

Neither historical events nor cross-cultural currents can explain the unique parallels in the myths and imagery of ancient Egypt and India. Walafrid Strabo (c. 809–849) German scholar has said: "The lotus flower, sacred to Buddha and to Osiris, has five petals which symbolizes the four limbs and the head; the five senses; the five digits; and like the pyramid, the four parts of the compass and the zenith. Other esoteric meanings abound: for myths are seldom simple, and never irresponsible."

Indian contacts with the Western world date back to prehistoric times. Trade relations, preceded by the migration of peoples, inevitably developed into cultural relations. Evidence of Indian contact with the ancient civilizations to her west, however is certain. Knobbed pottery vases came to Sumer from India and so did cotton. In the Akkadian tongue, Indian cotton was expressed by ideographs meaning "vegetable cloth." Assurbanipal (668-626 B.C) cultivated Indian plants including the "wool-bearing trees" of India.

According to the Skandha Purana, Egypt (Africa) was known as Sancha-dvipa continent mentioned in Sir Williams Jones' dissertation on Egypt. At Alexandria, in Egypt, Indian scholars were a common sight: they are mentioned both by Dio Chrysostom (c. 100 A.D.) and by Clement (c. 200 A.D.) Indirect contact between ancient India and Egypt through Mesopotamia is generally admitted, but evidence of a direct relationship between the two is at best fragmentary. Peter Von Bohlen (1796-1840) German Indologist, compared India with ancient Egypt. He thought there was a cultural connection between the two in ancient times. There are elements of folk art, language, and rural culture of Bengal which have an affinity with their Egyptian counterparts and which have not been explained satisfactorily in terms of Aryan, Mongolian, or Dravidian influences. There are similarities between place names in Bengal and Egypt and recently an Egyptian scholar, El Mansouri, has pointed out that in both Egypt and India the worship of cow, sun, snake, and river are common.

Recently, more definitive evidence suggesting contact between India and Egypt has become available. A terracotta mummy from Lothal vaguely resembles an Egyptian mummy and a similar terracotta mummy is found also at Mohenjodaro. In this context it is of interest to note that the Egyptian mummies are said to have been wrapped in Indian muslin. Characters similar to those on the Indus seals have also been found on tablets excavated from Easter Island.

Of all the Egyptian objects and motifs indicating some contact between India and Egypt during the Indus Valley period, "the cord pattern occurring in a copper tablet in the Indus Valley and on three Egyptian seals is the most striking link between the two countries. Gordon Childe has said, "In other words, in the third millennium B.C. India was already in a position to contribute to the building up of the cultural tradition that constitutes our spiritual heritage as she notoriously has done since the time of Alexander."

[Introduction](#)

[The Lotus and the River](#)

[Cultural Contacts with Egypt](#)

[The Sun King and Dasharatha](#)

[The Persian Connection](#)

[Links to Ancient Egypt](#)

[Conclusion](#)

Introduction



Peter Von Bohlen (1796-1840) German Indologist, compared India with ancient Egypt. He thought there was a cultural connection between the two in ancient times.



(source: [German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German](#) - By Valentine Stache-Rosen. p.15-16).

In his book, [Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India](#), Paul William Roberts, states:

" Recent research and scholarship make it increasingly possible to believe that the Vedic era was the lost civilization whose legacy the Egyptians and the Indians inherited. There must have been one. There are too many similarities between hieroglyphic texts and Vedic ones, these in turn echoed

in somewhat diluted form and a confused fashion by the authors of Babylonian texts and the Old Testament."

(source: [Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India](#) - By Paul William Roberts p. 300).

It is believed that the Dravidians from India went to Egypt and laid the foundation of its civilization there. the Egyptians themselves had the tradition that they originally came from the South, from a land called **Punt**, which an historian of the West, **Dr. H.R. Hall**, thought referred to some part of India.

The Indus Valley civilization is, according to Sir John Marshall who was in charge of the excavations, the oldest of all civilizations unearthed (c. 4000 B.C.) It is older than the Sumerian and it is believed by many that the latter was a branch of the former.

(source: [The Bhagvad Gita: A Scripture for the Future](#) - Translation and Commentary by Sachindra K. Majumdar p. 28).

Adolf Erman (1854-1937) author of [Life in ancient Egypt](#) and [A handbook of Egyptian religion](#), says that the persons who were responsible for a highly developed Egyptian civilization were from **Punt**, an Asiatic country, a description of which is unveiled by this scholar from the old legends - a distant country washed by the great seas, full of valleys, incense, balsum, precious metals and stones; rich in animals, cheetahs, panthers, dog-headed apes and long tailed monkeys, winged creatures with strange feathers to fly up to the boughs of wonderful trees, especially the incense tree and the coconut trees.

Dr. Erman further says that analyzing the Egyptian legends makes it clear that from Punt the heavenly beings headed by Amen, Horus and Hather, passed into the Nile valley...To this same country belongs that idol of **Bes**, the ancient figure of the deity in the Land of Punt.

M A Murray author of [Legends of Ancient Egypt](#) rightly observes that as a race the Egyptians are more Asiatic than African. He cites the type 'P' as depicted by Hatshepsut's artists as his support.

(source: [The Aryan Hoax: That Dupes The Indians](#) - By Paramesh Choudhary p. 225).

Klaus K. Klostermaier, in his book [A Survey of Hinduism](#) p. 18 says:

"For several centuries a lively commerce developed between the ancient Mediterranean world and India, particularly the ports on the Western coast. The most famous of these ports was Sopara, not far from modern Bombay, which was recently renamed Mumbai. **Present day Cranganore in Kerala, identified with the ancient Muziris, claims to have had trade contacts with Ancient Egypt under Queen Hatsheput, who sent five ships to obtain spices, as well as with ancient Israel during King Soloman's reign.** Apparently, the contact did not break off after Egypt was conquered by Greece and later by Rome.



India - Yaksha (dwarf) image discovered in cave 2nd century BC. Egypt Bes. depicted as a deformed dwarf. 3rd century BC.

(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 70 - 71).

Max Muller had also observed that the mythology of Egyptians (and also that of the Greeks and Assyrians) is wholly founded on Vedic traditions. **Eusebius**, a Greek writer, has also recorded that the early Ethiopians emigrated from the river Indus and first settled in the vicinity of Egypt.

In an essay entitled **On Egypt from the Ancient Book of the Hindus** (Asiatic Researchers Vol. III, 1792), British **Lt. Colonel Wilford** gave abundant evidence proving that ancient Indians colonized and settled in Egypt. The British explorer **John Hanning Speke**, who in 1862 discovered the source of the Nile in Lake Victoria, acknowledged that the Egyptians themselves didn't have the slightest knowledge of where the Nile's source was. However, Lt. Colonel Wilford's description of the Hindus' intimate acquaintance with

ancient Egypt led Speke to Ripon Falls, at the edge of Lake Victoria.

Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890), who worked in French India as a government official and was at one time President of the Court in Chandranagar, translated numerous Vedic hymns, the **Manusmriti**, and the Tamil work, **Kural**. This French savant and author of **La Bible Dans L'Inde** says:

"With such congruence before us, no one, I imagine, will appear to contest the purely Hindu origin of Egypt, unless to suggest that: "And who tells you that it was not Indian that copied Egypt? Any of you require that this affirmation shall be refuted by proofs leaving no room for even a shadow of doubt?"

"To be quite logical, then deprive India of the Sanskrit, that language which formed all other; but show me in India a leaf of papyrus, a columnar inscription, a temple bas relief tending to prove Egyptian birth."

(source: [Hinduism in the Space Age - by E. Vedavyas](#) p.117).

Heinrich Karl Brugsch agrees with this view and writes in his **History of Egypt** that,

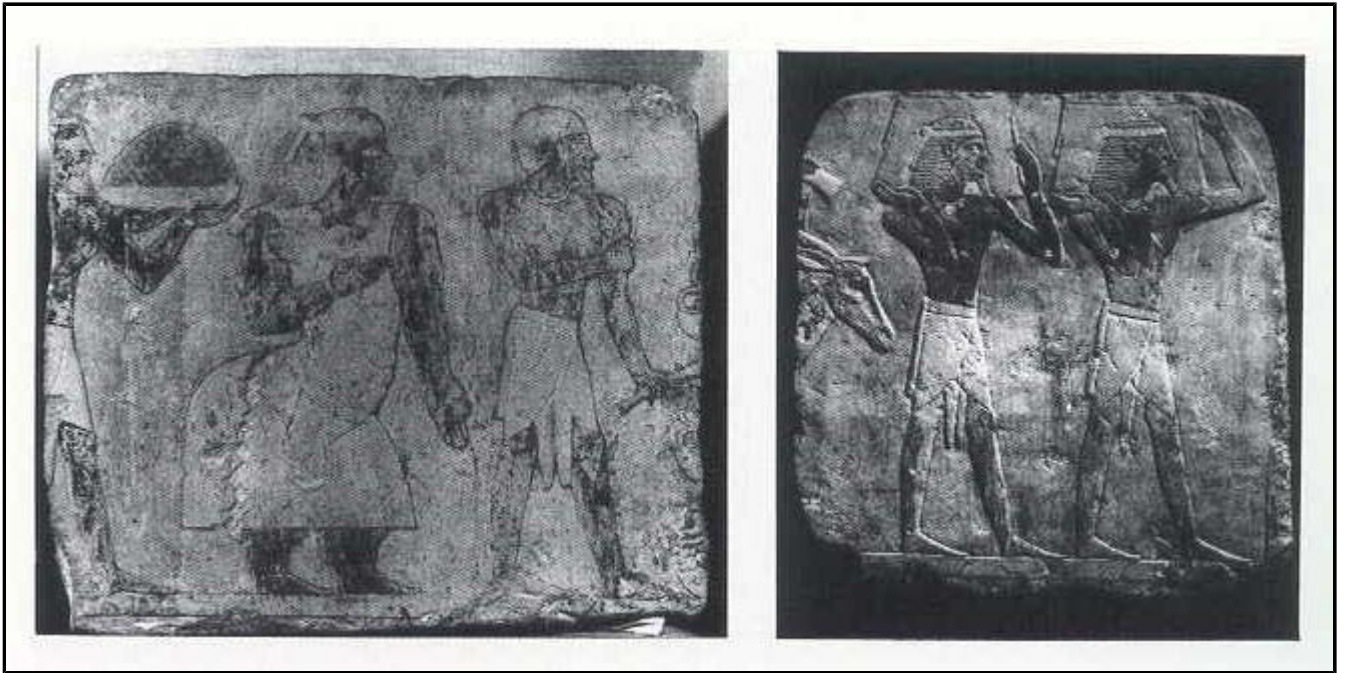
"We have a right to more than suspect that India, eight thousand years ago, sent a colony of emigrants who carried their arts and high civilization into what is now known as Egypt." The Egyptians came, according to their records, from a mysterious land (now known to lie on the shores of the Indian Ocean)."

