

Religious believes of Indus Valley Civilization-As Similar to Vedic texts

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Abstract

Indus valley civilization also known as sindhu saraswati civilization, situated in modern day of northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India. Its deep root has an earth end many hidden insights of 5000 year old civilizations technology ,lifestyle ,culture, artifacts etc. The Indus Valley Civilization was established around 3300 BC. It flourished between 2600 BC and 1900 BC (Mature Indus Valley Civilization). It started declining around 1900 BC and disappeared around 1400 BC. No structures like temples or palaces have been found however the people worshipped male and female deities. A seal which was named 'Pashupati Seal' has been excavated and it shows an image of a three-eyed figure that is believed this to be an early form of Lord Shiva. To Mahashivratri is a practice to worship lord shiva in which "Devotees pray and show their gratitude to lord shiva by performing/practicing strict fasting during the longest night of the year and staying awake the whole night chanting shiva's name". This form of practice can be seen in the Indus valley civilization through scriptural, archaeological aspects.

An idea of the religion of the Harappa people can be formed by a study of the seals, sealing's, inscribed copper tables, stone statuettes and terracotta figurines. According to Sir John Marshall and Dr. Mackey, the Pival Deity, the votary and the seven messengers were all males. The main deity is nude but the seven messengers are said to be dressed up in tunics. They were fabulous creatures and were shown as male deity. The cult the Mother Goddess did not dominate the Indus Valley Religion. The male gods loomed large on the horizon of that age. The Pival God was the supreme deity and a large number of subordinate male deities ruled over the destinies of the poor mortals inhabiting the Indus.

Key Words- Pashupati, Pipal, shiva

Introduction

The religious ideologies of the Indus people is one of the most complex and least understood aspect of this civilization in the absence of any decipherable written text. Therefore the main tools in building these ideologies had always been the excavated archaeological material. But recent studies in this aspect and the use of creative imagination has helped us in bridging the gaps or re-establishing a connection to a certain extent; for it would be unjust only to accept the archaeological evidences as concrete for deducing the religious beliefs of people that no longer exist. Over the years since the discovery of Indus civilization, many scholars have written about the religion of the Indus People but unfortunately very briefly and whatever conclusions they drew have also been revised on a large scale in the light of recent research.

Though we cannot be sure whether this presumed system of thought (belief in a supernatural (phenomenon) represented in this paper is a true reality. However, the results of this investigation using cross-cultural analogies with the help of comparative analysis present probable scenarios that take us away from the direct historical approaches (what earlier scholars assumed) and help us to gain a better understanding of Indus narrative themes and mind set. Because the association that is found between the gods and goddesses with relation to the natural and supernatural phenomena and references to animistic beings fall closely in line with Indus imagery found on its narrative seals.

Tree-Worship-

The seal and painted pottery of the Indus Valley show the figures of the Pipal and Acacia Trees. They were regarded as celestial plants and were supposed to be inhabited by divine spirits. The Pipal Tree was the abode of the supreme deity of the Indus Valley. On account of the extreme sanctity attaching to that plant, its symbolic representation formed the crest of the horned head-

dresses of the deities of lower grades. The pipal was the tree of creation and knowledge and was believed to impart highest knowledge to those who denned its branches on their heads. This privilege was enjoyed by the gods alone. The tree of life figures with great frequency on the seals of the Indus valley. Around this magic plant, most of the adventures and mighty exploits of the gods and national heroes of the Indus Valley were grouped. The sami tree is usually identified with Jand or Jandi. The Jand Tree is still believed to be the abode of a deity and many religious ceremonies are performed under it.

There was a struggle between the gods and demons for the possession of the tree for donning its branches as crests of pig-tails on their heads. Certain demons were always trying to steal away the tree or its branches. The tree was heavily guarded by a spirit. In addition to the guardian spirit, there were also other sentinels to protect the tree. The important of them was a composite animal whose face was human but the body comprised the features of various animals. He was to possess the intelligence of man, the dash and virility of a ram, the brutality and aggressiveness of a tiger and deadly bite of a cobra. Such a composite animal was considered to be the most fitting guardian of the tree of life. There were also other single bodied but three-headed animals in the form of sentinels. In one case, the heads were those of unicorn, bison and an indeterminate quadruped with long hooked horns curving forward.

