to the creative spirit. The Pallavas (275-897 AD) were great patrons of art, especially cave and temple architecture.

Indian painting too has a history of over two thousand years and presents a comprehensive record of the religious and emotional life of the people. The art of painting was widely cultivated in the Gupta period and is best known through the paintings surviving in the *Ajanta* and *Bagh* Caves. The artist in the Indian tradition had long been exploring man's inner experiences and his creative energies. The aesthetic enjoyment in the Indian tradition was based on, and aimed at, an art experience.

Ancient India understood that art form change according to time and place, and according to the period of history and region. It also understood that there should be no reproduction of nature except as seen through *intuitive absorption of trance*. Art in India has been intimately concerned with the experience of the beautiful. It is said to release the flow of creative energies in a person's being. It constitutes the core of the aesthetic state, which vitalizes the individual consciousness of man. An artist's work is an explosion of the human spirit-revealing beauty and bliss.

China

China is bordered by Himalayas on the west, Korea and Pacific Ocean on the east, Mongolia and Siberia on the north, and Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand on the south. The rivers of China have their source in central Asia and flow eastward. In the plain that lies between the mountain ranges that stretch from southwest to northwest, and south to northeast, where the population is concentrated. From the beginning of its history, Chinese population had depended upon agriculture. Since farmers traditionally depend upon the forces of nature, Chinese have always given much attention to these forces. Out of this dependence upon the forces of nature came some germinal ideas of the Chinese religion and cosmology, such as the viewing the earth as a fertility deity to whom, sacrifices must be offered. A chief attribute of the Ruler above (上帝 - *Shang Ti*), the ancestor deity, is the power to assure good crops. A persisting cosmological notion was that agriculture and human

affairs depend upon the harmony of natural forces (heaven, earth, humans), and the interplay of passive (陰, *Yin*) and active (陽, *Yang*) forces of the cosmos⁶².

Since, Chinese civilization arose in the Yellow River Valley, water control for the benefit of farming has been a major task of the government from early times. In order to prevent flooding, the state had to conscript masses by means of coercion, to work on drainage and irrigation. The origin of bureaucratic government in China may be traced back to the irrigation system in ancient times⁶³.

The traditional history of China began at the turn of second millennium BC. During the first several centuries the centre of China was present Shansi province, and the country was composed of a group of city-states. This is known as Hsia dynasty (1994-1751 BC). During this period bronze weapons and written symbols were in use, agriculture and cultivation of silk worms were adopted, and the initial phases of civilization began.

The actual history of China begins with Shang dynasty (1751-1112 BC), for it was dominant over city-states. The long Chou dynasty (1111-221 BC) saw the rise, growth and decline of feudalism. It also witnessed the laying of philosophical foundations of Chinese civilization. The founders of the dynasty introduced the concept of virtuous king, who makes the welfare of his subjects his chief duty. In the Middle Chou period (722-481 BC), the lords became semi-independent rulers who gave

⁶² In Chinese philosophy of 陰陽 *yīnyáng* (☯) describes as to how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. Many tangible dualities (e.g. light and dark, fire and water, expanding and contracting) are thought of as physical manifestations of the duality symbolized by yin and yang. Duality is found in many belief systems, but Yin and Yang are parts of a Oneness that is also equated with the Tao. The term 'dualistic-monism' or dialectical monism has been coined in an attempt to express this fruitful paradox of simultaneous unity/duality. Yin and yang can be thought of as complementary (rather than opposing) forces that interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than the assembled parts. In Taoist metaphysics, distinctions between good and bad, along with other dichotomous moral judgments, are perceptual, not real; so, the duality of yin and yang is an indivisible whole. In the ethics of Confucianism on the other hand, most notably in the philosophy of Dong Zhongshue (2nd century BC), a moral dimension is attached to the idea of yin and yang.

⁶³ Moreover, the cosmic order is a reflection of the imperial order in that the hierarchical nature of the Chinese government also influenced the religion of the masses, which views gods as officials who perform specific duties and who are tied to each other in a hierarchy.

nominal allegiance to the house of Chou. It was this period that produced the earliest record of Chinese literary work: *Shih Ching* (Book of Songs) and *Shu Ching* (Book of History). Towards the end of the period, while the dynasty was declining, Kings of Chou house continued to exist but with actual power⁶⁴. Slowly, feudalism, as such, also declined⁶⁵. The Later Chou (481-221 BC) period also known of Warring States. This final period of the Chou was the most productive time in traditional China and is comparable to the Golden Age in Greece. Collapse of Chin dynasty (221-206 BC) and ascendancy of Hans, boundaries of China extended to Korea, Sinkiang, North (Tonkin) and South (Annam) Vietnam. Emperor Wu Ti maintained the *silk routes* facilitating exchange of goods between Chinese and Roman empires. Wu Ti sponsored Confucianism⁶⁶ and by first century AD it became the state religion.

Before dealing with the religions of East Asia, a brief definition of religion in the Chinese tradition is necessary in view of the fact that much of the discussion to follow pertains to ethics, philosophy and metaphysics. In a broad sense, religion is man's apprehension of and participation in the cosmos, which is conceived of either as the source and totality of moral order, as in Confucianism, or as the source and totality of nature, as in Taoism. In either case, religion is consideration of the relationship of humans and cosmos; the harmony between them is deemed supremely important for man's destiny.

⁶⁴ They were able to survive because no state was strong enough to unite the country. The main interest of the rulers was to build military power and acquire wealth. In order to achieve these goals, they were eager to employ able men for office. Scholars travelled from one state to another seeking opportunity for political appointment. Confucius was one of them, although his philosophy was unacceptable to the existing rulers.

⁶⁵ An evidence of the decline of feudalism was the rise of ministers who were not of noble descent. They rose to power by ability and shrewdness and then became the actual leaders of several states. State policies were often decided in their households. In each of these families, often there was struggle for important offices. Another sign of collapse of feudalism was the increasing number of poor aristocrats who were descendent of nobles. These men were skilled in reading and writing, did not own fiefs, but neither were peasants. In order to earn a living, they trained themselves as experts in ceremony and rituals, and nobles and ministers retained such some.

⁶⁶ Many new books, which ascribed their authorship to Confucius, appeared in Han dynasty. These writings defended the absolute right of kingship and exalted the virtue of obedience to the emperor. In Confucianism, which evolved in course of time, morality was viewed as being cosmically centred and thus arose the Confucian metaphysics, stressing the complementary of nature and man.

The apprehension of the cosmos in Chinese religion is accomplished by means of a large number of modalities. It can be apprehended through the polytheistic modes such as ancestor-deities, god or demons, or through a single Being such as the *Shang-ti* (上帝 – The Ruler Above). It can also be apprehended in terms of metaphysical concepts such as *T'ien* (天 – Heaven), Tao, or Buddha. So far as the expressions of man's relations with the cosmos are concerned these take at least three forms: cultic expressions (rituals and ceremonies), sociological expression (family, clan, state, the Confucian shrine, the Taoist or Buddha temple), and intellectual expressions (ethics, philosophy, metaphysics). Following discussion of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism is understood in two senses: cultic and sociological expression and as ethics, philosophy, and metaphysics.

Prior to the Shangs, the people worshipped many gods with one supreme god, Shang-ti, as head of the pantheon, who was considered *the great ancestor* who presided over victory in war, agriculture, the weather, and good government. Because he was so remote and so busy, however, the people seem to have required more immediate intercessors for their needs and so the practice of ancestor worship began. When someone died, it was thought, they attained divine powers and could be called upon for assistance in times of need. This practice led to highly sophisticated rituals dedicated to appeasing the spirits of the ancestors which eventually included ornate burials in grand tombs filled (similar to the Egyptians) with all one would need to enjoy a comfortable afterlife. The king, in addition to his secular duties, served as chief officiate and mediator between the living and the dead and his rule was considered ordained by divine law. Although the later Zhou Dynasty developed the famous *Mandate of Heaven*, the idea of linking a just ruler with divine will has its roots in the beliefs fostered by the Shang.

Although Buddhists from India and central Asia began to reach in China in the first century AD, during the Han dynasty, the new religion did not gain momentum until the third century. It spread widely during the period of Political Disunion (AD 220-589). Morale of the people was low and the earthbound Confucian ethics could not meet the deepest needs of the people which Buddhism could. The Buddhist doctrines of rebirth and karma offered the Chinese a cosmic outlook and moral incentive. When Mahayana philosophy first reached China, the Taoists were surprised to find the similarities between the two and many Taoists converted to the new religion.

The *Book of History* and the *Book of Songs* provide a record of early religious life and furnish us clues about the rituals and belief of pre-Confucian religion. Ancestor

worship⁶⁷ was a dominant cult during the Shang period (1751-1112 BC). Members of royal family first practiced it, and others soon adopted it. King and princes were regarded heroes and hence demigods; when they died they became spirits who controlled the destiny of the royal house. The royal ancestors were assumed to possess superhuman powers and knowledge, thus Shang rulers, while faced with any problem, invariably consulted their ancestral spirits. Nobles too, as a rule, offered sacrifices to their more recent ancestors.

The ancestor worship of the past, and the land of the dead, began to interest the emperor more than his realm of the living and Shi Huang-ti became increasingly engrossed in what this other world consisted of and how he might avoid travelling there. He seems to have developed an obsession with death, became increasingly paranoid regarding his personal safety, and ardently sought after immortality. His desire to provide for himself an afterlife commensurate with his present one led him to commission a palace built for his tomb and an army of over 8,000 terracotta warriors created to serve him in eternity. This ceramic army, buried with him, also included terracotta chariots, cavalry, a commander in chief, and assorted birds and animals. He is said to have died while on a quest for an elixir of immortality and Li Siu, hoping to gain control of the government, kept his death a secret until he could alter his will to name his pliable son, Hu-Hai, as heir. This plan proved untenable, however, as the young prince showed himself to be quite unstable, executing many, and initiating a widespread rebellion in the land. Shortly after Shi Huang-ti's death, the Qin Dynasty quickly collapsed through the intrigue and ineptitude of people like Hu-Hai, Li Siu, and another advisor, Zhao Gao, and the Han Dynasty began with the accession of Liu-Bang.

Confucianism reflects the thought of a great Chinese philosopher Confucius⁶⁸. The entire Ancient Chinese philosophy centres on the teachings of Confucius⁶⁹, and the

⁶⁷ The most prominent ancestor was called *Shang-ti*, sometime referred to as *ti*. Since *ti* was also used to designate a king, *Shang-ti* was associated with deceased royalty. Shang Ti being an ancestral god. He gave rain, crops, and other favours to man, but his chief function were to grant victories in war.

⁶⁸ Confucius (551-479 BC), though a descendent of aristocratic family, was of humble origin and self-taught. He served as a minister of justice in the ducal court of Lu. He was a successful teacher. His writings are available in his *Analects*.

⁶⁹ Chinese philosophy scholar Fung Yu-lan (1973) traces and confirms the origins of six major schools of ancient Chinese thought: *Confucian* (this arose from the *ju* who were specialists in rituals *li* making it the rationalised expression of morality of aristocracy); *Mohist* (developed by men who

schools of thought led by Mo-Tzŭ, Meng Tzŭ – (Mencius), Hsun Tzŭ, and Han Fei (280-233 BC). Other forms of thought have also pervaded in China. Buddhism, introduced from India, has been particularly influential. The fact remains that with the supremacy of the various historical, poetical and philosophical texts used by it, Confucianism has played a dominant role in the Chinese thought.

Confucius felt that the basic problem in his days was the moral deterioration of the ruling class, and that this in turn contributed to the degeneration of common people. This view of government was embodied in the culture of the Early Chou, and Confucius, therefore, wanted to revive that culture. Central problem that confronted Confucius were the humans. He did not regard them as insignificant beings in the vast universe. He stressed the man's positioning in society, and that humans must submit to it. His ethical structure rests upon empathy for others. The criterion of ethics is that enlightened self-interest based on reciprocity (*shu*) and conscientiousness (*chung*). To him, propriety (*li*), the outward norm of human conduct, was important, and considered reverence in rituals essence of *li*. To him *li* signifies the entire body of manners, customs, and institutions.

According to Confucius the aim of education was to make gentleman: man of noble character (*chun-tzŭ*), morality and goodness being his duty. He believed that talented, intelligent people can achieve this through proper education. Confucian concept of government embraced rulers and officials of good men for they are the key to the problems of the state. According to him rulers should exercise moral force (*te*). When those above conduct themselves in accordance with precepts' of *li*, then those below will respect support and follow faithfully.

Taoism: Along with Confucianism, Mohism, Legalism, Taoism was also rising in strength during the period of warring states (404-221 BC). Although Mohism and legalism were critical of Confucianism, they shared its emphasis on paternalism, social solidarity and activism. Taoism was different in spirit with Confucianism and other faiths. It preferred individualism to collectivism, nature to society, self to

had specialised in martial arts basically expressing the ethics of the lower classes in general); *Dialectician* (originating from men who had specialised in art of debate, and who used their talents on behalf of their clients turning right into wrong, and wrong into right); *Legalist* (founded by men who were professional politicians and active statesman); *Yin-yang* (school belonged to those who believed in occult, astrology, and divination); and *Taoists* (originated from educated men who tried to escape the disorders of daily life by retiring in nature developing the concept of *Tao*).

family, Quietism to Activism, simplicity to artificiality and contemplation to deliberation.

The predecessors of the Taoist were recluses who lived at the time of Confucius. The rise in their philosophy was due to change in material culture (the use of iron, asbestos, cavalry and so on), and in part to the fusion of the Chou culture on the frontiers, where Chinese civilization was little known. At the beginning these recluses or quietists were interested in the nourishment of the *Ch'i*, the vital spirit or life breath of man. They understood Tao to mean the Way of the vital spirit. People, who came out of this tradition, expanded the meaning of Tao from mysterious essence of man to cosmic force. They desired to preserve the spirit of nature (*Tao*) that makes man truly human. They felt that both Confucianism and the Legalism, in their own ways, were suppressing this source of man. The Taoist movement was a protest against the Confucian emphasis on reason and morality at the expense of nature and against the Legalist drive for collectivism at the expense of the individual.

Lao Tzū is supposed to have founded Taoism and written the philosophical work *Tao Te Ching*. According to it, Tao has three distinct meanings. First, it produces the Unnameable or Non-being (*wu*). The *Unnameable* is eternal, absolute and unchanging because it is the basis of the changeable and temporal order. Secondly, Tao means the *Nameable* called the *One*, *Mother*, *Ancestor*, and *Heaven and Earth*. It is the inherent principle in nature of man and society, which holds things together as a Whole. Thirdly, Tao means both the *Unnameable* and *Nameable* for they are actually inseparable. *Being* must continually depend on *Non-being* for the production of myriad things, and on the other hand, *Non-being* needs *being* for the manifestation of Tao in the world.

Taoism had its philosophical and religious (mystical) practice. Philosophical Taoism has always represented the unorthodox, the romantic and the passive in Chinese thought, thus complementing the orthodox, rationalistic, and active side of the Chinese mind. As metaphysics, Taoism can be regarded as mystic naturalism, because Tao is the ground of nature. It is mystic in that it, as a source of nature, is Unnameable. Historically, Taoism furnished much of the substance for the development of Zen (*Ch'an*) Buddhism, which gave China a religious faith that is mystic and practical, as well as very adaptable.

Chinese is one of the world's oldest cultures, tracing back to thousands of years ago. Chinese culture is extremely diverse and varying, it has a profound effect in the philosophy, virtue, etiquette and traditions of Asia. Chinese language, ceramics, architecture, music, dance, martial arts, visual arts, philosophy, religion, politics and

history were widely respected throughout the world. From socio-economic point of view, from the late Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC) onwards, traditional Chinese society was organized into a hierarchic system of classes that was based on four occupations: (*shi*) noble scholars; (*nong*) peasantry; (*shang*) traders; and (*gong*) artisans and craftsmen. The mainstay of the economy was agriculture, animal husbandry and crafts.

Chinese religion was originally oriented to worshipping *Shang-ti* (the Supreme God) during the Xia and Shang dynasties, with the king and diviners acting as priests and using oracle bones. The Zhou dynasty oriented it to worshipping the broader concept of *T'ien* (heaven). There is often a blurred line between myth, religion and unexplained phenomena. A large part of Chinese culture is based on the notion that a spiritual world exists. Countless methods of divination have helped answer questions, even serving as an alternate to medicine. Folklores have helped fill the gap for things that cannot be explained. While many deities are part of the tradition, some of the most recognized holy figures include *Guan Yin* (a *Bodhisatva* - goddess of compassion), the *Jade Emperor* (The Supreme Deity) and *Buddha*. Native Chinese religions do not usually use cult images of deities, or even represent them, and large religious sculptures are nearly all Buddhist, dating mostly from the 4th to the 14th century. Buddhism is also the context of all large portraits. Imperial tombs have spectacular avenues of approach lined with real and mythological animals on a scale matching Egypt, and smaller versions decorate temples and palaces. Chinese ritual bronzes come from a period of over a thousand years from cca. 1500 BC, and have exerted a continuing influence over Chinese art. They are cast with complex patterned decoration, but avoid the human figure⁷⁰.

Most social values are derived from Confucianism and Taoism. Reincarnation and rebirth concept is a reminder of the connection between real-life and the after-life. Confucianism had been the official philosophy throughout most of the Imperial China. A number of more authoritarian strains of thought have also been influential, such as Legalism. Royalty frequently participated in these discussions as well.

⁷⁰ Terracotta Army was assembled for the tomb of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of a unified China from 221–210 BC, as a grand imperial version of the figures long placed in tombs to enable the deceased to enjoy the same lifestyle in the afterlife as when alive. The figures are in several poses including standing infantry and kneeling archers, as well as charioteers with horses. Each figure's head appears to be unique, showing a variety of facial features and expressions as well as hairstyles.

Chinese philosophers, writers and poets were highly respected and played key roles in preserving and promoting the culture of the empire. Some classical scholars, however, were noted for their daring depictions of the lives of the common people, often to the displeasure of authorities. The ancient written standard was classical Chinese. It was used for thousands of years, but was mostly used by scholars and intellectuals, which formed the highest class of the society. Calligraphy later became commercialized, and works by famous artists became prized possessions. While flourishing of philosophy was noted during 6th century BC, when the works as of Confucius's *Analects* and Laozi's *Tao Te Ching* appeared; the earliest classic work of literature in Chinese the *Book of Changes (I Ching)* dates back to 1000 BC, and dynastic histories around 110 BC. Different forms of art have swayed under the influence of great philosophers, teachers, religious figures and even political figures. Chinese art encompasses all facets of fine art, folk art and performing art. Porcelain pottery was one of the first forms of art in the Palaeolithic period.

Basically, the Chinese arts were visual. Early Stone Age art mostly consisted simple pottery and sculptures. After this early period Chinese art, like Chinese history, is typically classified by the succession of ruling dynasties. Much of the best work in ceramics, textiles, carved lacquer, and other techniques was produced over a long period by the various imperial workshops, which as well as being used by the court was distributed internally and abroad on a huge scale to demonstrate the wealth and power of the Emperors. Chinese painting became a highly appreciated art in court circles encompassing a wide variety of *Shan shui* (depicting nature using lines and brush) with specialized styles. The tradition of ink wash painting practiced mainly by scholars, and court painters especially of landscapes. Depending upon the individual imagination and objective of observation by the artist, flowers, birds, animals, etc. depicted in the paintings developed the aesthetic values. Traditional Chinese painting involves essentially the same techniques as Chinese calligraphy and is done on paper or silk with a brush dipped in ink. As with calligraphy, the most popular materials on which paintings are made of paper and silk. The finished work, were mounted on scrolls. The two main techniques in Chinese painting were: *Gong-bi* (meticulous) and *Shui-mo* (literati). Artists from the Hans (202 BC) to the Tangs (618–906 AD) mainly painted the human figures. Many early tomb paintings were meant to protect the dead or help their souls to get to paradise. Others illustrated the teachings of Confucius, or showed scenes of daily life. Many critics consider landscape to be the highest form of Chinese painting.

Music and dance were closely associated in the very early periods of China. The music of China dates back to the dawn of Chinese civilization with documents and artefacts providing evidence of a well-developed musical culture as early as the Zhou Dynasty (1122- 256 BC). The earliest music of the Zhou Dynasty recorded in ancient Chinese texts includes the ritual music and each piece may be associated with a dance. Some of the oldest written music dates back to Confucius's time. Early Chinese music⁷¹ and poetry⁷² was deeply influenced by the *Book of Songs* (classic poetry). Though the Tang Dynasty witnessed great poetic flowering, four great classical novels of Chinese literature were also written during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

China is the birthplace of Eastern martial arts. Chinese martial arts are collectively known as *Kung Fu* (human achievement) or *Wu Shu* (martial arts). The first generation of these arts started in Shaolin Monastery and Wudang Mountains, more for the purpose of survival and warfare than as art.

Chinese architecture, examples for which can be found from more than 2,000 years ago, is almost as old as Chinese civilization and has long been an important hallmark of Chinese culture. The most important feature is its emphasis on width, such as the wide halls of the *Forbidden City*. Another important feature is symmetry that connotes a sense of grandeur as it applies to everything from palaces to farmhouses. One notable exception is in the design of gardens, which tend to be as asymmetrical as possible. Like Chinese scroll paintings, the principle underlying the garden's composition is to create enduring flow, to let the patron wander and enjoy the garden without prescription, as in nature herself. *Feng shui* (technique of organizing space) has played a very important part in structural development. Chinese architecture also had a huge influence on the architecture of East Asia, and to a lesser extent, Southeast Asia as well.

Greece

While Greece can boast of no great river, towering mountains and irregular coastline broken by gulfs and bays providing numerous harbours cut it. Quite naturally Greek became sailors and merchants. Their proximity to the sea also brought dangers:

⁷¹ Early Chinese music was based on percussion instruments, which later gave away to stringed and reed instruments.

⁷² Famous ancient Chinese poet and statesman was Qu Yuan (340-278 BC).

hostile peoples could attack them by sea from every side except the north. Southern Greece was the location of Mycenae, Pylos, Tyrins, Corinth, Epidaurus, Sparta and other historic places.

The earliest inhabitants of both the mainland and the adjacent islands were the Pelasgians, a group of non-Indo-European people, who were overrun by invasions of Indo-Europeans since 1900 BC. From earliest times Greece had close ties with Crete. Its civilization was called Minoan (after the legendary king of Crete). The culture of Crete developed earlier than that of Greek mainland. Elaborate palaces were built at Knossos and Mallia by 2000 BC. Cretans learned to write a script similar to Egyptian hieroglyphs using clay tablets like the Sumerians. They became so powerful that they could extend their influence even to the mainland. Mycenae, which was then the cultural seat of Greece, took on a Minoan character. But by 1400 BC, the Greeks, under the leadership of Mycenae, conquered Crete and other Aegean islands.

Greece was strong in matters of intellectual creativity. It was outstanding in arts and sciences, and poets, painters, sculptors, architects, philosophers, scientists, and historians were its glory, excelling those of all other nations of antiquity. All the peoples around the Mediterranean admired Greek culture and for almost five centuries after Alexander. It continued to be imitated and adopted by others. However, the Greeks were weak in matters of government, although they were outstanding in the development of city-states (Athens, Thebes, Sparta, Corinth and other). Greeks on individual basis were brave and good soldiers. However, the Greek cities were characterized by intense pride and bitter rivalry between them. For the most part, there was no sense of a nation that included the Greek cities, lands, and persons of Greek blood. Alexander the Great, during his short rule of thirteen years (336-323 BC), succeeded both in conquering and in uniting them. But as soon as he died, the kingdom fell apart. Greece was never again united until it became part of the Roman Empire.

The original inhabitants of Greece: The Pelasgians, as narrated to Herodotus by the priestesses of Dodona, according to the ancient oracle of Epirus, had offered sacrifices of many kinds and prayed to gods (without any distinction or name because they have never heard the divine names). They have called the gods *theoi* on the ground that it was the gods who had arranged everything in order. Long afterwards, according to the priestesses, the Pelasgians learned the names of the gods from Egyptians. Unfortunately, because of the lack of archaeological evidence, little

can be said of the religion of the Pelasgians. Decipherment of Minoan inscriptions throws some light on Minoan-Mycenaean religion⁷³.

The question of justice was of a great concern to Greeks. In religious sense, justice is the idea that God is righteous sovereign of the universe and, therefore, everything what happens is an expression of justice. It implies that in this life a man gets what his conduct deserves: a just man prospers and a wicked suffers. Nevertheless, facts of life do not support the presumption. From early times Greeks saw that misfortune often strikes the upright. The way this paradox fascinated them had the theme concerned great dramatists⁷⁴.

Important source of information on the classical Greek polytheism are definitely Homer's epic poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that tell us about Trojan War and about the gods and men who participated in it⁷⁵. In Hesiod's *Theogony* we find the most exhaustive list of the gods, goddesses, and spirits of the sky, earth, sea, mountains, forests, rivers, springs, trees and underworld that play invisible role of divine actors in Greek religion.