Col. Henry Steel Olcott, a former president of the **Theosophical Society**, who explained in a March, 1881 edition of *The Theosophist* (page 123) that:

"We have a right to more than suspect that India, eight thousand years ago, sent a colony of emigrants who carried their arts and high civilization into what is now known to us as Egypt...This is what Bengsch Bey, the modern as well as the most trusted Egyptologer and antiquarian says on the origin of the old Egyptians. Regarding these as a branch of the Caucasian family having a close affinity with the Indo-Germanic races, he insists that they 'migrated from India before historic memory, and crossed that bridge of nations, the Isthmus of Suez, to find a new fatherland on the banks of the Nile."

The Egyptians came, according to their own records, from a mysterious land...on the shore of the Indian Ocean, the sacred Punt; the original home of their gods...who followed thence after their people who had abandoned them to the valley of the Nile, led by Amon, Hor and Hathor. This region was the Egyptian 'Land of the Gods,' Pa-Nuter, in old Egyptian, or Holyland, and now proved beyond any doubt to have been quite a different place from the Holyland of Sinai. By the pictorial hieroglyphic inscription found on the walls of the temple of the Queen Haslitop at Der-el-babri, we see that this Punt can be no other than India. For many ages the Egyptians traded with their old homes, and the reference here made by them to the names of the Princes of Punt and its fauna and flora, especially the nonmenclature of various precious woods to be found but in India, leave us scarcely room for the smallest doubt that the old civilization of Egypt is the direct outcome of that the older India."

(source: [Theosophist for March 1881](#) p. 123).



*A representation of the physical characteristics of Ita, wife of the chief of Punt - People of Punt carrying baskets of myrrh.
(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 32).*

Edward Pococke (1604–1691) English Orientalist says: "At the mouths of the Indus dwell a seafaring people, active, ingenious, and enterprising as when, ages subsequent to this great movement.....these people coast along the shores of Mekran, traverse the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and again adhering to the sea-board of Oman, Hadramant, and Yeman (the Eastern Arabia), they sail up the Red Sea; and again ascending mighty stream that fertilizes a land of wonders, found the kingdom of Egypt, Nubia and Abyssinia. These are the same stock that, centuries subsequently to this colonization, spread the blessings of civilization over Hellas and her islands."

(source: [India in Greece - By Edward Pococke](#) p. 42).

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren (1760-1842) an Egyptologist has observed: "It is perfectly agreeable to Hindu manners that colonies from India, i.e., Banian families should have passed over Africa, and carried with them their industry, and perhaps also their religious worship." "Whatever weight may be attached to Indian tradition and the express testimony of Eusebius confirming the report of migrations from the banks of the Indus into Egypt, there is certainly nothing improbable in the event itself, as a desire of gain would have formed a sufficient inducement."

(source: [Historical Researches - Heeran](#) p. 309).

Ethiopia, as is universally admitted now, was colonized by the Hindus. **Sir William Jones** says: "Ethiopia and Hindustan were possessed or colonized by the same extraordinary race."

(source: [Asiatic Researches](#) - volume I p. 426).

Louis Jacolliot has written:

"Egypt received from India, by Manes or Manu, its social institutions and laws, which resulted in division of the people into four castes, and placing the priest in the first rank; in the second, kings; then traders and artisans; and last in the social scale, the proletaire – the menial almost a slave."

Manu – Manes – Minos – Moses

A philosopher gives political and religious institutions to India and named Manu. The Egyptian legislator receives the name of Manes.

A Cretan visits Egypt to study the institutions with which he desired to endow his country, and history preserves his memory under the name of Minos.

Lastly, the liberation of the servile caste of He brews founds a new society and is named Moses.

Manu, Manes, Minos, Moses – these four names overshadow the entire ancient world, they appear at the cradles of four different peoples to play the same role.

Let us beware, the times of Brahminism, of Sacerdotalism, of Levitism, in India, in Egypt, in Judes, presents nothing to compare with the flames of Inquisition, the Vandois massacres, or St. Bartholomew's resound with Te Deum of exultation.

(source: [Bible in India: Hindoo Origin of Hebrew and Christian Revelation](#) p 60 - 67 and 125).

Philostratus introduces the Brahman larchus by stating to his auditor that the Ethiopians were originally an Indian race compelled to leave India for the impurity contracted by slaying a certain monarch to whom they owed allegiance."



Two ancient civilizations, contemporaneous, both growing along the banks of rivers which flow down from mountains, through desert. Both rivers support crocodiles and both people worship river gods and crocodiles and worship cows and have a wonderfully developed cosmogony. Both have a form of caste system. Both have contributed immensely to world culture in almost every field. Surely they must have interacted despite the vast geographical distances involved. There is evidence to suggest contact between the two from around BCE 3000 with the findings of Indian muslin, cotton and dhan (coriander) in Egypt. After about the third century BCE, during the time of Ptolemy Euergetes an Indian sailor was found shipwrecked on the coast of the Red Sea. He was taken to Alexandria where, in exchange for hospitality, he agreed to show the Ptolemy's men a direct sea route to India across the Indian Ocean. Thus began a most profitable period of contact between these two nations. During Emperor Ashoka's reign ambassadors were exchanged. Contact continued until Egypt came under Roman Law. After a short hiatus renewed ventures were undertaken now bigger and powerful markets of Rome clamoring for goods. Although trade was the reason for exchange many ideas that influenced each other's art and iconography also passed back and forth. There is a large body of evidence which documents the close relationships between these two countries. There has always been evidence to suggest indirect means of contact between these two.

"It is testified by Herdotus, Plato, Salon, Pythagoras, and Philostratus that the religion of Egypt proceeded from India....It is testified by Neibuhr, Valentia, Champollion and Weddington that the temples of upper Egypt are of greater antiquity than those of lower Egypt...that consequently the religion of Egypt, according to the testimony of those monuments....came from India...The chronicles found in the temples of Abydos and Sais and which have been transmitted by Josephus, Julius Africanus, and Eusebius, all testify that the religious

system of the Egyptians proceeded from India."

"We have Hindu chronologies (besides those of the Puranas concerning the Yuga) which go still further back in time than the Tables of the Egyptian kings according to Manetho."

There was intimate relations between India and Egypt. It is pointed out that in the processions of Ptolemy Philadelphus (265-246 BCE) were to be seen Indian women, Indian hunting dogs, Indian cows, and Indian spices.

According to the **Jewish chronicles**, there was a sea voyage to the East in the time of **Soloman** (c. 800 BCE). and many articles were brought from there. The use of the Indian names for merchandise raises a strong presumption in favor of their Indian origin. **The word 'Sindhu' found in the library of Assurbanipal, is used in the sense of Indian cotton. The Hebrew Karpas is derived from the Sanskrit Karpassa.**

One of the Jataka stories makes a reference to a trading voyage to the kingdom of Baveru and scholars have interpreted it as the Indian form of Babylon. This points to trade between India and Babylon. The Boghz koi inscriptions of the 14th century BCE. contain the names of such deities as Mitra, Varuna, Indra etc. These names indicate that there was a very close contact between India and Western Asia before the 14th century BCE. There are imported Indian iron, and steel, and Indian cotton cloth; the broad cloth called monache and that called sagmatogene, and girdles, and coats of skin and mallow-colored cloth, and a few muslins, and colored lac.



Gustav Oppert (1836-1908) born in Hamburg, Germany, he taught Sanskrit and comparative linguistics at the Presidency College, Madras for 21 years. He was the Telugu translator to the Government and Curator, Government Oriental Manuscript Library. He wrote a book **Die Gottheiten der Indier ("The Gods of the Indians")** in 1905.

In his book Oppert discussed **the chief gods of the Aryans and he compares Aditi with Egyptian Isis and the Babylonian Ea.**

(source: [German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German](#) - By Valentine Stache-Rosen. p.81-82).

