



## **Possible Origins of the Abrahamic and Hindu Religions in the Indus Valley: An Exploration**

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*Abstract: The first five books of the Bible give the narratives of Five Persons namely, Adam, Cain, Noah, Abraham and Moses. It is believed that these Five Persons lived in West Asia. The preferred locations are Lake Van in Turkey for Adam; no specific location for Cain; Mesopotamia for Noah; Mesopotamia and Palestine for Abraham; and Egypt for Moses. The Bible says that Moses led the Hebrews from a place named Mitsrayim—identified with Egypt—to the Promised Land of Yisrael. However, geographical details and the archaeological evidence available at these sites often does not match with the descriptions given in the Bible. We explore whether these Five Persons may have lived in the Indus Valley and Moses may have led the Exodus from here to Yisrael.*

*Further, we find remarkable parallels between the Biblical narratives of the Five Persons and the narratives of particular Five Persons in the Hindu texts, namely, Swayambhu Manu, Indra, Vaivaswat Manu, Rama and Krishna. It is believed that these Five Persons lived in larger Indian Subcontinent. The preferred locations are Mount Kailash for Swayambhu Manu; no specific location for Indra; Gujarat-Rajasthan for Vaivaswat Manu; and the Ganges Basin from Rama and Krishna. However, geographical details and the archaeological evidence available at these sites often does not match with the descriptions given in the Hindu texts. We explore whether these Five Persons may have lived in the Indus Valley and Krishna may have led the Yadavas from there to Yisrael.*

*Lastly, a question for further study is posed: If the geographical descriptions of the Five Persons in the two traditions coalesce in the Indus Valley and their narratives are parallel, might it be that the Five Persons described in the Bible were the same Five Persons described in the Hindu texts.*

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### **Methodological Preface**

This paper traverses between the Abrahamic and Hindu traditions. The conventional understanding of the Abrahamic Religions is that the narratives of the Torah were located in West Asia. Generally, the

narrative of Adam is located at Lake Van in Turkey or Qurnah in Iraq (Rohl no date; Hill 2000); the narrative of Noah is located in Iraq (Lending 2007); the narrative of Abraham is located between Iraq, Palestine and Egypt (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008), and the narrative of Moses is located between Egypt and Palestine (Hoffmeier 2012).

The conventional understanding of the Hindu religion is that the narratives from Swayambhu Manu to Krishna were located in the pan-Indian Subcontinent. It has been suggested that the roots may lie in the Indus Valley (Danino 2010); but, to the knowledge of the author, specific credible locations for Swayambhu Manu, Indra and Vaivaswat Manu have not been proposed; the narrative of Rama is located between Ayodhya and Sri Lanka; and that of Krishna at Mathura.

This paper seeks to place both the narratives in the Indus Valley. Moreover, it suggests that the geographical locations of the abovementioned five persons in the two traditions are coterminous. It is proposed that one stream of the people migrated westward to Palestine while another stream migrated eastward to the Ganges Basin at the time of collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization c. 1500 BCE. Thus, we hypothesize a *common* heritage of the two traditions. We do not suggest that either tradition borrowed from the other. They are equally placed on the same pedestal.

It is our solemn responsibility to bring forth the available knowledge before the people. “One of the central challenges for archaeology over the coming decades will be to find a way to engage with emerging, contemporary, sociomaterial phenomena and, hence, with issues of both contemporary and future ecological, social, political, and economic concern” (Harrison 2016). This challenge cannot wait until more credible evidence emerges. The way forward is to take into account the evidence available today and continually modify the hypothesis as new evidence emerges. Archaeology is continually providing new information. One could not have imagined in 1700 that Sanskrit and Latin languages had common origins. One could not have thought in 1800 that there existed the Indus Valley Civilization. Therefore, the task before us is to continually revise our understanding as new information emerges.

We submit that this hypothesis is consistent with the available archaeological evidence from the Indus Valley Civilization. Needless to say, archaeological evidence may not be expected to provide unequivocal evidence for the living of a particular person at a particular time and place. Archaeology only examines whether the necessary condition for the plausibility of such a hypothesis is satisfied. It does not fulfill the sufficient condition to “prove” such a hypothesis. Perhaps such will never be “proven.” We have to work with plausibility rather than proof.

The religious practices of the contemporary Hindu Civilization and its antecedents in the Indus Valley Civilization stand contrary to the contemporary Jewish beliefs. The Indus Valley Civilization people, for example, were idol worshippers which is *contra* to the practices of the Abrahamic religions. There are no “prophets” in Hinduism unlike the Abrahamic religions. At the first sight, therefore, it would be natural to assume that they have different origins. However, these present-day differences do not prove that they did *not* have a common origin. The cultural practices of the Protestants and Catholics, Shias and Sunnis, and Tibetan and Sri Lankan Buddhists are very different although they acknowledge their common origins. We do find parallels between the two traditions despite such differences. The Bible, for example, tells of a particular journey of Jacob in which he had put a stone under his head and had a dream in which he had an encounter with God. Then, the Bible says, “Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it” (Genesis 28:18). This is reminiscent of pouring oil on the Shivalinga.

Another contentious issue is that Hindus do not have “Prophets” unlike the Abrahamic religions. A Prophet is a person who delivers God’s message (Merriam-Webster 2015). The Hindus refer to the

Five Persons enumerated above variously. Swayambhu Manu and Vaivaswat Manu are called Prajapati or “lord of creatures, creator;” Indra is called Devta or “godhead, divinity;” and Rama and Krishna are called Avatara or “descent of a deity from heaven” (Monier-Williams 1987, p. 658, 495, 99). The Five Persons in the two traditions, therefore, have all been persons who deliver God’s message.

The parallels in the cultures, crops raised, color of the people, the arts and crafts and other cultural practices have not been examined and this is a limitation of this paper. The script of the Indus Valley Civilization has not been credibly deciphered as yet. Therefore, the literary evidence, if any, is hidden from our eyes. However, the march must go on.

## **Texts**

The Masoretic Text of the Bible was composed in 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century CE yet it speaks of events that may have taken place as early as 4000 BCE (Hutzler no date). Similarly, the Vayu Purana gives the narrative of Swayambhu—first among the Five Persons—in greatest detail among the Hindu texts. The relevant chapters were composed before 200 BCE, probably in the late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE (Hazra 1975, p. 13, 174-175). On the other hand, the Rig Veda gives details of Indra—the second person among the Five Persons. It was likely composed in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE. Linguist Koenraad Elst says Vedic culture was incipient from the early 4<sup>th</sup> millennium (Elst no date). Greek scholar N Kazanas places the events of the Rig Veda in 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE (Kazanas no date, p. 29). Sanskrit scholar O P Bharadwaj says Rig Veda is to be placed before 3000 BCE (Bharadwaj 1986, p. 34). Thus, the earlier narrative of Swayambhu is available to us in a later text; and the later narrative of Indra is available to us in an earlier text. This disconnect does not create a difficulty in our assessment. The narrative of Swayambhu could have been transmitted orally for a longer time and composed later; while the narrative of Indra could have been composed earlier. The long time oral transmission of the narrative of Swayambhu does not falsify it.

It cannot be precluded that the information of the distant past is cornered by biased data written in different periods under different cultures. That said, we cannot abjure our duty to inform the available evidence to the present and future generations in view of these uncertainties. The solemn responsibility of the archaeologist is to make an informed assessment on the basis of available evidence that is dynamically realigned with the new evidences as they may emerge.

## **Chronology and Genealogy**

An initial roadblock that needs surmounting is whether the Five Persons lived at the same time. Our study shows it may indeed be so. There is no consensus among scholars about the date of birth of the Five Persons in either tradition. We, therefore, only outline one possibility that shows their parallels.