Greek religion exhibits continuity in development from lower to higher forms of the sacred throughout their history. Their heterophonies were associated with temples and statues of the gods, such as found on the Acropolis of Athens, at Olympia or Delphi. Also, the Greeks never lost sight of the terrifying, destructive character that the holy often manifest⁷⁶.

The deities most often referred to as residing on the Mount Olympus are: Zeus (Ζεύς), Apóllōn (Απόλλων), Árēs (Αρης), Hērēmēs (Ερμης), Hēphaistos (Ηφαίστος),

⁷³ One of the tablets found in Knossos documents the shrine of *Zeus* on Mount Dicte. Also, a goddess called *the Lady* is associated with several shrines. A tablet at the shrine of Amniosos has confirmed the worship of *Eileithyia*, the goddess of childbirth. *Poseidon* (Gr. Ποσειδῶν) was the main deity of Crete. Other deities include the *Horse God*, the *Dove God*, and the *Handmaidens*, who accompany the mother goddesses. *Zeus*, *Hera*, and *Athena* appear.

⁷⁴ Sophocles dealt with this theme in three of his plays: *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

⁷⁵ According to Homer, the war was fought at Troy. Mycenae King Agamemnon led the Greek forces. Nestor from Pylos; King Idomeneus from Knosos; and Phthiotis. The Mount Olympus was the headquarter of the gods during the war. Mount Ida near Troy was from where Zeus watched the battle, and many other places are mentioned.

⁷⁶ Greek myths abound in monsters of many kind: Pan, Satyrs, Dragons, Giants, Titans, Sphinxes, Cyclops, Hydra, Centaurs, Minotaur, Gorgons, Cerberus, Fates, Furies and other demonic beings.

and Poseidōn (Ποσειδῶν), along with goddesses: Aphroditē (Αφροδίτη), Ártemis (Αρτεμις), Athēnā (Αθηνᾶ), Dēmētēr (Δημήτηρ), Héra (Ἥρα), and Hestía (Ἑστία). Zeus (god of air and sky, lightning and thunder) was the most important deity, who secured by acts of violence, an august position among gods. His authority was absolute, controlling all other deities. He always had his way but not without opposition because his subordinates were jealous, and at times they protested and even attempted rebellion⁷⁷. In a general sense every god had his sphere of function.

The Greeks as having intensely human characteristics represented the Olympian gods. They manifested desire, passion, jealousy, hatred, vengeance, cruelty, compassion etc. They were usually neither omnipotent nor omniscient; and they were certainly not always good. They differed from men, however, in their possession of immortality. They carried weapons and wore armour in battle, and they could appear or disappear at will. They could conceal their identity from human beings by appearing as human, as well as animal.

Ancient Greek art stands out among that of other ancient cultures for its development of naturalistic but idealized depictions of the human body, in which largely nude male figures were generally the focus of innovation. The rate of stylistic development between about 750 and 300 BC was remarkable by ancient standards, and in surviving works is best seen in sculpture. There were important innovations in painting, which have to be essentially reconstructed due to the lack of original survivals of quality, other than the distinct field of painted pottery. Greek architecture, technically very simple, established a harmonious style with numerous detailed conventions that were largely adopted by Romans and are still followed in some modern buildings. It used a vocabulary of ornament that was shared with pottery, metalwork and other media, and had an enormous influence on Eurasian art, especially after Buddhism carried it beyond the expanded Greek world of Alexander the Great. The social context of Greek art included radical political developments and a great increase in prosperity; the equally impressive Greek achievements in philosophy, literature and other fields are well known.

⁷⁷ There were two rebellions against the reign of *Zeus*, both by the demonic progeny of *Uranus* and *Gaea*. The first was that of the *Giants*, who seized the son of Zeus. Zeus put down the rebellion by the blast of his thunderbolt burning them to ashes. Out of these ashes mankind arose. The other rebellion was the war of *Titans* that lasted for ten years when they were conquered and cast into *Tartarus* in the underworld, where the wicked are punished.

The earliest art by Greeks is generally excluded from ancient Greek art, and instead known as Aegean art that includes Cycladic art and the art of the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures from the Greek Bronze Age. The art of ancient Greece is usually divided stylistically into four periods: Geometric (around 1000 BC), Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic. The 7th century BC witnessed the slow development of the archaic style as exemplified by the black-figure style of vase painting.

In reality, there was no sharp transition from one period to another. Forms of art developed at different speeds in different parts of the Greek world, and as in any age some artists worked in more innovative styles than others. Strong local traditions, and the requirements of local cults, enabled historians to locate the origins even of works of art found far from their place of origin. Greek art of various kinds was widely exported. The whole period saw a generally steady increase in prosperity and trading links within the Greek world and with neighbouring cultures.

The survival rate of Greek art differs starkly between media. We have huge quantities of pottery and coins, much stone sculpture, though even more Roman copies, and a few large bronze sculptures. Almost entirely missing are paintings, fine metal vessels, and anything in perishable materials including wood. The stone shell of a number of temples and theatres has survived, but little of their extensive decoration.

The Greeks decided very early on that the human form was the most important subject for artistic endeavour. Seeing their gods as having human form, there was little distinction between the sacred and the secular in art—the human body was both secular and sacred. A male nude of *Apollo* or *Heracles* had only slight differences in treatment to one of that year's Olympic boxing champion. In the Archaic Period the most important sculptural form was the *kouros*, the standing male nude. The *kore*, or standing clothed female figure, was also common, but since Greek society did not permit the public display of female nudity until the 4th century BC, it is considered to be of less importance in the development of sculpture. By the end of the period architectural sculpture on temples was becoming important.

As with pottery, the Greeks did not produce sculpture merely for artistic display. Statues were commissioned either by aristocratic individuals or by the state, and used for public memorials, as offerings to temples, oracles and sanctuaries, or as markers for graves. Statues in the Archaic period were not all intended to represent specific individuals. They were depictions of an ideal — beauty, piety, honour or sacrifice. Unlike authors, those who practiced the visual arts, including sculpture,

initially had a low social status in ancient Greece, though increasingly leading sculptors might become famous and rather wealthy, and often signed their work⁷⁸.

Surviving ancient Greek sculptures were mostly made of marble (or other high-quality limestone) or bronze. Chryselephantine, or gold-and-ivory, statues were the cult-images in temples and were regarded as the highest form of sculpture, but only some fragmentary pieces have survived. In some cases, glass paste, glass, and precious and semi-precious stones were used for detail such as eyes, jewellery, and weaponry. Most sculptures were painted. Terracotta was occasionally employed, for large statuary. Few examples of this survived, at least partially due to the fragility of such statues.

Ancient Rome

Rome means first the city standing on seven hills on the south bank of river Tiber, but Rome is also synonymous with all Italy. Once Italy had come under Roman power, Romans had extended their power all over the Mediterranean and beyond. The Romans were the last of the great people of antiquity to maturity. They were the heirs of the civilization of Greece, Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Romans came to maturity as the Hellenistic age was reaching its culmination. Not as brilliant in Architecture as Egypt, nor in art and philosophy as Greece, the Romans, nevertheless, surpassed all their predecessors in the practical arts, in development of natural resources, in military power and political wisdom.

The history of Rome begins from the founding of the city by Romulus in 753 BC. The Roman Empire survived in the west until the barbarians of Europe overwhelmed Rome in 476 AD and in the east when the Turks took Constantinople in 1453 AD. When the Romans made their appearance in history, they were only one of several minor people inhabiting Italy. At that time, they were Latins and had occupied the tiny state of Latium. The city of Rome began as military outpost against the Etruscans in north. Slowly, it conquered the Etruscans and other peoples. By 270 BC Rome had taken over control of southern Italy paving way for the expansion of the empire.

The earliest form of religion in Italy was a primitive animism. Every important phenomenon of nature was endowed with its *numen*; the world was full of *numina*,

⁷⁸ Plutarch in *Life of Pericles*, II said, *we admire the work of art but despise the maker of it*; this was a common view in the ancient Greek world.

to which humans reacted with a sense of *religio* (mystery, awe, and fear). When Latium emerged into the period of recorded history, people were still living on their pieces of land for generations as family. The religious life of the family revolved around those *spirits* connected with its welfare. Most important was *Vesta*, spirit of the fire on the family hearth. Religion of the family was simple and practical. The only altar in the home was the hearth with its fire always burning and *paterfamilias* the only priest.

The simplicity that was so characteristic of the early Latin families continued to be evident in the early Roman state, which was formed by a group of closely related tribes with similar cultures and common interests. The state was considered as a great family, the king assuming the role of the *paterfamilias*. All military, political and economic power was vested in the king, as well as the responsibility for religion for he was also the chief priest. There were sacred places, all rites related to the welfare of people were faithfully performed, and plain altars were needed. There were no images or statues to represent neither god nor any elaborate temples. The deities were nature spirits, without definite personalities, and thus without elaborate mythologies. The adornment that was to be characteristic of Roman religion appears to have begun in the sixth century BC. From the Etruscans and Greeks, Roman learned to make images and statues of their gods with the personalities of human beings. In the later centuries, the Romans identified their gods with similar Greek deities. This process reached culmination with the Romans taking over Greek Mount Olympus as the abode of Roman gods.

Romans of the later period, divide Roman gods into indigenous and adopted gods. A careful inventory of gods in the *Calendar of Numa*, the number of the deities associated with festivals and the names of Roman gods, comes to 33, but only 5: *Janus*, *Jupitar*, *Mars*, *Quirinus*, and *Vesta*, are of any importance. As far as adopted gods were concerned it is simply the pairing of the Greek with Roman god having the same role. Along with process of equation, many features of Greek mythology were transferred to their Roman counterparts.

Since early times, Romans were deeply religious people, performance of rituals was considered important, and a function of the state. The king himself was vested with priestly powers. When a republic replaced kingship around 500 BC, general administrative responsibility for state religious affairs was assigned to *Pontifex Maximus*, who had the power to appoint high-level priests, even the *rex sacrorum*. Far more than Greek religion, the Roman witnessed a development of priests, who were organized into colleges according to their functions. Like the Greeks, Romans also

learned to consult the oracle of *Apollo* in Cumae, a priestess practiced her art of divination by interpreting sacred writing known as *Sibylline Books*.

The multiplication of gods at Rome during the late centuries of the Republic and the proliferation of rites of divination and incantation suggest the profound attachment of the Roman people to supernatural powers. On the other hand, this elaboration of rites also shows that the old religion had begun to lose grounds. This loss of faith could be ascribed to large number of deities leading to confusion, expansion of Roman frontiers which now included so many people, Greek philosophy that brought to educated Roman scepticism of everything that was based on intervention of supernatural beings in the natural world, etc. In response to that a new quest for new religions: *mystery religions* not protecting the state or nation but individuals, started. But none these mysteries had sufficient substance to endure for long. In time, Christianity replaced them.

Roman art refers to the visual arts made in Ancient Rome and in the territories of the Roman Empire. Romans perhaps considered sculpture as the highest form of art, but figure painting was also very highly regarded. The two forms have had very contrasting rates of survival, with a very large body of sculpture surviving from about the 1st century BC onwards, though very little from before, but very little painting at all remains, and probably nothing that a contemporary would have considered to be of the highest quality.

Ancient Roman Pottery was not a luxury product, but a vast production of fine wares was decorated with reliefs that reflected the latest taste, and provided a large group in society with stylish objects at what was evidently an affordable price. Roman coins were an important means of propaganda, and survived in enormous numbers. Other perishable forms of art have not survived at all. While the traditional view of the ancient Roman artists is that they often borrowed from, and copied Greek precedents, more recent analysis has indicated that Roman art is a highly creative *pastiche* (imitation but with a difference) relying heavily on Greek models but also encompassing Etruscan, native Italic, and even Egyptian visual culture. Stylistic eclecticism and practical application are the hallmarks of much Roman art.

Pliny, Ancient Rome's most important historian concerning the arts, recorded that nearly all the forms of art – sculpture, landscape, portrait painting, even genre painting – were advanced in Greek times, and in some cases, more advanced than in

Rome. The high number of Roman copies of Greek art also speaks of the esteem Roman artists had for Greek art, and perhaps of its rare and higher quality⁷⁹.

It is notable that where Greeks worshiped the aesthetic qualities of great art and wrote extensively on artistic theory, Roman art was more decorative and indicative of status and wealth, and apparently not the subject of scholars or philosophers.

When Constantine moved the capital of the empire to Byzantium (renamed Constantinople), Roman art incorporated Eastern influences to produce the Byzantine style of the late empire. When Rome was sacked in the 5th century, artisans moved to and found work in the Eastern capital⁸⁰.

Palestine and Syria

Much of the land in this area is barren and badly eroded. There are numerous valleys and springs. The inhabitants of the area, which today includes Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel, have all been primarily devoted to animal husbandry. Farming has been difficult except in coastal areas, in river valleys and round cities such as Palmyra, Damascus, and Jericho. The Plain of Esdraelon, extending from Haifa to the Jordan River, is also a farming region. In ancient times, numerous cities on the Mediterranean have profited from farming on the coastal plain as well as from commerce by the sea.

During ancient Hebrew times, majority of Hebrew (Jewish) people lived between Dan and Beer-Sheba, although at times the territory reached as far as Aqaba. Syrians and Palestinians profited greatly from the caravan trade. Phoenicia too grew rich

⁷⁹ It appears that Roman artists had much Ancient Greek art to copy from, as trade in art was brisk throughout the empire, and much of the Greek artistic heritage found its way into Roman art through books and teaching. Ancient Greek treatises on the arts are known to have existed in Roman times though are now lost. Many Roman artists came from Greek colonies and provinces.

Many of the art forms and methods used by the Romans – such as high and low relief, free-standing sculpture, bronze casting, vase art, mosaic, coin art, fine jewellery and metalwork, funerary sculpture, perspective drawing, and portrait painting, landscape painting, architectural sculpture, and oil painting – all were developed or refined by Ancient Greek artists.

⁸⁰ The Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople employed nearly 10,000 workmen and artisans, in a final burst of Roman art under Emperor Justinian (527–565 CE), who also ordered the creation of the famous mosaics of Ravenna.

from it as they shipped around the brought-in goods to Mediterranean ports. Syrian, Hebrews, and Phoenicians got along well for they were mutually dependent on one another.

When the Hebrews entered Palestine, even as early as the time of Abraham⁸¹, they found the land already occupied. Some cities, e.g. Damascus, Jericho, Beth-Shan, Gezer, and Hazor, had been there for as long as 3000 years. When the Hebrews made their way in around 1200 BC, the land was strongly occupied thereby it took over more than two centuries that Hebrews succeeded in establishing themselves as an independent nation.

The Syrians, Hebrews, and their neighbours from earlier kingdoms had the misfortune of being located in a land, which lacked the necessary resources to become a strong military power. At the same time, some of the major routes that connected great powers, passed through the area making them a bridge between Egypt, Mesopotamia, and more remote lands of north and east. As each great power embarks upon world domination, it was necessary to conquer these lands. If one of the small powers defied the inevitable consequence was destruction⁸². Thus, it was possible for small kingdoms to be independent and prosperous only during the interludes between the periods of prosperity. Hebrews enjoyed a second period of independence (165-63 BC), when the Maccabees rebelled against oppressions of Seleucid kingdom of Syria.

Judaism is the religion of the Hebrews (also called Jews, Israel, and Semites). One of the most characteristic elements of the Jewish faith is the belief that God has revealed himself to man and that he has done this most significantly through persons of unusual talents who are believed to be inspired by God. Such persons are called

⁸¹ The term initially referred to the ancestral father of all Jews, Abraham, meaning *one from across the river* i.e., an immigrant into Palestine (then called Canaan), from across the Euphrates River. The word Jew is derived from Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob: the ancestral father of the tribe Judah that settled in southern part of Canaan. According to Genesis 32:28, God gave to Jacob the title of honour *Israel* because he had striven with both God and man and prevailed. When there was the Hebrew kingdom, on the death of King Solomon in 929 BC, the southern part took the name of Judah, northern that of Israel. After both nations had fallen, it was survivors of Judah who returned to their homeland, where they were, probably, joined by some other surviving tribes, and this restored group living in Judah came to be called Jews. It is this group who preserved the Hebrew culture.

⁸² e.g. Assyrians destroyed Damascus (732 BC) and Samaria (721 BC); Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem (587 BC).

prophets, or spokesman of God. Their utterances, oral or written, are divinely inspired real words of God. This belief in inspiration gave rise to the Bible.

For many centuries the stories, ballads, and laws of the Hebrews were transmitted orally from generation to generation. As early as 1000 BC, a few individual pieces attained a fixed form and were probably put into writing. After the nation was founded and the culture began to develop, Hebrews began to take pride in their history; the increasing complexity of their culture required codification of their laws. The process of writing down continued until the book of *Old Testament* (containing 24 books, divided into 3 parts: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings) had been produced. *The Law* (Torah) contains five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, all associated by tradition to Moses (little before 1200 BC), who may be regarded as founder of the Hebrew religion. Four books: Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings were written by inspired men and are thus called *Former Prophets*; and four books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve as *Latter Prophets*. The remaining thirteen (as the Hebrew count them) called *Writings* are: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I and II Chronicles. The Jews believed that this canon is ultimate, and thus rejected any book written after that.

In order to grasp the ancient Hebrew concept of God, we must understand that the Hebrews never thought of religion as a philosophical or theological system, or even a creed to be accepted. For them religion involved the whole life, including family, community, people, nation. The understanding of God that the Hebrews had attained by 500 BC, the faith that has inspired them from that day to this. Hebrew god *Elohim* is the creator, he is all-powerful and is revealed in all forces and sounds of nature not merely wonders of the sky (Psalm 29:3-10). He is just and holy. He is omniscient and omnipresent (Psalm 139).

Hebrew does not believe in hereafter. They believe that the present world is the real world, and present life is the only life. The hereafter is a shadowy realm. Life's rewards and punishments are here and now. When man dies, the drama ends. God is therefore, the god of this world, the present life. He makes himself known in the affairs of the world. We learn about God by observing nature, but also by the study of history, for his will always be revealed in history. The idea that God controls the rise and fall of nations is fundamental in the Old Testament.

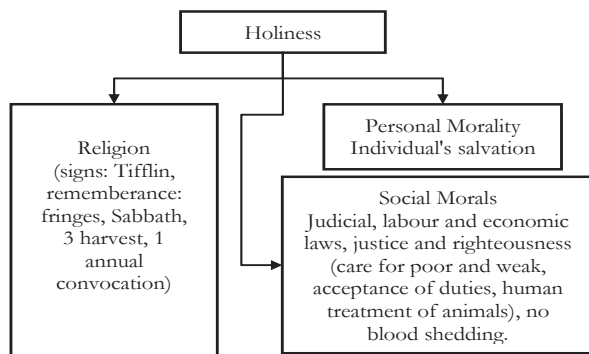
Hebrews believed, as all the stories of Genesis illustrate, God's primary concern is the individual person (Genesis: 4:8-16; 7:1; 12:1; 19:1-28; 24:40) and his character. Although the Hebrew faith gives a large place to priests, altars, shrines, sacrifices,

but in fact it is primarily a religion of morality. The moral character of biblical religion is given its classical formulation in the *Ten Commandments*⁸³, which combines reverence for God, with emphasis on the moral character of man (Exodus 20:1-17). Judaism is based on a man's covenant with God. Whenever man breaks the covenant, God punishes him, but he never repudiates his covenant. Hebrews traced their belief back to Abraham (Genesis 15:1-20).

The culture of Jewish people is from the formation of the Jewish nation in biblical times through life in the diaspora and the modern state of Israel. Judaism guides its adherents in both practice and belief, so that it has been called an orthopraxy. Not all individuals or all cultural phenomena can be classified as, *secular* or *religious*, a distinction native to enlightenment thinking.

Jewish culture in its etymological meaning retains linkage to the Jewish people's land of origin, the people named for the Kingdom of Judah, study of Jewish [texts](#), practice of community charity, and history. The term *secular Jewish culture* therefore

⁸³ According to the Covenant of Sinai, the Jewish people must live by Torah (the Laws: 10 commandments). The legal background is based on the concept of holiness (*kadosh*) that stems from its positive/negative elements i.e. separation from/dedication to the laws. The system of holiness can be illustrated as under:



With material wealth goes the cultural progress: arts, sciences and intellectual capabilities. But, as prosperity grows → religious degeneracy → moral depravity and corruption develops. Morality is inseparable with religion. The greatest evil is poverty as it is hindrance to mental and moral development of human unity and establishes the rule of God: i.e. fairness, justice, and responsibility. (See, Sharma (2010), pp. 34.)

refers to many aspects, including: religion and world view, literature, art and architecture, attitudes to gender, marriage, and family, social customs and lifestyles, music and dance. *Secular Judaism* is a distinct phenomenon related to Jewish secularization - a historical process of divesting all of these elements of culture from their religious beliefs and practices. It is derived from philosophy and values of the Enlightenment. Throughout history, in eras and places as diverse as the ancient Hellenic world, in Europe before and after the Age of Enlightenment, in Al-Andulas, North Africa and the Middle East, in India and China, United States and Israel, Jewish communities have seen the development of cultural phenomena that are characteristically Jewish without being at all specifically religious. Some factors in this come from within Judaism, others from the interaction of Jews with host populations in the diaspora, and others from the inner social and cultural dynamics of the community, as opposed to religion itself. This phenomenon has led to considerably different variations of Jewish culture unique to their own communities.

Jewish ceremonial art, also known as *Judaica*, refers to an array of objects used by the Jews for ritual purposes. Because enhancing a *mitzvah* by performing it with an especially beautiful object is considered a praiseworthy way of honouring God's commandments, Judaism has a long tradition of commissioning ritual objects from craftsmen and artists. Jewish paper cutting is a traditional form of folk art made by cutting figures and sentences in paper or parchment. It is connected with various customs and ceremonies, and associated with holidays and family life. Paper cuts often decorated *ketubbot* (marriage contracts), *Mizrahs*, and ornaments for festive occasions. Micro calligraphy is a Jewish form of calligrams developed in the 9th century, with parallels in Christianity and Islam, utilizing minute Hebrew letters to form representational, geometric and abstract designs. Coloured micrography is especially distinctive because these rare artworks are customarily rendered in black and white.

South East Asia

Throughout the Southeast Asian countries – Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Laos – India has played a vital political and spiritual role. SE Asia was under Indian influence starting around 200 BC until around the 15th century, when Hindu-Buddhist influence was absorbed by local politics. India had established trade, cultural and political relations with Southeast

Asian kingdoms. Although the peoples of maritime SE Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines) are thought to have migrated southwards from southern China sometime between 2500 and 1500 BC, the influence of the civilization of India gradually became predominant among them, and among the peoples of the Southeast Asian mainland. Indian traders, adventurers, teachers and priests continued to be the dominating influence in Southeast Asia until about 1500 CE, and Indians often ruled the earliest states in these regions. Hinduism and Buddhism both spread to these states from India and for many centuries existed there with mutual toleration. Eventually the states of the mainland became mainly Buddhist.

Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar is predominantly, practised by majority of the country's population. It is considered as the most religious Buddhist country in terms of the proportion of monks in the population and proportion of income spent on religion.

Khmer was a powerful Hindu-Buddhist empire in SE Asia. The empire, which grew out of the former ancient kingdoms of Funan and Chenia, at times ruled over and/or vassalized most mainland. Its greatest legacy is *Angkor*, which was the site of the capital city during the empire's zenith. The majestic monuments of Angkor bear testimony to the Khmer Empire's immense power and wealth, impressive art and culture, architectural technique and aesthetics achievements, as well as the variety of belief systems that it patronised over time. The beginning of the era of the Khmer Empire is conventionally dated to 802 CE. In this year, King Jayavarman II (802-835) had himself declared *king of the world*, or *king of kings*. The empire ended with the fall of Angkor in the 15th century.

Animism has existed since Indonesia's earliest history, around the first century, just before Hindu culture arrived in Indonesia. It still exists in some parts of in the region. People were thoroughly influenced by the religious philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism. These religions were brought to Indonesia around the 2nd and 4th centuries, respectively, when Indian traders arrived on the islands of Sumatra, bringing their religion. *Hinduism* and *Shaivite* traditions started to develop in Java in the 5th century AD. A number of Hindu and Buddhist influenced kingdoms were established, such as Kutai, Srivijaya, Majapahit and Sailendra. The Kingdom of Sailendra built the world's largest Buddhist monument, Borobudur, and around the same time, the Hindu monument *Prambanan* was also built. The peak of Hindu-Javanese civilization was the Majapahit Empire in the fourteenth century, described as a golden age in Indonesian history.

Buddhism in Thailand is largely of the Theravada school, though Thai Buddhism is practiced alongside Chinese indigenous religions by the large Thai Chinese population and alongside Hinduism by the Thais. The Chinese folk religion of Thailand has developed its local features, including the worship of local gods. Major Chinese festivals such as these are widely celebrated, where there are large Chinese populations.