On a sealing at Mohenjo-Daro, a bull protected by a cobra is engaged in fighting a human adversary and is preventing him from coming near the sacred tree. Another sealing shows an Acacia Tree being protected by a bull which is engaged in fighting a male. Another sealing shows an Acacia Tree being protected by a bull which is engaged in fighting a male. Another composite guardian is seen watching a huge monster or a tiger whom he evidently killed in a combat. In another case a votary is seen presenting an object to an Acacia Tree. A cobra or a Naga Deity is also seen guardian the tree. In another seal, an Acacia Tree is seen being guardian by the buffalo-headed goat. A study of the seals shows that although the tiger demon was always trying to steal away the tree or its branches, it failed to do so. However, on one occasion. he was able to steal

two branches of the tree of life. , but his success was short- lived and soon the demon was killed by the guardian. Many seals show the torture of the tiger demon.

Dr. Mackey excavated from Chanhudaro a seal which shows the tree of life and three pictograms. Lower down is a tiger with his tongue speaking out and almost touching the mouth of the tree spirit which is sitting in half-kneeling pose. According to Dr. Mackay, the tiger is licking the face of the man, perhaps in anticipation of the feast and the man is asking for mercy. This explanation is not accepted by other scholars. A large number of seals and seal impressions from the Indus site show the Acacia alone, with or without any inscription. However, a few of them show the Acacia Tree enclosed by a railing. Another sealing show that it was surrounded by a platform.

Tree worship is very old in India its persistence in historic times clearly shows that the ancient tradition relating to this cult was later on incorporated by the Hindus in their religious system in a highly modified form.

Siva-

This male consort of the Mother Goddess corresponds to siva who is also known as pasupati. On the seals is found a male god, horned and three –faced, in Yogic pose, his legs bent and surrounding by four animals. , the elephant, the tiger the rhinoceros and buffalo, by a couple of deer, indicating that the god is the lord of the animals. On the basis of that evidence, Sir John Marshall came to the conclusion that “Saivism was the oldest religion in Indian deity was “the prototype of the historic Siva.” There were no public temples which may be due to fact that such structures may still be concealed beneath the Stupa at Mohenjo-Daro. Another temple has been “bodily re moved by the brick robbers at Harappa.” Most of the sacred images were found in the corners of the rooms which indicate that religion was. Merely a private concern and not dictated by the state. However, Dr. Mortimer Wheeler and Dr. Piggott feel that the people were ruled by priest kings who held public festivals and the community of priests controlled by political destiny also. In the absence of public temples, it is proper to arrive at such conclusion.

Dr. Mackey noticed an interesting seal amulet depicting a different religious subject. A horned goddess is shown in the midst of a Pipal Tree, before which another horned deity is kneeling and doing obeisance. The goddess and the worshipper wear long plaits of hair, have their arms adorned with many bangles. Both have a floral and leafy spray spring from the head between the horns. Behind the worshipper a goat with a human face looks on. A row of female spirits facing the opposite way occupies the whole of the lower part of the seal amulet, each figure wearing a spring on the head, a pig-tail behind, but no horns. According to Dr. Mackay, "the mystical seven in number recall the Smallpox Goddess Sitala and her six sisters, primitive cult regarded as indigenous. Most of the seals are clearly amulets. They bear inscriptions which are probably charms or spells. This shows that the people were afraid of demons. There was also the practice of Yoga. The worship of sacred "incense-burners" was also prevalent.

According to Wheeler, the importance, not necessarily the deification of water in the life of Indus Valley people is stressed by Great Bath at Mohenjo-Daro and by the almost extravagant provision for bathing and drainage throughout the city. Purification by bath or ceremonial ablutions must have been a part and parcel of the religion of the people. To quote Wheeler, "The Indus religion was a mélange of much that we already know of third millennium Asiatic religious observance, augmented by specific anticipation of the later Hinduism."

Other SCRIPTURAL ASPECTS: Similar to Vedic Texts

Mahabharatam:- Mahabharata is one of the vital components that created the Hindu culture, and a major source of information on the development of Hinduism. It is considered a religious text for the Hindus. It is the longest known poem in the world with 100,000 stanzas, 200,000 lines, and 1.8 million words. In the epic of Mahabharata there is a story of Lubdhaka which is directly linked to Mahashivratri.

THE LEGEND OF LUBHDAKA- The legend of Lubdhaka is deeply related to Mahashivaratri and explains the popular custom of all-night worship of Lord Shiva on the festival. As a tradition

devotees recite the legend of Lubdhaka while they observe fast in worship of Lord Shiva on Mahashivaratri. And, it is only after observing an all night fast that devotees eat the prasad offered to Shiva.