Bishop Ussher had arrived at a time for the birth of Adam on genealogical considerations as 4004 BCE (The Open Bible 1985, p. 1). The Hindu texts are silent on the time of Swayambhu.

The time suggested for Cain on genealogical considerations is 3900-3200 BCE (Bible History no date). William Jones has estimated the number of generations from Vaivaswat to Buddha as 117 (1799, p. 297, 302 and 304). Accordingly, the numbers of generations between Vivaswan, father of Vaivaswat, and Buddha would be 118. The mean length of generation for the Medieval Indian Kings has been estimated at 27 years and the mean length of reign has been estimated at 19 years (Trautmann 1969, p. 566). The upper- and lower number of years between Buddha and Vivaswan is thus estimated as 3186 and 2242 years. According to Modern Chronology Buddha was born in 563 BCE (Mark 2020). Thus, the time for Vivaswan is estimated to be between 3749 to 2805 BCE. The Biblical and Hindu estimates have the common range of 3749 to 3200 BCE.

The time for Noah is suggested to be between 3402 and 2462 BCE (Hasel 1980). As mentioned above the number of generations between Vaivaswat and Buddha have been estimated as 117 by William Jones. Taking the mean length of generation and reign as suggested previously, the upper- and lower years between Vaivaswat and Buddha are estimated as 3159 to 2223 years. Taking the birth of Buddha at 563 BCE, the time for Vaivaswat is arrived at 3734 to 2786 BCE. The range from 3402 to 2786 BCE is common to both the estimates.

Archbishop Ussher had arrived at year 1996 BCE for the birth of Abraham on genealogical considerations (Pierce 2006). The numbers of generations between Buddha and Rama are estimated to be 61 numbers by William Jones. Taking the mean length of generation and reign as suggested previously, the upper- and lower years between Vaivaswat and Buddha are estimated as 1647 to 1159 years. Taking the birth of Buddha at 563 BCE, the time for Rama is arrived at 2210 to 1722 BCE. The Biblical year 1996 BCE falls within the Hindu range.

Archbishop Ussher has suggested the date of 1491 BCE for the Exodus on genealogical considerations (Pierce 2006). Moses was 80 years old at that time hence would have been born around 1571 BCE. The number of generations from Krishna to the extinction of the Lunar Dynasty—in which he was born—have been estimated as 32 by the Mudiraj Community that believes it has descended from that Dynasty (Mudiraj 2020). Taking the mean length of generation and reign as previously, this makes it 864 to 608 years from Krishna to the extinction of the Lunar Dynasty. The Mudiraj Community believes that the Lunar Dynasty became extinct in 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, say 350 BCE. Thus, Krishna would have been born between 1214 and 1171 BCE. Given the uncertainty regarding the numbers of generations, the length thereof, and the time of extinction of the Lunar Dynasty, we consider the time of 1571 BCE for the birth of Moses and the high estimate of 1214 BCE for Krishna to be parallel. This has been shown as “1571~1210” at Figure 1 since the figures are not in agreement.

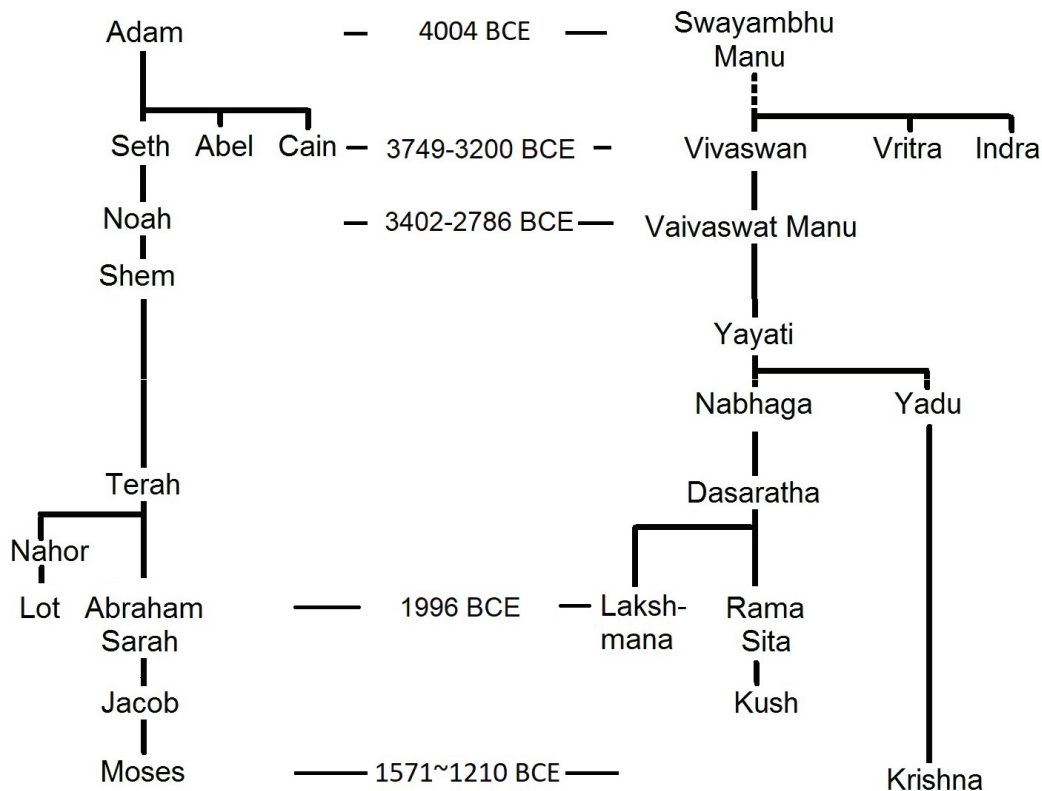


Figure 1: Parallel dates and genealogies



The genealogies of the Five Persons also run parallel as shown elsewhere (Jhunjhunwala 2020) and produced at Figure 1.

## Names

The names of the Five Persons may be expected to show parallels if they may be the same persons. We have used the “Common Key Method,” which compares the sounds in the names; and the “Word Embedding Method,” which looks at the embedded meaning even though the words may be phonetically dissimilar (Rosette Text Analytics 2020). We have considered a name to be parallel if it is found to be so by either method. We find 23 person- and place names to be parallel as given below and 14 names to be distinct as given subsequently. It is significant that these names appear in the same genealogical order in both the narratives.

1. The creativity of Elohim is written as “B-r-” (Sarna 1989, p. 5). The name Brahman contains the same stem “Br.”
2. Adam was the first man. His counterpart Swayambhu was “self-created.”
3. Eve or “Chavvah” means “life” (Strong’s 02332). Her counterpart Shatarupa is also known as “Tanu” which means “preserving life” (Vayu Purana 10:9, Monier-Williams 1987, p. 435).
4. Adam dwelt on Mount Moriah (Targum Pseudo Jonathan, Genesis 1-6). His counterpart Brahma’s seat was located at Mount Meru (Mahabharata 9:38:13-14). The names Moriah and Meru are parallel.
5. “Cain” means spear (Strong’s 07014, 07013). His counterpart Indra’s weapon was the spear (Rig Veda 1:52:8, 6:18:10).
6. “Abel” means vapour (Strong’s 01892). Indra released the waters, which are condensed vapour, that were held back by his counterpart Vritra (Rig Veda 1.80.4).
7. “Noah,” is written as “Noach” which is related to “Manowach” (Strong’s 05146, 04495). “Manowach” is parallel with Noah’s counterpart “Manu” with common syllables “M” and “n.”
8. “Selah” means “to sprout” (Strong’s 07974). His counterpart Prithu milked the cereals from the earth (Vishnu Purana 1:1:8).
9. “Eber” means “the region beyond” (Strong’s 05677). His counterpart Sagar extended the ocean’s boundaries (Ramayana 5:1:89).
10. “Peleg” means channel (Strong’s 06389, 06388). His counterpart Bhagiratha divided the Ganga into seven channels (Ramayana 1:43:12.).
11. “Reu” is parallel to his counterpart “Raghu.”
12. “Serug” is parallel to his counterpart “Shighrag.”
13. “Nahor” is parallel to his counterpart “Nahusa.”
14. “Terah” is parallel to his counterpart “Dasaratha.” Both names contain the syllables “T/D,” “r” and “h.”
15. Abraham was earlier called Ab-Ram (Genesis 17:5). His counterpart was “Rama.” The root “Ram” is common to both names.
16. “Sarah’s” counterpart was “Sita.” Common syllables are “S” and “a.”
17. “Haran” means “mountaineer” (Strong’s 02039). His counterpart “Bharata” too means “mountaineer” (Monier-Williams 1987, p. 747).