Long-established religions in Vietnam include the Vietnamese folk religion, which has been historically structured by the doctrines of *Confucianism* and *Taoism* from China, as well as a strong tradition of *Buddhism* (called the three teachings or *tam giáo*). Vietnamese folk religion is not an organized religious system, but a set of local worship traditions devoted to the *thaan*, a term, which can be translated as *spirits*, *gods*, or with the more exhaustive locution *generative powers*. These gods can be nature deities or kinship deities or ancestral gods, and the ancestral gods of a specific family. Ancestral gods are often deified heroic persons. The Vietnamese indigenous religion is sometimes identified as Confucianism since it carries values that were emphasized by Confucius.

Lao Buddhists belong to the Theravada tradition, based on the earliest teachings of the Buddha and preserved in Sri Lanka after Mahayana Buddhism branched off in the 2nd century BC.

East Asia can be designated in three ways: geographically, referring to the region east of Himalayas; ethnologically, referring to the area populated mainly by the Mongoloids; and culturally, referring to the area under influence of Chinese civilization. Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea and Japan make up the region.

Japan

Japan is a 4/5 mountainous country consisting four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. Most of its rivers are unnavigable; hence communities in ancient Japan were not easily accessible. This accounts for regionalism and conservatism in Japan's history. Its geographical isolation from the continent also enabled it to preserve traditional customs and practices without intrusion of continental culture. Pre-historic Japan was a land of numerous autonomous clans, each rivalling the other for control, for larger territories. Eventually, the Yamato clan subjugated many other clans and established the dynasty at the turn of fourth

century AD. *Confucianism*, *Buddhism*, and *Shintoism* have dominated the religious rites and practices.

Buddhism was introduced to Japan in sixth century. The early history of Japanese Buddhism is characterized by imperial enthusiasm and patronage. The imperial court believed that this new religion was culturally superior to Shinto, the native religion of Japan. Prince Shōtoku (ruled AD 592-621) wanted to make this new religion the faith of the people and Confucianism the philosophy of the government, so he sponsored the building of Buddhist temples.

Shintoism: In Japan Taoism and Buddhism are merged with the ancient religion of Japan and are known as Shinto. The term Shinto is a combination of two Chinese words, *shin* (god) and *to* (way) meaning *the way of the gods*. Shinto refers to the Way as described in the mythology of early Japan. The myth defines how *kami* (spirit or divinity that is represented in animate and in-animate things) came into being.

The civilization of Japan began to flourish after the arrival of three religions: Confucianism provided ethics, law, political institutions, and educational system, Buddhism gave Japan its religious philosophy and metaphysics, but it was Shinto the indigenous religion that forced the other two to adapt themselves to the Japanese environment. According to a statement attributed to Prince Shōtoku, the three Japanese religions are comparable to the parts of a tree. Shinto is the root, Confucianism is the stem and branches, and Buddhism the flowers and fruits. This analogy implies the inseparableness of these three traditions.

Numerous clans ruled by chieftains divided early Japan. The *kami* was the guiding and protecting spirit of the group. The deity having no name was simply called *kami* or frequently associated with a holy tree, rock or mountain or field providing a cosmic reference enabling the people to have an experience of transcendence. Shinto did not have an ecclesiastical organization until the arrival of Buddhism in the sixth century. The imperial court or chieftains made the appointment of professional priests, and the shrines were constructed at their order.

The heart of Shinto is a communal religion centred on a shrine, often located in a wooded area and surrounded by a scenic sanctuary. Regular rituals are performed by the priests in the worship hall (*haiden*) of the inner sanctuary. This is where visitors pay homage to the divinity. Cleanliness and silence are strictly observed. The entrance through Shinto (*torii*) gate(s) reminds the visitors of the sacredity of the place. An important function of the shrine is to hold seasonal celebrations.

The first settlers of Japan, the *Jōmon* people⁸⁴ (11000–300 BC), were nomadic hunter-gatherers who later practiced organized farming and built cities with populations of hundreds if not thousands. They built simple houses of wood and thatch set into shallow earthen pits to provide warmth from the soil. They crafted lavishly decorated storage pottery, clay figurines and crystal jewels. The next wave of immigrants was the *Yayoi* people. These people, arriving in Japan about 350 BC, brought their knowledge of wetland rice cultivation, the manufacture of copper weapons and bronze bells, and wheel-thrown, kiln-fired ceramics. By 350 BC, new immigrants that had arrived bringing their knowledge created statuettes and pottery vessels. Japanese ceramics include the earliest known artefacts of their culture.

The introduction of Buddhism to the islands of Japan brought with it new art forms that the Japanese refined such as bronze casting. The Japanese also constructed singular works of architecture; some of the nation's oldest Buddhist temples, for example, at the Horyu-ji to the southwest of Nara still exist. First built in the early 7th century as the private temple of prince Shōtoku. Temple building in the 8th century was focused around the Tōdai-ji in Nara is the most ambitious religious complex erected in the early centuries of Buddhist worship in Japan. The earliest Japanese sculptures of the Buddha are dated to the 6th and 7th century BC. They ultimately derive from the 1st to 3rd century AD Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara. Traditional Japanese sculptures mainly focused on Buddhist images. The oldest sculpture in Japan is a wooden statue of Amitābha at the Zenkō-ji temple. Statues are often lacquered, gilded, or brightly painted. Bronze and other metals have also been used.

Japanese preferences for natural materials and an interaction of interior and exterior space are clearly expressed in architecture. Most Japanese sculpture is associated with religion, and the medium's use declined with the lessening importance of traditional Buddhism. Though elaborate and stylized forms of architecture are cornerstone of Japanese art, painting was also important since the late Heian period around the year 1000 AD. Painting styles often changed as ruling groups changed. Painting is the preferred artistic expression in Japan. Japanese art covers a wide range of art styles and media, including ancient pottery, sculpture, ink painting and calligraphy on silk and paper, *ukiyo-e* paintings and woodblock prints, *kirigami*, *origami*, *dorodango* along with a myriad of other types of works of art. The written work can consist of phrases, poems, stories, or even single characters. The forms are known as *shodō* or more commonly *shūji* (learning writing of characters),

⁸⁴ Named after the cord markings that decorated the surfaces of their clay vessels.

and *sumi-e* (ink painting). The flowing, brush-drawn Japanese rendering of text itself is seen as a traditional art form as well as a means of conveying written information. Landscapes, portraits, and scenes of life are traditional subjects associated with Japanese painting.

The Japanese also have rich tradition of performance art. Music, theatre, and dance are integral parts of the Japanese art world. Many old forms of these performances, art styles have survived to the present. For instance, *Kabuki* Folk dances and traditional music was also performed throughout the country. Drums, gongs, flutes, and stringed instruments are hallmarks of traditional Japanese music. While various periods of Japanese history are famous for their particular art styles and contributions to the development of Japanese art and aesthetics⁸⁵.

The culture of Japan has evolved greatly over the millennia, from the country's prehistoric time. Early works of Japanese literature were heavily influenced by cultural contact with China. Indian literature also had an influence through the spread of Buddhism throughout Japan. The music of Japan *gaku* (enjoyment) includes a wide array of performers in distinct styles. The four traditional theatres from Japan are *nō*, *kyōgen*, *kabuki*, and *bunraku*.

⁸⁵ The Edo period is particularly well known for its *Ukiyo-e* wood-block prints and art of the *Pleasure Quarters* of Kyoto that celebrated the courtesans of the *floating world*.

Appendix 2.1.

A Note on the Myths of Creation

The word *myth* comes from Greek meaning *story*, but myths as we know them are more than mere folktales: they are stories with special significance for the culture that gave them birth. The myths are stories that tell a society what is important for it to know about its gods, history, laws, or class structure. Every ancient civilization is filled with variety of mythical tales. Practically, in each civilization, invariably the first is related to the process of creation of universe and the role of major deities. It is almost a truism in most mythologies that the act of creation is the process of developing order out of chaos⁸⁶.

Mesopotamia

Ancient Mesopotamian odyssey recorded about *Gilgamesh* the king of the city-state Uruk, by philosopher-sage *Zarathustra* in his *Avesta*, describes two primeval gods: *Apsû* (Abzu), who represents fresh water and *Tiamat* representing oceanic waters. Several other gods are also created. *Ea* and his brothers – who reside in *Tiamat*'s vast body. They make so much noise that the babel or noise annoys *Tiamat* and *Apsû* greatly. *Apsû* wishes to kill the young gods, but *Tiamat* disagrees. The vizier, *Mummu* agrees with *Apsû*'s plan to destroy them. *Tiamat*, in order to stop this from occurring, warns *Ea*, the most powerful of the gods. She uses her magic to put *Apsû* into a coma, then kills him, and shuts *Mummu* out. She then becomes the chief god and marries *Damkina*, and has a son, *Marduk*. *Marduk* is given wind to play with and he uses the wind to make dust storms and tornadoes. This disrupts *Tiamat*'s great body and causes the gods still residing inside her making her unable to sleep. The gods persuade *Tiamat* to take revenge for the death of her husband, *Apsû*. Her power grows, and some of the gods join her. She creates 11 monsters to help her win the battle and elevates *Kingu*, her new husband, to *supreme dominion*. A lengthy

⁸⁶ This traditionalist view that reverse the order and fears chaos is mirrored in W. B. Yeats famous description of a destructive anarchy: *Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold* (*The Second Coming*, 1921).

description of the other gods' inability to deal with the threat follows. Marduk offers to save the gods, if he is appointed as their leader and allowed to remain so, even after the threat passes. When the gods agree to Marduk's conditions he is selected as their champion against Tiamat, and becomes very powerful. Marduk challenges Tiamat to combat and destroys her. He then rips her corpse into two halves with which, he fashions the earth and the skies. Marduk then creates the calendar, organizes the planets and stars, and regulates the moon, the sun, and the weather. The gods who have pledged their allegiance to Tiamat are initially forced into labour in the service of the gods who sided with Marduk. Most noteworthy is Marduk's symbolic elevation over *Enlil*, who was seen by earlier Mesopotamian civilizations as the king of the gods.

The Babylonian Flood Legend

The Great Flood mythological story about a great destruction that once befell the earth. There are several variants; the Biblical version is the most famous. The possibility that there is a historical event behind the story (a local flood in southern Babylonia in the twenty-eighth century BC) cannot be excluded.

The Babylonian story of the Great Flood has come down to us in three versions, which contain so many echoes that it is likely that tradition was not oral, but written. The Biblical account can be seen as the fourth branch to this tree.

The oldest text is the *Epic of Atrahasis*, which survives on three tablets from the reign of king Ammi-saduqa of Babylonia (1647-1626 BC). It follows the standard pattern. At the beginning, the world is created and the Lesser Gods are forced to work hard, digging rivers and erecting mountains. They are tired, however, and declare war upon the Great Gods, who decide to create mankind to make life easier for the gods.

This story of an insurrection, shortly after the Creation, by Lesser Gods, may be behind the revolt of the giants in the Graeco-Roman version, and the remarks about the giants in the Bible. It is true, the Biblical Giants are not explicitly mentioned as rebellious or bad, but knowledge about their acts is taken for granted by the author, who does not explain who were *the mighty men that were of old*, and assumes that everyone understands that the giants were evil. The connection is made very explicit in the apocryphal *Book of Watchers*, which belongs to the Enochitic literature and dates to the late third or early second century BC.

Back to the *Epic of Atrahasis*. Mankind has been created but their population increases and their noise disturbs the gods. The supreme god Enlil decides to wipe out all humans with a Great Flood, but Enki, who has created mankind, betrays the secret to Atrahasis in a dream, and orders him to build a ship. There is a brief description of it, focusing on its roof, and a description of Atrahasis' speech to the Elders of Shuruppak.

After a fragment on the building and departure of the ark, we still have some lines about the storm, and the very end of it, in which the gods make sure that the noise will remain within limits: they invent childbirth, infant mortality, and celibacy.

The second Babylonian text is the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which was composed in cca.1100 BC, and contains much information that was composed earlier. It tells the story of the king of Uruk, Gilgamesh, who is on a quest for immortality, and meets Ut-napishtim, the survivor of the Flood. He tells essentially the story of the *Epic of Atrahasis*, even quoting it, but this time, the story is told in the first person singular.

There are some interesting differences, though, which betray that the author had read more than just the *Epic of Atrahasis*. For instance, the story from the Eridu Genesis that Enki spoke to Ziusudra indirectly, through a wall, is incomprehensible in the *Epic of Atrahasis*, but has received a funny twist in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*: Enki has sworn not to betray the secret to mankind, and therefore, he tells it to a house, and the wall speaks to Ut-napishtim. We also read about the dimensions of the Ark, which is not a ship in our sense of the word, but a large cube, with a roof like the firmament that had once divided the primordial waters. In other words, the Ark is to be a copy of the universe.

This time, we have a long and beautiful description of the storm-flood, and finally the famous story of the landing on a mountain in what is now Kurdistan. Like any Babylonian sailor would have done, Ut-napištim releases birds to check if there is land in sight, and indeed, it is discovered. He sacrifices, and the gods gather *like flies* - an insulting comparison that is not fully explained. In the end, Ut-napishtim receives immortality, a gift that he cannot offer to the king of Uruk.

Berosus an important Babylonian official, of the main temple of Babylon, wrote a *Babylonian History*, which contains a description of the Great Flood as well. A new element added is that the hero Xisuthrus, who again has his Sumerian name (Ziusudra), has to take care of three tablets containing human wisdom, which he has to bury in the city of Sippar. They are not mentioned in any other text, except for two

Table 2.1.1: Different Versions of the Myth Compared

	Eridu Genesis	Atrahasis	Gilgamesh	Bible	Berosus	Greece
Date	3 rd mill. BC	cca. 1640 BC	cca. 1100 BC	cca. 1000-500 BC	278 BC	cca. 700 BC
Revolt	...	Lesser gods	...	Giants	Monsters	Giants
Hero	Ziusudra	Atrahasis	Ut-napishtim	Noah	Xisuthrus	Deucalion
Country	Shuruppak	Shuruppak	Shuruppak	...	Sippar	Thessaly
Destroyer	Enlil	Enlil	Enlil	YHWH	Enlil	Zeus
Warning	Vision	Dream	Indirect order	Direct order	Dream	...
Reason	Noise	Noise	...	Sin, giants	...	Sin, giants
Cause	Storm flood	Rain	Storm, flood	Rain, fountains	...	Rain, waves
Savior	Enki	Enki	Enki	YHWH	Enki	Prometheus
Period	7 days	7 days	7 days	150/40 days	Quickly	9 days
Destination	...	...	Nimush	Ararat	Gordyene	Parnassus
Fate	Eternal life	Eternal life	Eternal life	3 sons	Eternal life	3 grandsons
Birds	...	...	Raven, dove, swallow	Doves/raven	Several	None

Source: Compiled by the author from Livius.org Articles on Ancient History.

Jewish books, *Jubilees* and *Enoch*. Another innovation is the reference to the day on which the Flood begins, 15 Daisios; this element can also be found in the Genesis account. Another similarity with the story in the Bible is that the dimensions of the ark are mentioned, and resemble a real ship.

It is not likely that many Greeks read the *Babylonian History*. In any case, they kept to their own version, which is a bit different from the Babylonian versions, but still has some remarkable similarities

Egypt

The story of creation that was developed in Heliopolis was that first of the gods evolved out of chaos and darkness and brought order to disordered universe runs parallel to creation stories of other civilizations. In the beginning were the primeval waters named *Nun* (or *Nu*), since they were unconscious and inanimate, were incapable of independent action. Out of the waters, *Ra* (Sun god) raised himself on a hill and found that at the moment of his creation nothing else existed. Until this moment he had lived alone in the primeval waters, where he developed in darkness and contained both male and female principles. Pyramid texts tell us that *Ra* was the god *who came into being, who masturbated. He took his phallus in his grasp that he might create orgasm by means of it, and so were born the twins Shu (the god of air) and Tefnut (the goddess of mist). Ra said that he became three gods.* This act resulted in the immediate existence of light and dispersal of chaos. After creating himself and his two children *Ra* wept, and tears that fell gave birth to mortal men and women. In the meantime, *Shu* and *Tefnut* joined together as man and wife, and out of their union came *Geb* (god of earth) and *Nut* (the goddess of sky). The two were long locked in embrace, and *Shu* had to come in between them. He lifted *Nut* up above the earth, and the universe was formed.

Persia

Zoroastrianists believe that the only god in the beginning of time was *Ahura Mazda* (Wise Lord). Before the world was made, He lived in Endless Light. At this time there was also an Evil Spirit, *Ahriman*, who lived in the Absolute Darkness. The myth symbolises the struggle between Endless Light and Absolute Darkness. Between these realms there was nothing until one day *Ahura* decided to make other creations.

Ahura created Second water. Third he made the Earth with no mountains or valleys. Fourth he made plants without any thorns or stickers. Fifth he created big and small animals. Sixth he created a man, handsome and smart, who was named, *Gayomard*. Last of all he created fire to mix with all the other creations. He ordered the fire to serve mankind in cooking and keeping warm. After Ahura finished his creations, the Evil Spirit saw them. The Wise Lord then commanded Evil Spirit to praise all of his creations so that he could become immortal. The Evil Spirit thinking he was more powerful than Ahura's creations vowed to destroy them with the help of his own creations, demons, witches and monsters. The all-knowing Ahura decided to create six Spirits (Holy Immortals) in his own essence to compete with Ahriman.

India

According to the *Rig Vedic* myth that persists throughout Hindu mythology is the idea of primeval incest⁸⁷ (Hymns, X.61.5-7; I.71.5; I.71.8; I.164.33). Heaven and earth meet here in an act which is creative.

„As his phallus was stretched out in the eagerness for the act of a man... he drew back from the maiden, his daughter, that tireless phallus which had been thrust in. As they were in the midst of the very act of the union, when the father was satisfying his desire for the young girl, the two of them left a little of the out-flowing seed shed upon the back of the earth in the womb of good deeds. The benevolent gods created sacred speech and fashioned *Rudra Vastrospati*, the protector of sacred rites... As *Agni* made seed for the great father heaven, he entered into the womb. The god satisfied his lust in his own daughter... *Agni* caused to be born blameless benevolent group of youths (*Angirases*) and made them great... Heaven is my father, the engenderer, the navel here. My mother is the wide earth, my close kin. Between these two outstretched bowls is the womb; in it the father placed his daughter's embryo.”

⁸⁷ No single hymn tells this story, but only scattered references are made that never actually names the father or the daughter and may simply express in anthromorphic terms the idea of the One (*Manu*, later identified as *Prajapati*) who creates a Second with who he unites as a pair.

One cosmogonic myth is the subject of an entire hymn which explains creation as the result of a primeval sacrifice – dismemberment and distribution (X.90); not an actual creation of something out of nothing, but rather a rearrangement, order out of chaos. The primeval Man (*Puruṣa*) is not changed into various forms of life; he is those forms.

“(Puruṣa) himself is all this whatever has been and whatever is to be. He is the lord of immortality and also lord of that which grows on food. Such is his greatness, and the Man is yet greater than this. All creatures make up a quarter of him; three quarters are the immortals in heaven.... From him *Viraj* (he who rules afar) was born, and from *Viraj* came the Man, who having been born, ranged beyond the earth before and behind. When the gods spread the sacrifice... in which everything was offered...everything was born. His mouth was the *Brahmin*, his arms were made into the *nobles*, his two thighs were the *populace*, and from his feet the *servants*. The *moon* was born from his mind; the *sun* from his eye. From his mouth came *Indra* and *Agni*, and from his vital breath the wind (*Vayu*) was born. From his navel the atmosphere was born; from his head the heaven appeared. From his two feet came the earth, the regions of sky from his ear. Thus they fashioned the world.”

China

The Chinese *Pan-ku* myth follows as that in the beginning the universe was nothing but chaos, and the heavens and the earth were intermingled—a big black egg⁸⁸. *Pan-*

⁸⁸ The interesting aspects of this tale are its similarities to other myths. For example, scientifically speaking, the cosmic egg is a common concept that is indicative of the universe before the Big Bang occurred. While this may, at first glance, be a very primitive way of describing such an event, one cannot help but notice how very insightful it is. How did various people with no apparent technology or knowledge of the universe, as we modern humans know it, so accurately explain what we now can? Were they made privy to this knowledge somehow?

An interesting aspect of the tale is one of the more elusive. Some versions of the Pan-ku creation myth state that the giant had help from four mythical beasts: the turtle known for its

ku was born inside of this egg and slept for 18,000 years, during which time the *Yin* (陰) and *Yang* (陽) balanced as he grew. When he awoke, he realized that he was trapped within it. He cracked the egg and began to push it apart, essentially splitting the Yin and Yang. The upper half of the shell became the sky above him, and the lower half became the earth. The longer he held them apart, the thicker they grew and the taller he became, thus pushing them further apart. The popular version of the myth claims that a turtle, a qilin, phoenix, and a dragon assisted him in this task. After another 18,000 years Pan-ku died, his body forming the various parts of the earth, and the parasites on his body forming humans⁸⁹.

Greece

According to Greek mythology, in the beginning, there was nothing but chaos. Out of this chaos, *Night* and *Erebus* (personification of Death and Shadow) materialized. They gave birth to *Love*, who in turn created *Light* and *Day*. Then came *Gaea* (earth), and *Tartarus* (the deepest pit in the world). *Gaea* first bore *Uranus* (heaven), and then she brought forth terrible creatures: The *Cyclopes*. *Gaea* didn't like this. She decided to have *Cronus* (one of the Titans) castrate his father with a jagged sickle. Cronus threw the severed members behind him and from the bloody drops earth conceived the *Furies* and *Giants*. Cronus then began to fear for his own life when he was given a prophecy that one of his own children (birthed by *Rhea*, who was his sister and wife) would overcome him as he did with his father. So he ate them one by one as they were delivered by *Rhea*. When *Zeus* was born, however, *Rhea* hid him in a cave on Crete, and gave Cronus a rock wrapped in a blanket instead. Cronus swallowed the rock, thinking that it was Zeus. When Zeus became fully grown, he forced Cronus to vomit out his brothers and sisters. After this, they went to war with the Titans. The gods, with the help of the Cyclopes, who they released from Tartarus, eventually won over the Titans and threw all of them into Tartarus, with the exception of *Atlas*, who was condemned to hold the world up for eternity. The gods, however, faced more challenges to their authority. *Gaea* had given birth to a terrible monster named

strength and immortality; the Qilin (a dragon-like creature) and the dragon as the bearers of wisdom and a symbol of power; and the phoenix a symbol of rebirth.

⁸⁹ Another version states that he formed the earth with a chisel and hammer, while yet another version states that a goddess who later inhabited the earth formed humans.

Typhon, who rose up against them. Zeus managed to strike Typhon down with a lightning bolt. Afterwards, the Giants, who arose from Uranus's blood, also rose up against the Gods. Zeus defeated them too, and threw them into Tartarus. After this, when all threats to the Gods' authority were crushed, Zeus and his two brothers, *Poseidon* and *Hádēs*, drew lots to see what part of the world each would rule. Zeus ended up ruling the sky, Poseidon the sea, and Hádēs the underworld.

Appendix 2.2.

2.2.1. Ancient Deities in Different Civilizations

INDO-ARYAN	GREEK	ROMAN	EGYPTIAN
Ashvinin	Dioskuroi	Gemini	-
Brahma	Héphaistos	Vulcanus	Ptah
Dyaus	Ouranos	Uranus	-
Indra	Zeus	Jupiter	Amon
Indrani	Héra	Juno	Mut
Kali-Uma	Rhea	Cybele-Ceres	Isis
Kama	Eros	Cupido	-
Kartikeya	Árēs	Mars	Onuris
Lakshmi	Aphroditē	Venus	Hathor
Ratri	Athēnā	Minerva	Neith
Rudra	Diónysos	Bacchus	-
Saraswati	Leda	Leda	-
Shiva	Kronos	Saturnus	Osiris
Surya	Apóllōn	Sol	Horus
Ushas	Eros	Aurora	-
Varuna	Poseidōn	Naptune	Sebek
Vayu	Aiolos	Ventus	-
Vishnu	Hērmēs	Mercurius	Anubis
Yama	Hádēs	Pluto	Thoth

Source: Sharma, S (2010) *Reflections on the Philosophical Foundations of Economics*, Zagreb: Mikrorad, pp 42.

2.2.2. Deities of Ancient Mesopotamia

Deities	Function
Abzu and Tiamat	Primordial beings
Agasaya	...
Anhilulu	...
Anshar and Kishar	Primordial beings
Anu	First Lord of the heaven; the supreme deity
Anunnaki	...
Bel	...
Dumuzid/Tammuz	...
Enki/Ea	Creator of man; represented wisdom, magic and incantations
Enkimdu	...
Enlil	Creator god; air god: god of winds, storm
Ereshkigal	Goddess of underworld
Geshtinanna	...
Inanna/Ishtar	Goddess of sexuality, passion, love and war
Kingu	...
Lahmu and Lahamu	Primordial being
Mami/Nintu	...
Marduk	Patron god of city of Babylon
Nammu	Primordial being; primeval sea (Engur)
Namtar	...
Nanna/Sin	God of the moon and wisdom
Nanshe	...
Ninhursag	Protectoress of women and children
Ninurta	Born to Ninhursag
Utu/Shamsh	Sun god; dispenser of justice

Source: Compiled by the author.