We are not completely in the dark on the question of Indian influence on Greece. Speaking of ascetic practices in the West, **Professor Sir Flinders Petrie** (1853-1942) British archaeologist and Egyptologist, author of **Egypt and Israel** (1911) observes:

"The presence of a large body of Indian troops in the Persian army in Greece in 480 B.C. shows how far west the Indian connections were carried; and the discovery of modeled heads of **Indians at Memphis,**

of about the fifth century B.C. shows that Indians were living there for trade. Hence there is no difficulty in regarding India as the source of the entirely new ideal of asceticism in the West."

(source: [Eastern Religions & Western Thought - By S. Radhakrishnan](#) p. 150).



He feels that the doctrine of rebirth, favored by keeping all bodily senses in abeyance, and brought to pass by driving out the twelve inner torments by their antitheses, was accepted in Egypt under the Indian influence.

(source: [Religious Life in Egypt - By W. M Flinders Petrie](#) p. 211).

Friedrich Wilhelm, Freiherr von Bissing (1873-1956) wrote:

"**The land of Punt in the Egyptian ethnological traditions has been identified by the scholars with the Malabar coast of Deccan. From this land ebony, and other rich woods, incense, balsam, precious metals, etc. used to be imported into Egypt.**"

(source: [Prehistorische Topfen aus Indien and Aegypten - By Friedrich Wilhelm, Freiherr von Bissing](#). Chapter VIII).

The Egyptians similarly called their ancient land Puanit (land of Panis (poenis or traders) in Egyptian : Word corrupted to a meaningless Punt) and before that, Amenti. Puanit can be reached leading off the Red Sea (South-east direction) to India [specifically East India, since Egyptians had more in common culturally with East India , theologically similar cat headed goddess Shashti, ancient references to embalming and afterlife in the area and the unmistakable 'bengali' accent in Egyptian (v becomes b, a becomes o or u (Eg Vena becomes Benu))] and Amenti should be Indonesia. The polynesians both in Madagascar and in Fiji seem to trace their origins to Indonesia. Indonesia is also geographically central to almost all ancient temple-building cultures, barring Europe

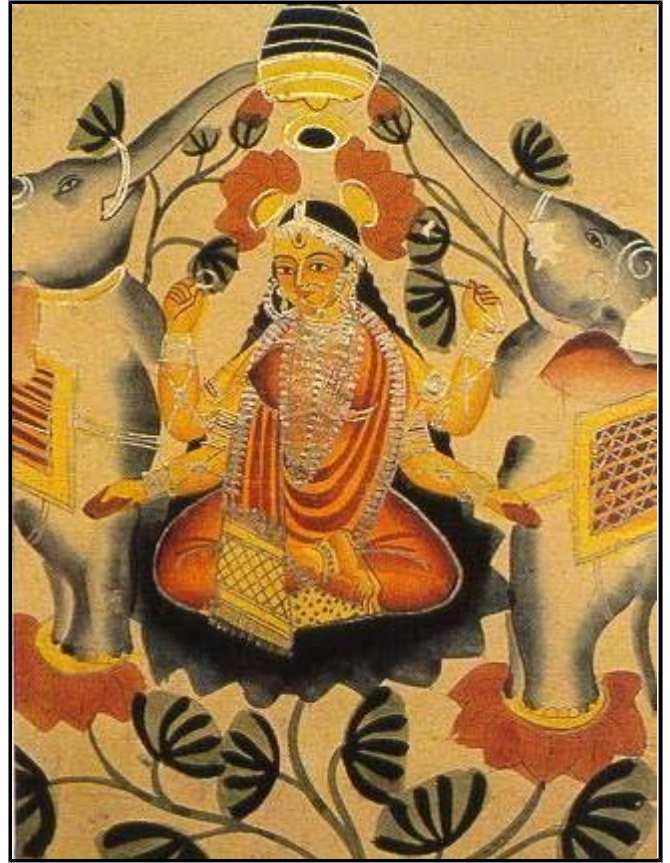
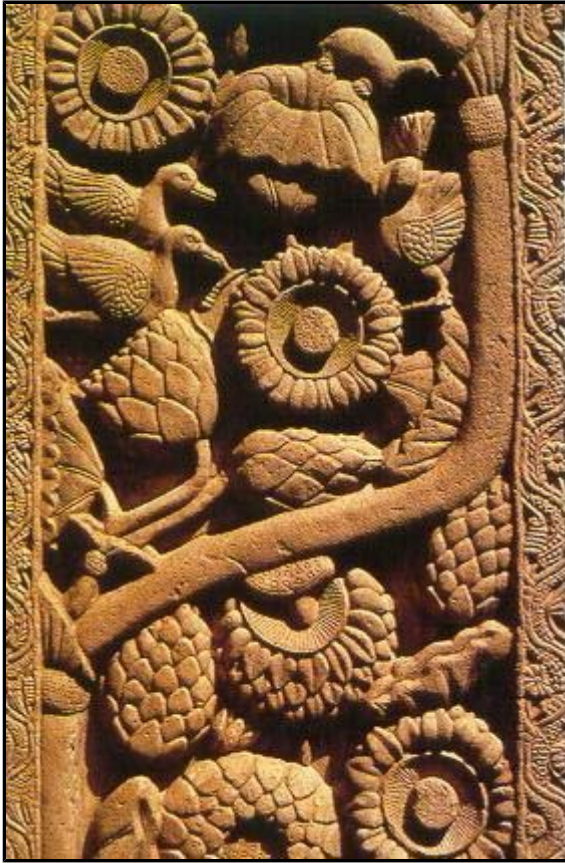
[Top of Page](#)

The Lotus and the River

The flower so prolific in the imagery of both India and Egypt, grows out of the waters and opens its petals to be warmed by the sun: to be fertilized. From the earliest imagery in stone at Sanchi, of the first century BC in India, the lotus is associated with Sri, the goddess of fertility, who is later invoked as Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and abundance - being worshipped by Buddhists, Jains, and Hindus alike. The lotus is held in each hand by Surya, signifying the fertilizing powers of the sun as he travels through the universe.

In Egypt, the blue lotus appears in the earliest wall paintings of the VI Dynasty at the pyramids of Saqqara and in all funerary stelae. They are offered to the deceased, and held in the hand as though they possess the power to revitalize them: to bring the deceased back to life. Carved out of blue lapis, along with the golden falcon and the sun that are the symbols of the god Horus, the **lotus** appears among the funerary treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamen.

The **lotus** then, becomes a leitmotiv, a symbol most apt since it links the waters with the sun, the earth to sky - signifying fertility and regeneration in both Egypt and India. For, it is the seed of the plant which spells out the cycle of birth-decay-death and rebirth that forms the essential pattern of belief in these two riverine and agricultural societies. In India and Egypt, the rivers Saraswati and Ganga and the Nile have brought sustenance to the land and nourished these civilizations which have survived five millennia. Both these rivers, the Ganga and the Nile, are personified and worshipped. They provide the dramatic backdrop against which myths and indeed created, to explain the topographic conditions of the land.

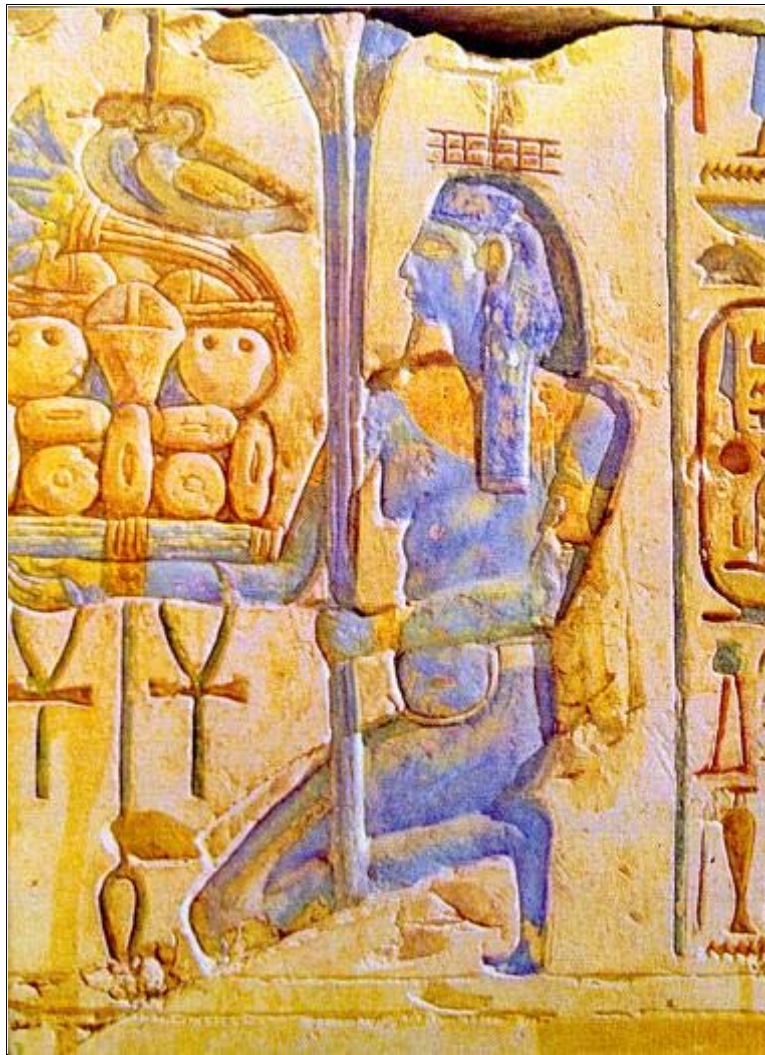


*Lotus in full bloom. Railing pillar in stupa , Sanchi Gajalakshmi seated on Lotus. Kalaghat painting
(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 4).*

From its source in the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, the Ganga flows some two thousand five hundred kilometers, through the rich deltaic region which is known as Aryavarta, in the most densely populated area of India. Puranic myths recount the divine origins of Ganga, as she fell from heaven to earth in response to penance performed by the sage Bhagiratha: to bring the powers of water to an earth parched for over a thousand years. At the seventh century seaport of Mahabalipuram in south India, this epic theme is entirely carved out of a granite rock spanning almost fifty feet. A natural cleft in the rock allows the rain water to pour down in great torrents - as though this were the descent of a mighty river. Besides this cleft are carved the serpentine forms of the naga devatas (snake divinities), the sun and the moon, the gandharvas and kinnaras (celestial beings), the hunters and animals of the forest - all of them rejoicing in this great event where the divine river is celebrated as the savior of all mankind.

