

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

weight of authority about what he says. Those who believe in an expert in any field expect him to deliver judgment without always assigning reasons. Perhaps his assigning reasons is impossible.' That simply means that the expert has so practised his knowledge into his entire nature that in the presence of a problem he can count on a revealing reaction of his whole mind. 'Now, religious expertness is not quite of this scientific type, but it is akin to it. The religious expert attains to an awareness of some factors in life which the untrained religious mind may miss altogether. Just as a fine sense of propriety may be the highest flower of moral insight, so this perception of higher values by a religious expert may be the surest

indication of his expertness.' For this reason the religious expert may be wise in practical concerns though he may seem to live in an exalted moral sphere, and he may have deep discernment in regard to larger social questions though he may be unskilled in practical politics. 'No amount of detailed knowledge is as important as to see sharply and straight the human essentials involved in any modern industrial, or racial, or militarist movement which threatens the welfare of men. The highest expertness is that of a mind that can see problems steadily and see them whole. The power of a Christian view of men to conduce to such steadiness and wholeness is an indication of the soundness of the view.'



Mohenjo-daro: The Indus Valley Civilization, circa 3000 B.C.

BY PROFESSOR W. FULTON, D.D., THE UNIVERSITY, GLASGOW.

IN recent years remarkable discoveries, little known to the ordinary reader, have been made in the Indus valley, principally at Mohenjo-daro. The result would appear to be that our knowledge of Indian civilization has been carried back at a single bound no less than three thousand years, and that we have gained new light upon the obscure question of the origins of Hinduism. It is even claimed that the culture of the Indus valley *circa* 3000 B.C. was as advanced as, if not indeed in some respects more advanced than, the culture of Mesopotamia or Egypt; also that the religion of the pre-Aryan peoples of the Indus valley *circa* 3000 B.C. is perpetuated, in some of its leading features, in the living Hinduism of the Indo-Aryans of to-day.

What is the problem of the origins of Hinduism? It may be stated, at least partially, by putting the question in more definite form. How did it come to pass that Vishnu and Siva, figures of but secondary rank in the Vedic hymns, have gained precedence in Hinduism over Indra, Varuna, Agni, and the other old Vedic deities? If Vishnu and Siva were originally Aryan deities, the question seems unanswerable. If they were originally pre-Aryan deities and were taken over by the Indo-Aryans,

then the question seems answerable in the light of the new discoveries in the Indus valley. For these discoveries reveal the Dravidian and other pre-Aryan inhabitants of India as capable of supplying their conquerors with religions of as advanced a type as Vishnuism and Sivaism. Indeed, the evidence yielded by Mohenjo-daro leads to the well-founded conjecture that Siva actually has his prototype among the gods of the older pre-Aryan stocks, whose civilization in the second or third millennium before Christ—that is, before the Aryan invasion or immigration—so far from being primitive and barbaric, is at least worthy of being compared with the contemporary civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Crete.

Siva is usually identified with the old Vedic god Rudra. But, contrary to the old Vedic tradition and the Brahman law, he possesses (like Vishnu) temples, images, and temple priesthods. May not the unbrahmanical character of his worship be accounted for most naturally by the fact that the pre-Aryan peoples of India worshipped him, if under another name, and imposed their religion upon the Aryan invaders and immigrants?

But let us hear on this point the words of the

archæologist whose good fortune it has been to direct the recent explorations in the Indus Valley : 'Hitherto it has been commonly supposed that the pre-Aryan peoples of India were on an altogether lower plane of civilization than their Aryan conquerors, that to the latter they were much what the Helots were to the Spartans, or the Slavs to their Byzantine overlords. . . . The picture of them gleaned from the Hymns of the Rigveda was that of black-skinned, flat-nosed barbarians, as different from the fair Aryans in physical aspect as they were in speech and religion. . . . Mentally, physically, socially, and religiously, their inferiority to their conquerors was taken for granted, and little or no credit was given them for the achievements of Indian civilization. Never for a moment was it imagined that five thousand years ago, before ever the Aryans were heard of, the Punjab and Sind, if not other parts of India as well, were enjoying an advanced and singularly uniform civilization of their own, closely akin but in some respects even superior to that of contemporary Mesopotamia and Egypt. Yet this is what the discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro have now placed beyond question.'