2.2.3. Deities of Ancient Egypt

Deities	Title(s)	Function
Amun	The Hidden One; The Pilot who knows the Water; King of the Gods	Solar god; Thebian variation of God Ra; controlled the life span of individuals
Anubis	The watch dog; Lord of the Mummy Wrapping; Lord of the Holy Land	God of death; Checks the balance of scales in judging the souls of dead
Apophis	-	Snake enemy of Ra
Aten	-	Physical manifestation of Ra as the sun disk
Atum	-	Pilot of the solar boat at night
Bastet	-	Feline goddess of pleasure and protector from evil
Bes	-	Divine protector of mothers and new-born; god of music, dance, jollity protector of Happiness
Geb	The great Cackler	God of earth and living plants; protector of dead bodies in their tombs
Hapi	Primeval One of Earth	Personification of the Nile
Hathor	Great Mother; Lady of the Holy Country; Lady of All	Goddess of Sky, love, music, beauty and joy; greeter of the dead at the entrance to the underworld
Horus the Elder	-	Steerer of the solar boat
Horus the Younger	Guide of the underworld	Protector and guide of souls through the underworld
Imhotep	<i>He Who Comes in peace</i>	God of science, magic and medicine
Isis	Great Mother	Archetype of wifely love and devoted motherhood
Khepri	-	God of the morning sun; god of creation and rebirth
Khnum	Father of fathers and mother of mothers	Creates humans out of clay

Khons	His name means <i>to travel and move about</i>	God of the moon; fills living being with air of life
Maat	-	Goddess of truth and justice
Min	-	God of fertility; vegetation god and bringer of rain
Mut	Great Mother	Protective goddess associated with vultures
Neith	-	Guardian of Canopic jars; a war goddess
Nephtys	Lady of the House	Counterpart of Isis represents death, decay, the invisible and darkness
Nun	-	God of the primeval waters
Nut	The Great Protectoress	Goddess of the sky; protector of gods and souls of the dead while in the solar boat
Osiris	-	God of death and resurrection; god of the underworld; supreme god of the dead; god of fertility and vegetation
Ptah	Lord of Maat	God of creation; originator of food, labour and <i>all good things</i>
Ra	Lord of Heaven and Earth	Sun god; creator god; pilot of the solar boat
Ra-Herakthy	-	God of the morning sun
Sekhmet	Eye of Ra	Goddess of war; associated with the destructive sun-heat
Serket	-	Scorpion goddess
Seth	The Red God	God of evil, chaos and violence; god of darkness
Shu	Father of the Gods; The Uplifter	God of air and space between the earth and sky
Sobek	-	Crocodile god

Tefnut	-	Goddess of mist
Thoth	Divine Author; Heart of Ra; Bull of Justice	God of wisdom, medicine and science; Ra's messenger among humans

Source: Edited by the author, from Armour, R A (2001) *Gods and Myths of Ancient Egypt*, Cairo: American University in Cairo. pp 176-182.

2.2.4. Deities of Ancient Persia

Deities	Function
Aesma Daeva	Demon of lust and anger; personification of violence, a lover of conflict
Agas	A Persian demoness of illness, one of the drugs
Ahura Mazda	<i>Lord of Wisdom</i> - supreme god, creator of heaven and earth
Ahuraani	Water goddess; watches over rainfall
Airyaman	God of friendship and healing
Aka Manah	One of <i>Daevas</i> : personification of sensual desire
Allatum	Goddess of underworld
Amesha Spentas	The name of seven divine belonging to the retinue of Ahura Mazda
Anahita	Water, fertility goddess; patroness of women as well as goddess of war
Aneretat	Personification of immortality and the protector of plants
Angra Mainyu	God of darkness, eternal destroyer of good, creator of evil
Apam-natat	God found in water who provides water to the people
Apaosa	A demon who brings draught and aridity
Arishtat	Personification of holy devotion; goddess of fertility and the dead buried in the earth
Armaiti	Principal adversary of the world of demons; his eternal opponent are: the arch demon of lie and drug, and arch demon of apostasy, <i>Indra</i>
Asha Vahishta	Personification of <i>best</i> truth; protects the physical and moral order on earth
Asman	God of the sky
Asto Vidatu	The demon of death whom no human escapes

Atar	God of all fire and of purity
Baga	God of prosperity and wealth
Bahram	God of planets and victory
Burijas	War god of Kassites
Bushyasta	Demon of lethargy and sloth; evil genius – causes men to oversleep
Buyasta	Demon of laziness who prevents people from working
Daena	Goddess personifying religion
Daevas	Demons who cause plagues and diseases and who fight every form of religion
Dahaka	God of death and demon of deceit and mendacity; loves destroying life
Dena	Goddess: daughter of Ahura Mazda
Dev	A demon of enormous power, a ruthless and immortal god of war
Drug	Female demon a representation of lie
Drvaspa	Goddess, protector of cattle, children and friendship
Fravashis	Guardian, defender of the spirit of the family
Gandareva	Water-demon who continually tries to devour the good things of creation
Geus-Tasan	Mythical divine creator of cattle
Geus-Urvan	Guardian of cattle
Haoma	A deified plant whose sap has anaesthetic qualities
Haurvatat	Personification of perfection and associated with life
Hvar	Sun-god; good spirit
Hvarekhsaeta	Many-horsed sun-god
Indar	God of warfare, courage and bravery
Indra	One of the seven Daevas and personification of apostasy
Izha	Indo-Iranian goddess of sacrifice
Khshathra Vairya	Personification of <i>desirable dominion</i> ; defender of peace and royalty
Mah	God of the moon associated with cow
Mao	Persian moon god
Mithra	God of light, contracts and friendship. He also maintains cosmic order

Nairyosangha	God of fire and messenger between gods and men
Nanghaithya	Personification of discontent
Neriosang	Messenger-god
Peris	Spirits of great beauty who guide mortals on their way to the <i>Land of Blessed</i>
Rapithwin	God of mid-day; a protecting deity of the south and summer
Rashnu	Divine angel of justice and last judgement; personification of righteousness
Saurva	One of seven main Daevas and main rival of Khshathra vairya
Spenta Mainyu	<i>Holy Spirit</i> is god of life; personification of good and light
Sraosa	Personification of obedience and messenger of Ahura Mazda
Srosh	A messenger of god in Middle Persian myths
Vanant	One of the four leaders of mythological war for Ahura Mazda
Vata	God of wind
Verethragha	God of victory and personification of aggressive triumph
Vohu Manah	Personification of wisdom
Vouruskasha	Sea deity of the ocean world in <i>Zoroastrian</i> cosmology
Yazata	Deities to whom the hymns in <i>Zend-Avesta</i> are addressed
Zam	Deified earth
Zam Armatav	Goddess of the earth
Zarich	Female <i>Daeva</i> : A personification of aging
Zurevan	A primordial god in Persian religion; a neutral god; father of Ahura Mazda

Source: *Iranian Mythology: Gods and Goddesses*, The Circle of Iranian Studies, at www.caissoas.com/CAIS/Mythology/gods_goddesses.htm

2.2.5. Major Hindu Deities of Ancient India

Deities	Function
Brahma	Often identified with <i>Prajapati</i> , a Vedic deity. According to the <i>Purānas</i> , <i>Brahma</i> (the Creator) is self-born (without mother) in the lotus flower, which grew from the navel of <i>Vishnu</i> at the beginning of the universe. Brahma is said also to be the son of the Supreme Being (<i>Brāhman</i>) and the female energy known as <i>Prakṛti</i> (nature or <i>Māyā</i>)
Kali	Goddess of time and change, represented as the consort of Lord <i>Shiva</i> . She is associated with many other Hindu goddesses like <i>Durga</i> , <i>Bhadrakali</i> , <i>Sati</i> , <i>Rudrani</i> , <i>Parvati</i> and <i>Chamunda</i> . She is the foremost among the ten fierce Tantric goddesses
Prajapati	At the beginning of creation, <i>Brahma</i> created eleven <i>Prajapatis</i> , who are believed to be the fathers of the human race. Since all these sons of his were born out of his mind rather than body, they are called <i>Manas Putras</i>
Saraswati	White skinned goddess of poetry, music, science and learning as well as all creative arts. Inventor of all the arts of civilization: music, letters, mathematics, calendars, magic, the Vedas and all other branches of learning
Shiva	On mount <i>Kailasha</i> in the Himalayas, his traditional abode, where he sits in deep meditation Lord <i>Shiva</i> . He is said to eradicate <i>Kama</i> (sexual desire), <i>Moha</i> (material desire) and <i>Māyā</i> (mundane thoughts) from his devotees' minds. His attributes are <i>Third Eye</i> (with which he burned Desire to ashes); <i>Serpent</i> (garlanded); Crescent (his head bears the crescent of the fifth day moon showing that He possesses the power of procreation and destruction); <i>Sacred Ganga</i> (flowing from his matted hair); <i>Damaru</i> (a small hand drum - the major attribute of his famous dancing representation known as <i>Nataraja</i>); <i>Vibhuti</i> (three lines of ashes drawn on the forehead representing the essence of our Being); <i>Bhasma</i> (body smeared with ashes); <i>Tiger skin</i> : (often shown seated upon a tiger skin wearing a deer skin indicating that he has controlled the mind perfectly); <i>Trident</i> (his particular weapon); <i>Nandi</i> (the Bull - his vehicle); and the <i>Lingam</i> (phallus)
Tara	Pre-Vedic saviour goddess; governs the underworld, the Earth and the Heavens, birth, death and regeneration, love and war, the seasons, all that lives and grows, and the moon cycles

Vishnu	Maintainer, Preserver, famously identified with His or god's incarnations (especially Krishna and Rama). He is also called <i>Narayana</i> ; and considered as supreme soul and supreme god. He is all-pervading, essence of all beings, the master of - and beyond - the past, present and future, the creator and destroyer of all existences, one who supports, sustains and governs the universe and originates and develops all elements within
Aditi	Sun goddess, mother of all the lights of heaven
Agni	Regent of the southeast
Ananta	Serpent's queen
Bhawani	Mother goddess bestower of existence
Devi	Dearly beloved goddess
Durga	Queen mother, warrior goddess, rode tiger into battle defending her children – gods
Ganesha	Also known as <i>Ganapati</i> , <i>Vinayaka</i> is one of the best-known and most worshiped deities in Hindu pantheon. His image is found and worshiped by Hindus throughout India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Cambodia. He is considered god of new beginnings and remover of obstacles the patron of arts and sciences and the deva of intellect and wisdom
Hanuman	Monkey god; one of the central figures of epic <i>Rāmāyana</i>
Indra	Chief of the regent gods, is regarded as the regent of the east
Indrani	Queen of gods
Kamadeva	God of love
Karttikeya	Sons of <i>Parvati</i> and <i>Shiva</i>
Kubera	God of wealth and propriety, regent of north
Kundalini	Serpent goddess representing inner power of the human body
Lakshmi	Goddess of wealth and abundance; lady of lotus; goddess of beauty and good fortune
<i>Māyā</i>	Virgin aspect of the triple Hindu goddess, symbolized by a spider, spinner of magic, fate and earthly appearances
Parvati	Represents maiden aspect of Kali; Daughter of the mountain, Devi; Daughter of Heaven; Shiva's bride; also known by names <i>Māyā</i> , <i>Sati</i> , <i>Durga</i> , <i>Shakti</i> , etc.
Prakrti	Nature (<i>Māyā</i>)
Prithvi	Earth Mother

Rudra	A <i>Rig Vedic</i> deity, associated with wind or storm and the hunt. Shiva shares several features with him: the theonym Shiva originated as an epithet of <i>Rudra</i>
Savitri	Hindu mother of civilization, She brought forth music and literature, rhythm, time, measurements, day and night, memory, conquest, victory and yoga
Shakti	Great goddess of cosmic energy
Sita	Goddess <i>Earth</i> as the wife of <i>Rama</i>
Soma	Regent of the northeast
Surya	Regent of the southwest
Uma	The Golden goddess, personifying light and beauty
Varuna	Originally the representative of the all-embracing heaven (atmosphere), now the god of the ocean; regent of the west
Vasundhara	Goddess of prosperity
Vayu	(or Pavana, the wind) regent of the northwest
Yama	Lord of the hereafter

Source: Compiled by the author.

2.2.6. Deities of Ancient China

Deities	Function
Caishen	God of wealth; happy family and a secure, prosperous, and respectable job
Chang'e	Goddess of the moon
Dragon	Oldest symbol of a deity (appears c. 4500-3750 BC); considered a composite of yin and yang energies and originally seen as a balancing force who was wise and just; god of rain and waters
Guanyin	Goddess of mercy and compassion; the patron of sailors and fishermen
Menshen	"Gods of Peaceful Sleep", guardian of the door, protects a room, house, or building from evil spirits and ghosts
Niu Lang & Zhi Nu	The god and goddess of love
Nuwa & Fuxi	Mother and father deities of human beings
	The god of creation: The myth says that once there was only darkness everywhere in the universe and in this grew a cosmic egg

P'an Ku	which was kept warm for thousands of years until it broke open and P'an Ku appeared. He cut through the darkness and separated the yin from the yang principles; then he made the yin into earth and the yang into sky and pushed them apart from each other. He worked on his creation for thousands of years until it was perfect, and then he died. His breath became air and his blood the rivers and streams. The fleas from his body ran off and became animals while his body hair became forests of trees and bushes. His left eye became the sun and his right eye the moon. Many centuries after his death, Nuwa appeared and created human beings and Fuxi taught them how to survive in the world P'an Ku had created
Shang-ti	Supreme god of law, order, justice, and creation; worshipped primarily during (1600-1046 BC); considered as the great ancestor of all Chinese, who gave the people culture, architecture, skill in battle, agriculture, controlled the weather, regulated the seasons, and was king over the other gods, human beings, and nature
Xiwangmu	Queen of the immortal gods and spirits, especially female spirits and goddess of immortality
Yan Wang	God of death and king in the afterlife; Lord Yama; greatest of all the Lords of Death who rule the regions of the underworld; presides over the judgment of souls and decides their punishment of crimes in life, go on to live with the gods, or be reincarnated

Source: Campbell, T (2014) *Gods and Goddesses of Ancient China*, Rosen Group.

2.2.7. Deities of Ancient Greece

Deities	Function
Aphrodite	Goddess of love and beauty; was the wife of Hephaistos but was in love with the war god Ares
Apollo	God of the sun, truth, music, poetry, dance and healing
Ares	God of war; unlike Athena, not very cunning in battle and not a popular god
Artemis	Goddess of hunting, archery and childbirth, and wild animals; had the ability to send plagues or sudden death to mortals, but she could also heal them
Athens	Goddess of war and cunning wisdom. She is also the goddess of pot-making and wool-working
Demeter	Goddess of fertility and agriculture; also associated with the underworld

Diónysos	Fun loving god of high spirits, strong emotions and wine; also closely associated with drama and the theatre
Hephaistos	God of fire, volcanoes, blacksmiths and craft-workers
Hera	Goddess of weddings and marriage; wife of Zeus and the queen of the gods
Hermes	God of travel, business, weights and measures and sports; messenger of the gods and guide of the souls of the dead to the underworld. The patron of herdsmen, thieves, graves and messengers. His staff caused men to fall asleep instantly
Poseidon	God of the sea and horses; known for his bad temper and was greatly feared because of his ability to cause earthquakes; believed to be able to make fresh water gush forth from the earth
Zeus	King of the gods; controls the weather; <i>cloud-gatherer</i> and the <i>thunderer</i> ; his weapon was the thunderbolt

Source: British Museum, London.

2.2.8. Deities in Ancient Rome

Deities	Function
Apollo	The god of the sun/rides the sun
Bacchus	The god of wine, parties/festivals, madness, and merriment
Ceres	Saturn's daughter, goddess of farming and agriculture
Cupid	The god of love.
Diana	The goddess of the moon
Fortuna	The goddess of luck
Janus	The god of gates and doors
Juno	Jupiter's wife, and goddess of marriage
Jupitar	The king of the gods and goddesses, and god of lightning and the sky
Mars	God of war
Mercury	Messenger of the gods; also the god of thieves, commerce and travellers.
Minerva	The virgin goddess of wisdom, handicrafts, strategic warfare, and trade
Pluto	The god of death, and the riches under the earth
Proserpina	Pluto's wife, goddess of spring, queen of the underworld

Saturn	The titan of time and king of the titans
Terra	The goddess of the earth
Apollo	The god of the sun/rides the sun

Source: Compiled by the author.

3.

Religion, Philosophy, and Economics in Ancient Civilizations⁹⁰

In above context at least three important facts should be recognized. First, that human history is an excellent teacher. It is continuous and there are no gaps in it. If at all, there are, these are the gaps in our memory and knowledge alone. Second, that human nature and behaviour has not changed fundamentally, over the course of history. Over time, factors such as enhancement in individual's knowledge, development in science and technology, political and socio-economic conditions, impact of religion etc. had only partial and temporary effects. Third, nothing begins from afresh as it has already been there in the past, in some form or the other. Thus past and future are very much related. Future is just an embryo in the womb of the past. To look at the future one must look at the past.

⁹⁰ This essay is based on my lecture 'An Unholy Trinity ...' delivered at the University of Meerut (India) in March 2017. A modified version of this has appeared in (2017), 'Some Thoughts on Ancient Civilizations' Trinity of Philosophy, Religion and Economics' in *The Journal of Philosophical Economics: Reflections on Economic and Social Issues*, XI: 1, pp 83-102). Following text is a revised and enlarged version of the same.

This essay, by looking at the history of civilizations, tries to look back at the functioning of the then existing mechanism of socio-economic order by examining the relationship between three fundamental spheres of human life – philosophy, religion and economics. Naturally, question arises, why to go back to the past history? Answer could probably be: Because, for one or the other reason, these civilizations were considered *great*. Historians suggest various reasons, such as, the vast geographical area that these covered, their military might, their economic growth and trade record, their efficient public administration, for their deliverance of socio-economic welfare to larger section of people, or their contributions to architecture, science, medicine, technology, and their cultural legacy etc.

From ancient history, interestingly, enough, we learn that humans have consistently fought to create a better future. Visions of intellectuals, rulers, men of faiths, and business people have helped shape civilizations to progress. But, underneath this progress were also sown the seeds of their downfall, for relatively soon the future visions of an *endless* progress ended abruptly (in a relative sense) for reasons of wars, natural disasters, poor socio-political management of societies, etc. As continuity and recovery are natural processes, again and again, these civilizations started their rebuilding, but their past determined their future, and rarely any of these rose to its glorious past again.

Human history, further, suggests that *Homo sapiens* have trotted the land for over 250,000 years, but organized civilizations have existed only since 5000 BC. In the dawn of time, some grand civilizations of the ancient world emerged on the banks of great rivers: Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian on the Euphrates and Tigris, Egyptian on the Nile, pre-Indian along the Indus, Chinese along the Yellow River, Dravidian and Aryan in Indus basin and Ganges-Yamuna valley and so on. Only, Israeli and Persian civilizations survived in mountainous and desert lands, but after great struggles. Geographically, in different parts of the *Old World* these civilizations and cultures produced prosperous societies with highly developed philosophies and religious beliefs of their own.

This short study is organized into four sections: While 'Introduction' sets forth some basic thoughts for consideration; the section on 'Philosophy, Religion, Arts and Economics', tries to examine the ideological structure of a mutual relationship of these segments; the following section, 'The Trinity of Philosophy, Religion, and Economics', develops some arguments that puts to doubt the claimed thesis of relationship; and the finally, are the gist of the entire exercise.

FIG. 1: A QUICK GLANCE AT SOME ASPECTS OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

	CHINA	INDIA	PERSIA	MESOPOTAMIA	EGYPT	GREECE	ISRAEL
The Geographical Region	Area between the Yang-Tse-kiang and Huang-Ho	Delta of Indus and the valley of Ganges-Yamuna	Empires ruled by the Persians	Delta of Euphrates-Tigris and all the north up to Syria, and Palestine	Along the river Nile and its delta.	Mainland, Aegean islands and the coast of the Mediterranean	The kingdoms of Levant: Israel and Judea
At its Zenith Since	2300 BC	2500 BC	3400 BC	3500 BC	3100 BC	1200 BC	1200 BC
Well-known Philosophers	Confucius and Mencius	Śankara, Buddha, and Mahavira	Zarathustra	Hammurabi	Imhotep, and Ptah-hotep	Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle	Moses
Main Ancient Religion	Buddhist	Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain	Zoroastrianism	-	-	Hellenic	Jewish
Major Deity(ies)	Shang-ti, and T'ien (Heaven)	Hindu: Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh Buddha: Gautama Jain: Mahavira	Ahura Mazda	Sumerian: Anu, Enlil, and Ea Babylon: Marduk, and Ishtar	Ra (Sun), and Pt-ah	Zeus, and Poseidon	YHWH
Major Advances in Technology	Gun powder, Automated crossbows, and Robots	Philosophy, Architecture, Gold smithy, Metallurgy, Crafts and sculpture	Persian wheel, Production of wines	Mathematics, Writing script Weights and measures	Surgery, Geometry, Architecture Chariot, Archery and Art of war	Philosophy, Medicine, Mathematics (Heat ray weapon; Universal antidote against all poisons)	Preservation and use of water

Note: The table is composed by the author based upon historical facts from variety of sources.

Religion, Philosophy, Arts, and Economics⁹¹

Since humans have been able, they have used philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, history and language to understand and record our world. Progress in each field had neither been parallel nor continuous. Each segment did make some strides at one or the other point on the time scale, depending upon the political, religious, cultural and economic circumstances.

In historical perspective, religious beliefs have dictated the daily life of the people, for human beings have always sought answers to varieties of questions about themselves and their environment. At least points of time, mankind has always thought that it knew in what it believed (faiths, religion⁹²), had the scientific percept

⁹¹ Matter of this section heavily draws upon chapters: 1. Religion, Philosophy and Economics (pp. 1-11); and 2. Philosophical and Historical Perspective of Religion and Economics (pp 13-85), of my (2010) book *Reflections on the Philosophical Foundations of Economics*, Zagreb: Mikrorad.

⁹² Religion can be approached from various standpoints. Scientific approach to religion has been called as phenomenological that seeks to define religion to isolate its elements, to discern its general pattern. It brings within its purview the characteristic and dominant interests of entire cultures, and may therefore concern itself as much with secular life as with religious practices and beliefs. Phenomenological methodology is based upon the work of anthropologists, philosophers, theologians, historians and scholars of culture.

(knowledge, philosophy⁹³) and wanted or needed (economics⁹⁴) for its daily life. This inseparable overlapping relationship of themes common to religion, philosophy and economics was like that of a holy trinity. This however, does not imply the undermining of the role of arts and sciences (technology) as these two have also played a significant role in people's life and thus in the progress of civilizations.

In historical perspective, religious beliefs have dictated the daily life of the people, for human beings have always sought answers to varieties of questions about themselves and their environment. Humankind has always thought that it knew in what it has been gifted with. Out of many fundamental desires, the following four can be highlighted as these did create the basic structure of every civilization and its culture. These being:

⁹³ The term is derived from the Greek words: *philo* (friends) and *sophia* (knowledge). In the Holy Bible (Proverb 1.2-4), we come across the definition of philosophers:

"To know wisdom and instruction
To comprehend the words of understanding
To receive the discipline of wisdom, justice, right and equity
To give prudence to the simple
To the young men knowledge and direction"

However, since then it has been variously defined. To cite some views:

- The Greek *philosophers* shaded off into the *rhetor* and sophists were simply the men of intellectual pursuits. Philosophy meant the sum total of all scientific knowledge. It is simply the universal science of which metaphysics formed a part not less than did physics, and physics not less than mathematics or any *philosophy* on the nature of the society and of the polis.

- Philosophy is something intermediate between theology and science. Like theology it consists of speculation on matters as to which definite knowledge has, so far, been unascertainable; but like science it appeals to human reason than to authority, whether to tradition or that of revelations.

- All definite knowledge belongs to science; all dogma that surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. But between theology and science there is the *no man's land* that Bertrand Russell calls philosophy.

- Conception of life and the world are believed to be a product of two factors: inherited religious and ethical conceptions, and investigation, which might be called scientific. Individual philosophers have differed widely in regard to the proportions in which these two factors entered in their systems.

⁹⁴ Economics has traditionally been defined as the study of *nature and causes of increasing wealth and economic welfare of the people*. However, Economics, in a practical sense, must be seen as a mechanism that ensures a rational allocation of human and material resources.

I think (the love for study or pursuit of wisdom or of knowledge of things and their causes, theoretical or practical) = referring to philosophy

I believe (faith in Supreme Being) = referring to religion

I want (nature and causes of increasing wealth and economic welfare of the people) = referring to economics

I create (spirit of invention and creation) = referring to arts, science and technology

Corresponding to the mentioned, human nature and behaviour has taken shape.