18. "Ai" is also written as Ayath (Genesis 13:3, Isaiah 10:28). It is parallel to Ayodhya. Both names contain the syllables "A" and "i/y."
19. Moses' father's name "Amram" means "exalted people" (Strong's 06019). Krishna's father's name "Vasudeva" means "excellent gods" (Monier-Williams 1987, p. 930).
20. Moses' mother's name "Jochebed" is derived from "Jehovah" or God (Strong's: 03115, 03068). Krishna's mother's name "Devaki" means "celestial, divine, god or deity" (Monier-Williams 1987, p. 495).
21. Moses' skin colour was dark (Exodus 4:6). The name "Krishna" means "dark" (Monier-Williams 1987, p. 306).
22. "Aaron" is parallel to "Balarama." Both names contain the syllables "A," "r" and "n/m."
23. "Mitsrayim" is parallel to "Mathura." Both names contain the syllables "M," "t" and "r."

We do not find parallels in the Hindu texts to the following 13 Biblical names: Yahweh, Seth, Nod, Ararat, Hagar, Keturah, Nahor, Lot, Esau, Jacob, Zipporah, Gershom and Midian. Now we take up the narratives of the Five Persons.

### Adam: Rivers of Eden

The Bible says that four rivers named Pishon, Gihon, Perath and Hiddekel flowed out of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14). The Hindu narrative tells of Alaknanda, Saraswati, Sita and an unnamed river flowing out from Mount Meru (Vayu Purana 42:13-15, 25-27, 41-45, 75-78).

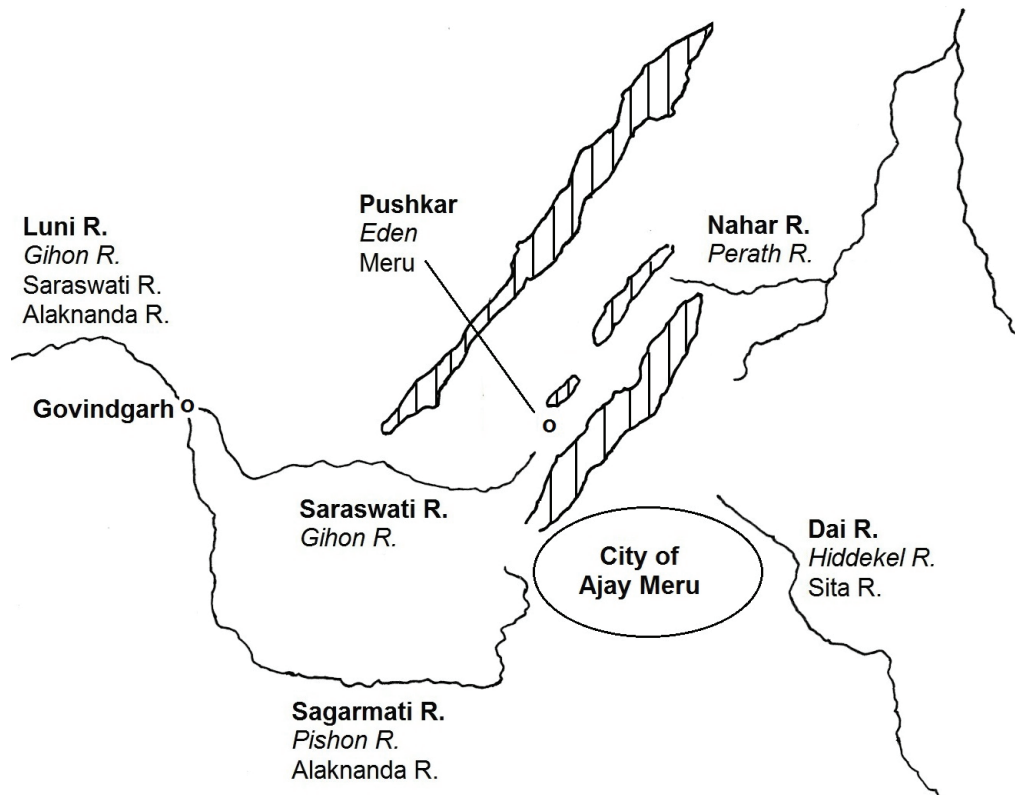
Four rivers indeed flow out of Pushkar as shown in Figure 2. The river emerging to the south of Pushkar is the Sagarmati. We suggest she is the Pishon of the Bible and Alaknanda of the Vayu Purana. She flows near the town of Pisangan. The name "Pishon" and first part "Pisan" of the name "Pisangan" both carry the same consonants "p," "s" and "n" and could suggest a common origin of the two names. The river emerging to the west of Pushkar is the Saraswati. We suggest she is the Gihon of the Bible and the ancient Saraswati of the Hindu texts. The river emerging to the northeast is the Nahar. We suggest she is the Perath River of the Bible and the unnamed north-flowing river of the Hindu texts. The river emerging to the southeast is the Dai. We suggest she is the Hiddekel of the Bible and Sita of the Hindu texts.

The Biblical and Hindu narratives both indicate a connection of the rivers emerging to the south and west. The Targum Pseudo Jonathan says that the Gihon carried the waters of the Pishon (Exodus 3:17); while the Hindu texts say that both the Alaknanda and Saraswati Rivers flow near the Gandhamadan Mountains. This is exactly the situation of the Sagarmati and Saraswati rivers. The Saraswati carries the waters of the Sagarmati after Govindgarh as shown in Figure 2; and the combined river flows near the Aravalli Mountains.

Evidences of human habitation are available from Pushkar from the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE. Pottery related to the Chalcolithic Age has been found at Budha Pushkar (Allchin 1983, p. 65). Archaeological material related to Chalcolithic and early history phases has been found at Tilwara located on the Luni River downstream from Pushkar (Mishra 1999).

The location of Eden at Lake Van in Turkey is often suggested (Krausz, p. 1999, Rohl 2016). Here the Nahar River is said to be a spring on Mount Sahand, the Hiddekel is said to be the Tigris, the Perath is said to be the Euphrates, the Gihon is said to be the Aras, and the Pishon is said to be the Uwzon River as marked in Figure 3.

These suggestions are largely rooted in the similarity of names. The Perath is suggested to be the Euphrates River. Both names have common consonants "p," "r," and "t/th." The Gihon is suggested to



**Figure 2: Rivers of Pushkar. Shaded areas indicate mountains. Contemporary names are given in bold, Biblical names are given in italics and Hindu names are given in normal font**



**Figure 3: Eden in Turkey. Photo: Traced by Author in Google Earth picture**

be the Aras River because the name “Gaihun” used by Islamic scholars for this river is similar to the Biblical name Gihon. The Pishon is suggested to be the Uwzon River because the alphabet “U” in the name Uwzon, if changed to “P,” becomes Pwzon, which is similar to Pishon.