The writer is Sir John Marshall, late Director-General of Archæology in India, and the words occur in his Editorial Preface to a large three-volume monograph, published in 1931, on *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilisation*.

It is a handsome work, and is profusely illustrated with photographs, plans of buildings, and drawings. The editor himself contributes a large part of the book, and also reviews the contributions of his collaborators. To the collaborators fall the task of dealing in detail with the monumental remains, the minor antiquities, and the other discoveries. It gives some idea of the thoroughness with which the whole task has been carried out to mention that Sir John Marshall has enlisted the services not only of experienced archæologists (like Mr. Ernest Mackay, a specialist in Mesopotamian Archæology), but of experts in chemistry and metallurgy, zoology and anthropology, not to speak of Oriental tongues. The result is a work consonant with the importance of the discoveries it records, and reflecting the highest credit on the Government of India's Department of Archæology.

It is only about sixty years since Sir Alexander Cunningham, that great pioneer of Indian Archæology, drew attention to the Indus valley as providing ancient sites of high importance for the archæologist. In particular, he indicated an ancient site on the banks of the Ravi, near a small

village of the Punjab, called Harappa, lying midway between Lahore and Multan. On that site some engraved seals of a peculiar type were found, unlike any till then found in India. Such seals were worn by a cord round the neck or wrist, and probably their chief use in prehistoric, as in historic, times in India was for sealing parcels and merchandise.

But the excavations at Harappa have been dwarfed in significance by the more recent excavations at Mohenjo-daro in Sind, another ancient site of the Indus valley, four hundred miles from Harappa and farther down the valley. These later excavations took place between the years 1922 and 1927.

Mohenjo-daro, which perhaps means in Sindhi 'the Mound of the Dead,' has been the site of a number of considerable cities. The remains now laid bare, covering an area of more than thirteen acres, belong to the three latest cities on the site. Various groups of buildings have been exposed, but the most striking group is congregated about a lofty mound which appears to have been crowned at one time with a pre-Aryan temple. In after times a Buddhist *stupa* or mausoleum took the place of the temple.

In view of the monumental and other remains discovered at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, Sir John Marshall considers it beyond question that in the fourth and third millennia B.C. the peoples of the Indus country had reached, like the peoples of the valleys of the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Nile, the Chalcolithic stage of culture, continuing to use arms and utensils of stone side by side with those of copper or bronze. Accordingly, we are prepared to find much in common between the Indus peoples and the peoples of Mesopotamia and Egypt. We learn from the excavations in the Indus valley that the society of the Indus peoples was organized in cities; that their wealth was derived mainly from agriculture and trade; that they were skilled in metal work and conversant with spinning and weaving; that they manufactured domestic vessels of earthenware turned on the wheel, and not infrequently glazed and painted; that personal ornaments made of precious metals were much in vogue; and that they were familiar with the invention of writing, employing a pictographic script, like other contemporary peoples of Western Asia and the Nearer East.

But the Indus civilization had its own distinctive features.

Of all the buildings congregated about the mound at Mohenjo-daro the most remarkable is one which contains a large bath or tank, thirty-nine feet in

length by twenty-three feet in breadth, and sunk eight feet below the floor-level. It seems to have been a vast hydropathic establishment, and is probably of religious significance. There is nothing to compare with it in prehistoric Egypt or Mesopotamia or, indeed, anywhere else in Western Asia. Apart from this imposing building, the remains brought to light at Mohenjo-daro are, for the most part, private dwelling-houses or shops. The dwelling-houses appear to have been spacious and well-constructed, and in general provided with bathrooms, whose floors, like the floor of the great bath or tank, were laid in finely jointed brick-on-edge. It looks as though Sir John Marshall were justified in affirming that the amenities of life enjoyed by the average citizen at Mohenjo-daro were far in advance of anything to be found in the fourth or third millennium B.C. in Babylonia or on the banks of the Nile.