It is difficult to determine when the religious beliefs took precedence over philosophy or economics, however, a possible scenario could certainly be that as soon the fear inspired in the heart of humans by the sights of the great commotions of nature such as the volcano, the tempest, the thunderbolt, the earthquake and the angry seas, it led him to invent the gods and seek consolation. Intellectuals of society came to rescue. While the wiser took the advisory role, the physically strong took the political leadership (e.g. Vedic *Varna* system). Such leadership provided confidence and faith in the minds of people, stimulated them to toil and create prosperity. But then, the codes of conduct were required. Ethical and Moral philosophies emerged. Growing economies required frameworks and regulations. In order to preserve the set moral and social standards, laws of the societies were framed (e.g. King Hammurabi enacted such a code in Babylon in 1756 BC). Religion and philosophy got involved in day-to-day economics. This happens to be the story of our journey in time.

Religious philosophy tries to attempt to understand the concepts involved in religion (e.g. existence, fate, creation, justice, mercy, redemption, God etc.). Philosophers have approached particular religious' beliefs while advocating wide-ranging views about philosophy and religion. Economics has been considered as a study of human behaviour in his social environment, which among others is also based on religious and philosophical considerations. Philosophers in their search for Truth, Spirit, and the Good have also observed and designed the social order. Through the history of humankind, practices of various religious faiths and rites have incorporated philosophies of the time to enhance the economic welfare of the people. Moreover, history is also a witness of the conflicts of beliefs, and economic ambitions of the preferred class. While the warrior kings, who have fought wars and destroyed economies; the intellectuals, on the other hand, have helped protect human rights, develop democracy and create new social orders. At times, intellectuals or religious

leaders and clergy have also seized political power and dictated the economics of time. Economic analysis and moral philosophy have thus been concerned with economics and ethics. Moral philosophy had improved economic analysis and helped design codes of economic conduct.

Through millenniums, though the world, in its outward material aspect, has changed considerably, such that means of communication, manner of utilization of man and material resources, sophisticated scientific discoveries, etc., which greatly enhanced the societies and made economic progress easy; but it is regrettable and unfortunate, that not many great changes took place on the inner spiritual side of the humankind. The fundamental spiritual characteristic of humans is his desire for liberation that inspires him to move forward on the path of self-realization. Human beings want liberation in physical, mental and spiritual realms. In order to free themselves from the relative physical bondage of time, space and person, humans have developed transportation and communication. In their drive to free themselves from relative psychic bondage, they have developed scientific knowledge. In the spiritual realm, mankind has searched for absolute freedom from nature. While, generally, the human mind is not conscious of its desire for spiritual freedom, the inspiration, however derived unconsciously, fuels human expression in social organization, culture, science, literature, politics, economics and others. Any social system, thus, should/must aim at helping an individual to achieve this ultimate freedom. Nevertheless, it has been observed in the course of history, that one group or class always tried to dominate the fellow beings, and at times, the suffering classes ultimately revolted against the domination. It must, therefore, be acknowledged that the social system is vital in the reorientation of the human minds, as social freedom means political and economic freedom at the same time.

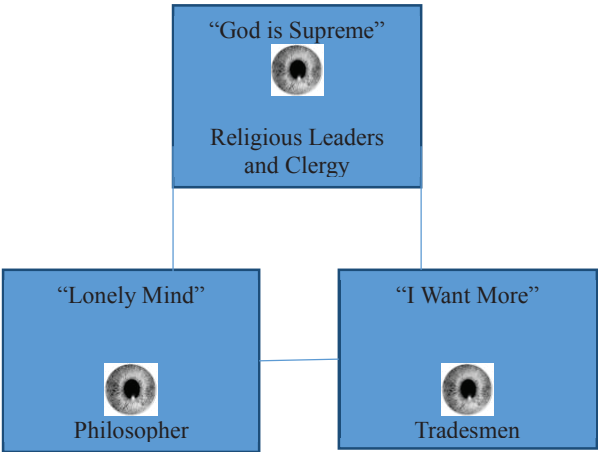
Religious ideas have evolved as an attempt to free human beings from all bondage of limitation, and the purpose of existence of political institutions and other social organizations was meant to provide people with the maximum possible social freedom. The very idea of a system of religion derives from a culture familiar with philosophy. Philosophy speaks in terms of rational propositions or principles that are thought to be universal, and philosophical ethics sets forth the virtues of temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice on a purely rational basis. Remember, the ideas of great thinkers are never obsolete. They animate the progress that seems to kill them. The most ancient fancies, sometime, startle us by their strikingly modern character, for insight does not depend on modernity.

Thus, it goes without saying that practically in all civilizations, there had existed a very close bond in philosophy, ethics, religion and economics, and this could safely be called a *holy* relationship. There were hardly any doubts in the minds of leaders

that it would not work. Factually, it did work for centuries. Of course, there were constant conflicts and power-struggles for dominance. But again, for these being an inherent part of human nature, there was nothing to worry about, as the socio-economic system kept floating.

In philosophical and religious domain some of the questions that dominated practically every ancient civilization's history, and have been frequently discussed were: the existence of God⁹⁵, I-consciousness, the matter and the spirit, the self, and the moral values etc.⁹⁶ For the sake of an easy understanding of issues in question, a brief examination is under:

Fig. 1.: “Struggle for Dominance” in the Holy Trinity



Source: Author’s work

(a) *The existence of God.* The burden of proof of God’s existence is exclusively on the individual and is based on beliefs⁹⁷. God has been called by different names in

⁹⁵ See note 1. in the *Introduction* pp 1.

⁹⁶ For a detailed discussion on some of the issues, one could recommend an excellent book by P. T. Raju, (1982), *Spirit, Being, and Self: Studies in Indian and Western Philosophy*, New Delhi-Madras: South Asian Publishers.

⁹⁷ Negative theology claims that God can only be known by denying in ordinary terms any application to it (or them). Once a description of a *supreme being* is hit upon, there remains the problem of providing reason for supposing that anything answering to the description exists.

different civilizations⁹⁸. So have been in existence in the early civilizations the traditions of polytheism and monotheism (e.g. while the Sumerian god *Anu*, and the Babylonian god *Shamsh* are the nature gods, the Jewish scriptures mention Abraham's God as an ethical God, *I am who I Am*; YHWH - The Lord - Exodus 3:14). In most polytheistic faiths, there were multiple gods, but there is the main deity (supreme-being) who is seen as a craftsman of the universe, and is omnipotent (e.g. while Persians had *Ahura Mazda* (Per. مزدا اهورا), Indian Aryans *Brāhma* (Sans. ब्रह्मा); and Chinese *Shang-ti* (Ch. 上帝).

All through the centuries, philosophers have always asked whether there is a reason to believe that God exists. They have also considered His nature. According to classical theism, God is primarily the creator. God accounts for there being any world at all. He is causally responsible for the existence of everything other than himself. God is the one who creates *from nothing* (*ex nihilo*). God makes to be that things are just *there* regardless of what they are *like*. The universe began to exist because God created it. Many theists frequently reject almost all the tenets of classical theism, however, they agree that God is the creator; that He causes things to exist. But they also tend to regard Him as an onlooker who is able to step in and modify how things are?

(b) The subject of *I consciousness* is best illustrated in the Vedic literature and in the Old Testament:

(i) "Originally this [universe] was only the *Ātman* (soul) in the form of a person. He looked around and saw Nothing beside him. First he uttered, *I am*. Out of it came the word *I*. Therefore, when one is asked: *Who are you*, he says first *I am* and adds his other name."

(*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣada*, 1,4,1.)

(ii) "And God said unto Moses, *I am that I am*, and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you."

"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus, shalt thou say unto children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; and this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations".

(*The Bible, Exodus, 3, 14-15.*)

The medieval period was the highest watermark for purported proof of the existence of God, such as the *five ways* of Aquinas or the ontological argument of Anselm.

⁹⁸ It is only now that we can identify the god of the antediluvian patriarchs of the *first time*. The ancients knew Him by several names and epithets. The Sumerians refer to the god of *Eridu* as *Enki* (Lord of the Earth) and *Nudimud* (Maker of Man) whereas the East Semitic speaking peoples of Mesopotamia (Babylonians and Assyrians) knew him simply as *Eya*.

There are two kind of knowledge, *knowledge of being*, which is what intuition really is and *knowledge by cognition*, which is generally called mediated knowledge. More or less explicit aim of the *Upaniṣadas* and the implicit aim of the *grand tradition of the West* are to tell the man what he is to be, and how he can be what he is to be. One is greatly struck by the significance of what God told Moses, viz., that he was simply the I-Am, had no name; equally one is awed by the *Upaniṣadic* statement that the Cosmic Person (*Prajapati*; the Greek *Logos*), the firstborn uttered first *I am* (ॐ). This corresponds with Judeo-Christian idea that God made man in his own image. Then if God is *Being*, the ontological basis of everything can be discovered by me in my: *I am*. A rational tracing and explanation of this mooring constitutes true and significant philosophy. It must, however, be noted that in Western philosophy, the study of the *I-consciousness* and to some extent of the Hegelian *ego-consciousness*, is basically neglected. David Hume, his followers – the modern logical positivists and empiricists tend towards denying the existence and reality of the *I*, or the *Self*.

(c) *The Matter and the Spirit*. From the time human intellect first penetrated into the mysteries of nature, people have tried to explain the inter-relation between the two. Both philosophers and scientists have looked into the problem from their own perspectives. About two and a half thousand years before, philosophy and science were inseparable entities. These philosophical and scientific views of the relation between the matter and the spirit have become the basics of many socio-economic-political philosophies. Greek scientists explained matter as a clearly separate entity from spirit and pictured matter as being made of several building blocks, purely passive and moving in a void, influenced by some force assumed to be of spiritual origin. In this way, an idea of dualism between matter and spirit, mind and body, soul and body became an essential concept in western thought for several centuries. Aristotle evolved his philosophy and scientific view of this universe based on this principle of dualism. He also believed that contemplating God and the human soul was more important than material research. Since, the Christian church, throughout the Middle Ages, supported this Aristotelian concept of the universe, and hence it was not challenged strongly all these years.

(d) *The Self*. Western philosophy, through its Greek and Judeo-Christian formulations developed the concept of *spirit* and went beyond its original etymological meaning of breath and air. While, eastern philosophies in general, and the Indian philosophy in particular are referred as spiritual in outlook when compared to western philosophies that are said to be humanistic, natural and scientific. Reason for the indifference of some contemporary philosophers to the problem of spirit may be traced to the bifurcation of philosophy and theology, with the result that, in view of such a contrast, since the reality of spirit is important for religious consciousness; it

has become unimportant for philosophy. Similarly, since philosophy claims to be a rational pursuit, theology is considered to be irrational faith. But can philosophy, if it is to be adequate to explain man's life, and can do without the concept of spirit? Indian philosophies look for the answers rather in great detail.

Although the morality of people and their ethics amount to the same thing, there is a usage that restricts morality to systems such as that of Kant based on notions such as duty, obligation, and principles of conduct, reserving ethics for the more Aristotelian approach to practical reasoning based on the notion of virtue, and generally avoiding the separation of moral considerations. As far as moral laws are concerned, some theories see the subject in terms of a number of laws (e.g. in the *Ten Commandments*). The status of these laws may be that they are the edicts of a divine lawmaker, or that they are truths of reason knowable *a priori*.

Since the dawn of human civilization, humans have among others, inherited a desire to invent, create, and make objects of beauty, aesthetics, and grandeur. The manifestation of this inherent desire to create is called art. Usually, the human mind has drawn inspirations for inventing, creating and making, either from nature or from religious beliefs. These manifestations are the pangs of wandering mind/soul of the human being so as to enjoy the freedom of imagination that usually provides meaningfulness, intellectual pleasure, comfort and satisfaction to the *artist's* soul. Through the creation of art objects, or performances, the creator/performer, and the observer – both enjoy in the beauty and form of creation and feel mental pleasure. In certain sense an artist's position is very similar to that of the 'philosopher of science', and thus could safely be called as a 'philosopher of art'.

Historically, the five main ancient arts were painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry. To these can be added the performing arts: theatre and dance. Architecture, sculptures, high quality painted pottery, visual arts (mosaics, prints, calligraphy etc.), nature-man-made aesthetics, (e.g. Japanese *Karesansui* art in Rojan-ji), and paintings are symbols of human perception of a refined judgement.

Another aspect of this creative human desire is manifested in modelling objects and inventing solutions for the necessities in the ordinary daily life of people – farmers, labourers, craftsmen, and others. In this process, usually involved was the primitive or indigenous technology that could easily be called as engineering or science.

Thus, both these aspects of creativity, i.e. art and science had greatly contributed to the richness of ancient cultures and civilization.

Because, the economy is important for the conduct of policies of the individuals and nations, economics became an important part of knowledge, but fairly late in history. Economists got concerned themselves with the grounds and social role of

what they have accepted as knowledge. Precisely because of the fact that economics is important, an inquiry into the methodological strengths and weaknesses of the science, and significance of economists' knowledge, is always imminent.

Economics as a science has four facets: (i) one of these being pure knowledge. As a science, it is concerned with providing information, description and interpretation of the nature of the economy in all its ramifications. Economists use the tools of deductive theory, empirical inference, and the concepts of model and paradigm construction. The objective is positive knowledge and insight into what the economy is about; (ii) Economics is also social control, one of the modes through which in societies, a social construction of reality is formulated. Through internalization, however, individualized, the construction provides people with a sense of proper and possible with regard to economy. Economics, then, has both explanation and rationalization, and thus its ideology has come to serve some of the purpose formerly provided by religion. The content and nuances of economic theory is to control the formation of issues (defining problems) and policies (finding solutions); (iii) the third facet of economics is its function as psychic balm for it provides us with a sense of order and sets our mind to rest; and (iv) perhaps the most important dimension of economics is its functioning in everyday life. Economics as a science, in principle, facilitates the allocation of natural and human resources in their best possible use, making the development and progress of societies possible. In fact, this being the essence of Economics, it is a science and art at the same time.

It must, however, be noted that such a modern definition applied to ancient civilizations, is not as apt as one would hope for. Economics as a science, in ancient times, did not exist. Simple reasons being the absence of a market (in modern sense) and competition; lack of transport and communication; limited spread of knowledge, etc. While the first and second facets of our definition were surely missing, third and fourth might have been in function for these suited to the then existing rudimentary system of taxation and property laws. Since, farming, animal husbandry, fishing, hunting and barter were the main activities of most societies, presumably, no sophisticated scientific knowledge was required. Furthermore, wars of invasion and conquest of territories being a frequent source of accumulation of riches and wealth of nations, for sure, hardly needed scientific knowledge of economics. What was needed were the levies and booties of war. Thus, the economics of the time, if at all it existed, was imperialistic and without a human face.

While the Egyptian economy for over 3500 years remained a tightly controlled command economy run by public servants and bureaucrats, the Sumerians – the forerunners of all the Old World civilizations – developed a model of a free economy based on international trade around 3100 BC. They were the first to develop a system

of economic rules. Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) should be credited for being the first to create some basic economic notions (e.g. national output, high quality labour force through education, importance of technology for national prosperity etc.) and first compendium of economics. Later, around 321 BC, the famous Indian strategist Kautilya, produced the first available treatises on statecraft of classical times – *The Arthaśāstra*.

The Trinity of Philosophy, Religion, and Economics

For an inquisitive mind, a logical question is, as to whether or not such an ideal relationship (for it being called *holy*) did exist in reality. Doubts can be expressed. Accordingly, answers must be sought from the history of these ancient civilizations.

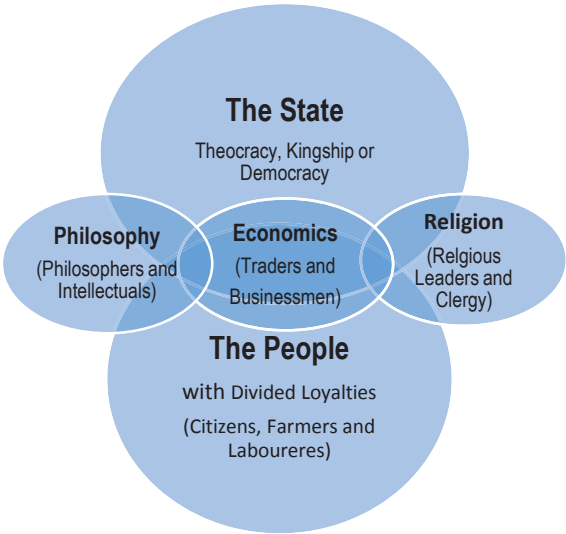
A close look at history suggests that the claimed ideal symbiosis between the three segments was a pure thought. In practice, however, the representatives of each mentioned segment struggled and competed amongst them for supremacy. Subject to circumstances, the winners rotated throughout the history. Naturally, in the struggle for dominance, the claimants often sacrificed the proclaimed ideals, moral and ethical values. Thus, the eternity, holiness or the sacrosanctity, of the triangular relationship can be questioned. In order to prove the point, some arguments can be put forward here:

1. It is rather easy to imagine that at one time, in all civilizations, in principle, at least theoretically, an ideal cooperative relationship would have existed. Scholars have claimed that there had existed such an ideal symbiosis. Historical details and events, however, do not support this contention. This *ideal virtual relationship*, seemingly, could have been a *pure thought* of philosophical minds as the philosophers must have believed that it *should* and *could* exist in any civilization for such an amicable ambient will ensure the *perfect* functioning of the designed socio-economic order, and uphold the perseverance of moral and ethical standards that are vital to the existence of societies. Further assumption, presumably, was that wars, natural disasters, intense sufferings by people are not sufficiently enough grounds to disturb the claimed harmony. Logically conceived, this ideal (and probably virtual) relationship was envisaged to be manifested in individual human minds through I-consciousness that implies three mentioned basics of human *habitus*.

It must, however, be added that this fundamental harmony that was supposed to have existed was not a *triad* character, but a *quad* relationship. The fourth pillar was definitely the desire of inventive minds of humankind – *I make (Create)*. As necessities of life are the source of invention, ordinary people – farmers, labourers, craftsmen –

invented, created products or found solutions for the day-to-day problems of life. Thus indigenous technology did exist. Although, technological factor has not been mentioned in ancient economic literature (until 321 BC in Kautilya). It would be logical to assume, that the term ‘mode of production’ implied the use of the then existing level of knowledge, science and technology. Accordingly, this fourth pillar ensuring stability of the mechanism must be considered as one of the fundamentals of economics and thus given due importance.

Fig.2.: “The Mishmash” in the Trinity



Source: Author’s work

(Note: In sphere of philosophy the philosopher is virtually a loner and occasionally joins hands with the rulers; in case of religion religious leaders and clergy exercise power by making people afraid of God’s anger; and in the economic domain business and mercantile class is driven by self-interest and profit motive. Naturally, a jumble must have existed in the centre, and all the subjects must have participated in struggle for dominance, at least marginally.)

2. Think of a scenario. It would be logical for a scholar to assume that these fundamental questions must have first taken roots in philosopher’s minds. Since,

philosophers are never taken seriously, and often branded as crazy, and even sentenced to death for their noble ideas⁹⁹. It is natural to expect that the philosophers must have tried to win over and convince the rulers in support of their ideas. This must have made possible that in some great civilizations philosophers (intellectuals) became close advisers to the rulers (e.g. to the kings of VI Egyptian dynasty, Ptah-hotep, 2200 BC; Confucius, to Prince of Lu, 503 BC; Kautilya to Emperor Chandragupta, 321 BC), and some basic ideas of these intellectual minds must have been tried (may be with limited success only). It is also logical to assume that the above mentioned aspects must have had in focus the common human socio-economic behaviour, and thus easy to further assume, that it should be made mandatory to preserve the moral, ethical and social standards, that were vital for the progress of the societies. To make it possible, the philosophers and rulers must have also sought the help of religious leaders to convince the masses, for usually they have always commanded immense influence and respect among the masses. Thus, moral, ethical, socio-economic and legal issues must have become a fertile breeding ground for promoting the desire for dominance eventually leading to struggle for power.

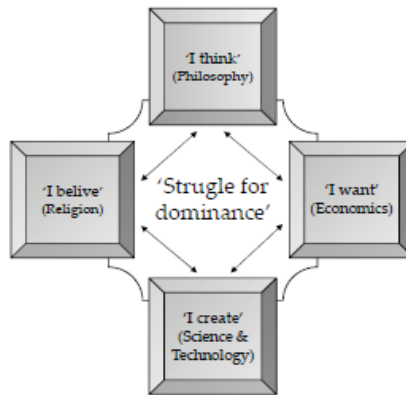
Religions have often dealt with certain fundamental questions such as creation and existence¹⁰⁰ (e.g. *Rig Veda*, *Holy Bible*, *Avesta* and many other holy texts), fate, justice, money, redistribution, etc. This has always been in context to the preservation of social order through search for truth, spirit and good. Naturally, both – the philosophers and the priests – have approached these themes scientifically and with reason. Now, by a simple conjecture one can assume that in the *interest of preserving and smooth functioning of the socio-economic order*, these issues were interpreted as per personal affinities and whims of the intellectuals, rulers, priests and even business lords. People were supposed to follow the rules. Codes of conduct, courts, and judges

⁹⁹ In 399 BC, his enemies and detractors of crimes against the state in the Athenian court of king Archon, among them *impiety* and *corruption of the young* accused Socrates. Plato in his *Death of Socrates* narrates through dialogues the entire incident. In *Euthyphro*, Socrates explores the concepts and aims of piety and religion; in *Apology*, he courageously defends the integrity of his teachings; in *Crito*, he demonstrates his respect for law in his refusal to flee his death sentence; and in *Phaedo* embraces death and discusses the immortality of soul.

¹⁰⁰ *Rig Veda*, best illustrates the process as *Prajapati* (the eternal spirit) witnessed that there was complete darkness (*tamas*), then came light (*prakasa*), that made churning/chaos (*manthan*), leading to a harmony (*santulan*) of matter (*tatva*) – the five elements. Interpreting, ancient Vedic philosopher Taittiriya says that *ākāśa* (space, ether) is born out of *ātman*, air out of *akasha*, *agni* (fire) out of air, *jal* (water) out of fire, *prithvi* (earth) out of water, *vraksha* (plants) out of the earth, *bhojan* (food) out of plants, *virya* (semen) out of food and *Purusha* (person) out of semen. Of this body the vital principle is *prāṇa* or *ātman* (soul).

were appointed by the rulers to sort out disputes and sanction the offenders. Forced labour, levies, land or crop ownership, high interest rates, wide spread temple prostitution, and merciless punishments for crimes were not uncommon as instruments of repression. Egyptian, Sumerian, and Chinese history is full of such examples.

Fig. 3.: *The Quad*



Source: Author's work

Religious leaders (either the kings themselves or the priests) have tried to establish theocratic states and considered themselves as the representatives of god on earth¹⁰¹ (e.g. in Egypt, Sumer and Babylon, there were the regional and local gods). Mostly, the priests had declared themselves as the gods¹⁰², and in reality they were

¹⁰¹ Sumerian religion was polytheistic and gods were innumerable. All of them were recognized throughout the whole land, but in every city there was one patron and particular god. Other gods could have their shrines in courts of his temple. All the gods had their functions e.g. *Enki* of Eridu was lord of the waters, god of wisdom, art and handicrafts, and writing; at Larsa *Shamash* was god of justice; at Nippur *Enlil* was the lord of rain and wind; at Erech *Ishtar* was the goddess of love and son. At Babylon *Marduk* was the principal God. The gods were men *writ large* and the temples were their houses where they lived a normal human life. The Sumerians had no idea of hereafter; as for them there was no Hell or Paradise. The spirit of man lived after death but at best in a ghostly world from which there was no return. The supreme god of each city tended to usurp the provinces of others and a good deal of confusion in pantheon resulted, for even ancient legends had to be modified to suit the local cult.

¹⁰² The tradition of kings declaring themselves as gods had continued up to the Middle Ages. For example, the Roman Emperor Augustus (BC 27-14 AD) declared himself as god and ordered his own worships in temples specially constructed throughout the empire.

the kings (moreover, the tradition of kings declaring themselves as gods had continued long (e.g. the Roman Emperor Augustus, BC 27-14 AD, declared himself as god and ordered his own worships in temples specially constructed throughout the empire). The usual justification given was that human ruler is simply the representative of God(s) on earth to enforce His will. The deification of the kings on-carried and it leads to a logical conclusion that they did rule in the name of God(s). Conversely, the high priest of one of the larger temples used to be a person of great political importance and was often chosen from the royal house. Temple and State were so inextricably mingled that while the state has to be regarded as theocracy, the Temple must be regarded as a political institution, and the State Religion as a political instrument. Civil and ecclesiastical offices were not clearly distinguished.

3. In past history, there had existed variety of models of this close relationship of intellectuals, rulers, priests and even business lords that have been adopted in different civilizations in the past. Historical proofs suggest that these forms varied from intense collusion, to intense competition or enmity to the extent of wars, or bureaucratic tyranny (e.g. in times of Egyptian Pharaohs¹⁰³, and Early Chinese Emperors: Xi, 1818-1776 BC, and Chou, 1776-1123 BC). The warlords, with ritual blessings of God's representatives – the priests (and of course, with the financial support of business class), waged wars of invasion (Thutmose III, 1479-1425 BC; Darius 550-486 BC; Alexander 336-323 BC) engaging massive armies inflicting death, devastation and misery upon common people. Against such a collusive model common was one that of intense rivalry infighting for dominance in the society. Philosophers (intellectuals, advisers) in rivalry with the priests, usually stood by political rulers, who usually also had large armies at their disposal. It is also noticeable that at times, priests having the support of the masses declared themselves as rulers¹⁰⁴. In such cases a conflict would have been imminent. The conflicts did arise, who won, we can only guess and look back for the historical examples.