However, the archaeological evidence for habitation at Lake Van at c. 4000 BCE at the time of Adam is weak. Though the area witnessed the beginning of human habitation and grazing around 6000 BCE, the area was fragile and susceptible to repeated degradation (Woldring 2017). Further, Lake Van

is a dead and extremely saline lake which does not support cultivation (Kelly 2014). Such an area could hardly be a “Garden” as described in the Bible.

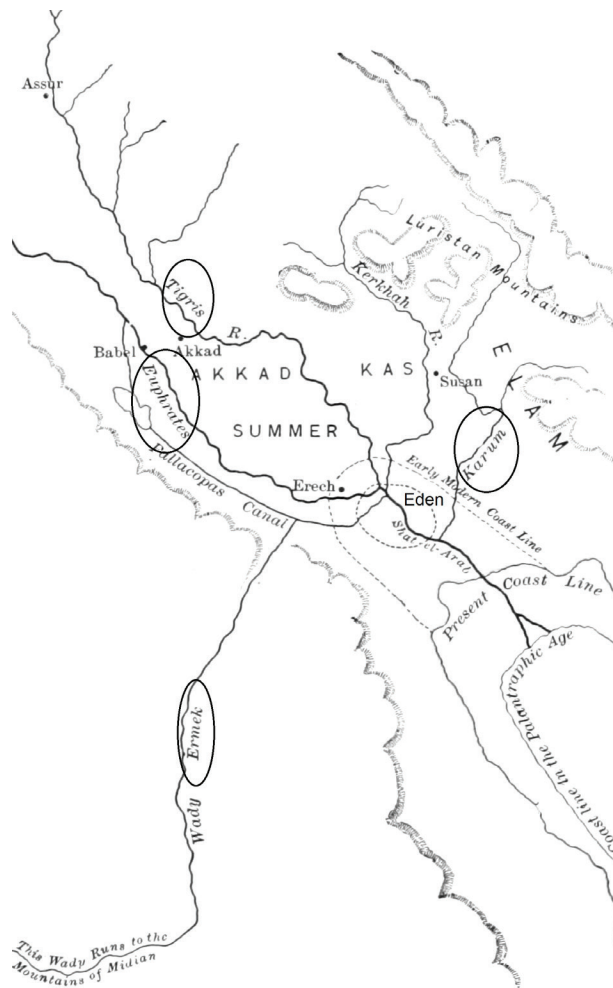


Figure 4: Eden at Al-Qurnah. Photo: Maccoun, p. 1899

Another proposed location for Eden is at Al-Qurnah at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers as shown in Figure 4. Here, as in the previous proposal, the Hiddekel and Perath are suggested to be the Tigris and Euphrates. Pishon is suggested to be Wady Ermek and Gihon is suggested to be the Karun River (Hill 2000). However, here the four rivers converge into one river—the Shatt al-Arab—while, according to the Bible, one river divided into four rivers (Genesis 2:10). The place is also not located atop a mountain, as stated in the Book of Ezekiel (28:14, 16). No wonder, author of the Biblical Word Commentary, Gordon Wenham examines the above suggestions and concludes that the problem of geography is “insoluble” (1983, p. 66-67).

### Cain: Herdsmen versus Agriculturists

Cain’s killing of his brother Abel, and Indra’s killing of his nephew Vritra may relate to a conflict between herdsmen and agriculturists. It is likely that Cain practiced crop cultivation since he brought the fruit of the ground as an offering to the Lord. Abel, on the other hand, likely practiced animal husbandry since he brought the firstborn of his flock as an offering (Genesis 4:3-4).

Indra, like Cain, was an agriculturist. The Rig Veda tells of him working with corn and barley, and undertaking ploughing, threshing, and yoking of animals (Rig Veda 1.140.13, 1.117.21, 4.38.1, 8.21.3



10.149.4). Vritra, like Abel, practiced animal husbandry. The Rig Veda says that Indra had forcibly captured his cows, meaning that Vritra was a herdsman (Rig Veda 2:23:3, 3:31:20, 4:16:8, 5:30:4).

The people of North Gujarat started keeping herds of domesticated animals in the early fourth millennium BCE (Patel 2009, p. 181; Harris 2011, pp. 37-38). These herdsmen would have had unrestricted control of the land and water until the beginning of crop cultivation around 3300 BCE ((Harris 2011, p. 38). It appears a conflict arose between them and the agriculturists at this time. This conflict could be described in the narratives of Cain and Indra.

**Noah: Foretelling the Flood**

God was not happy with the doings of the people at the time of Noah. Thus, the Bible says, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind had become great on the earth...” (Genesis 6:5). The Bhagwata Purana likewise says, “At the end of the last age [before the Flood], there was a complete destruction of the world” (8:24:7).

God told Noah that He will bring rains after seven days. Noah should make a boat and get into it when the flood came:

The Lord said to Noah, “Come into the ark... You must take with you seven of every kind of... animal... to preserve their offspring... For in seven days I will cause it to rain on the earth... (Genesis 7:1-4).

Similarly, the Fish Incarnation told Vaivaswat Manu:

Seventh day from today the entire world will be submerged in the sea. Then a boat will come for you. You get into the boat with the seven sages and seeds of all the creatures (Mahabharata 3:187:6).



Figure 5: Flood-prone Areas of Rajasthan. Circle shows probable area of the Flood at Jalore  
 Photo: Government of Rajasthan 2015



Both the narratives tell that a flood would come after seven days; and that Noah and Vaivaswat should get into a boat with seeds of all the creatures. One possibility is that the Flood took place in South Rajasthan as shown at Figure 5. The Luni which flows near here flooded at 5000 years ago (Ngangom et al 2016). She has experienced at least 17 extreme floods in the last millennium (Alpa 2008, p. 25).

The Jewish tradition holds that the Flood took place in the month of October (Chabad, 2015). The rains take place in India between the months of July and October as shown in Figure 6. The thirst of the land would have been quenched in the heavy rainfall from June to September. Hence the rains in October could have turned into a flood.

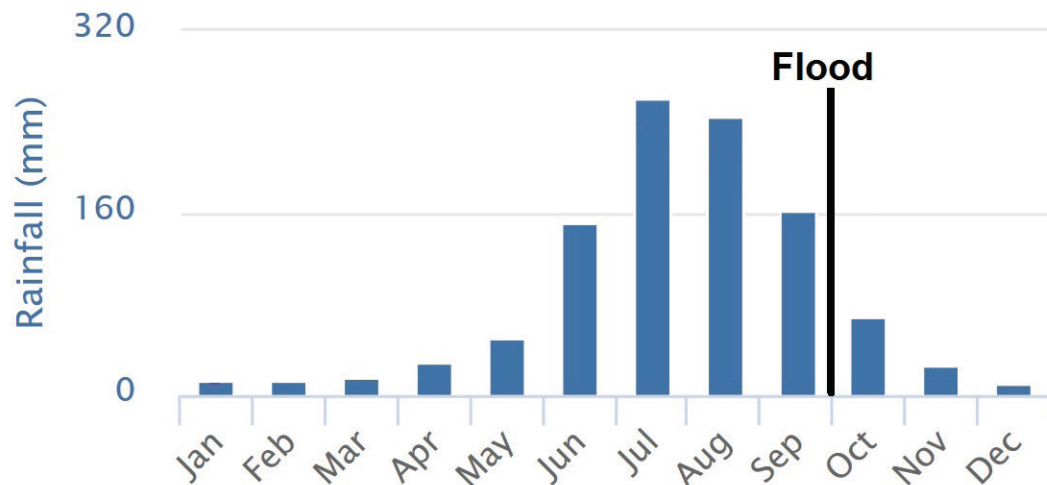


Figure 6: Rainfall pattern in India. Photo: Adapted from World Bank (2017)