Mention should also be made, among the distinguishing marks of the civilization of the Indus valley, of the use of cotton for textiles which is to be found there, and which appears to have been exclusively restricted at this period to India, not being extended to the Western world until two or three thousand years later. As a matter of fact, the Babylonian and Greek names for cotton (*Sindhu* and *Sindon* respectively) have always pointed to the Indus valley as the home of cotton-growing.

Equally peculiar to the Indus valley, and stamped with an individual character of its own, is its art. Sir John Marshall assures us that nothing that we know of in other countries at this period bears any resemblance, in point of style, to the miniature faience models of rams, dogs, and other animals, or to the intaglio engravings on the seals, 'the best of which—notably the humped and short-horned bulls—are distinguishable by a breadth of treatment and a feeling for line and plastic form that has rarely been surpassed in glyptic art.' Numerous specimens—a thousand in all—of these engraved seals have been recovered at Mohenjo-daro, similar in design and script to those of Harappa.

The discovery at Susa and several sites in Mesopotamia of typical Indian seals, inscribed with pictographic legends, furnishes an interesting line of evidence for the date of the Indus valley civilization. For the Indian seals discovered in Mesopotamia have been found in positions which leave no doubt that they belonged to the period before Sargon I., that is, before 2700 B.C. To this date Sir John Marshall would assign the first city at Mohenjo-daro; the second, he would assign to about 3000 B.C., and the third to about 3300 B.C.

Another distinctive feature of the Indus valley in pre-Aryan times is the script which the people invented for their writing, and for which the main source is provided by the engraved seals unearthed at Harappa and, more especially, Mohenjo-daro. In the work under review Professor Langdon says that though pictographic in origin, the signs have become standardized to neat monumental forms, the result being that very few of the objects portrayed by the signs can now be identified. On the other hand, the writing remains in what may be called on Egyptian analogy the hieroglyphic state; it has not been worn down by use to conventional or stereotyped summaries like the Egyptian hieratic, the Babylonian cuneiform, or the Chinese writing. It is to be observed that although there are resemblances, more or less striking, between the Indus script and most of the other pictographic scripts of Western Asia and the Nearer East, we must not jump to the conclusion that the Indus script was directly borrowed from some other country. In all probability the Indus script is as individual in character as the language it was designed to record.

Professor Langdon is of opinion that this Indus script is the source of the Brahmi alphabet of India. It is no doubt a pictographic and not an alphabetic script, but there is a strong presumption—apart from the evidence supplied by other alphabets—in favour of the Brahmi alphabet having been evolved from a pictographic script. The generally accepted theory has been that the Brahmi alphabet was of Semitic origin, having been derived ultimately from a Phœnician script.

As for the language of the texts unearthed at Mohenjo-daro, all that can be said of it at present is that it is pre-Aryan and in no way connected with Sanskrit. As the Indus civilization was pre-Aryan, so must also have been the Indus language or languages. Perhaps the clue to the language of Mohenjo-daro will be found some day in Mesopotamia. Already seals and sealings (seal impressions), carried by trade from the Indus valley in ancient times, have been recovered, as already noticed, from several sites. At Ur one Indian seal has been found with a cuneiform in place of an 'Indus' inscription; perhaps more such seals will be found, perhaps even a key to the 'Indus' tongue.

Turn now to the religion of the pre-Aryan Indus valley civilization *circa* 3000 B.C. We have noticed how advanced a civilization it was, and have remarked on some of its distinctive features. Let us now notice what Mohenjo-daro can tell us

regarding the religious beliefs of the Dravidians and other pre-Aryan races of India, and in particular what light it throws upon the problem of Hindu origins. It is perhaps worth reiterating that up till now the Dravidians and other pre-Aryans have been generally looked upon as savages whose contribution to Hinduism consisted only of barbaric and degrading elements of belief and practice.