¹⁰³ The pyramid building speaks of the power of the Old kingdom rulers as it is estimated that a rotating workforce of 20,000 men must have laboured for 20 years on Khufu's pyramid. Although this workforce had to be organized, fed, housed, and paid (which must have required an extraordinarily well-developed system of administration) but was harshly treated.

¹⁰⁴ e.g. in the 4th century, Roman Emperor Constantine I, 306-337 AD, started appointing the Popes. During the Holy Roman Empire, 539-638 AD, the European Kings participated in the appointment of the Pope. Later, the trend was reversed such that the confirmation of kingships by Pope became mandatory (since 1059 AD).

Note that XV century Italy was a highly unstable place of shifting allegiances and ferociously contending states led by ruthlessly self-aggrandising families – the Medici of Florence, the Sforza of Milan, the Malatesta of Rimini. After the French invasion of Charles VIII

4. To qualify for a 'great' ancient civilization, there must be a successful, flourishing and well-organized economy. Although, every economy functions by its own laws, it is also governed by social and moral codes (e.g. tax and property laws), and religious beliefs (e.g. charity, rejection of the rate of interest by Islam), and target goals of the society. Accordingly, it has to devise a particular economic model (e.g. the command economy of the Egyptian type; autocratic model of early Chinese emperors; or open economy like that of the Sumerian¹⁰⁵ and of Indus Valley). For any civilization, the symbol of its prosperity, among others, is its portfolio of gross monetary and real assets, and the income-wealth structure of the population. In ancient civilizations, money (bullion, coins and jewels) had been a synthetic indicator of the wealth of a nation. While, its growth was measured in terms of output of the primary sector, and its extensive international trade, its sustainability over a long period of time showed its robustness and strength. The quality of life, occupational structure, level of poverty and income distribution, infrastructure, trade, organization of bureaucracy, urbanization etc. are some of the litmus test indicators of the level of advancement of any society. Accordingly, all ancient civilizations that are considered to have been *great* must pass through these tests.

Unfortunately, very little economic data is available on these mentioned issues. Thus, it is rather difficult, better say impossible, to make any reliable comparative study. A simple fact, however, can be learnt from the history, which is that the achieved annual rates of economic growth of these societies were constantly low and fluctuated around zero. Farming, animal husbandry, carpentry, smithy, fishing, and international trade usually contributed to the major share of national incomes. Economies were mostly controlled by the State. Riches were shared among rulers, bureaucrats and traders who commanded the wealth, property and trade of any economy. Common people (farmers, labourers and slaves) toiled and suffered from

(in 1494) and Louis XII (in 1499), Italy became the cockpit for a larger European struggle between contending powers.

In modern times too this tradition continues (e.g. King of Thailand, HM the Queen of Britain, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama (although in exile), are secular and political heads at the same time.

¹⁰⁵ The merchants had their agencies in distant towns with whom they kept correspondence and did business by letters of credit. Accounts were properly maintained. Since, coined money did not exist in circulation thus all trade was through barter. Gold and silver were workable standards (1-unit of account of gold was equal to 8 units (shekel) of silver). Value had to be verified by the scales and weights.

hunger, disease and widespread poverty, low living standard, exploitation, high interest rates on loans (e.g. in Sumer, interest on loans varied between 20-33 percent per year), and high taxes (e.g. in Ancient China, the agricultural tax was fixed at 12.5 percent of the annual yield.), etc. Thus, the question is as to what was so 'great' to admire about in the economics of these civilizations?

5. Every economy, in any time period, depends upon the state of technology. Technological precedence of a civilization over other, in any given period of time, is an indicator of its advance. In history, every civilization, at one time or the other has its technological edge over others¹⁰⁶. This edge was demonstrated in its sciences (astronomy, literature, mathematics, geometry, medicine, architecture, warfare etc.), philosophy (ethics, logic, metaphysics etc.). Archaeological, anthropological and historical studies demonstrate that most of these ancient civilizations have contributed their fair share at one time or the other. The only question is why the progress in science and technology (in the modern sense), as compared to the modern age (the last 250 years) was so slow? Was there lack of inventive minds or the patrons of society intentionally kept it at such low levels as to maintain their dominant position? Why the thoughtful minds did not help in this process is the question that needs to be explored?

Based upon above partial analysis, one can simply conclude three things. Firstly, all civilizations had grown, stagnated or declined in their path of continuity over time. So had their history. Unfortunately, the lack of proper record of facts of history makes any such study practically impossible, or at least fairly difficult. Some of the mentioned civilizations have come to be known in history as *great* for their achievements. However, we must note that these contributions though remarkable, were only *marginal* and products of few intellectual minds i.e. *philosophers of science* and *philosophers of arts* (in terms of numbers, for sure, these people could have been only a few per tens of million people, and had appeared rarely on a time scale). Secondly, it can be argued that it is logical to assume that throughout the ancient age, the upholders of the so-called *holy* relationship between the mentioned fields bothered little about the fate of the common masses. The political system, ruling elite and the business leaders of the time, took most care of their vested interests only. There were revolutions from time to time but were crushed mercilessly and

¹⁰⁶ While, the Chinese invented and popularised production of steel, gun-powder; Indians out-performed in medicine, gold-smithy; so were remarkable the feats of the Egyptians in astronomy, mathematics, geometry, war techniques (e.g. employment of horses and chariots in war); Mesopotamians introduced measures and weights; Persians discovered the so called *Persian wheel* for irrigation, Harappans led in architecture and urbanization and so on.

eventually these brought only restricted reforms. The resulting advancement of societies was based on an unethical and unjust relationship based upon the desire for dominance, power struggles, conflicts, repression, religious manipulations of masses, massive poverty accompanied with unequal distribution of incomes and wealth, forced labour, and so on. Thus, the question is, as to how such a relationship, as it existed, can be called 'holy'; and if it was at all, then on what grounds it can be defended. However, if a final judgement is to be passed, the trinity could easily be called 'totally unholy' and 'unfair'! Finally, based upon some of the presented thoughts above, it would rather be wrong to conclude that the ancient civilizations did not contribute their due share to the development of human life in general, or did not have some spectacular achievements in humanities, arts, sciences, religion, and culture. On the contrary, had not been these achievements of the past; humans would not have been what they are today.

Appendix 3.1.

A Note on Crime and Corruption in the Ancient World

Human mind has always had its dark side too. Virtues and evil co-exist in human mind side by side. Human mind is inclined to a variety of negativities and thus source of many evils in society. Historically proven, neither religion, nor philosophy nor economics of the time were free from evils. There were two broad discourses of corrupt practices (corruption) in antiquity. The first, virtue focussed corruption, conceived it as a generalised condition that spread contagiously and diffusely throughout the polity affecting leaders and citizens alike. It focussed less on the actions of individuals than on the loss of virtue and the general moral health of the body politic¹⁰⁷. Corruption was both the cause and effect of aggressive empire-building, hedonism (especially indulgence in luxury), material inequality and civic professionalization, especially of military functions. The second discourse of corruption rule-focused corruption was conceived as the abuse of public office for private gain involving such transgressions as bribery, embezzlement, theft, fraud, extortion, blackmail, abuse of discretion, favouritism, nepotism etc.¹⁰⁸

Corruption, in a strict sense, is a form of dishonest or unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. However, it may include many mentioned activities. It can be defined as an action to (a) secretly provide (b) a good or a service to a third party (c) so that he or she can influence certain actions which (d) benefit the corrupt, a third party, or both (e) in which the corrupt agent has authority¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁷ Many classical writers took it for granted that prosperous states were doomed to tip into decline and fears of moral decrepitude may be found in the writings of such ancient writers as Confucius, Kautilya, Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, Thucydides, Tacitus, Epictetus and Seneca and others.

¹⁰⁸ All these mentioned negativities, including as well as conspiracy, intrigues, lies, thefts, torture, physical and sexual exploitation, etc. had universally existed in all civilizations at all times, and can be placed in a broad category – *crime and corruption*.

¹⁰⁹ Factors that encourage systemic corruption include conflicting incentives, discretionary powers; monopolistic powers; lack of transparency; low pay; and a culture of impunity. Specific acts of corruption include *bribery, extortion, and embezzlement* in a system where *corruption*

Since, human beings in carry corruption, the philosophers and religious thinkers have responded to the inescapable reality of corruption in different ways. The history of religion includes numerous examples of religious leaders calling attention to corruption in the religious practices and institutions of their time. For example, Jewish prophets Isaiah and Amos berate the rabbinical establishment of Ancient Judea for failing to live up to the ideals of the Torah. In the New Testament, Jesus accuses the rabbinical establishment of his time of hypocritically following only the ceremonial parts of the Torah and neglecting the more important elements of justice, mercy and faithfulness. In 1517, Martin Luther accuses the Catholic Church of widespread corruption, including selling of indulgences.

Ancient Indian literature, especially the RV, philosophically deals with the evil of corruption. RV contains a large number of hymns (*riks* = learn as it is) on the causes of corruption and measures as how to eliminate the same in any mosaic society of individuals following different professions¹¹⁰. In the other three holy Vedas also a few *mantras*/hymns relate to corruption. *Sama Veda* (Hymns 179 and 913) describes corruption as hydra, having nine heads and it enters the human body through ninety-nine sources through five senses, five sense organs and *etani* (the outward looking mind as per RV 9.XII.99).

According to the RV, corruption creeps in society *when the matter is considered as inert and the members of society do not find any sin in treating the benign mother earth as a*

becomes the rule rather than the exception. Two types of corruption – individual and public (government) - can be noticed. Public corruption includes corruption of the political process and of government agencies such as the police as well as corruption in processes of allocating public funds for contracts, grants, and hiring. Political corruption is the abuse of public power, office, or resources by government officials for personal gain, by extortion, soliciting or offering bribes. It can also take the form of office holders maintaining themselves in office by purchasing votes, and by enacting laws which use taxpayers' money. Evidence suggests that corruption can have political consequences – with citizens being asked for bribes becoming less likely to identify with their country or region.

¹¹⁰ The 99 *vrītras* (powers of evil) are mentioned in *Rig Veda* (RV) 1-84-13. It further says in 1-104-3 taking bribe for money belonging to the state is misappropriation of public funds. All bribe takers are thieves of God and they get rebirth in the foulest of the womb (confirmed even in Bhagavad-Gita). RV 3-34-6 and YV 30-22, the corrupt people should not be allowed by the ruler to mix with the people of following four divine professions (*chatvar varnasharam*). YV 30-19 and RV 5-61-8 mention that those persons who praise and justify are also corrupt persons, keep away from them. RV 1-42-4 even mentions keep away from *Gurus* (preceptors) who take donations/charity. *Rāmāyana* described the evil through nine corrupt heads of Ravana. Similarly, later *Mahābhārata* described 99 sources of entry of corruption through 99 corrupt sons of blind Kaurva king Dhritrashtra.

quarry. In RV, the spirit of God is in the *shunya* (cosmic void) of each sub atomic particle of atom – the building block of matter. Hence the matter has unsuspected vitality and its use on need based living is virtue and its excessive use is a sin. Corruption creeps in a society where economics (*artha*) is based on inert matter and the possession of wealth/any kind of matter having predominance of *tamasic guna* of stupor is considered as a matter of pride. *Māyā* creates a Golden Dazzling Disc for such individuals and hides the truth and Supreme Reality for them. *Māyā* also creates the greatest miracle that we search for God everywhere when He resides in our hearts.

RV further says that purpose of human birth is to assist *nirguna Brahma* (ineffable and formless god) who is also Supreme Architect (*Viswakarma*) in the maintenance of His Grand Wondrous Design. For the maintenance of this Design, He has created *Rta* - eternal cosmic laws of necessity and wants all human beings to follow the same. Having created these eternal laws of nature *He Himself* follows them sternly lest a great harm is done to the cosmic creation. Thus He and His Laws (*Rta*) are the same. When the individuals in any society starts ignoring these laws available to human beings through the *Book of Nature* (which even blind individuals can read), corruption creeps in society. Corruption destroys all the noble attributes of human beings due to pursuit of only material knowledge bereft of spiritual and divine knowledge, which in Vedas is ignorance/nescience/*ajnan*. (RV 1-129-6). Only harmonized divine, spiritual and material knowledge is true knowledge (*Janan*) in Vedas.

RV says that when even one human being dies of starvation, it is a signal that corruption has crept in society and *avaras* (followers of non-divine professions) who want honour, power and wealth for themselves have started multiplying. In *Kaliyuga* (Dark Age) their number far exceeds the followers of divine professions (*varnas*). Ethics and community welfare becomes the greatest casualty. RV says that the thieves of God (bribe givers/takers) who consider matter as inert become insensitive to hydra headed corruption and resort to ostentatious worship and donations/gift culture to gain social recognition. Most of them drift from darkness to utter darkness through meditation (See *Isa Upanishad* and *Yajur Veda*). The various virtuous concepts like *iddm nan mmam* – (nothing for self all for society) akin to the enlightened liberalism of Aristotle, moderation of Vedas; middle path of Buddha and the noble concept of illusion of comfort in the vast turbulent sea of matter (Vedic Phantasmagoria – Cosmic delusion *Māyā*) are no longer considered as virtue in the materialistic corrupt society dominated by non-divine *avaras*, *vrstras*, *kimidin* etc.

Very similar to Plato's *philosopher king*, the so-called *sage-king* is regarded as one of the loftiest ideals of Confucianism, and *Shun* is esteemed one of the greatest paragons of the sage-kings in the history of Confucian thought. It is often said that,

on the one hand, he became *the perfect standard of human relations* in self-cultivation as an *inner sage*; on the other hand, he was also solicitous about *extensively conferring benefit on the people and assisting all subjects* (See *Analects*, 6.30) in humane government (*ren zheng*) as an *outer king*. In Confucian classics, *shun* is always highly regarded. Confucianism advocates the lofty moral ideal of *humane love* (*ren ai*) and condemns immoral actions¹¹¹. In Confucians' view, a true and honest state bureaucrat should be guided by moral principles. Therefore, striving for material wealth was considered inappropriate. But in fact, the Confucian concept of *ren zhi* or *people's government* largely contributed to widespread corruption throughout China. Wang Anshi, the famous Chinese economist of the Song dynasty, wanted to introduce reforms in monetary institutions that would reduce corruption and nepotism, but his ideas were dismissed by the Confucian elite. As a result, corruption continued to exist on an even larger scale, involving the court itself and the local elite. In practice, it meant that the more important an issue was, the deeper one would need to reach into one's pocket.

Prince Siddhartha (later enlightened Gautama Buddha) was disgusted by the corruption, thirst of power, selfish ambitions and jealousy among people in politics. He was aware that true liberation from suffering won't come from mere social works and changing social rules but from inner transformation of individuals. And he wanted to find a way which can give true liberation to people. He had heard the names of some famous teachers many times who were well known for their achievements in meditation. He couldn't wait to become old to pursue the path of inner transformation and to find the way out of suffering (which were normal tradition in India those days), he left his home to meditate. He believed that people will be unable to attain enlightenment through the word, and society will become morally corrupt over time. Accordingly, people following his teachings (as recorded in *Dhammapada*, *Iti-Vuttaka* and *Anguttar Nikaya*) will lead them on to the path of *Nirvāna*. Buddha propagates right *Dharma* and *Panchsheela*.

Greek philosophers deal with virtue focussed corruption at length. Plato, in *The Republic*, acknowledges the corrupt nature of political institutions, and recommends that philosophers *shelter behind a wall* to avoid senselessly martyring themselves¹¹².

¹¹¹ Strangely enough, however, Mencius, a paradigmatic Confucian intellectual, believed that *a true man cannot be corrupted by wealth, subdued by power, or affected by poverty*, highly commended such typically corrupt actions as bending the law for the benefit of relatives or appointing people by mere nepotism when he talked about *Shun* in the text of *Mencius*.

¹¹² On the issue of corruption Plato reflects: "Disciples of philosophy ... have tasted how sweet and blessed a possession philosophy is, and have also seen and been satisfied of the madness of the multitude, and known that there is no one who ever acts honestly in the administration

The *New Testament*, in keeping with the tradition of Ancient Greek thought, also frankly acknowledges the corruption of the world (ὁ κόσμος) and claims to offer a way of keeping the spirit *unspotted from the world*. Paul of Tarsus acknowledges his readers must inevitably *deal with the world*, and recommends they adopt an attitude of *as if not* in all their dealings. When they buy a thing, for example, they should relate to it *as if it were not theirs to keep*. New Testament readers are thus advised to refuse to conform to the present age and not to be ashamed to be peculiar or singular. They are advised not to be friends of the corrupt world, because *friendship with the world is enmity with God*. They are advised not to love the corrupt world or the things of the world. The rulers of this world, Paul explains, *are coming to nothing*. While readers must obey corrupt rulers in order to live in the world, the spirit is subject to no law but to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves. New Testament readers are advised to adopt a disposition in which they are *in the world, but not of the world*. This disposition, Paul claims, shows us a way to escape *slavery to corruption* and experience the freedom and glory of being *innocent children of God*.

Egypt

The cradle of civilization – Egypt was also the germination ground of political corruption. The holders of power, pharaoh and priests had frequently misused the wealth for their own benefit. No less wide-spread was the corruption on individual level as Egypt was a well-organized society run by the bureaucrats who were not immune to corrupt practices. Though the examples of government and religious corruption are innumerable, let us take an example of early Egypt, where *Amen-Re* was considered the true father of the pharaoh, which helped legitimize the power the pharaohs held over Egypt. The priests held a large amount of power with the general public, which they preserved by appearing as defenders and guardians of the oppressed people. The kings tried to limit the power of the priests of Amen to simply

of States, nor any helper who will save anyone who maintains the cause of the just. Such a saviour would be like a man who has fallen among wild beasts—unable to join in the wickedness of his fellows, neither would he be able alone to resist all their fierce natures, and therefore he would be of no use to the State or to his friends, and would have to throw away his life before he had done any good to himself or others. And he reflects upon all this, and holds his peace, and does his own business. He is like one who retires under the shelter of a wall in the storm of dust and sleet which the driving wind hurries along; and when he sees the rest of mankind full of wickedness, he is content if only he can live his own life and be pure from evil or unrighteousness, and depart in peace and good will, with bright hopes.” For detailed discussion on the issue, see *The Republic*, pp 488-497.

religious affairs. This was holding order until around 1498 BC, when Hatshepsut took control. Thutmose III was still young and in the care of the priests of Amen (he was originally supposed to become a priest himself). As time passed, many chose sides. There were those who believed that a woman could not be king and supported Thutmose III. Hatshepsut also had her supporters, the priests of Amen. To legitimize her claim to power, Hatshepsut had them declare her Pharaoh (the first woman to do this) and was from then on depicted with the masculine attributes of pharaohs. Her supporters reaped the rewards of her power; the First Prophet of Amen became the administrator of the temple's wealth, head of all the gods' priests in Upper and Lower Egypt, and prefect of Thebes and vizier. Hatshepsut also built the stunning temple Deirdre el Bahri, along with other smaller chapels. This is where we see the priesthood and temples gaining undue power¹¹³.

While Hatshepsut was ruling Egypt, Thutmose III had become head of the army, and eventually took control back from his mother. His rule saw many conquests with much accompanying wealth. This wealth was first distributed to the warriors/soldiers, then the priesthood of Amen took their share, and in the end not much was left for Pharaoh. As their wealth and power increased, the power of the king decreased. The priests were now starting to push the king out of power, turn him into a figurehead and maybe try to get rid of the position all together. But still Thutmose III enlarged the temple's landholdings and added to the Amen temple at Karnak.

A couple of pharaohs later (Amenhotep III) the worship of the red disc of the sun, *Aten*, gained popularity and followers. When Amenhotep III died, his son was brought up devoted to Aten, not Amen. As Pharaoh, Amenhotep IV's name was changed to Akhenaten (1334 BC) and the funding to the temples of Amen subsequently stopped. The wealth, land, and slaves that belonged to the temples were most likely seized by the king. There was still a large public following of Amen,

¹¹³ Amen-Re, the first true pharaoh helped to justify the pharaoh's power in Ancient Egypt. Since Egypt was ruled by Theocracy, priests held a large amount of power over public, which gave them a different set of laws than the *common people*. When Amenhotep III became Pharaoh (leader of Priests and Government), he started a monotheistic belief in only the God Aten. When Amenhotep III died, Amenhotep IV assumed the throne. After changing his name to Akhenaten, he stopped funding all the temples of Amen. All of the wealth, land, slaves that belonged to all other temples (non-Aten) were seized by the pharaoh, thus undoing thousands of years of tradition. After his death, all wealth was returned to the priesthood, making the pharaoh a figure head to the priests. As God-Kings, the priests should know their place and not become so corrupted by material wealth and do their job as spiritual leaders.

however, and the temples were eventually rebuilt by Ahkenaten's son-in-law. The co-regent also returned all of the confiscated wealth to the priesthood.

This corruption of the priesthood of Amen was fostered by many pharaohs, and it certainly did not end with Ahkenaten's son-in-law. While it appeared to come to a head in Hatshepsut's time, the pharaohs before her are just as responsible. Or perhaps it was an inevitable occurrence, with the state religion being so closely tied with the power of the Pharaoh, and so adamantly followed by the people in many aspects of their daily lives.

Persia

When the Assyrians were carving out the world's first true *super empire* from the period of 10th century to 7th century BC. The semi-nomadic Indo-Iranian people who flocked to settled lands and even started out their own religious institutions with the *universal* principles. One of such principles pertains to the prophet Zoroaster and his monotheistic approach to religion – with the *chief god* attribution given to the supreme being of *Ahura Mazda*. Such evolving yet unrestricted religious maxims clearly contrasted with the Babylonian system where each city seemingly had an exclusive patron god with his/her own set of *godly* powers.

Guided by these newer religious conventions (that seemed to favour order, truth and the law or logic) and semi-nomadic cultural background, the tribes of Iran (still relatively independent from each other) did identify themselves as a separate super-entity who were different from the Babylonians. In the south of this land of Iran emerged a confederation of around 10 or 15 tribes, who collectively named their realm as Persia¹¹⁴. Historically, this proved to be an incredibly momentous event in the region, which till then was a secondary realm to the likes of the fabulously rich Babylonians and the rigorously tough Assyrians. To that end, spurred by his recent successes, the ever-ambitious Cyrus consequently invested himself and his newly founded kingdom in *world* conquering endeavours – with the first target being the Lydian Empire based in Asia Minor.

¹¹⁴ The leading tribe among this burgeoning league was the Pasargadae – and their king always came from the Achaemenid clan. In 559 BC, a new leader was chosen: Cyrus the Great; also known as *Kurosh-e Bozorg* (or Cyrus the Elder) in New Persian, the founder of the Achaemenid Persian Empire. The emergence of Cyrus II to power only came after he subdued the Medes, a super-tribe from Northern Iran that was initially stronger than its Persian counterpart. And after taking control of the entire realm of Iran (which will be called Persia from now), he declared himself the *Shah* (or simply King) of Persia.

After the death of Darius, his son Xerxes ruled until 465 BC. Xerxes was a cruel but weak king who was also defeated by the Greeks in the Persian Wars. During Xerxes' reign, the Persian Empire declined. Although the empire continued for more than a century, it grew weaker as it constantly faced conspiracies, assassinations, and revolts by the people who were burdened with heavy taxes. Alexander the Great, defeated King Darius III and the Persian army in 330 B.C. Darius was subsequently assassinated by one of his own followers. Although Alexander retained the Persian system of government until his own death in 323 BC, Darius's defeat marked the end of the Achaemenid dynasty and the Persian Empire.

The social structure started to break down once there was no longer a strong leader. The people below the upper class started organizing riots and other actions of revolt against the rulers. This caused the rulers to go against their religion by working for the evil spirits. Kings became greedy and began stealing from the supply if riches rather than giving it to the people.

For one thing, weak rulers led to numerous provincial revolts, especially in Egypt, which always had detested Persian rule. Secondly, the provincial satraps also became more independent, ruling their satrapies more as kings than as the king's loyal subjects. They even carried on their own foreign policies and waged war on each other, which only added to Persia's problems. Revolts and unruly satraps caused serious economic problems for the empire. The government definitely grew weaker after the start of the fall of the Persian empire. The government struggled with thriving without having a strong ruler that could train armies to battle and gain wealth for Persia. The government started to shift to a very dysfunctional dictatorship. The Persian army was negatively affected because they no longer had a strong base or leader to keep them in line.

The Persian people no longer received the resources to build and sculpt beautiful artwork and buildings. This fall caused there to be much less production of pieces of artwork. We today have a gap in Persian art because of the fall.