Here is a spectacular instance of the way in which myth is used to relate man to the environment. In this myth one senses an acute awareness of the ecological balance which needs to be maintained: of the vapors of the sea rising to the sky through heat, described in the myth as tapas, and then falling back to earth as the divine river, to flow down through the matted locks of Lord Shiva, on to the Himalayas, to flow back into the ocean.





River Goddess Ganga, Rameshvara Caves. Ellora. Hapi, god of the River Nile. Temple of Abydos, Egypt.
 (source: *India and Egypt* - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 8 - 9).

As in India, so in Egypt, the river is personified in human form. A sandstone relief from the temple of Rameses II at Abydos depicts Hapi, god of the Nile, holding a pair of blue lotus stalks in his hands; suspended from the god's right arm is the ankh, the symbol of life. Unlike the Ganga, the blue god of the Nile is male, but with one female breast to symbolize his role as nourisher - releasing the waters each year to provide sustenance to mankind.

The main presiding deity of the Egyptian pantheon is Osiris, like Yama, god of the dead, whose story of life, death and regeneration has been transmitted to us in great detail by Plutarch.

Some extraordinary parallels with the Osirian myth are found among the myths and images of India. Lord Vishnu lied recumbent on the bed of the ocean asleep, as indeed Osiris lied prostate and dead on a bier.

The Hindi word for cow means also "ray of illumination," and in Egyptian lore a cow is sometimes depicted as the source of light in the sky.

The Puranas, Nile and Lake Amara

Significant also is the fact that **Lieutenant Speake**, when planning his **discovery of the source of the Nile**, secured his best information from a map reconstructed out of **Puranas**. (Journal, pp. 27, 77, 216; Wilford, in *Asiatic Researches*, III).

It traced the course of the river, the "Great Krishna," through **Cusha-dvipa**, from a great lake in **Chandristhan**, "**Country of the Moon**," which it gave the correct position in relation to the Zanzibar islands. The name was from the native **Unya-muezi**, having the same meaning; and the map correctly mentioned another native name, **Amara**, applied to the district bordering Lake Victoria Nyanza.

"All our previous information," says Speake, "concerning the hydrography of these regions, originated with the ancient Hindus, who told it to the priests of the Nile; and all these busy Egyptian geographers, who disseminated their knowledge with a view to be famous for their long-sightedness, in solving the mystery which enshrouded the source of their holy river, were so many hypothetical humbugs. The Hindu traders had a firm basis to stand upon through their intercourse with the Abyssinians."

(source: [Periplus of the Erythrean Sea - W.H. Schoff](#) p. 229-230).

The Puranas have a remarkable connection with one of the most important discoveries of the 19th century. In 1858, **John Hanning Speke** (1827-1864) – Speke was commissioned in the British Indian Army in 1844 – made the discovery that Lake Victoria was the source of the River Nile in Africa. **Speke wrote that to some Indian Pundits (Hindu scholars) the Nile was known as Nila**, and also as Kaali. Nila means blue and Kaali means dark – both apt descriptions for the Nile near its source. These are mentioned in several Puranas including the Bhavishaya.



This went against the conventional wisdom, for Lake Victoria was unknown at the time. Sir Richard Burton, the leader of the Nile expedition, had identified Lake Tangyanika as the source. Speke, however, following upon the advice of a Benares (Varansi) Pundit, insisted that the real source was a much large lake that lay to the north. Following this advice Speke went on to discover Victoria. The Pundit had also told him that the real source were twin peaks as Somagiri, '**Soma**' in **Sanskrit stands for moon** and 'giri' means peak, and Somagiri therefore are none other than the fabled **Mountains of the Moon in Central Africa!** The Pundit must have known all this. He published his book [Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile](#) in 1863.

(source: [Nostradamus and Beyond – N S Rajaram](#) p. 60 - 67).

Colonel Rigby now gave me a most interesting paper, with a map attached to it, about the Nile and the Mountains of the Moon. It was written by **Lieutenant Wilford**, from the "**Purans**" of the **Ancient Hindus**. As it exemplifies, to a certain extent, the supposition I formerly arrived at concerning the Mountains of the Moon being associated with the country of the Moon, I would fain draw the attention of the reader of my travels to the volume of the "Asiatic Researches" in which it was published. It is

remarkable that the Hindus have christened the source of the Nile Amara, which is the name of a country at the north-east corner of the Victoria N'yanza. This, I think, shows clearly, that the ancient Hindus must have had some kind of communication with both the northern and southern ends of the Victoria N'yanza.

(source: [Journal of the Discovery of The Source of the Nile - http://www.capitalnet.com/~jcbyers/Speke/nile-chap01.htm](http://www.capitalnet.com/~jcbyers/Speke/nile-chap01.htm)).

[Top of Page](#)

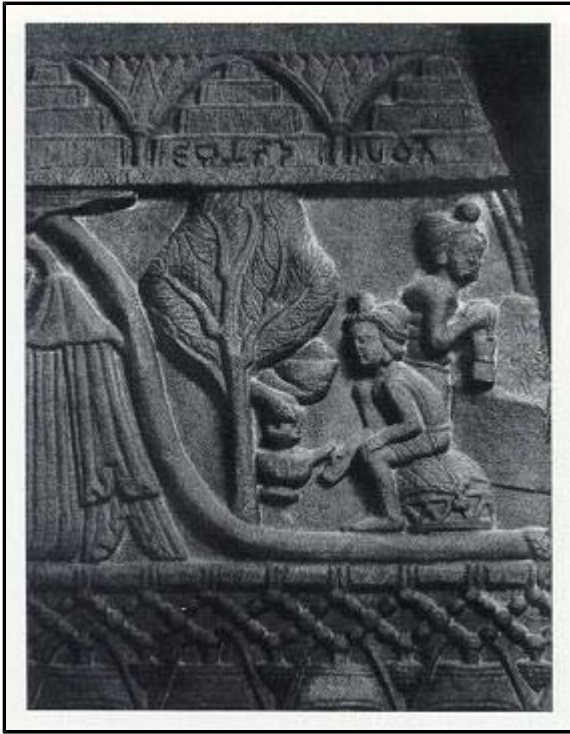
Cultural Contacts with Egypt

All through the ages the peoples of India have had active intercourse with the other peoples of the world. Since the days of Mohenjo daro culture, the Hindus have never lived in an alleged "splendid isolation." It is generally assumed that internationalism or cosmopolitanism is a very recent phenomenon in human affairs. As a matter of fact, however, culture has ever been international.

The dawn of human civilization finds the Hindus as captains of industry and entrepreneurs of commerce. **They were in touch with the Pharaohs of Egypt. The mummies of the Egyptians were wrapped in muslin which was imported from India.** Hindu trade gave to the land of the Nile ivory, gold, spices,

tamarind-wood, sandal-wood, monkeys, and other characteristic Indian plants and animals. It is also believed that the textile craftsmen of Egypt dyed their cloth with Hindu indigo. Hindu ships brought the Indian commodities to the Arabian ports, or to the Land of Punt; and from there these were transported to Luxor, Karnak and Memphis.

Hindu commerce with the land of the Euphrates was more intimate and direct. As early as about 3000 B.C. the Hindus supplied the Chaldean city of Ur on the Euphrates with teak-wood. The Assyrians also, like the Egyptians, got their muslin from India. In fact, vegetable "wool", i.e. cotton, and wool producing plants have been some of the earliest gifts of Hindu merchants to the world. From the tenth to the sixth century B.C. the Assyro-Babylonian trade of the Hindus seems to have been very brisk. Hindus brought with them apes, elephants, cedar, teak, peacocks, tigers, rice, ivory, and other articles to Babylon, the Rome of Western Asia. It was through this Indo-Mesopotamian trade that the Athenians of the sixth century B.C. came to know of rice and peacocks.



*(India) vanadevata's (wood spirit) hand issuing from tree trunk offering water. - (Egypt) deceased drinking water offered by tree divinity
(source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 69).*

This expansion of Hindu activity influenced the literature of the time, e.g. the Vedas and Jatakas. A cylinder seal of about 2,000 B.C. bearing cuneiform inscriptions and images of Chaldean deities have been unearthed in Central India. In Southern India has been found a Babylonian sarcophagus.