Sir John Marshall calls attention to the great number of figurines or statuettes discovered at Mohenjo-daro, portraying a standing female, almost nude but for an elaborate head-dress and collar and a band or girdle about her loins. Similar figurines, also belonging to the Chalcolithic age, have been found in the neighbouring country of Baluchistan. They appear to represent the great Mother or Nature Goddess, whose cult became prevalent in historic times throughout most of Western Asia, but, as we may now say on the evidence of the recent discoveries in the Indus valley and Baluchistan, had spread even to India in the Chalcolithic period. In the India of to-day the worship of the Divine Mother is remarkably widespread; her shrines are said to be found in every town and village throughout the land. Her worship is especially strong among the pre-Aryan tribes, some of whom have never really come within the fold of Hinduism; and this would serve to confirm the position here indicated that the cult of the great Mother Goddess flourished in the Indus valley, as in Western Asia, so early as the Chalcolithic age. Accordingly, the pre-Aryan civilization of India explains the prevalence of a cult which finds no place in the Vedic religion of the Aryo-Indians.

Further light is thrown upon the history of Hinduism by the appearance at Mohenjo-daro of a male god, obviously to be identified with the historic Siva. The attributes that link him to the historic Siva are, first of all, his three-facedness; for Siva, the all-seeing, is always portrayed in historic times with three eyes, if with a varying number of faces. The second feature of this pre-Aryan god connecting him with the historic Siva is his Yogi-like posture, with feet drawn up beneath him, heel to heel, toes turned downwards, and hands extended above the knees; for Siva is the 'Great Yogin,' the typical ascetic and self-mortifier. But Siva is not only prince of Yogis; he is also lord of the animal creation, and it is seemingly in reference to this aspect of his nature that in the seal recently discovered at Mohenjo-daro there are grouped about him the four animals—the elephant, the tiger, the rhinoceros, and the buffalo. Still another

attribute that enables us to connect this ancient god with the historic Siva is the pair of horns crowning his head, a special religious significance attaching to pairs of horns. It is admitted, however, that this attribute does not furnish in this case actual evidence of identity, and has to be explained that this pre-Aryan emblem of divinity appears to have taken the form of a trident in later days, and in that guise to have continued to be a special attribute of Siva. Finally, there remain the deer or ibexes beneath the low Indian throne, as in many medieval images of Siva. Incidentally, it would appear that this last motif was not borrowed by the Sivaites from the Buddhists, but rather that the Buddhists adopted it from the popular religion of the day.

The conclusion would then seem to be a reasonable one that the unknown god so strikingly portrayed on the Mohenjo-daro seal is none other than the prototype, in his most essential aspects, of the historic Siva. Here again the Indus valley civilization *circa* 3000 B.C. supplies a clue to modern Hinduism. It may even be true of Vishna, but it certainly seems true of Siva (who divides with Vishnu the allegiance of two hundred millions of Hindus), that the roots of his religion reach beyond the Aryan religion of the Veda. Thus we may say that the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India impressed upon the Aryan invaders and immigrants religious beliefs of the higher as well as the lower culture.

That the peoples of the Indus valley worshipped their deities in lower as well as higher form, in aniconic as well as iconic or anthropomorphic form, is evidenced from the phallic, bætylic (chiefly meteoric), and other stones which have been unearthed in great numbers from the ruins at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. The presence of phallic stones, similar to many of the lingas seen in Siva temples to-day, shows that phallism was not introduced into India by the Greeks or other Western invaders, as has commonly been supposed, but had a pre-Aryan origin. Pre-Aryan, as we must also conclude, was the cult of bætylic stones, and not—as has also been commonly supposed—confined to Western Asia (the Semitic *massëbhah* is a familiar instance).