Persian taxes became heavier and more oppressive, which led to economic depression and revolts, which in turn led to more repression, heavier taxes and so on. The Persian kings also started hoarding gold and silver rather than re-circulating it. This created economic turmoil without enough gold and silver for doing business. As a result of this economic turmoil, the Persian kings got weaker still, which fed back into the problem of revolts and powerful satraps and so on. Crop production decreased as well which caused more commoners to leave and less trade to happen.

They could no longer make scientific advancements. Persia decreased in complexity towards the end of its era. The decrease in these advancements caused

their weapon production and safety to diminish. This was detrimental to the empire and was a major reason why it fell.

Ruled by the legendary King Croesus (who was supposedly the richest man in the contemporary world, and also credited with issuing the first true gold coins), the Lydians controlled all of Anatolia west of the River Halys, except Lycia. In spite of such intimidating credentials, Croesus was defeated by carefully crafted planning and indirect devices and stratagem) that seemingly went against the established military protocols of the ancient world. This was epitomized by an incident that followed an indecisive battle near the Halys. As per customs and the existing situation, after the strenuous battle, Croesus retired to his capital Sardis – in a bid to solidify his position and continue the fight next spring. But Cyrus took a gamble of a lifetime, and followed Croesus all the way to Sardis. This audacious move was mirrored by the unusual battlefield tactic of using Arabian camels (dromedaries) – both of which took the Lydian king and his cavalry forces by surprise. Subsequently, the citadel of Sardis fell to the invading Persians.

In any case, Croesus' life was probably spared – a political and psychological ploy that became the personal trademark of Cyrus the Great. As a matter of fact, the victorious king developed a magnanimous reputation for sparing conquered rulers so that he could supposedly use their advice on how to govern their lands. This was complimented by Cyrus' progressive attitude (or at least his *pretense* of generosity) towards foreign cultures and religions, a crucial personality aspect that aided the Persians when they next faced the Babylonians. After defeating the Babylonian army in a few engagements, the Persian army made its triumphant yet bloodless entry into the jewel of the ancient world, the city of Babylon – a task made easy by the enemy tyrant Nabonidus, who fled the capital.

India

There are several references to the prevalence of official corruption in ancient India. But the text that provides an elaborate description of the menace is the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya. This sophisticated and detailed treatise on statecraft is essentially prescriptive or normative in nature, belonging to a genre of literature that suggests what the state ought to be and not what it really was. Nevertheless, one should realise that norms are prescribed only when digressions or abnormalities exist. This confirms the fact that corruption was rampant enough in ancient India to necessitate expert advice on how to tame it. Kautilya expressed his views on a range of issues including state, war, social structures, diplomacy, ethics, and politics.

Kautilya argues that honesty is not a virtue that would remain consistent lifelong and the temptation to make easy gains through corrupt means can override the trait of honesty any time. Similarly, he compared the process of generation and collection of revenue (by officials) with honey or poison on the tip of the tongue, which becomes impossible not. Based on such sweeping, albeit questionable, generalisations about the nature of human beings, he prescribed a strict vigil even over the superintendents of government departments in relation to the place, time, nature, output and *modus operandi* of work. All this is perhaps indicative of widespread corruption in the Kingdom's administration at various levels.

Kautilya reflected serious concerns about opacity in the operations of the world of the corrupt. Illegal transactions were so shrouded in mist that he compared embezzlers to fish moving under water and the virtual impossibility of detecting when exactly the fish is drinking water. He also noted that while it is possible to ascertain the movements of bird flying in the sky, but it is difficult to gauge the corrupt activities of government officials.

During Mauryan times, superintendents were the highest officials, a position they received for possessing the desired *individual capacity* and adequate *ministerial qualifications*. Given the general emphasis of Kautilya on observing ethics and morality in relation to the functioning of a state, it seems the selection process would have involved not just a scrutiny of the educational attainments but also the right kind of aptitude for the job including traits of honesty and impartiality. This shows that despite the greatest care taken in recruiting officials, corrupt persons made their way into the system. Kautilya was a great administrative thinker of his times. As he argued, too much of personal interaction or union among the higher executives leads to departmental goals being compromised and leads to corruption. This is because human emotions and personal concerns act as impediments to the successful running of an administration, which is basically a rule-based impersonal affair. Similarly, dissension among executives when team effort is required results in a poor outcome. Kautilya suggested that the decline in output and corruption can be curbed by promoting professionalism at work. The superintendents should execute work with the subordinate officials such as accountants, writers, coin-examiners, treasurers and military officers in a team spirit. Such an effort creates a sense of belonging among members of the department who start identifying and synchronising their goals with the larger goals of the organization, thereby contributing to the eventual success of the state.

Kautilya provides a comprehensive list of 40 kinds of embezzlement. In all these cases, the concerned functionaries such as the treasurer, the prescriber, the receiver, the payer, the person who caused the payment and the ministerial servants were to be separately interrogated. In case any of these officials were to lie, their punishment

was to be enhanced to the level meted out to the chief officer mainly responsible for the crime. After the enquiry, a public proclamation was to be made asking the common people to claim compensation in case they were aggrieved and suffered from the embezzlement.

Thus, Kautilya was concerned about carrying the cases of fraud to their logical conclusion. *The Arthaśāstra* states that an increase in expenditure and lower revenue collection was an indication of embezzlement of funds by corrupt officials. Kautilya was sensitive enough to acknowledge the waste of labour of the workforce involved in generating revenues. He defined self-enjoyment by government functionaries as making use of or causing others to enjoy what belongs to the king. He was perhaps alluding to the current practice of misusing government offices for selfish motives such as unduly benefitting the self, family members, friends and relatives either in monetary or non-monetary form which harms the larger public good. Kautilya was also not unaware of corruption in the judicial administration. He prescribed the imposition of varying degrees of fines on judges trying to proceed with a trial without evidence, or unjustly maintaining silence, or threatening, defaming or abusing the complainants, arbitrarily dismissing responses provided to questions raised by the judge himself, unnecessarily delaying the trial or giving unjust punishments¹¹⁵.

Kautilya prescribed reliance on an elaborate espionage network for detecting financial misappropriation and judicial impropriety. Spies were recruited for their honesty and good conduct. They were to keep a watch even over the activities of accountants and clerks for reporting cases of fabrication of accounts. On successful detection of embezzlement cases, Kautilya advocated hefty fines to be imposed apart from the confiscation of ill-earned hordes. If a functionary was charged and proved even of a single offence, he was made answerable for all other associated offences related to the case.

Since taxes paid by the people are utilised for their welfare, any loss of revenue affects the welfare of the society at large. This is precisely the reason why Kautilya explicitly argued that the fines imposed should be in proportion to the value of work done, the number of days taken, the amount of capital spent and the amount of daily wages paid. The threat of fines being imposed and subsequent public embarrassment do deter judicial officials, to some extent, from resorting to corrupt practices. But

¹¹⁵ This shows that there were incidents of judicial pronouncements being biased, favouring one party to the detriment of others¹¹⁵. In an atmosphere of corruption prevailing in the judicial administration as well, Kautilya perhaps wanted to ensure that the litigants are encouraged and given voice to air their legitimate grievances. He expected judges to be more receptive to the complaints and be fair in delivering justice.

Kautilya was proactive in laying down traps to catch public functionaries with loose morals and inclination to resort to bribery or seek undue favour.

China

Corruption in China dates back over a thousand years and has been present through countless dynasties. In fact, widespread corruption is often cited as one of the factors that led to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in the 19th century. In dynastic China, the implementation and enforcement of laws and regulations were the task of local officials. Their official salary was entirely at their disposal, but they had to finance office expenses, pay their assistants and bestow lavish treatments upon higher ranking state officials, as well as pay them a so-called *regular fee*. However, the imperial budget allocated to the administration was rather low. Local officials, the prefects, also received a small sum, *jang-lien jin*, meaning *the silver to maintain integrity*, yet it didn't quite prevent them from accepting bribes in just about any form. Though taking bribes was generally considered to be an uncouth custom or bad habit, it was nevertheless a well-known and widely accepted one. In practice it meant that officials at every level required extra payments from their subordinates or citizens under various names. It was not unusual that extra fees were charged several times for the same *service* resulting in bribery becoming so complex that the central government was simply unable to control the situation. Thus, it was also very unclear as to what counted as *legal corruption* and what fell outside of that. As a result, the labyrinth of bribes and favours, corruption became an integral part of the entire administration.

In this complex system it was only normal that government officials would trade their influence for money. They also formed strong cliques to protect themselves from punishments by state businessmen, officials, military leaders and other high ranking state employees. New people entering the administration carried on these traditions because they firmly believed that corruption was a normal facet of the job. According to historical records, less than three out of ten civil servants could preserve their integrity. China's emperors were aware of the corruption problem and many of them made desperate attempts to eradicate it, but their endeavours were often futile¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁶ One of the most successful was the *Great Qing Legal Code*, introduced in 1644 and enforced for nearly 270 years. The code specified sanctions against corruption according to the severity of the crime. Depending upon the received amount of money or the value of gifts, the punishments varied from beatings with a bamboo stick to the death penalty. One of the most infamous corrupt state officials was He Shen, the prime minister of Emperor Qianlong. He

Corruption has left its deep mark on the Chinese language and culture also. Proverbs such as *a big rooster eats no small rice* or *money falls into the hands of yamen secretaries as lamb into mouth of the tiger* (yamen = state office) illustrate how corruption was present in everyday life. Chinese literature also suggests that officials were corrupt and that it was only natural for them to expect bribes and gifts in return for a favourable decision. The long history of corruption in China, moving from dynasty to dynasty, suggests that an honest and morally correct magister was indeed an exception to the rule¹¹⁷.

It is evident, through these few examples that the phenomenon of corruption is timeless, however it is not a characteristic of one people or nation, but of all of mankind. Nevertheless, that does not mean that regulations and laws shouldn't exist in order to prevent and minimise this bad habit.

Greece

Corruption being one of the inborn characteristic of the human nature, was not unknown in ancient Greece. Greek history, like any other, is full of examples verifying the phenomenon. An example is the case of debt cancellation of great legislator Solon (5th century BC) – the Seisachtheia. As Aristotle writes, just before the announcement of the debt cancellation, he informed his friends to rush and get large loans, which eventually were cleared of any debt, hence making them really

accumulated his wealth during two decades in office. In 1799, he lost the Emperor's trust and the court ordered an investigation against him. Around 1,100 million tales of silver were discovered when his home was searched, an amount equivalent to the revenue of the Qing government for 15 years. His wrongdoings ended when, at the age 49, he was given a court decree to hang himself.

¹¹⁷ British Free Lance Art Director and Illustrator, Andras Csuka, in one of his blogs on China, in 2016, writes, "Corruption in Imperial China was no different. It dates back over a thousand years and has been present through countless dynasties. In fact, widespread corruption is often cited as one of the factors that led to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in the 19th century. As a result, the labyrinth of bribes and favors, corruption became an integral part of the entire administration. A European traveller in the 18th century described Chinese corruption as follows: 'The man who preserved his integrity is generally considered as incapable or a dreamer. It is not easy to swim against the stream'. In this complex system it was only normal that government officials would trade their influence for money. They also formed strong cliques to protect themselves from punishments by state businessmen, officials, military leaders and other high ranking state employees".

rich. Themistocles claimed that it has no value to be a leader if you cannot enrich your friends. Agisilaos, King of Sparta believed exactly the same thing. Even the monuments on the Acropolis were connected to the biggest scandal of abuse during the Golden Century of Pericles (5th century BC). The main issues were both, using money from the treasury of the Athenian Alliance by Pericles and the suspicion that Phidias had distorted the gold in the statue of Athena. Plutarch writes that Pericles introduced the *secret funds* by taking 10 talents (an enormous sum for that period). When questioned in Pnika he answered *I gave them where they were needed*, without explaining further.

Demosthenes was exiled and imprisoned twice due to corruption charges. The first time he took money of Alexander the Great's treasurer, Arpalos, who took the funds from Babylon and fled to Athens. The second time he took money from the Amfises in order to cover a scandal at Delphi. Arpalos had escaped to Athens in order to avoid the wrath of Alexander the Great because he stole the army's finance and the treasury of Babylon, which had been entrusted to him. Finally, Demosthenes was convicted and exiled from Athens in 324 BC for choosing to work with the biggest abuser of his time, Arpalos.

In ancient Greece, the laws and the constitution did not work by divine right but by the right of the people. That is why Pericles was given a trial date, although he was never tried, since during that time the Peloponnesian War commenced. Nevertheless, before the temple of Athena Nike began, the auditors looked thoroughly at Kalikratis' designs. As for Phidias, he achieved to demonstrate his innocence in court, however he didn't escape prison. The key reason was his arrogance in immortalizing Pericles and himself on the shield of the goddess Athena.

Ancient Greece was no different. Despite its reputation as a philosophical idyll, it was run by bureaucrats like most countries. Aristotle himself estimated that the city of Athens alone had 20,000 public employees who were badly paid and 'made ends meet'.

Rome

Despite the relative stability of the Roman Empire the succession from one emperor to another was often a complicated and messy affair. Most of the time the emperorship was passed on from one family member to another. Several emperors who had no son chose their political heirs by adopting them. Other times power was seized through battles or other forms of violence. Once it was even sold to the highest bidder. Between 70 and 50 BC, Roman politics hit rock bottom. Candidates, in some cases, dispensed with promoting sporting events and simply bought votes. The

situation eventually got so out of hand that Cicero and others passed campaign reform laws that outlawed these bribes and prohibited politicians from sponsoring gladiator contests two years before an election. A candidate found guilty lost his right forever to run for office. An early legal code in the Roman republic, imposed the death penalty on judges who accepted bribes. Enforcement became lenient only after the rise of the Roman Emperorship.

Rome had real problem trying to define what qualified as a bribe and what was a friendship gift. There was a pretty broad range of *quid pro quos*. Emperor Tiberius tried to clamp down on local governors extorting tax payments from subjects but still left local officials plenty of room to obtain gratuities, Tiberus said he wanted his *sheep shorn, not flayed*, meaning it was acceptable for local rulers to take some money but not excessive amounts. The rich and well-connected paid proportionally less taxes than the poor and middle class. Most of the tax collecting was done by local authorities who were told if they came up short they would make up the difference out of their own pockets. The Romans were fierce tax collectors. People who failed to register could be fined 25 percent of their personal property. And authorities weren't shy about resorting to violence.

Fascinating is the history of political corruption during the Republic and plundering of provinces by their governors during the reign of Roman Emperors.

The process of commercializing the Romans, which had begun probably before the Second Punic War, went on through the later Republic, and reached a climax in the Age of Augustus. By that time the old noble families had largely run out. Their scions, had not earned but had inherited the riches, were more anxious for spending than for getting. Luxury and squandering rose to ever-greater excesses, and culminated under Nero. After him several things began to produce a reaction. The emperors undertook to set a more frugal example; the Stoic philosophy and, more slowly, Christianity, began to establish other ideals than those of getting and enjoying. The highborn families who had amassed the riches had nearly all died out, thanks to a childlessness caused by luxurious living and to the slaughters of the civil wars and of the tyrants; and property was passing into the hands of ex-slaves and provincials who had a bare knowledge of the use of riches.

Unfortunately, the leaven that had begun to work among the Roman upper classes during the Republic had learned to worship the golden god so eagerly invoked by their masters. Under the Empire the forms and expressions of the spirit changed in some details but the underlying essence was the same. Money continued to be the leading power in the world until the coming of the barbarians and of Christianity.

If a state becomes thoroughly commercialized, this fact will probably betray itself in the public life. It will be increasingly difficult for officials to quit office with clean hands. The receipt of what is to-day called *graft* will affect both magistrates and citizens. If this tendency to make the public loss the private gain is not ultimately checked, it is likely there will be needed some violent change in the structure of government by which political bribery and corruption will be left less opportunity for their sinister work. Not all the evils that cursed the dying Roman Republic were due to this illicit passing of money. Not a few of the oligarchs who did their best to make the rule of the Roman Senate intolerable went through their public careers without directly filching or unlawfully receiving a denarius. This can be said of Cato Minor, of Cicero, of a good many more. On the other hand, Julius Caesar, the founder of the better regime of the Empire, would undoubtedly have assented to Walpole's alleged maxim, that *all men have their price*. He bought up votes and opposing statesmen shamelessly – witness his purchase of Curio; and probably the other leaders were no freer from malpractices than their senatorial opponents.

From the day when the great Punic war indemnity wrung out of Carthage began to fill the Roman treasury, whatever else the Senate's government lacked, it seldom lacked money. The public service, especially the foreign service, with its chances for the plunder of conquered kings, the loot of conquered cities, the *gifts* of trembling Asiatics and Greeklings, was no longer likely to cost the general or proprietor a farthing; on the contrary, he was an exceptional man if he laid down his unsalaried office without being far wealthier than when he took it up¹¹⁸.

Unfortunately for Jugurtha he did not possess treasures enough to purchase all his enemies; and he discovered too late that there were limits at Rome beyond which even gold could not carry him. But while bribery was often a determining factor in the Republic's foreign relations, the influence of money was equally decisive upon home politics. A great noble craved office to enrich him by a war, an embassy, and a governorship. An Italian farmer craved the franchise more humbly to fatten on the favours handed him for electing the great noble to office. The results were almost inevitable.

The abuses of the *Ambitus* – the canvassing for election – were patent to the Roman fathers before the city ceased to be a weak commonwealth. The custom of a candidate's walking around the Forum, saluting the farmers come to trade, and

¹¹⁸ In 171 BC. Occurred the first case of a Roman official – a commissioner to Illyria – taking bribes from a foreign potentate; an example only too eagerly followed by the succeeding generations, until the scandals culminated in Jugurtha's bribery of a large fraction of the actual rulers of Rome (111 BC), and his memorable words as he cast his eyes backward when quitting the sovereign city, "*Urbem venalem, et mature perituram, A emptorem invenerit.*"

asking their votes, was not to be supplemented by adventitious helps. Thus in 432 BC a law forbade such candidates from wearing a conspicuous white dress to attract attention. In 358 BC, they were forbidden to go about on market days when the people would be especially thronged together¹¹⁹.

Soon after this came the Caesarian regime, and elections became mere registrations of the will of Julius Caesar, and later of the Triumvirs. Under Augustus a modicum of freedom returned to the electoral comitia, and that the old methods were being pursued and the old evils returning, is shown by the law of 18 BC, which required a candidate, before beginning his canvass, to deposit 100,000 sesterces as security that he would keep the laws. With the death of Augustus, however, and the transfer of the elections by Tiberius from the Comitia to the Senate, election bribery practically ceased to be a crime.

It would be easy to present details of the venality of the Roman government during the later Republic. The notorious case (61 BC) of the trial of Clodius for

¹¹⁹ These laws appeared to be sufficient for nearly two centuries; then it seemed that their edge needed to be sharpened. In 181 BC, a new law declared that persons convicted of illicit canvassing should be ineligible as candidates for ten years. Here matters were again allowed practically to sleep, while the laws themselves insufficient, considering the highly organized party-system developing at Rome, were more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Finally, in the last two decades of the Republic the trading in votes rose to such a height that the law was repeatedly strengthened — though, it would seem, to deplorably little purpose. By an act of 67 BC the *treating* of voters was made punishable; in 63 BC (the year of Cicero's consulship) the penalty for violating this act was set at ten years of exile; it was also forbidden to candidates to give any public games for the two years previous to standing for office, or to hire persons to attend them while they made their rounds of vote seeking. In 55 BC a new law struck at what was probably the most flagrant form of corruption. The wealthy candidate would quietly arrange for his election to the desired office with a band of political *go-betweens*. These professional gentlemen would proceed to mark out the Roman tribes into smaller and wieldier sections, arrange the voters into clubs and fraternities, compound with each section for its votes, marshal the faithful henchmen to the electoral comitia, and duly pay over the stipulated honorarium upon delivery of the election. The details of such arrangements were — it may be imagined — seldom committed to writing. We are left to guess at the workings of these voters' *collegia* by a few hints from Cicero. It is sufficient to remark that under the later Republic almost any man of noble family and deep purse seems to have been able to rise fairly high in the scale of offices, provided he was willing to spend freely. In times of great excitement, to be sure, mere money might fail to prevail against an approved party leader; but the latter, it can be assumed, would he hardly prove niggardly. The law of 55 BC, declared these voters' *collegia* unlawful, and arranged special methods for trying offenders against the election statutes. That this new law was ineffectual is shown by still another act in 52 BC, against political clubs, making the penalties still heavier.

sacrilege, when thirty-one judges out of fifty-six voted him *not guilty* of a crime all knew he had committed, is a good instance of the way gold could blind the eyes of Roman *judices*. The manner, in which the infamous Egyptian King, Ptolemaeus Auletes, bought the friendship of the Senate in 58 BC, was almost as glaring as the bribery by Jugurtha. Too often the person to buy was not the voter or the influential party leader, but the party leader's mistress. This was true in the instance of the concubine of that Verres, whose knaveries were immortalized by Cicero; and of Praecia, the mistress of Cethegus, a powerful tribune, whose favour was necessary to Lucullus when he wished the Cilician province.

The gifts an Asiatic prince might be expected to send to Roman general and his staff would amount to fortunes. Even petty potentates would pay richly for the privilege of keeping life and power¹²⁰.

From the first conquest of Sicily the Romans administered their provinces with no altruistic notions as to the uplifting of the governed. The provinces were so many farms of the sovereign people. The only question was how to raise the largest possible crops of tribute. Should the new farm be forced, its soil quickly exhausted by a few huge harvests, or should it be carefully cultivated, preferring smaller but permanent returns? The question seemed merely one of expediency. It was only after bitter experience that the rulers of the ancient world could assent to the Emperor Tiberius's maxim – *a good shepherd clips his sheep, but does not flay them*.

Sent forth to govern while such motives obtained at home, it required more than ordinary strength of character on the part of a pro-magistrate not to extend also to the filling of his private coffer, the mandate to fill the public aerarium. With him would go a suite of friends, usually young spendthrifts, and with their fortunes to make? If he and they were truly honest, still they would return after one to three years with their fortunes vastly bettered. If they were men of easy consciences they would return, as Varus – the victim of Arminius – did from Syria, who *as a poor man entered a rich country, as a rich man left the country poor*.

As early as 198 BC Cato, the censor, had to put a stop to certain unjust exactions in Sardinia. In 171 BC delegates from the two Spains made formal complaint in the

¹²⁰ Aristobulus, a Jewish Prince, sent Pompeius a golden vine worth 500 talents; he gave a legate, A. Gabinus, 300, a quaestor 400 talents. Ptolemaeus "Mennai", lord of a robber state in Lebanon, bought immunity for himself from Pompeius for 1,000 talents, which – with unusual honesty for a Roman general – Pompeius used to pay his troops. Ariobarzanes of Cappadocia paid the same conqueror thirty-three talents monthly, which, however, did not reach to the interest on his debts. Gabinus again while proconsul of Syria pressed out of the province 400,000,000 sesterces. Finally, Crassus the Rich is said to have taken from the Temple of Jerusalem, treasure worth 10,000 talents.

Senate of the avarice and insolence of their governors. Before this there had been outcry from the Ambraciots of Greece and the Cenomani of Gaul. In 149 BC came the *Lex Calpurnia*, the first of the almost fruitless laws devised to prevent provincial oppression.

As a rule, the Roman governor – especially if he was set over the more civilized, hence more wealthy and desirable provinces – had little to fear from that usual check to despotism – the revolt of the oppressed¹²¹.

And yet the oppression of the provinces, those estates of the Roman people (*praedia populi Romani*), was very great. The provincial was regularly spoken of as a *stipendarius* – the man who must pay. If he was to be defended from attack and fostered, it was only because leaving him defenceless cut off his sovereign's revenue. The governors sent out to him were clothed with the power of Turkish pashas. In theory the governor was not allowed to purchase anything in his province because, as we are formed by Cicero, it was thought a theft, not a purchase, when the seller could not sell at his own price; for a governor would be able to take anything he pleased whether for sale or not, once he began to purchase. A Lucius Piso, governor

¹²¹ In the East the Diodochi and their long series of wars and tyrannies had almost stamped out the sentiment of local patriotism, and it is a fair question whether the rule of the average Roman governor was worse than that of the average local despot to which those regions had been accustomed. Greece, the one country where local spirit ought to have been strong, had been emasculated by the great draughts on her population for the Hellenistic colonies and armies, and by the systematic pressure from Macedonia. The defeat at Sellasia in 221 BC of Cleomenes of Sparta ended perhaps the last genuine attempt of the home *Hellenes* to live for themselves, and to pursue their own policy; for Aratus and Philopoemen were barely able to keep their much vaunted Achaean League from becoming the victim of Macedonia; and the deathlike quiet that settled over Greece after the destruction of Corinth (146 BC) shows how little political vitality was left in a country which three centuries before had seemed one high-school of active politics. That Roman misrule might be resented, could be shown by the ready welcome Mithridates of Pontus received from the Greek and Asiatic cities; but, except as the help came from without, things seldom passed beyond mere grumbings. It was usually cheaper and safer to pay the fee to the Roman governor and his quaestor than to engage in conspiracies against the power, which had worn down the genius of Hannibal. Besides, as was said – bad as were Roman governors – the dynasts preceding them had been very bad also. The woes of the Jews arose largely because of the misdeeds of the houses of the Maccabees and of the Herods. Those Agrippas who held sway over much of Palestine down to the great Jewish War, had to pay tribute to Rome and support their own ostentatious courts – no small expense for the governed; which expense partly ended when the royal household with its harem, eunuchs and greedy chamberlains was replaced by the simpler praetorium of a Roman governor. The average proconsul, in short, could seldom oppress to the extent of a covetous, unscrupulous, degenerate princelet only indirectly under the supervision of Rome.

of Further Spain, having lost a ring, sent for a goldsmith to come to his tribunal in the open Forum at Corduba, weighed out the necessary gold, and had the man make the ring in the sight of every one; but that an honest governor should feel the need of such precautions is a sorry comment on the general practice. A new governor, in fact, entering his province, came to his subjects almost as a strange demi-god, who might prove to be a benefactor or a demon. They would await eagerly his edict – his announcement of his attitude towards the dreaded tax-farmers and moneylenders, and as to how he would deal with the matter of usury. Would he exact the *aurum aedilicium*, a supposedly voluntary offering, sent from the provincial cities to pay for the aediles' games at Rome? Finally, would he exact large fees from litigants, and consistently give the judgment to the man with the freest purse?