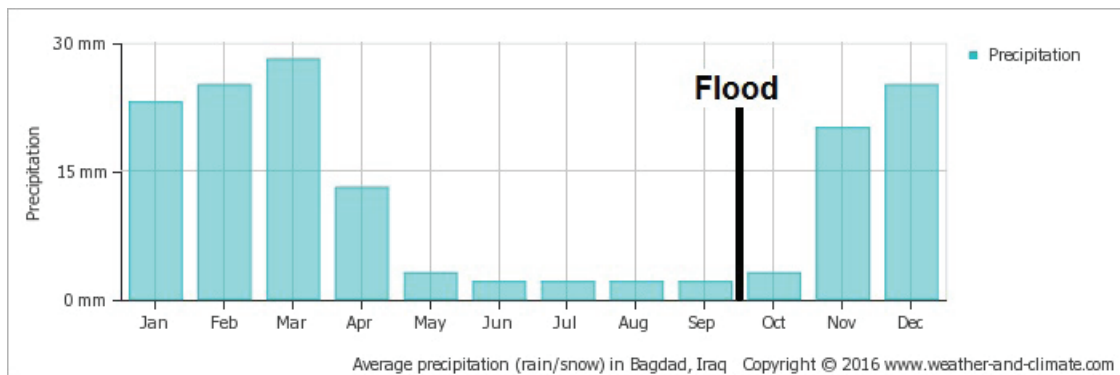


Figure 7: Rainfall pattern in Baghdad, Iraq. Photo: World Weather and Climate Information (2017)

The main rainfall in Iraq, on the other hand, takes place between November and April as shown in Figure 7. Nahum Sarna, author of the JPS Torah Commentary mentions that the flooding in the Euphrates takes place in spring (1989, p. 55). Therefore, timing of the Biblical Flood matches with the rainfall pattern of India and does not match with the pattern of Iraq. Another feature of the Biblical narrative of Noah is the making of the Tower of Babel with baked bricks. Base of towers have been found at Mohenjo Daro as shown in Figure 8. These are made with baked bricks as said in the Bible (Genesis 11:3).



**Figure 8: Group of towers at the southeastern corner of the Citadel, Mohenjo Daro. Photo: Mortimer Wheeler (1950)**

The tower-like temples at Anupgarh may be precursors of the Tower of Babel. They have their “top in the heavens” as said in the Bible (Genesis 11:3-4). Figure 9 gives the picture of a tower under construction with baked bricks near Anupgarh, Rajasthan. Some sites in the area had specific areas for making baked bricks (Mughal 1982, p. 92).

### **Abraham: Wife Taken to the King of the Southern Country**

Terah left Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. He died at Haran and Abraham continued the journey to Ai in Canaan. We suggest Ur of the Chaldeans could be located at Anupgarh, where the ancestors of Terah had built the Tower of Babel as described above; Haran was located at Nohar which lies on the way from Anupgarh to Ghuram; and Ai was located at Ghuram as shown in Figure 10. The line of Ikshwaku, in parallel, could be located at Ikshumati at Anupgarh. The messengers who had travelled from Ayodhya to Kekeya to fetch Bharata tell of passing through Ikshumati (Ramayana 2:68:13-19). They may have passed through Anupgarh on their way from Ghuram to the western regions (Jhunjhunwala 2008, p. 260). The line of Rama may have migrated from here to Ayodhya at Ghuram as shown at Figure 10.



**Figure 9: A tower temple under construction with baked bricks near Anupgarh. Photo: Author, February 2008**

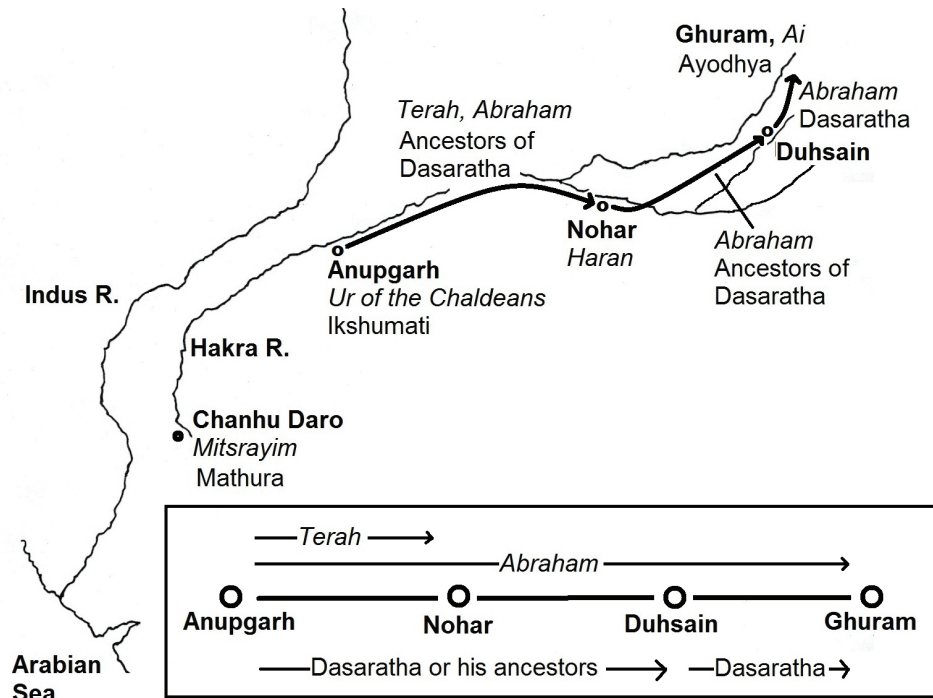


Figure 10: Migrations from Anupgarh to Ghuram

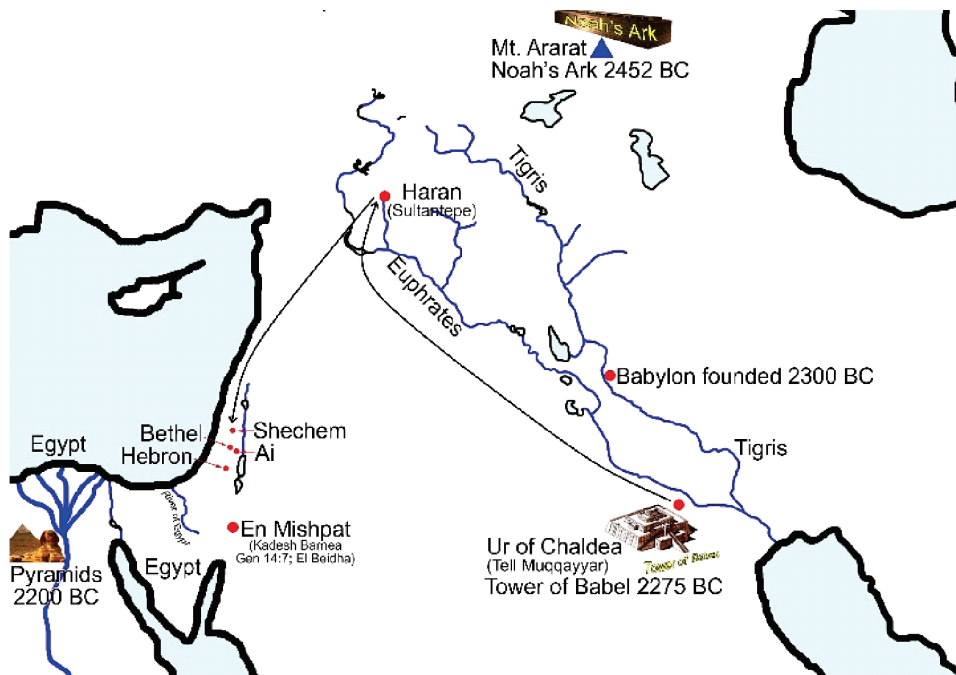


Figure 11: Ur of the Chaldeans, Haran and Canaan in West Asia. Travels of Abraham marked by Author. Adapted from photo by Rudd (2016)