Hindu trade with the Hebrews also was considerable. Soloman (1015 B.C), King of Judaea, was a great internationalist. In order to promote the trade of his land he set up a port at the head of the right arm of the Red Sea. He made his race the medium of intercourse between Phoenicians and Hindus. The port of Ophir (in Southern India) is famous in Hebrew literature for its trade in gold under Soloman. The Books of Genesis, Kings and Ezekiel indicate the nature and amount of Hindu contact with Asia Minor. It is held by Biblical scholars that the stones in the breast plate of the high priest may have come from India. The Hindus supplied also the demand of Syria for ivory and ebony. **The Hebrew word, tuki (peacock), is derived from Tamil (South Indian) tokei, and ahalin (aloe) from aghil.**

[Top of Page](#)

The Sun King and Dasharatha

Subhash Kak has observed: "A sad consequence of the racist historiography of the [19th century Indologists and their successors](#) is the **neglect of India's interaction with Africa**. [Cyril A Hromnik's Indo-Africa : towards a new understanding of the history of sub-Saharan Africa](#) (1981) is the only book on the Indian contribution to the history of sub-Saharan Africa that I am aware of, but it is just an exploratory study.

The Sun King and Dasharatha - Two historical persons with Indic connections -- one from North Mesopotamia and the other from Egypt.

The Sun King Akhenaten of Egypt (ruled 1352-1336 BC according to the mainstream view) was the son-in-law to Dasharatha, the Mitanni king of North Syria, through the queen, Kiya. (The name **Dasharatha** is spelled Tushratta in the Hittite cuneiform script, which does not distinguish between 'd' and 't' very well. Some have suggested that the Sanskrit original is Tvesharatha, "having splendid chariots.") Letters exchanged between Akhenaten and Dasharatha have been found in Amarna in Egypt and other evidence comes from the tombs of the period that have been discovered in excellent condition.

The **Mitanni, who worshiped Vedic gods**, belonged to an Indic kingdom that was connected by marriage across several generations to the Egyptian 18th dynasty to which Akhenaten belonged. The first Mitanni king was Sutarna I ("good sun"). He was followed by Paratarna I ("great sun"), **Parashukshatra ("ruler with axe")**, Saukshatra ("son of Sukshatra, the good ruler"), Paratarna II, Artatama or Ritadhama ("abiding in cosmic law"), Sutarna II, Dasharatha, and finally Mativaja (Matiwazza, "whose wealth is prayer") during whose lifetime the Mitanni state appears to have become a vassal to Assyria.



But how could an Indic kingdom be so far from India, near Egypt? After catastrophic earthquakes dried up the Sarasvati river around 1900 BC, many groups of Indic people started moving West. We see Kassites, a somewhat shadowy aristocracy with Indic names and worshiping Surya and the Maruts, in Western Iran about 1800 BC. They captured power in Babylon in 1600 BC, which they were to rule for over 500 years.

The Mitanni ruled northern Mesopotamia (including Syria) for about 300 years, starting 1600 BC, out of their capital of Vasukhani. (For Mitanni names, I give standard Sanskrit spellings rather than the form that we find in inscriptions in the inadequate cuneiform script, such as Wassukkani for Vasukhani, "a mine of wealth.") Their warriors were called *marya*, which is the proper Sanskrit term for it.

In a treaty between the Hittites and the Mitanni, **Indic deities Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and Nasatya (Ashvins) are invoked.** A text by a Mitannian named Kikkuli uses words such as aika (eka, one), tera (tri, three), panza (pancha, five), satta (sapta, seven), na (nava, nine), vartana (vartana, round). Another text has babru (babhru, brown), parita (palita, grey), and pinkara (pingala, red). Their



chief festival was the celebration of *vishuva* (solstice) very much like in India. It is not only the kings who had Sanskrit names; a large number of other Sanskrit names have been unearthed in the records from the area.

The Vedic presence via the Mitanni in Egypt and the Near East occurs several centuries before the exodus of the Jews. This presence is sure to have left its mark in various customs, traditions, and beliefs. It may be that this encounter explains uncanny similarities in mythology and ritual, such as circumambulation around a rock or the use of a rosary of 108 beads.

(source: [The Sun King and Dasharatha - By Subhash Kak sulekha.com](#)).

The Sphinxes of India

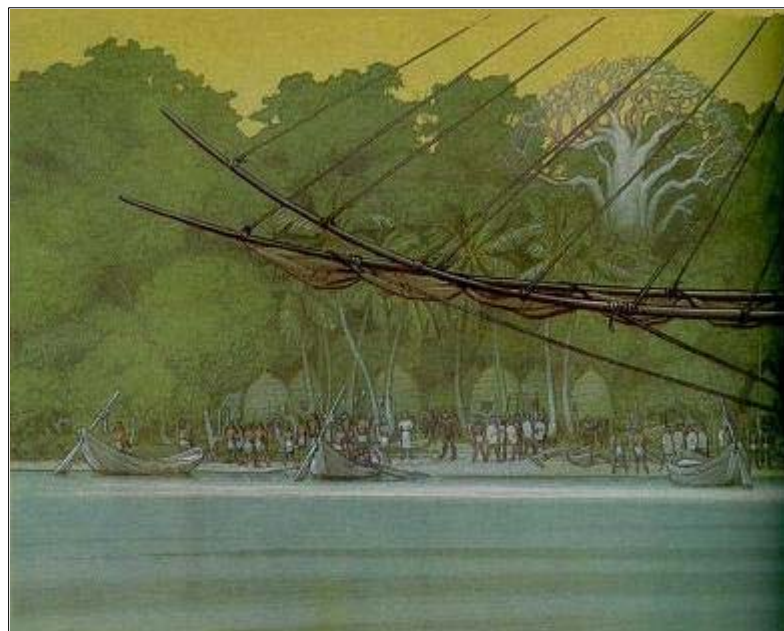
In Indian art and culture the existence and presence of the sphinx as a mythological being has so far gone unnoticed and unrecognized. But through many years of research I have found that the sphinx plays a significant role in the arts and traditions of many temples in India. And not only in the art, but also in ritual and legend.

(source: [The Sphinxes of India - By Raja Deekshitar - Swaveda.com](#)).

India's Contact with the West

H. R. Hall writes in his book, [The Ancient History of the Near East](#) (London, 1913, p. 74): “There is no doubt that the Indus must have been one of the oldest centers of human civilization, and it seems natural to consider that the strange non-Semitic and non-Aryan people who came from the east to civilize the west was of Indian origin, particularly when we see to what point the Sumerians looked like Indians in appearance.”

The **Egyptians attributed an eastern origin to their culture, starting that they had come from the East by sea, from the land of “Punt”**. Maritime communications and trading from the mouths of the Indus to the south of Arabia and as far as the Egyptians coast – very important during the early period of Egypt – had always existed. The fact that the Egyptians had built a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea implies a considerable volume of trade toward the south and east. The center of sea trade between India and the Mediterranean appears to have been south of Arabia and Socotra (probably the Egyptian Pas-enka), the Greek Dioscorida, called Sukhadara dvipa (the Happy Isle) by the Indians.





By the pictorial hieroglyphic inscription found on the walls of the temple of the Queen Haslitop at Der-el-babri, we see that this Punt can be no other than India. "It is testified by Herdotus, Plato, Salon, Pythagoras, and Philostratus that the religion of Egypt proceeded from India. "The land of Punt in the Egyptian ethnological traditions has been identified by the scholars with the Malabar coast of Deccan. From this land ebony, and other rich woods, incense, balsam, precious metals, etc. used to be imported into Egypt."

The geographical sections of the Puranas (Ancient Chronicles of India) mentions Mecca among the holy places, under the name of Makheshvara, together with its black stone as an emblem of the god Shiva.

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, written in the first century tells of the founding of the city of Endaemon, or modern Aden: "In the early days of the city when the voyage was not yet made from India to Egypt, and when they did not dare to sail from Egypt to the ports across the ocean (those of India), but all came together at this place, it received the cargoes from both countries." The Periplus indicates that Endaemon had been founded by Indian merchants, the Minas, whom Strabo calls Minaeans. Pliny speaks of the Minaeans as the most ancient of trading peoples and mentions relations between the Minaeans and King Minos of Crete. The prophet Ezekiel relates that their trading expeditions reached as far as the Phoenician city of Tyre.

According to Sergi, "the Egyptians and all other Hamitic peoples came out of Asia," while according to Haddon, "at the beginning of history, some Asians came to Egypt, first from the south, eventually bringing with them bronze and probably also the plough and wheat."

In the seventh century, St. Isidore made a summary in his Encyclopedia of knowledge derived from ancient Greek and Latin authors, many of whose works have now disappeared. He also speaks of "Ethiopians" in his Etymologiarium (IX.2.128): "They came in ancient times from the River Indus, established themselves in Egypt between the Nile and the sea, towards the south, in the equatorial regions. They became three nations: the Hesperians to the west, the Garamantes in Tripolitania, and the Indians in the east. (The Hesperians" are the ancient inhabitants of Spain; "Garamantes" can be connected to Karama "city in Dravidian); and "the Indians" refers to the inhabitants of Ethiopia, who were also mistaken in ancient literature for the inhabitants of India."

Between the 6th and the first millennium B.C.E., relations between India and the Near East are evident. Precious stones – amazonite – coming from Nilgiri in southern India have been found at Ur prior to the Jemder Nasr period (3000 B.C.E). Indian seals have been found in Bahrain and in Mesopotamia in pre-Sargonic levels (2500 B.C.E). Traces of Indian cotton have been found, and there are archaeological indications of sea trade with India in the Larsa period (2170 to 1950 B.C.E). **The beams of the Temple of the Moon, at Ur of the Chaldees, and those of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar (6th century B.C.E.) were of teak and cedarwood coming from Malabar in southern India.**

(source: [A Brief History of India](#) - By Alain Danielou p. 12 - 20).