In 43 BC, Cassius, Caesar's murderer, descended on the province. He was engaged in a life and death struggle with Antonius and Octavius the avengers. Under the justification of extreme public peril, his exactions rose to sheer confiscation. At Tarsus he ruthlessly quartered soldiers on the city folk till the huge sum of 1,500 talents had been paid. The miserable citizens sold all the public property, coined all the sacred vessels and precious ornaments in the temples, and finally the despairing magistrates *sold free persons into bondage, first boys and girls, later women and wretched old men, who brought a very small price, and finally young men. Many of these committed suicide.* Finally, Cassius' heart *was touched* (did he have true scruples, or did he fear a desperate insurrection?). He remitted a part of the contribution, and presently marched away to his doom. In the great province of Asia during this destructive civil war the contributions levied by both sides were almost as merciless.

It has been said that the rule of the emperors in the provinces was milder and simple than that of the Republic. This is true; but all abuses were by no means at an end. In Tiberius' reign the formidable revolt of Julius Florus and Julius Sacrovivis in Gaul was directly traceable to *the excessive debts of the states of Gaul*, and the rebel agitators argued against the domineering and cruelty of the government, and *the tribute without end and the excessive usury of the Romans*. Juvenal, writing about 100 AD, again would have one feel that *the very marrow is drained from the empty bones of kings*; that it is folly to complain at Rome; that the governors' wife often abuses her influence; that the lictors' rods and axes are always busy, and that judgments are sold for bribes.

Evidently, these abuses tended to concentrate the capital of the world at Rome and made possible the vast fortunes and prodigal spending of the later republic and the early Empire. The extraordinary opportunities for illegally and easily gained wealth deepened the lust of the ruling classes for money, and their willingness to

gauge honour, happiness, love, and religion, in terms of money. Under the early Caesars, was a cult of Mammon, which has no counterpart in history.

Since corruption and crime is a deep rooted and lasting evil of all human societies, perhaps a vivid picture can be painted, by illustrating the crime pattern that might have existed even in Roman religious' circles. An introspection in history of the Vatican during the Renaissance can give us some idea of the state of affairs in earlier years of Christianity¹²².

¹²² Eamon Duffy (1997, pp 177) illustrates the state of affairs in papacy in following words: "Contemporaries viewed Renaissance Rome... a city of expense-account whores and political graft, where everyone had a price, where nothing and nobody could be trusted. The popes themselves seemed to set the tone. Alexander VI (1492-1503) flaunted a young and nubile mistress in the Vatican, was widely believed to have made a habit of poisoning his cardinals so as to get his hands on their property, and he ruthlessly aggrandised his illegitimate sons and daughters at the Church expense. Julius II (1503-13), ... was a very dubious Father of all the Faithful, for he had fathered three daughters of his own while a cardinal... Leo X (1513-21), Son of Lorenzo the Magnificent of Florence, was made a cleric at seven and a cardinal at thirteen years old: as pope he ruled both Rome and Florence."

Appendix 3.2.

Some Highlights

3.2.1. Philosophy

Mesopotamia

The origins of philosophy can be traced back to early Mesopotamian wisdom, which embodied certain philosophies of life, particularly ethics in the forms of dialectic, dialogues, epic poetry, folklore, hymns, proverbs etc. Babylonian reason and rationality developed beyond empirical observation.

The earliest form of logic was developed by the Babylonians, notably due to the nature of their social system. Logic was employed to some extent in their astronomy and medicine. Babylonian thought had a considerable influence on early Ancient Greek and Hellenistic philosophy-

Egypt

There is very little information today on the ancient Egyptian philosophy. The most notable currently known ancient Egyptian philosophers were Imhotep, Ptahhotep, and Amenhotep. Did Greek philosophy influence the Egyptian philosophy or *vice versa* is a debatable point too.

Persia

Persian philosophy can be traced back as far as to their old philosophical traditions and thoughts, which originated in ancient Indo-Iranian roots and were considerably influenced by Zarathustra's teachings around 1500 BC.

Throughout Persian history and due to remarkable political and social changes such as the Arab and Mongol invasions of Persia, a wide spectrum of schools of thoughts showed a variety of views on philosophical questions extending from Old Iranian and mainly Zoroastrianism-related traditions.

India

The schools of Indian philosophical thought are classified as either orthodox or heterodox – depending on one of three alternate criteria: whether it believes the *Vedas* are a valid source

of knowledge; whether the school believes in the premises of *Brāhman* and *Ātman*; and whether the school believes in afterlife and *Devas*.

There are six major schools of orthodox Hindu thought: *Nyaya* (realism), *Vaishesika* (naturalism), *Samkhya* (rationalism), *Yoga* (personally defined theism), *Mimamsa* (ritualism) and *Vedanta* (Upanishadic traditions); and four major heterodox schools— Jain, Buddhist, Ajivika and Charvaka.

The main schools of Indian philosophy were formalised chiefly between 1000 BC to the early centuries of the modern era. According to philosopher Radhakrishnan, the earliest of these, which date back to the composition of the Upanishads (1000-500 BC), constitute the earliest philosophical compositions of the world. Competition and integration between the various schools was intense during their formative years, especially between 800 BC and 200 CE.

Indian philosophies share many concepts such as *dharma*, *karma*, *samsara*, reincarnation, *dukkha*, renunciation, meditation, with almost all of them focussing on the ultimate goal of liberation of the individual through diverse range of spiritual practices (*moksha*, *nirvāṇa*). They differ in their assumptions about the nature.

China

Chinese philosophy originates in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, during a period known as the *Hundred Schools of Thought*, characterized by significant intellectual and cultural developments. Although much of Chinese philosophy begins in the *Warring States* period, elements of Chinese philosophy have existed for several thousand years; some can be found in the *I-Ching* (the Book of Changes), an ancient compendium of divination.

Early Shang Dynasty thought was based upon cycles. This notion stems from what the people could observe around them: day and night cycled, the seasons progressed again and again, and even the moon waxed and waned until it waxed again. Thus, this notion, which remained relevant throughout, reflects the order of nature. During the Shangs, fate could be manipulated by great deities, commonly translated as gods. Ancestor worship was present and universally recognized. There was also human and animal sacrifice. When the Shangs were overthrown by Chu, a new political, religious and philosophical concept was introduced called the *Mandate of Heaven*.

Greece

Greek philosophy arose in the 6th century BC and continued throughout the Hellenistic period and the period in which Ancient Greece was part of the Roman Empire. Philosophy was used to make sense out of the world in a non-religious way. It dealt with a wide variety of subjects, including political philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, ontology, logic, biology, rhetoric.

Some scholars claim that Greek philosophy was influenced by the older wisdom literature and mythological cosmogonies of the ancient Near East. Philosophical thought of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle that was followed, up to and after the wars of Alexander, are those of *classical Greek* and *Hellenistic* philosophy.

Israel

Scholars have claimed that Ancient Israelis did not evolve their own philosophical thought. The civilization basically relied on the laws of *Abraham* and *Moses*. It is only lately that Jewish philosophy includes all practices carried out by Jews in relation to the religion of Judaism. Until modern *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) Jewish philosophy was preoccupied with attempts to reconcile coherent new ideas into the tradition of Rabbinic Judaism; thus organizing emergent ideas that are not necessarily Jewish into a uniquely Jewish scholastic framework and world-view.

3.2.2. Religion

Mesopotamia

The religion of Mesopotamia derived its early structure from the fact that the social and political life of that area was centred in the individual states each with independent king. The organization of religious life was similar to that of the political state. In each capital city there was a chief deity who had a goddess wife. Other deities assisted the two. At first the king himself served as the high priest, however, later an elaborate professional priesthood arose.

Above the gods, worshipped by each city, there was also a triad of deities that included *Anu*, god of the sky; *Enlil*, who ruled the affairs of men and earth; and *Ea*, god of waters. When Babylon and Nineveh became powerful enough to conquer other Mesopotamian cities, great god *Marduk* and *Ishtar* came to achieve the supreme status.

The characteristic features of Mesopotamian religion figure along the lines of magic. Inspection of the vital organs of slaughtered animals; and observation of heavenly bodies abode of divine spirits; various ritualistic practices to control and expulsion of evil spirits, exorcism, judgements were common.

Egypt

The Egyptians worshipped a multitude of gods. Some are gods of entire nation and other the local gods. In principle, Egyptian theology is characterized by the confusing vagueness with which many of the deities are delineated and the popular syncretism that made possible the substitution, merging and absorption of gods. The same functions would then be performed

but under another name. Yet out of this confused picture there did emerge a group of nine gods.

Belief in a hereafter with both rewards and punishments was one of the notable features of Egyptian religion.

Persia

Although the early Persians did not leave behind a history or description of their religion, the inscriptions of Persian kings and the scriptures which the followers of prophet Zarathustra wrote, provide much information concerning the ideas, beliefs, and practices the prophet set himself, against and undertook to eradicate.

The Persians worshipped *Ahura Mazda* (Zeus) as the dome of sky, and sacrificed to him on mountaintops. They also worshipped sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and wind. It is only later that they learned to worship *Anahita* (Aphrodite). This report is confirmed and illuminated by the *Rig Veda* of India.

India

Since the arrival of Aryans in India, male cosmic gods were the main deities. Linguistic expertise shows that the word for 'god' in *Rig Veda* (earlier Indian Aryan text) is *deva*; in *Avesta* (in earlier Iranian text) it is also *daeva*, both being cognate with Latin *Deus*. The original great sky and father god of the Indo-Europeans turns up in the *Rig Veda* as *Dyaus-pitar* in the Greek and Latin classics as *Zeus* and *Ju-pitar*. Among the subjects of worship were the deities Sun (*Surya*), Fire (*Agni*), Thunder/Storm (*Indra*), and other personifications of nature. The closest kinship between Avestan and Rig Vedic deities is the evidence of common Indo-Iranian religion before this group divided.

The great sky god of the Aryan Indo-Iranians was *Varuna* who was associated with both the cosmic and moral order. Other common Vedic deities were *Mitra* (Mithra), *Indra* (Indra), *Nasatyas* or *Ashvins* (Nanhaithya), *Vayu* (Vayu), *Soma* (Haoma), and *Yama* (Yima). In the *Rig Veda*, *Varuna* and *Mitra* are among the deities called *asura* (Ahura) and others as *deva*.

China

The ancient religion of China can best be understood through their philosophy of life on Earth and its relation to Heaven (*T'ien*) that was an ancestral deity. Heaven stood as the cosmic counterpart of man's ethical sensibilities, the guarantor of man's moral strivings. Confucius viewed religion as a factor that contributed to man's ethical and aesthetic life.

Taoism was different in spirit with Confucianism and other faiths. It preferred individualism to collectivism, nature to society, self to family, quietism to activism, simplicity to artificiality and contemplation to deliberation.

The predecessors of the Taoist were recluses. The rise in their philosophy was due to change in material culture (the use of iron, asbestos, cavalry and so on), and in part to the

fusion of the Chou culture on the frontiers, where Chinese civilization was little known. At the beginning these recluses or quietists were interested in the nourishment of the *Ch'i*, the vital spirit or life breath of man. They understood Tao to mean the Way of the vital spirit. Expanding the meaning of Tao from mysterious essence of man to cosmic force. They desired to preserve the spirit of nature (*Tao*) that makes man truly human.

Greece

There is an archaeological evidence of the existence of the Neolithic Pelasgians, but little can be said of their religion. The decipherment of Minoan inscriptions has thrown new light on Minoan-Mycenaean religion. *Poseidon* was the main deity of Crete. Other deities include *Horse God*, *Dove God* and the *Handmaidens*, who accompany mother goddesses. *Zeus*, *Hera* and *Athena* also appear. Greeks have already attained well-articulated polytheism organized in pantheon with Zeus. There remain numerous survivals of an animistic culture, which were retained and reinterpreted.

Greek religion exhibits continuity in development of the lower to higher forms with no breaks. Greek heterophonies were associated with temples and statues of the gods such as Acropolis of Athens, at Olympia or Delphi, but the original sites of heterophonies were springs, trees, mountains, the sea, the awe inspiring phenomena of earth, air, sky and human life. The temples, the priests, the sacred precincts were expression of sacred and the profane. The Greeks never lost sight of the terrifying, destructive character that holy often manifests.

Israel

One of the most characteristic elements of Jewish faith is the belief that God has revealed himself to Moses. Hebrews did not think of religion as a philosophical or theological system or even a creed to be accepted. For them religion involved the whole life, including family, community, people nation. The understanding of God that the Hebrews had attained by 500 BC is the faith that has inspired from that day to this, and differs from the primitive faith that they left behind.

Although the Hebrew faith gave a large place to priests, altar, shrines and sacrifices, it is primarily a religion of morality. Along with their preoccupation with God, they were also concerned with the character of man. God and man are in a constant fellowship each finds fulfilment in the other. God as a judge of man destroys man because of his moral degeneration, which he can tolerate no longer. Even the most distinguished kings of the Hebrews are used as examples to set forth this moral lesson.

Judaism, is based on a covenant with God – an idea that appears in the earliest literature of the Hebrews and has been a constant element in the Jewish faith. The people must lead a holy life. God is a king who out of generosity gives man a covenant, blesses him if he keeps it and punishes him for breaching it but never repudiates the covenant.

3.2.3. Economics

Mesopotamia

One of the major reasons Sumer became an important city was trade. Sumer did not have many natural resources aside from fish, reeds, and mud bricks. People who lived in the Zagros and Taurus mountains needed wheat and barley from the city-state of Sumer. In exchange for these products, the mountain people would give Sumerians timber, limestone, gold, silver, and copper. Riverboats were used to transport goods for trade. Money was not usually used to pay for goods that were traded. A barter system in which goods were directly exchanged for other goods developed. If money had to be used, it was usually in the form of small silver disks. Sumer is also known as *the birthplace of economics*.

Temples were the key location for most commercial activity. In addition, temples were the chief employer. Artisans, scribes, priests, local administrators, and teachers all were employed by the temple. Temples gained their economic strength based on their vast real estate holdings.

Craftsmanship was an important skill in Sumer and was developed for survival on a day-to-day basis. The most important craftsmen were the copper and bronze workers responsible for making tools that farmers, shepherds, soldiers, and others needed for survival. Carpentry too was extremely important.

Egypt

The economy of Pharaonic Egypt has been called an ancient command economy. There was a specialized bureaucracy, which monitored or controlled much of its activity. Bureaucrats were also in charge of public works, which were mostly religious in character and involved at times tens of thousands of workers and administrators.

Egypt was a patchwork of mostly autarkic households and domains. After the taxes were paid, domain administrators and successful householders stored surpluses for future use or exchanged them by barter on the markets. Market forces seem to have played a role above all during the periods when the administration broke down. Much of the trade beyond local exchanges was in the hands of wholesale merchants acting for the crown or the great temple estates. Major changes to the early barter system began to occur only with the influx of foreigners and the introduction of coined money in the Late Period. Major economic activities were: farming and fishing, manufacture, mining, commerce and banking. The practice of slavery was seemingly less harsh and widespread than in other societies. Taxation in Ancient Egypt is considered by some to have been the most heavily taxed nation and to have collapsed under the weight of the levies imposed on the populace.

Persia

Due to its size, the overall status of the Persian economy was incredibly varied. The Persian Empire obtained much of its wealth as a result of its prolific crops. Even some of the most urban cities in the empire relied on agriculture. Barley, wine production were Persia's more common commodities. Government programs worked towards expanding agricultural production in the empire. Government money was invested in improving irrigation, the quality of the crops, and the latest farming techniques. In the regions that had formerly belonged to Egypt and Babylon, the economic sector was run primarily by the religious officials, who controlled most of the state land. They leased the lands to families in the area. Families either worked the lands themselves, or hired labourers, and the crops they produced on them were used to pay taxes and send tribute to the king.

While agriculture may have been the main source for basic resources and the use of state lands, funds for the Persian government were mainly earned through taxes and tribute. Taxes were primarily paid in un-minted silver and tributes typically, a predetermined weight of a product produced in the region. Some frequent tributes included ebony, ivory, and horses.

India

Most people in ancient India were farmers. They grew wheat, rice and cotton. On the coast, people produced salt in big evaporation flats, and in Sri Lanka they dove for pearls. Indian traders shipped teak wood to Iran to use in shipbuilding. Many men and women and children also worked in manufacturing, spinning, weaving and printing cotton cloth, pouring steel into crucibles, boiling off raw sugar, and drawing out glass into tiny beads.

India always made money from trade, because She is between China and West Asia and Europe. From the Harappan period on, Indians were selling gold to the West Asia, using their carefully made weights. Soon Indian traders were also selling West Asian glass and wool to China, and Chinese silk and pottery to people in West Asia. Indians were also selling medicines, spices, indigo, and pearls.

Trade made India a very rich country. But because it mainly went through northern India, the north part of India was usually richer than the south part.

Successful shipping trade and the creation of the Silk Road facilitated their trade east and west, and encouraged Indian manufacturers to develop new industries.

About 130 BC, the Ptolemies also established direct sailing from Egypt and East Africa to India.

China

Trade was a gigantic part of Ancient China. Using these routes China traded with Korea, Southwest Asia, India, and Japan. China's main exports were salt, iron, fish, cattle, and silk. China imported plants, glass, wool, and precious stones like gold and silver. All this trading with other countries established a strong economy, and China grew in wealth. The Chinese initial form of money was coins called *Cowrie* shells. Soon, they developed paper money.

This was the world's first system of paper money, and it was one of Ancient China's greatest advancements.

Greece

The economy of ancient Greece was defined largely by the region's dependence on imported goods. Beginning in the 6th century BC, trade craftsmanship and commerce, principally maritime became pivotal aspects of Greek economic output.

Israel

In the Medieval ages, it was important to be able to trade, for this was the way to a stable economy. Israel was a great trade centre with much diverse trading. There were many trade routes going through it. This as well as the fact that it was close to many countries, enabled the economy to flourish.

Field labour and craft production was of central importance in the lives of ancient Canaanites and Israelites. The economy of both the Bronze and Iron Age populations was dependent on the harvest and the production of valuable trade goods such as metals worked into jewellery, weapons and ceramics.

Readings

- (1959) *The Upanisadas*, New York: Harper and Row.
- (1976) *The Bible*, New York: The Bible Societies, Collins and Fontana.
- (1981) *The Rig Veda: An Anthology*, London: Penguin Books.
- Allachin B (1997) *Origins of a Civilization: The Prehistory and Early Archaeology of South Asia*, New York: Aronovsky.
- Aquinas, St. Thomas (1993) *Selected Philosophical Writings*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Aristotle (1962) *The Politics*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Augustine, St. (1992) *Confessions*, New York: Oxford University Press, (Tr. by H Chadwick).
- Basham, AL (1967) *The Wonder That Was India*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson.
- Bechret, H (1979) *Buddhism and Society*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka.
- Bonar, J (1927) *Philosophy and Political Economy*, London: McMillan.
- Bottéro, J et. al., (2001) *Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Braudel, F (1993) *A History of Civilizations*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Breasted, J (1957) *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Buber, M (1958) *I and Thou*, New York: Scribner.
- Child, G (1943) *What Happened in History*, London: Pelican Books.
- Cicero (1960) *Selected Works*, London: Penguin Books (Tr. by M Grant).
- Confucius (1996) *The Analects*, Ware: Wordsworth Classics.
- Conze, E (1959) *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Copleston, F (1993) *A History of Philosophy*, Vol.1 and II, New York: Doubleday.
- Crawford, HEW, (2004) *Sumer and the Sumerians*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Cury, M and J Wilson (1963) *A Shorter History of Rome*, Hong Kong: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Davis, B (2004) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Derchain, P (1981) 'Divinite: Le Probleme du divi et des dieux dans l'Egypte ancienne' *Dictionnaire des mythologies*, ed. Y. Bonnefoy, vol. 1. Paris, pp 324-30.
- Duffy, E (1997) *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, New Haven: Yale University

- Duffy, E (1997) *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dunand, F and C Zivie-Coche (2004) *Gods and Men in Egypt*, Itacha: University Press.
- Epstein, I (1959) *Judaism*, Harmondsworth: Pelican Books.
- Geertz, C (1993) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London: Fontana Press.
- Gernet, J (1996) *A History of Chinese Civilization (II ed.)*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Goldmann, L (1955) *Le Dieu cache*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Gopinath, S (2005) *The Indus Valley*, Chicago: Heinemann.
- Graves, R (1955) *The Greek Myths*, Vols. I and II, London: Penguin Books.
- Gupta, SP (1996) *The Indus-Saraswati Civilization: Origins, Problems and Issues*, Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan.
- Hausman, D (1992) *Essays on Philosophy and Economic Methodology*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Hausman, D and M McPherson (1996) *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Hegel, GWF (1840) *Philosophy of Religion*, New York: Oxford University Press (Tr. by EB Spiers and JB Sanderson).
- Herodotus (1998) *The Histories*, New York: Oxford, (Tr. by Robin Waterfield).
- Hobbes, T (1994 [1651/1668]) *Leviathan*, edited by Edwin Curley (Hackett, Indianapolis)
- Hume, D (1738) *The Treatise of Human Nature*, (Reprinted Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- _____ (1996) *Selected Essays*, New York: Oxford, (Eds. S Copley and A Edgar).
- Jayatillake, KN (1969) *Aspects of Buddhist Social Philosophy*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka.
- Kautilya (1987) *The Arthaśāstra*, New Delhi: Penguin Books (ed. by L Rangarajan).
- Kenover J, Heuston M, and Kimberley (2005), *The Ancient South Asian World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kerenyi, C (1962) *The Religions of the Greeks and Romans*, New York: Dutton.
- Lévi-Strauss, C (1958) *Anthropologie structurale* (trans. Structural Anthropology, Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, 1963).
- Locke, J (1823) *The Works of John Locke*. London: Printed for T. Tegg (10 vols.).
- Majumdar AC (Ed.) (1954) *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vols. II and III, Bombay: Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan.
- Majumdar, RC et.al. (1950), *Advanced History of India Pts.1-3*, London: Macmillan.
- Nehru, JL (1934/1935) *Glimpses of World History*, Vols. I and II, Oxford: University Press.

- Nietzsche, F (2005) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Otto, R (1929) *The Idea of Holy*, New York: Galaxy.
- Plantinga, A (1980) *Does God Have a Nature*, Milwaukee: Wisconsin University Press.
- Plato (1955) *The Republic*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics (Tr. Desmond Lee).
- ____ (1970) *The Laws*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (Tr. by T J Saunders).
- Polybius (1979) *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, London: Penguin Books.
- Radhakrishnan, S (1923) *Indian Philosophy*, London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Raju, PT (1982) *Spirit, Being, and Self: Studies in Indian and Western Philosophy*, New Delhi: South Asian.
- Russell, B (1946) *History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen and Unwin.
- Sen, C (1953) *Elements of Jainism*, Calcutta: Publicity Society.
- Sharma, S (2010) *Reflections on the Philosophical Foundations of Economics*, Zagreb: Mikrorad.
- ____ (2017), 'Some thoughts on ancient civilizations' trinity of philosophy, religion and economics' in *The Journal of Philosophical Economics: Reflections on Economic and Social Issues*, XI: 1, pp 83-102).
- Swinburne, R (1993) *The Coherence of Theism*, Oxford: University Press.
- Tillich, P (1955) *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*, Chicago: Phoenix.
- Vernon McCasland S, Cairns G, and DC Yu, (1969), *Religions of the World*, New York: Random House.
- Weber, M (1964) *The Religion of China*, London: Macmillan.
- Wells, HG (1936) *A Short History of the World*, Harmondsworth: Pelican Books.
- Whitehead, AN (1987) *Science and Philosophy*, London: Ashgate.
- Woolley, L (1929) *The Sumerians*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Yu-lan, Fung (1973), *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Vol. I, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