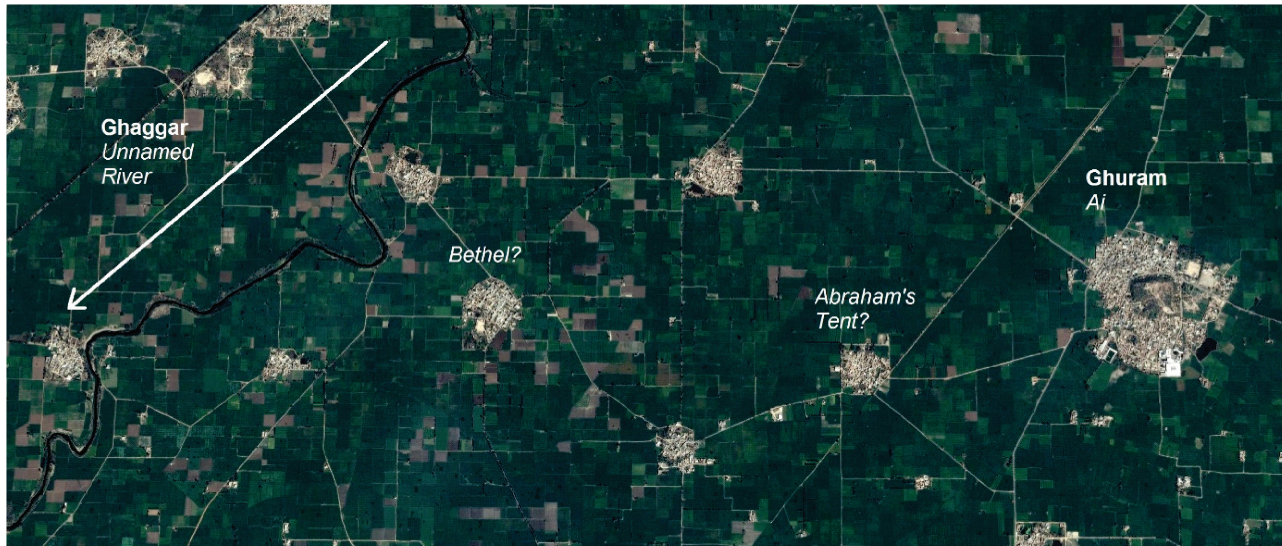
Scholars place Ur of the Chaldeans at Tell Muqqayyar in South Iraq, Haran at the city of that name in Northern Iraq, and Ai in Yisrael as shown in Figure 11 (Hoskisson 1989). We may recall that Terah had left Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan (Genesis 11:31). We may therefore expect him to take a path leading more or less directly to Canaan. However, the travel suggested above involves an unnecessary detour of about 1000 kilometers and puts a question mark on the abovementioned identifications of these places.



The Bible describes the geography of Ai as follows:

Then [Abraham] moved to the hill east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west [towards a] river and Ai on the east (Genesis 12:8).

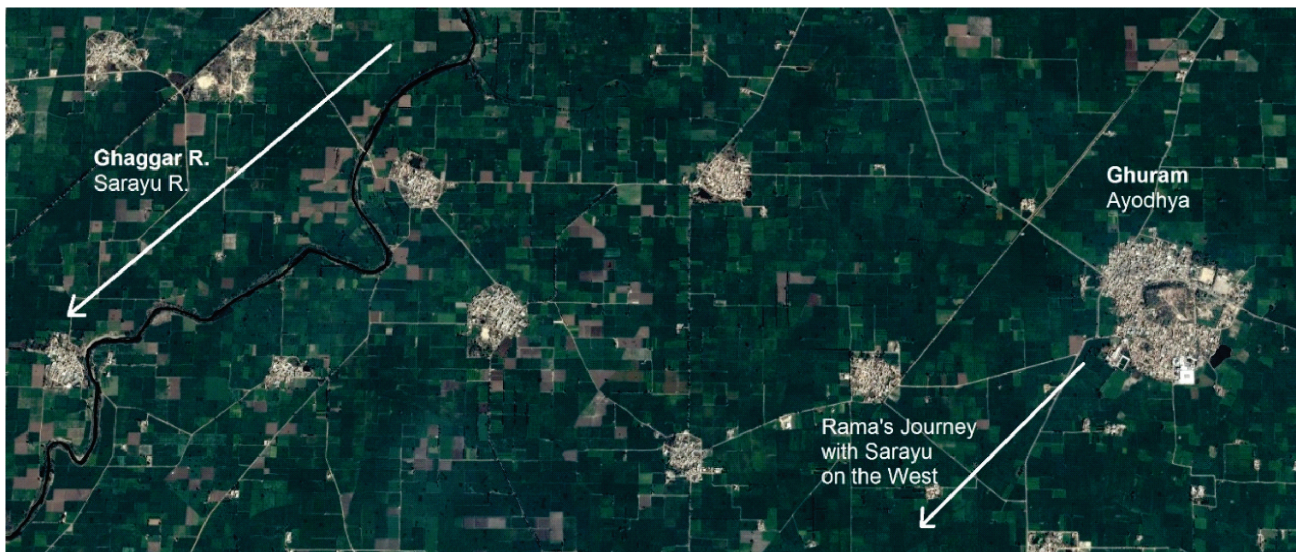
The Hebrew word for “west river” is “yam” (Strong’s 03220). It means “west” as well as “sea.” We render “sea” as “river” here since both are water bodies. This verse tells us that an unnamed river was located on the west and the hill of Ai was located on the east of Bethel, the place where Abraham pitched his tent. The mound of Ghuram is located east and the Ghaggar River flows to the west of the place marked “Bethel” in Figure 12.. Thus, Ghuram could be the Biblical Ai.



**Figure 12: Location of Hill of Ai to the east; and Ghaggar River to the west of Bethel.**

**Photo: Adapted from Google Earth by Author**

Towards the end of his life Rama decided to leave Ayodhya. The Sarayu River was flowing to the west as he left on this journey (Ramayana 7:110:1). Ancient Ayodhya, therefore, would be located east of the ancient Sarayu. Ghuram is indeed located east of the Ghaggar River as shown in Figure 13.



**Figure 13: Location of Ghuram east of the Ghaggar River.**

**Photo: Adapted from Google Earth by Author**



Living Ayodhya does not match with this description because the it is located southwest of the Ghaghara River as shown in Figure 14, not to the east as told in the Ramayana.



Figure 14: Location of Living Ayodhya southwest of the Ghaghara River.

Photo: Adapted from Google Earth by Author

Excavations at Ghuram have reported Harappan sherds (Indian Archaeology 1976-77, p. 44). The original name of “Ghuram” was “Kuh-Ram” or Mountain of Ram (Randhawa 2017). This could be associated with the early name of Abraham “Ab-ram” as well as the name “Rama.”

There was a famine in the land of Canaan and Abraham travelled from Ai to Mitsrayim in the south to live temporarily. His wife Sarah and nephew Lot accompanied him (Genesis 12:10). The Hindu narrative similarly tells that a palace intrigue led to King Dasaratha exiling Rama from Ayodhya. Rama then went to the south to spend 14 years in exile. His wife Sita and brother Lakshmana accompanied him (Ramayana 2:18:17).

The Bible says that, in the south, Sarah was taken to the palace of the King of Mitsrayim (Genesis 12:14-15). The Ramayana similarly says Sita was abducted by Ravana, the King of Lanka from Panchvati (Ramayana: 6:123:45).