The Persian Connection

F. Max Muller speaks of the colonization of Persia by the Hindus. Discussing the word 'Arya', he says: "But it was more faithfully preserved by the Zoroastrians, who migrated from India to the North-west and whose religion has been preserved to us in the Zind Avesta, though in fragments only. He again says: "The Zoroastrians were a colony from Northern India."

(source: [Science of Language - By Max Muller](#) p. 242-253).

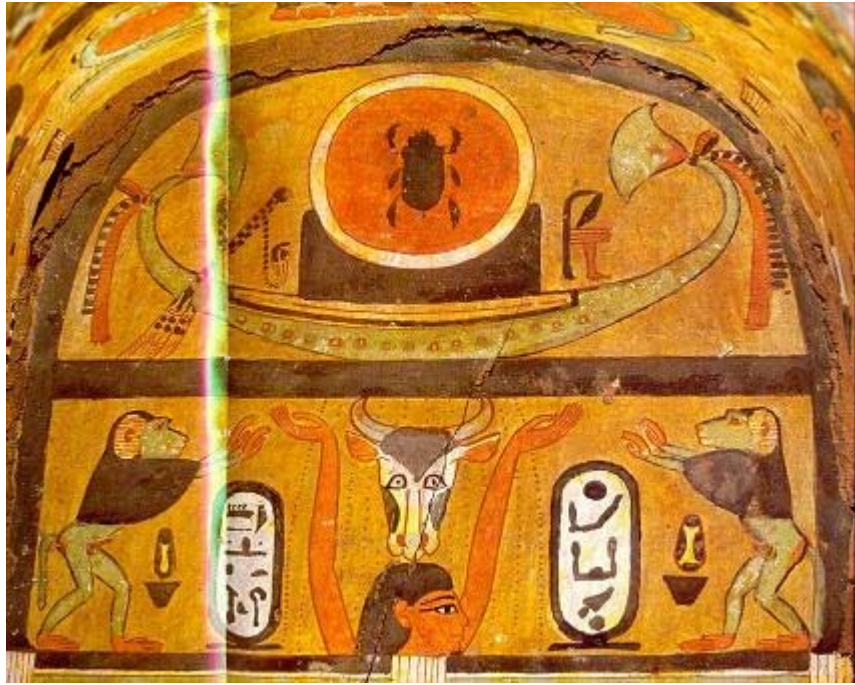
Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran says: "In point of fact that Zind is derived from the Sanskrit, and a passage to have descended from the Hindus of the second or warrior caste."

(source: [Historical researches into the politics, intercourse, and trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians - By A. H. Heeren](#) Volume II p. 220).

Sir William Jones writes: "I was not a little surprised to find that out of words in Du Perron's Zind Dictionary, six or seven were pure Sanskrit."

(source: [Sir William Jones' Works](#) Volume I p. 82-82).





(India) A terracotta solar plaque illustrating solar boat (Egypt) - solar boat
(source: *India and Egypt* - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 80-81).

Mr Haug, in an interesting essay on the origin of Zoroastrian religion, compares it with Brahminism, and points out the originally-close connection between Brahminical and the Zoroastrian religions, customs and observances. After comparing names of divine beings, names and legends of heroes, sacrificial rites, religious observances, domestic rites, and cosmographical opinions that occur both in the Vedic and Avasta writings, he says: "In the Vedas as well as in the older portions of the Zind-Avesta (see the Gathas), there are sufficient traces to be discovered that the Zoroastrian religion arose out of a vital struggle against a certain form of Brahminical religion had assumed at a certain early period.

After contrasting the names of the Hindu gods and the Zoroastrian deities, he continues: "These facts throw some light upon the age which that great religious struggle took place, the consequence of which was the entire separation of the Ancient Iranians from the Brahmins and the foundation of the Zoroastrian religion. It must have occurred when Indra was the chief god of Hinduism."

(source: [Essays on the Parsees](#) - By Haug p. 288).

It is not easy to ascertain when the Hindu colonization of Persia took place. It is certain, however, that it took place before the Mahabharata.

Col James Tod writes: "Ujamada, by his wife, Nila, had five sons, who spread their branches on both sides of the Indus. Regarding three the Puranas are silent, which implies their migration to distant regions. Is it possible that they might be the origin of the Medes? These Medes are descendants of Yayat, third son of the patriarch, Menu and Madai, founder of the Medes, was of Japhet's line. Aia Mede, the patronymic of the branch of Bajaswa, is from Aja 'a goat'. The Assyrian Mede in Scripture is typified by the goat."

(source: [Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India](#) ISBN 8120612892 Volume I. p. 14).

Apart from the passage in Manu, (Manusmriti is much older than Mahabharata) describing the origin of the Ancient Persians, there is another argument to support it. Zoroaster, the Prophet of the Ancient Persians, was born from the emigrants from India had settled in Persia long enough to have become a separate nation. Vyasa held a grand religious discussion with Zoroaster at Balkh in Turkistan, and was therefore his contemporary. Zanthus of Lydia (B.C. 470), the earliest Greek writer, who mentions Zoroaster, says that he lived about six hundred years before the Trojan war (which took place about 1800 BC). Aristotle and Eudoxus place his era as much as six thousand years before Plato, others five thousand years before the Trojan War, (see Pliny: *Historia Naturalis*, XXX, 1-3). Berosus, the Babylonian historian, makes him a king of the Babylon between B.C. 2200 and BC 2000. It is, however, clear that the Hindu Colonization of Persia took place anterior to the Great War.

In the first chapter (Fargard) of the part which bears the name Vendidad of their sacred book (which is also their most ancient book), Hurmuzd of God tells Zapetman (Zoroaster) "I have given to man an excellent and fertile country. Nobody is able to give such a one. This land lies to the east (of Persia) where the stars rise every evening." "when Jamshed (the leader of the emigrating nation), came from the highland in the east to the plain, there were neither domestic animals nor wild nor men."

Count Magnus Fredrik Ferdinand Bjornstjerna (1779-1847) author of the book, [The Theogony of the Hindoos with their systems of Philosophy and Cosmogony](#) says: "The country alluded to above from which the Persians are said to have come can be no other than then the north-west part of Ancient India - Afghanistan and Kashmir - being to the east of Persia, as well as highland compared to the Persian planes."

The Chaldeans were originally migrators from India. Count Bjornstjerna writes: "The Chaldeans, the Babylonians and the inhabitants of Colchis derived their civilization from India."

The Assyrians, too were of Hindu origin. Their first king was Bali Boal or Bel. This Boal or Bali was a great King of India in ancient times. He ruled from Cambodia to Greece. Professor Maurice says: "Bali...was the puissant sovereign of a mighty empire extending over the vast continent of India."

(source: [Hindu Raj in the World - By Krishan Lal Jain](#) p. 88-92).

The **code of Manu**, India's great law book, states that Dravidas, Yavanas (Greeks), Sakas (Scythians), **Pahlavas (Persians)**, Kambojas (Tibetans, Siamese, Burmese), and Sinas (Chinese), are sprung from Kshatriyas - the second highest caste who forgot their religion and went astray.

(source: [The Power of India - By Michael Pym](#) p. 218).

[Top of Page](#)

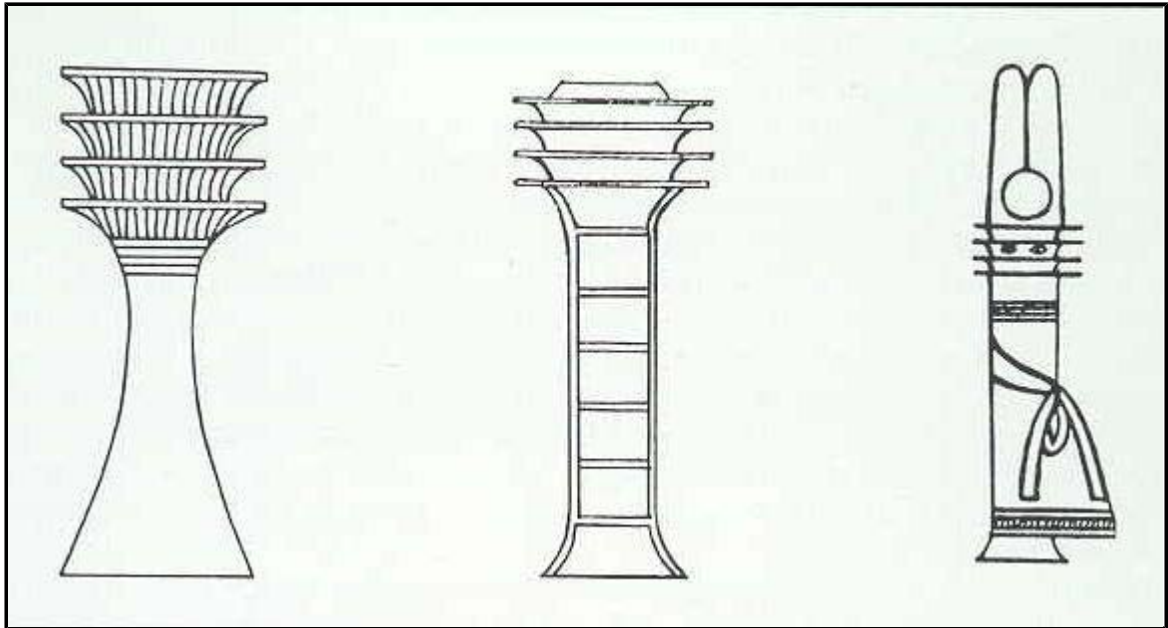
Links to Ancient Egypt

Difficult as it is to pin point exactly when communication between Egypt and India commenced, it is nevertheless intriguing to note the remarkable parallels which go as far back as the second millennium BC, if not earlier, between the concept of the Egyptian maat and the Vedic rita - the divine order of nature or creation, as opposed to the chaos of falsehood. According to both the Egyptian and Indian traditions, it was the principal duty of the king to establish order in place of disorder or chaos. Other interesting points of similarity between the two ancient cultures were the deification of the forces of nature, faith in magical chants, deep-rooted mysticism, and an emphasis on symbolic expression.