It is clear also from several of the Indus valley seals and sealings that the worship of trees prevailed in the Chalcolithic age, as in the historic period. Sometimes the tree itself is worshipped in its natural form, in accordance with the principle of animism in Marett's sense of 'animatism'; sometimes the tree spirit is personified and endowed with human shape and human attributes, in accordance with the Tylorian principle of animism. We

may gather from the Rigveda that tree-worship was practised by the pre-Aryan, not by the Aryan, population of India; and it does not, therefore, surprise us to find that it was prevalent among the Indus peoples.

Even more abundant, indeed far more abundant, than the evidence for tree-worship among the Indus peoples is the evidence for animal-worship, which is also foreign to the Vedic religion. That the cult of the bull in particular was very prevalent in Chalcolithic times throughout Sind, the Punjab, and Baluchistan, is proved by the large number of terra-cotta bulls found at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa and on contemporary sites in Baluchistan, as well as by the frequent delineation of the bull on the seals and on pottery. We may thus infer that much of the animal-worship which is characteristic of Hinduism is derived from the pre-Aryan age.

We gather that the discoveries in the Indus valley are of deep significance for the student of the rise and growth of Hinduism. About five thousand years ago, as it would appear, the Mother Goddess so honoured and revered to-day in the villages of India, and the ancestor of Siva, now the supreme god of half the Hindu world, were worshipped by a pre-Aryan people; among whom also the worship of stones and trees and animals was maintained in much the same form as it has been maintained in historic times. There is also evidence that yoga was practised. Already, as we might put it, religion in India was characteristically Indian.

'There is enough here to demonstrate,' says Sir John Marshall, 'that, so far as it was capable of expression in outward concrete forms, this religion of the Indus people was the lineal progenitor of Hinduism. It should be remembered that many of the basic features of Hinduism are not traceable to an Indo-Aryan source at all. They come into view, not in the earliest Vedic literature, which represents the more or less pure Indo-Aryan tradition, but

either in the later Vedas or in the still later Brahmanas, Upanishads, and Epics, when the Vedic Aryans had long since amalgamated with the older races. And among the basic features of Hinduism are the cults of Siva and the Mother Goddess, the worship of animals and trees and stones, phallism, and yoga. The orthodox view has been that these various elements represent a popular form of religion evolved by the Indo-Aryans themselves—a parallel growth, as it were, to the Vedic religion; although a few of these features have been taken over from the pre-Aryans, who were pictured as little more than untutored savages. But now that our knowledge of the pre-Aryans has been revolutionized, is it not reasonable to presume that the people who contributed so much to the cultural and material side of Hinduism, contributed also some of the essential metaphysical and theological ideas so intimately associated with it? In the absence of decipherable documents, we can, of course, but argue on the probabilities of the case, but surely this presumption is more natural than to postulate the existence among the Indo-Aryans of a body of religious beliefs and doctrines of which their own voluminous literature knows nothing and which are largely alien to Vedic thought.'

Many other points of interest and debate emerge from a perusal of the goodly volumes which Sir John Marshall has edited, but we have been content to call attention to the point so admirably stated in the foregoing passage. And two more sentences from Sir John Marshall will make his position indubitably clear: 'No doubt the non-Aryan jungle tribes of to-day preserve for us some of the cruder and more elemental features of the pre-Aryan religion. But to assume that such features represent the sum total of that religion is as irrational as to suppose that the rude grass and mud hovels of these same jungle tribes are representative of the massive edifices of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa.'

The Cambridge Group Movement—1832.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN G. MORTON, M.A., ORPINGTON.

MR. A. J. RUSSELL in an early page of his (blithe and bracing) book—*For Sinners Only*—which contains many authentic annals of the Oxford Group Movement, makes the very startling state-

ment that Cambridge 'has never yet produced a real live revival.'

As to Oxford, he truly adds that 'several flourishing religious movements had started in this intel-