We have marked the possible route of the travel of Abraham and Rama in Figure 15 according to

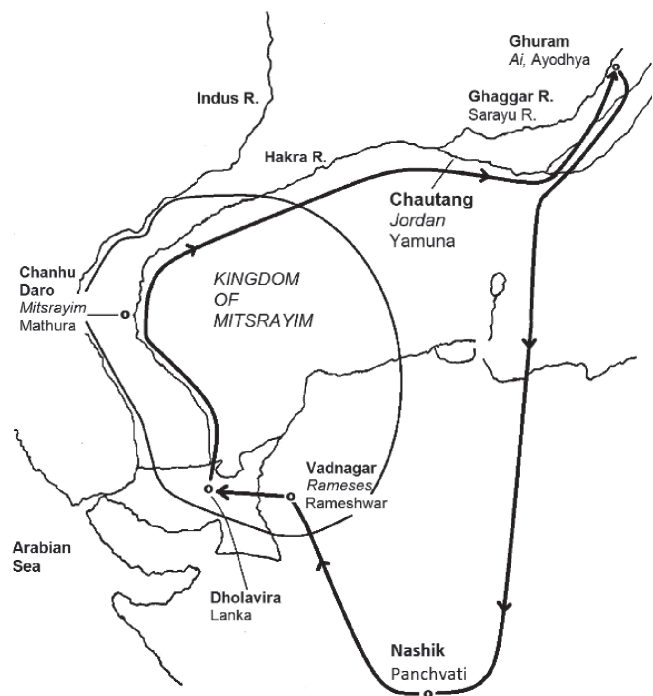


Figure 15: Common southward travels of Abraham and Rama. Circled area marks the area of the kingdom of Mitsrayim. Biblical names are given in italics. Hindu names are given in normal font

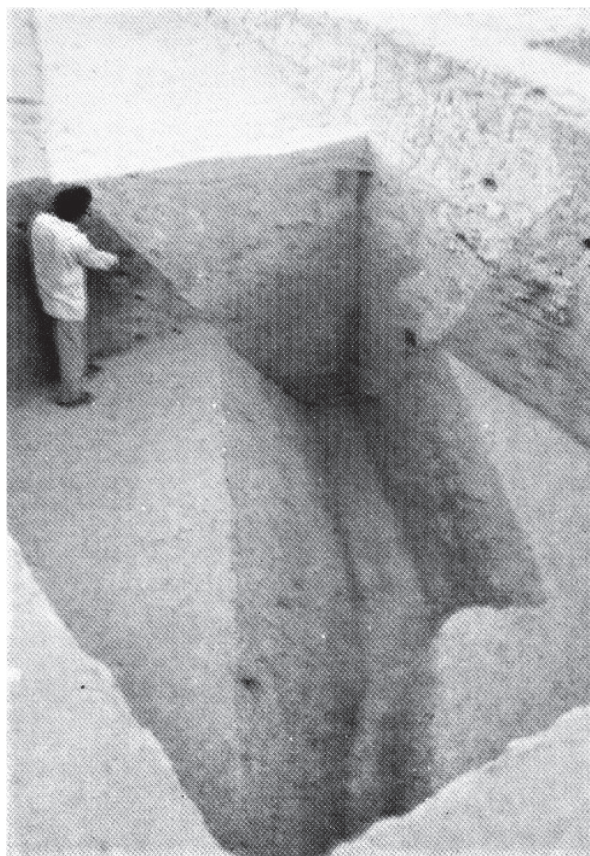


our understanding of the Hindu narrative. Details are given at Jhunjhunwala (2018, pp. 259-300).

Abraham and Lot separated after their return from Mitsrayim and Lot settled at Sodom. The Bible says that Sodom was located in the eastern direction (Genesis 13:10-11). The Hebrew word for “east” may indicate an ancient place located on the eastern frontier ((Strong’s 06924). We suggest this place was located at the ancient site of Daulatpur on the banks of the Chautang River in Haryana. This site is easternmost among the major sites of Indus Valley Civilization.

The Bible says of this event: “Lot looked up and saw the plains of the Jordan was well-watered...” (Genesis 13:10-11). The Hebrew word for well-watered is “mashqeh” (Strong’s 04945). It has an association with the word “drink” and points to irrigation. Archaeological evidence for the practice of irrigation in the ancient times is available from Haryana. A picture of an ancient moat at Banawali is given at Figure 16. This indicates that those people had knowledge of water engineering. They likely used this knowledge for undertaking irrigation as well.

The term “well-watered” does not match with the Jordan River of Yisrael in our assessment. The water of the Jordan River is saline (Murakami 1995). It leaves a salt residue in the soil when used for irrigation (Encyclopedia Britannica 2015). The area was primarily rain-fed. People made only limited complementary irrigation in the area from springs (Philippe 2003, p. 19). People do undertake irrigation in the area at present, but do so using arrangements and technology made only in the last century (Encyclopedia Britannica 2015).



**Figure 16: Moat at Banawali. Photo: Bisht (no date)**



**Figure 17: Sambhar Salt Lake. Photo: Author, March 2013.**

Gordon J. Wenham, author of Word Biblical Commentary on the Book of Genesis suggests that the term “well-watered” refers to the springs near Jericho, Ain Feshka and Engedi (1987, p. 297). However, springs are relatively small sources of water than rivers while the Bible defines the term “well-watered” with reference to the Jordan River.

Lot was taken captive at a war that took place at Siddim, the “Salt Sea” (Genesis 14:3). The phrase “emeq Siddim” used for this place indicates lowlands, plains or fields (Strong’s 06010, 07708). The Sambhar Lake has



a thriving industry of manufacture of salt from the saline water of the lake. Figure 17 gives a picture of the flatlands near the lake.

Siddim is located near the Dead Sea in the conventional perspective (Sarna 1989, p. 104). However, the Dead Sea is surrounded by mountains on all sides and does not match with the Biblical description of its location in the “plains.”

The Bible says that the defeated kings fell into “chemar” pits as they fled (Genesis 14:10). The word “chemar” means slime (Strong’s 02564). These could be lime pits because “slime” and “lime” both have their origin in Old English “lim” (Dictionary.com 2010a, 2010b). Limestone was dug near Sambhar. This digging leads to the formation of shallow pits that are hundreds of feet long as shown in Figure 18. These may be the pits in which the defeated kings fell as they fled.



**Figure 18: Pit created from mining of limestone, Village Sapon-ki-dhani, Sambhar.  
Photo: Author, March 2016**

The Bible says that Sodom was destroyed by “gophriyth” is conventionally translated as “brimstone” (Strong’s 01614). “Brimstone” has its roots in Old English “brynstān,” which, in turn, has its roots in Indo-European “g<sup>w</sup>her” which means “to heat, warm” (Free Dictionary 2016a, 2016b). Further, “Brimstone” is cognate with “brennusteinn” which means “amber” (Dictionary.com 2010a). Thus “gophriyth” suggests hot amber colored matter. The dust storms in the summers in North India could be indicated here. Seven persons died in such a dust storm in May 2015 (Press Trust of India 2016).

The subsequent Biblical narrative of Abraham tells of a number of places named “Beer.” First of these is “Beersheba.” Meaning of the “Beer” is “well, pit, spring” (Strong’s: 0875). “Sheba,” means “seven” (Strong’s 07651). Thus “Beersheba” has hidden within it the meaning “seven wells.”



**Figure 19: Drawing a bucketful of water from a Beri. Photo: Gravis, September 2005.**



People of the Thar Desert make a well they call “beri.” They dig a well of about four feet diameter as shown in Figure 19. Many such wells are made in close proximity in the bed of a dry seasonal pond. These wells continue to provide water after the surface water in the pond has dried out. Owners of a beri close up the mouth with stones before the onset of the next monsoon as shown in Figure 20. The beri remains submerged in water during the monsoons. There is a good chance that a newly made beri may collapse at this time. Therefore, owners fill a newly made beri with sand before the onset of the monsoons, and dig and open it up again after the monsoons (Jhunjhunwala 2005, p. 235).