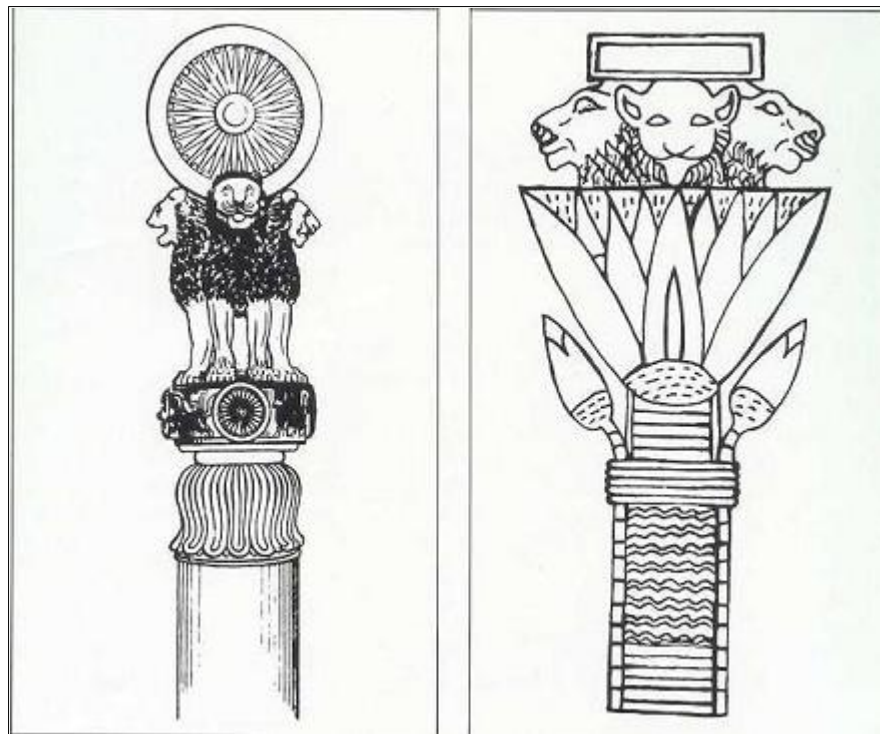
There is a close proximity between Hindu mythology and Egyptian mythology and rituals. "The Book of Dead" and Garuda Purana are similar. Both are recited at the time of death. Their gods and goddesses are also similar.

The brightest evidence of India's direct relations with Egypt is, however, preserved in the Mauryan Emperor Ashok's thirteenth rock edict, inscribed in the early decades of the third century B. C. In it, **Emperor Ashoka** refers to his contacts with Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 BC), in connection with the expansion of his policy of the propagation of the Law of Righteousness (dharma). In the Ashokan records of Ptolemy II is referred to as Turamaya. There can be little doubts that official embassies were exchanged between the Mauryan court and that of Ptolemy II. Pliny names the Egyptian ambassador of Ptolemy II to India as Dionysius.

(source: [Intercourse between India and the Western World - By H. G. Rawlinson](#) p. 92).



Forms of the Djed column - Egypt Pharaonic Age



Ashokan pillar with lion capital. India. Lotus pillar surmounted with lion heads Egypt. Pharaonic Age. (source: India and Egypt - edited by Saryu Doshi p. 66).

Ashoka, in his second rock edict, refers to the philanthropic activities undertaken by himself. He records that he had made arrangements for the medical treatment of men and animals in the territories of his own empire as well as in the region ruled by Antiochus Theos II of Syria (260-246 BC) and its neighboring kingdoms, which also included Egypt.

With the growth of India's links with the West, there was brisk communication in the area of trade with the Hellenistic world including Egypt, and it is believed that Indian traders reached the land of the Pharaohs. A Hellenistic writer, Agatharchides, the learned tutor of Ptolemy Soter II informs one about a colony of Indians on the island close to the mouth of the Red Sea, named Socotra, which in Sanskrit would be Sukhottara-dvipa (island of great joy). Socotra, must have functioned as one of many intermediary ports between Egypt and India.

Interestingly, it is stated that the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy IV, Philopator, lined a part of his yacht with Indian stones. The presence of Indians in Egypt in the third century BC has been attested by Athenaeus who observes that the processions of Ptolemy II Philadelphus also included women, cows, and hunting dogs from India.

(source: [India and Egypt: Influences and Interactions](#) - edited by Saryu Doshi).

Historians have long known that Egypt and India traded by land and sea during the Roman era, in part because of texts detailing the commercial exchange of luxury goods, including fabrics, spices and wine. Among their finds at the site near Egypt's border with Sudan: more than 16 pounds (7 kilograms) of black peppercorns, the largest stash of the prized Indian spice ever recovered from a Roman archaeological site.

Ships would sail between Berenike and India during the summer, when monsoon winds were strongest, Wendrich said. From Berenike, camel caravans probably carried the goods 240 miles (386 kilometers) west to the Nile, where they were shipped by boat to the Mediterranean port of Alexandria, she said. From there, they could have moved by ship through the rest of the Roman world. Mediterranean goods, including wine from the Greek island of Kos and fine tableware, moved in the opposite direction. This Indian cotton textile was excavated from a Roman trash dump in the ancient Egyptian town of Berenike. Local Ababda nomads dig in one of the streets in Berenike, which holds an array of artifacts that scientists say reveals an "impressive" sea trade between the Roman Empire and India.

(source: [cnn.com](#))

[Top of Page](#)

India's cultural links with Africa since Ancient times by Medha Vishwas Gadre

India had established contacts with Africa long before the discovery of Monsoon winds by Hippalus in 43 A.D. There are references to the geography of Africa in Puranas. **Dr. S. Musafar Ali**, notes that Salmalidwipa is the tropical part of Africa bordering the Indian Ocean in the West. It included Madagascar, the Zang of Arab and Persian geographers, the Harina of Puranas and the Sankhdwipa of some other writers. The Hindus have accurate knowledge of many East African localities. **Col. John Speke**, the discoverer of the source of Nile, by actual discovery of Kushadwipa has confirmed the Puranic Statement regarding the source of Nile.

According to the Arab geographers the term Zangistan from which the term Zanzibar or Zang Coast is derived, covers the whole of the eastern part of the Africa, known to the Muslims. **Zang is obviously equivalent to the Sanskrit word 'Sankh'**. The Arabs probably borrowed the name from Puranas. Sankha-Dwipa signifies the Island of Shells.

Kakasaheb Kalelkar maintains that the very fact that the Puranas mention Miair, the ancient Egypt, establishes that the region must have been known to our forefathers. The ancient Hindus knew of great sweet water Lake Victoria, which they called Amar (Immortal) and the mountain of the Moon Rwenzore near the source of the Nile. Nile was clearly a Sanskrit word and secondly the Hindus were familiar with the source of the river Nile. The region between the central lake and east of Africa (part of Tanzania) is referred to as 'Chandrastan' and river Nile as Krishna in the Puranas. **According to Col. John Speke, the ancient Hindus must have had some kind of communication with both the Northern and Southern ends of Victoria Nyanza.** An Egyptian scholar, **El Manswori**, has pointed out that both in India and Egypt, worship of cow, sun, snake and river was common. Indian gods Shiva, Vishnu, Brahman are linked to the solar of Egypt as the Ishwara to the Orisis, Nandi to Apis and Hanuman to Cynocephalus. Both in India and Egypt the lotus flower too was held sacred.

The goddess Plator was a cow, the god Nefertem, a lotus flower, the goddess Neith was honored in the form of shield on which two crossed arrows were nailed. Mostly, however, the Egyptian deities were represented in animal forms. The god Khnum was Ram. Horus a Falcon, Thoth an Ibis, Sebek a Crocodile, the goddess Nut as Bubastis a cat and goddess Buto a Serpent. The most famous of these sacred animals, was a sacred bull of Memphis, Apis whom the Egyptians conceived to be the servant of god Ptolah, Nandi, Shiva!

Brisk trade led to Indian settlement to Egypt and Egyptian colonies in India. That contact between India and

Egypt had become closer the period is confirmed by Athenaeus, who says that Indian women, hunting dogs, cows and spices carried on camels, figured in the procession of Ptolemy. The saloon of Ptolemy yacht was lined with Indian Memphis may indicate that the existence of and Indian settlement and a ptolemaic grave stone have been excavated bearing signs of the wheel and trident. The infant deity Horus is represented in Indian postures seated on lotus.