There is yet another version of this legend, which is popular as the legend of King Chitrabhanu. This legend has been narrated by Bhishma in Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata Story goes that Lubdhaka - a poor tribal man and a devout worshipper of Lord Shiva once went into the deep forests to collect firewood. As the darkness engulfed the jungle, Lubdhaka lost his way and could not find his way home. He became extremely terrified as deep growls of animals began to fill the jungle. Seeking protection till daybreak, Lubdhaka climbed the nearest bel tree and sought safety and shelter in its branches. Since Lubdhaka was perched on the branch of a tree he was afraid that if he dozed he might fall off from the tree. To keep himself awake all night, Lubdhaka decided to pluck one leaf from the bheel tree and drop it while chanting the name of Shiva. By sunrise, the devout tribal realized that he had dropped thousands of leaves on to a Shiva Lingam, which he had not seen in the darkness. Lubdhaka's all night worship pleased Lord Shiva and by his divine grace tigers and other wild animals went away. Thus, Lubdhaka not only survived but was also rewarded with divine bliss.

According to Puranas, ever since that day, the story of the tribal Lubdhaka has been recited every year on the night of Mahashivaratri. This popular legend also form the basis of the popular custom of offering bhel (Aegle marmelos) leaves to Lord Shiva on Shivaratri.

SKANDA PUARANAM ,Kendara Khanda ,33rd Adhyayam-

Fellow sat on a Bilva tree at night with the bow in his hand. He wanted to kill a wild boar and he kept awake even without winking. He had stored some water in his quiver, lest he should be distressed due to hunger and thirst. It was the fourteenth day in the dark fortnight of the month of Magha (January-February). He was looking in front for the animal and unintentionally he (plucked and) made many Bilva (Aegle Marmelos) leaves fall down. Sometimes in anger he plucked a number of 13 bilva leaves and dropped then in down. Wafted (by the wind) they fell

upon a Linga that was at the root of the Srivrka (Bilva tree). Sometimes that wicked fellow gargled and that water fell on the Siva linga. The leaves of the Bilva tree also fell. In such a manner, by sheer good luck and happy coincidence the action of that forester became a worship of Siva.

STORY OF LUBDAKA IN BALI, INDONESIA-

The longest night of the year, or the 14thpanglong of the seventh (Kapitu-or agha) month of the Balinese Saka calender, which fell this year on the 19th of January, is fully consecrated to Shiva. It is therefore called the Night of Shiva, or Siwa Ratri, which is a night of meditation aimed at cleansing the impurities accumulated during the year. People who participate don't sleep the whole night. They pray, meditate and discuss holy texts in the temple of the dead (PuraDalem) or the temple of origin (PuraPuseh). Barely known twenty years ago, Siwa Ratri is now one of the most popular holy days of modern Bali. This rite is inseparable from the story of the hunter Lubdaka, which is the principal object of the reading sessions. Here is the story, which should be read in a symbolic way.

Once upon a time, among the aborigines of Nasdaq, there lived a vile man by the name of Lubdaka. He was vile and low, he was a hunter and flesh eating man, he thus violated the teachings of Dharma, the religion of truth, every single day. He was living in a hut on the fringe of the great primary forest with his wife and children, and every day, with his bow and arrow, he would slip between the huge trees and hunt one of the wild forest game available: deer, birds, wild buffaloes or boars and others. He knew the dangers of the forest wilderness, though, and, as soon as the day was cooling and the sun lowering, he would immediately head back home for a rest and his wife's embrace.

It so happened that on the morning of sasikapitu, the day of the dead moon of the seventh month, when the night is at its longest in the year, and thus darkness is too, Lubdaka as usual grabbed his bow and arrows and once more took his hunting path to the forest. Slowly cutting his way among the wet undergrowth, crossing streams and rivers, he came upon empty hamlets and ruined temples. But, as if nature were at rest, hiding for a day its life and power, there was

no game to be seen. No wild boars, no deers, no birds and no men indeed. Tired, feeling helpless, and thinking of his crying wife and hungry children back home in their wooden hut, Lubdaka pushed forward, unheeding of the yellowing of the sun in the West, announcing its setting. He wanted game. So he walked and walked continuously, watching for the signs of life to kill, always ready to pounce.



But there was nothing to be found. Treading forward, tired, he suddenly came upon a small lake, extending before his eyes the trees cleared. On the other side of the lake, the sun was hanging its head and reddening. As it reddened further into the sunset, the still nature came back to life, together with all the shrieks and shrills of the living forest. There was even a growl: a tiger, either after its prey or looking for water. Lubdaka suddenly realized he had gone too far and had to spend the night, on the most frightening night of the year, by the shore of the lake. He had to look for some sort of shelter.