The ancient kingdom of Ethiopia which evolved around the capital Axum, developed a written language, Ge'ez providing 200 years of documentation. The Ethiopians were allowed to control trade in gold, incense, ivory and also products imported from Indian Ocean. The port of Adulis by the time of Periplus had become a meeting point for the maritime trade and served as an outlet for Axum, itself a great collecting center for ivory from various regions. Later Cosmos confirmed that there is a multitude of elephants with large tusks from Ethiopia. These tusks were sent by boat to India, Persia and the Land of Himyariteis. The Indian silk was highly prized in the region than traditional cotton. The Roman Emperor Justinian had tried to persuade the Ethiopians to directly purchase the silk from India and sell it to the Romans in order to break the monopoly of Persians, their enemy.

Lilias Homburger in his paper says, **Historical conclusions from a study of Indo African language, the first dynastic Egyptians came from Indus Valley, following the same traders who had preceded them.** The use of Cowrie was brought from Maldiv Islands, near the Indian Coast. According to Mrs. Leakey, "Cowrie shells from Maldiv Islands were found in an Iron Age settlement near Nakuru in the Kenya Highlands, establishing the possibility of very old trade contacts between India and Africa." According to another authority "the Indian who traded with Egypt used Cowrie shells for money. This system dated as far as 28th B.C.

The importance of India's trade relations with Axumite Empire was brought to the light by the discovery of 103 Kushana Gold Coins around 230 A.D. contained the legends in Prakrit and Kharoshti script as well as Greek. The Brahmi and Kharoshti script probably had an influence on the Auximite script. Indian merchants with Brahmi and Kharoshti alphabet were moving about, in Ethiopia as well as Egypt from the early pre-Christian centuries with vowel signs, affixed to the Kharoshti and Brahmi consonants could in this way brought to the cognizance of the Ethiopians who must have learnt their system of vowels, indications from India, from which they were also influenced in other respects. They recite the vowels in approximately the same order as is customary in Sanskrit.

(source: [Afro-Hindu Vision](#) ICCS Nagpur p 84 - 91).

[Top of Page](#)

Masada and Ancient India

On the 15th of Xanthicus (roughly, April), AD 74, **Eleazer ben Yair**, the son of Judah the Galilean and leader of a Jewish community **besieged by invading Romans in their rock fortress of Masada**, rose to address his people. He had a simple message: There would be no surrender. They would all have to die, kill each other, with the last man killing himself.



Eleazer's listeners demurred. Sensing their fear, the charismatic leader rose again, to deliver a final exhortation. Eleazer's pulsating tour de force was not about Israel, the Jewish faith and the barbarians at the gate.

It was, the historian Josephus was to later record, an evocation of the Hindu rite of passage, of seeing death in the flesh as just another milestone on the soul's immortal journey. "Are we not," Eleazer asked, "ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians? And by our own cowardice?"

"We, therefore, who have been brought up in a discipline of our own, ought to become an example to others of our readiness to die. Yet, if we do stand in need of foreigners to support us in this matter, **let us regard those Indians** who profess the exercise of

philosophy; for these good men do but unwillingly undergo the time of life, and look upon it as a necessary servitude, and **make haste to let their souls loose from their bodies**; nay, when no misfortune presses them to it, nor drives them upon it, **these have such a desire of a life of immortality, that they tell other men beforehand that they are about to depart; and nobody hinders them**, but every one thinks them

happy men, and gives them letters to be carried to their familiar friends [that are dead], so firmly and certainly do they believe that souls converse with one another [in the other world]. So when these men have heard all such commands that were to be given them, they deliver their body to the fire; and, in order to their getting their soul a separation from the body in the greatest purity, they die in the midst of hymns of commendations made to them; for their dearest friends conduct them to their death more readily than do any of the rest of mankind conduct their fellow-citizens when they are going a very long journey, who at the same time weep on their own account, but look upon the others as happy persons, as so soon to be made partakers of the immortal order of beings. Are not we, therefore, ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians? and by our own cowardice to lay a base reproach upon the laws of our country, which are so much desired and imitated by all mankind?"

For more refer to [Wars of the Jews - By Flavius Josephus](#)

(source: [Hail Mogambo - By Ashok Malik](#) - indianexpress.com and [Josephus: Wars of the Jews., Book VII, Chapter VIII, section vii](#)).

[Top of Page](#)

Conclusion

Sir William Jones says:

"Of the cursory observations on the Hindus, which it would require volumes to expand and illustrate, this is the result, that they had an immemorial affinity with the old Persians, Ethiopians and Egyptians, the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Tuscans, the Scythians, or Goths, and Celts, the Chinese, Japanese, and Peruvians."

(source: [Asiatic Researches](#) - volume I p. 426).

The extensive maritime activities of India in the remotest time led to her earliest contacts with Egypt, Sumer, Babylon, Assyria, Judea and many other countries. There are strong indications showing that Egypt in remote antiquity derived her civilization from India. Those who went from India must have mixed themselves with the natives of the land and the indigenous culture absorbed, rejected or modified the impulse from India. Eusebius and Philostratus believe that Indians first colonized Abyssinia and gradually descended to Egypt watering her civilization. The earliest Ethiopian tradition says that they came from a land situated near the mouth of the Indus. While there can be little doubt that trade occupied a central position in the relations between India and Egypt through the ages, it must be remembered that commercial transactions brought in their wake intellectual and cultural exchanges.

(source: [The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R. Patel](#) ASIN 0896844536 p. 1-4).

Books used for this chapter

1. [India and Egypt: Influences and Interactions](#) - edited by Saryu Doshi
2. [Empire of the Soul: Some Journeys in India](#) - By Paul William Roberts
3. [Hindu Raj in the World](#) - By Krishan Lal Jain
4. [India in Greece](#) - by Edward Pococke
5. [Hindu Superiority](#) - Har Bilas Sarda
6. [The Soul of India](#) - By Satyavrata R. Patel

For more links between India and Egypt, visit these sites:

Trade in and metal sources for the Indian Bronze Age Civilization

<http://www.hindunet.org/saraswati/trade1.htm>

http://www.hindunet.org/hindu_history/saraswati/dictionary/8095TO.HTM

[India-Egypt Connections Could Be Much More Than Anyone Can Think Of](#)



Did You Know?

The Astronomical Code of the RgVeda



The Rigveda speaks of fire altars symbolizing the Vedic system of knowledge. The **fire altars built of bricks in elaborate designs**, are described in great detail in the **Taittiriya Samhita, Satapatha Brahmana** and other early texts.

It is generally accepted that the geometric constructions of the fire altars represent the earliest Indian mathematics and geometry. There exists a scientific basis to the Vedic fire ritual.

Astronomy is central to the understanding of the Indian civilization, as it is to that of other ancient civilizations. That astronomy played a very central role in Vedic cultures is apparent from the innumerable references to nakshatras and devas (heavenly bodies) in the earliest texts and the

continuing cycle of ceremonies related to the calendar.

The nineteenth century Indologists were influenced by attitudes that were inimical to the spirit of free inquiry. **There were those who wished to fit the Vedic chronology within the straitjacket of biblical chronology** and this colored their interpretations. Most dismissed the idea of an underlying unity because such an idea had not yet arrived in physics, the governing metaphor being that of a mechanistic physics. Unfortunately, these notions soon got frozen and when science itself changed, there was no corresponding revolution in the academic Vedic exegesis.

The Astronomical Code presents a long forgotten code at the basis of the altars and the organization of the Vedic books. This discovery has the greatest implications for the understanding of ancient science and the chronology of the ancient world. Author Subhash Kak presents an astronomical key to unlock the secrets of the Rigveda. He shows why the Rigveda should be prior to 2000 BC and is perhaps much more older and how the earliest astronomy and mathematics arose in India.



He has discovered a long-lost astronomy of the Vedic texts which allows us to establish a chronology of that period with reasonable certainty. This chronology has the greatest significance in our understanding of ancient India and its civilization. It is generally accepted that the references to the Vedic gods Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Nasatyas in the Hittite-Mitanni treaty of the second millennium B.C.E. refers to the Indo-Aryan rather than the Iranians. It appears that the Indic element was intrusive into South-western Asia starting about the beginning of the second millennium. If this intrusion was triggered by the collapse of the Harappan economy caused by the desiccation of the Saraswati river around 1900 B.C.E. then one can see how this intrusion was accompanied by a transmission of the astronomy of the fire altars and the planetary period values of the Rgveda. One might speculate that the Vedic astronomy was taken over by the Babylonians and it was built upon further during the flowering that took place there starting around 700 B.C. E.

The recognition of the central role of astronomy in the Vedic world view has great significance for the

interpretation of the Vedic literature. In particular, many Rgvedic hymns turn out to have allusions to astronomical phenomena. Many hymns, considered paradoxical or unclear, can be understood within an astronomical framework. The astronomical references in the Vedic literature cannot be brushed aside any longer. These references can be helpful in constructing a chronology of the Vedic era.

(source: [Astronomical Code of the Rig Veda - By Subhash Kak](#) and [Astronomy and Its Role in Vedic Culture - By Subhash Kak](#) in [The Dawn of Indian Civilization](#) up to 600 BC - edited by [G. C Pande](#) p. 615 - 620).

[Top of Page](#)



[home](#)

Copyright © 2001 - All Rights Reserved.

[india and egypt](#)

[Guest Book](#)

[contents](#)

Updated - September 7, 2005