There was a lush and large bila tree overhanging the lake. It would be perfect, he thought. So he climbed up and sat just over the water, his ears keenly listening for any signs of danger among the growls, grunts and gnarls at the foot of the tree: the tiger. He stayed there. There was no way he could sleep. He could fall, and the hunter would be the prey. So he remained sitting on his branch, waiting for each dark hour to succeed another dark hour. Casually, as if to while away the passing of the time, he picked up leaves from the bila branch where he sat, and threw them one by one in the lake whose water he could hear rippling below him. Unwittingly, the leaves fell on a stone, and thus, little by little, Lubdaka's "offerings of fear" stacked up into the shape of a lingga –the symbol of the Supreme God Shiva. Lubdaka, thus, spent his whole night as if worshipping God. In the morning, after the sun had risen, and the dangers vanished from the forest, he went back home, empty-handed, but relieved, and he carried on with his life.

Time passed, and then came Lubdaka's time of death. As he was a vile hunter, his soul, as a result of his deeds of evil, came to wander in the 'nowheres of space', waiting to be caught and taken to the hell of Yama, where he was to boil for eons in the cauldron of death. But Shiva somehow caught sight of it and, moved by the memory of the bila "offerings of fear", he sent his godly troops to the damned man's rescue. Yama, the lord of hell, although he would not at first comply, as Lubdaka was a sinner indeed and a man of vile condition, had to yield to the great god's wishes, who took the poor wretch to heaven, the heaven of Shiva.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASPECTS:-

THE MAN AND THE TIGER SEAL:

There were many seals founded during the excavation of Indus valley from which there are some seals which shows similarity towards the story of lubdaka.

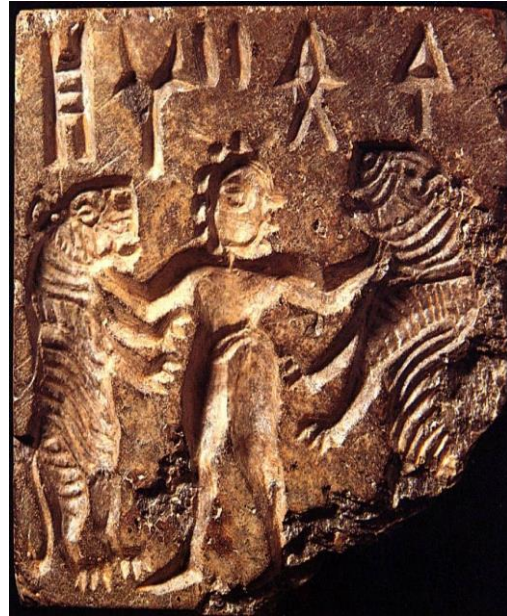


Indus Folklore: An Unknown Story on Some Harappan Objects

Gregory L. Possehl wrote a research paper on this the man and the tiger seal he cited that "There are at least 18 examples of a "human and tiger" motif in Indus glyptic art "The 'human and tiger' scene,' he writes, "is a dynamic moment, suggesting that we have here a narrative of Indus folklore. It occurs with sufficient regularity that I feel it is appropriate to consider it a theme of Mature Harappan society. The human and the tiger are looking at one another. The human is in a squatting, or kneeling posture and is 'beckoning' the tiger. The seal has captured a moment when this 'Harappan person' and the tiger are engaged; but there is no violence. The tiger is just looking and the person is gesturing in a non-threatening way, toward it.

This is a simple scene, of a human up in a tree, kneeling on a limb, with his or her arm stretched out. Where it can be determined, it is the left arm on the seal impression. Below the tree is a tiger, facing away from the tree, but looking back, seemingly at the afore noted human". There are 18 examples that I have found. The scene on the stamp seals may be repeated in more complex graphic settings. The 'human and tiger' scene, is a dynamic moment, suggesting that we

have here a narrative of Indus folklore. We still do not know the story told on the 'human and tiger' glyptic, or what it meant to the Harappan peoples. If I may speculate, it seems to be about a person in the forest who is in a tree, possibly to avoid a tiger passing by. Rather than being mauled and eaten by this beast, the human reaches an accommodation with it and they end-up 'friends'. The base narrative of this story can be combined with other narratives, as with the humans with plants (trees?) that they have uprooted or the scene of 'divine adoration'. So, it might be a part of some longer story, or an individual story among others, we just do not know. But, it is clear that the posture of the human in the tree is repeated elsewhere, and could be said to be an 'Harappan posture'.



From the above picture representations we can clearly that there is a man who is fighting from the tiger and hiding through climbing up the tree but contradict to these many seals were also founded during the harrapan excavation of a man fighting the tiger We can see that there were mans who used to fight the tigers as well as hiding from the tiger (maybe some kind of Indus folktales).

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