**Figure 20: Mouth of a Beri covered with stone. Photo: Gravis, May 2005**

The Biblical descriptions of the wells of Beersheba match with the beri. Abraham had expelled Hagar while he was living at Beersheba. She was helplessly wandering in the wilderness trying to find some water for her thirsty son. At this time, an angel appeared, “God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and gave the boy a drink” (Genesis 21:19). Hagar could not see the source of water. The angel, however, knew of it. He may have removed the overlying earth, and Hagar took water from it. A person with foreknowledge of its location alone can remove the overlaid sediments and open it as shown in Figure 21.

The topography of the Rohri Hills is suitable for making a beri. The Hakra/Nara has made numerous flood spill channels into smaller valleys among sand dunes, thus creating many oxbow lakes where beri could be made (Mallah, Shaikh and Veesar 2002).

### **Moses: The Exodus**

The Pharaoh ordered the Mitsrite midwives to kill all the newborn sons of the Hebrews at Goshen (Exodus 1:16). Demoness Putna did the same. She was ordered by King Kamsa to kill the male children of the Yadavas (Bhagwata Purana 10:6.2).

The Bible says that his mother was not able to hide baby Moses from the Mitsrites. She put him in a basket and laid the basket by the bank of the River of Mitsrayim (Exodus 2:3). Moses’ sister stood watching to see what happened to the basket. The Pharaoh’s daughter recovered the basket. Then Moses’ sister approached the Pharaoh’s daughter and suggested she might get a wet nurse from among the Hebrews to bring up the infant. The Pharaoh’s daughter agreed to the suggestion. Moses’ sister then brought her mother to the Pharaoh’s daughter, who gave infant Moses to his natural mother to wet nurse for her. In this way, Moses’ biological mother brought



**Figure 21: Beri being uncovered. Photo: Gravis, September 2005**

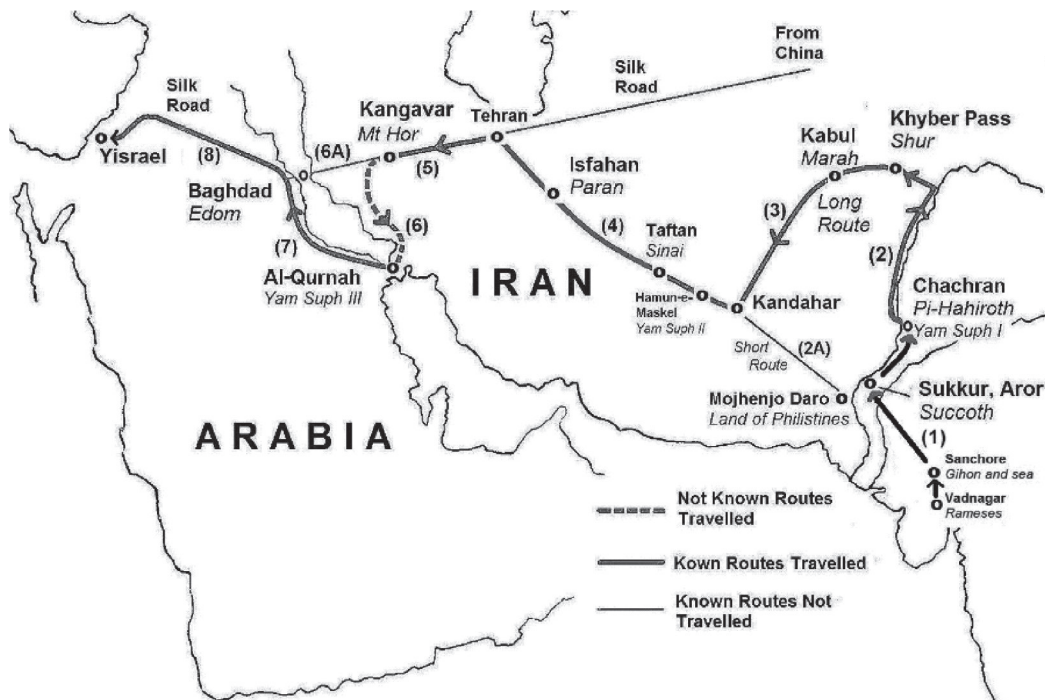
up her own child by posing as his foster mother (Exodus 2:9). Krishna's life was similarly saved by taking him across the Yamuna River in a basket and he was brought up by his foster parents Nand and Yashoda.

After becoming an adult, Moses killed a Mitsrite who was beating a Hebrew and fled to Midian and joined the household of Jethro the Priest. Similarly, Krishna killed Kamsa who was tyrannizing the Yadavas and went for undertaking studies with Sage Sandipani (Bhagwata Purana 10:44:38, 10:45:12, 31).

The conflict between the Hebrews and Pharaoh that led to their Exodus from the land of Mitsrayim was on the collection of straw for baking the bricks. Thus, we may expect that the construction material at Mitsrayim would be baked bricks. We homed in on Chanhu Daro as the location of Mitsrayim on the twin considerations of baked bricks and timing of habitation. Baked bricks were the main construction material used at Chanhu Daro (Khan and Lemmen 2013, p. 4). Habitation here began at c. 2500 BCE and ended at c. 1500 BCE (E J H Mackay quoted by Possehl 2008). The end at c. 1500 BCE matches with the birth of Moses at 1571 BCE as mentioned earlier. The habitation was "massive" though declining at c. 1500 BCE (Miller 2001). The decline also matches with the Exodus at c. 1500 BCE. The city may have declined after the Hebrews left.

The Hebrews left Mitsrayim after the ten plagues brought upon the city by Moses. Krishna similarly led the Yadavas from Dwarka after ill omens appeared there. A point of distinction is that Moses led the Exodus from Chanhu Daro while Krishna led the Yadavas from Dwarka. The two places are located about 600 kilometers apart.

We have marked the suggested route of the Exodus from the Indus Valley to Yisrael in Figure 22. We suggest that the Hebrews travelled from the Rameses at Vadnagar to the confluence of the Gihon River and the sea at Sanchoe, and onwards to Sukkur as shown in Route (1) in the figure.



**Figure 22: Route of the Exodus.** (1) Vadnagar to Chachran. (2) Chachran to Kabul. (2A) Short Route avoided by Hebrews. (3) Kabul to Kandahar. (4) Kandahar to Tehran via Hamun-e-Mashkel, Taftan and Isfahan. (5) Tehran to the Kangavar along the Silk Road. (6) South along the east bank of Tigris River to Al-Qurnah. (6A) Proposed travel through Baghdad not permitted by King of Edom. (7) North along west bank of Euphrates River from Al-Qurnah. (8) West along the Silk Road of Baghdad to Yisrael.<sup>1</sup>



The Hebrews had to cross the Indus River in order to move west towards Yisrael. The short route was to cross the Indus River at Sukkur and get on to the ancient trade route that started at Mohenjo Daro and travel toward Kandahar as marked at Route (2A). However, God advised them to avoid the shorter route through the land of Philistines, located at Mohenjo Daro (Exodus 13:17). We suggest that they then moved north from Sukkur and camped at Chachran as marked at Route (2) in the figure.



**Figure 23: Sedges on banks of the Indus River. Photo: Marwat and Khan 2008, p. 302**

The point of camping is named “Pi-Hahiroth” in the Bible (Exodus 14:9). It means a “place where sedges grow” (Strong’s 06367). Sedges are hardy grasses with triangular stems. They grow in marshes, river banks and sides of streams, among other places. The banks of the Indus River provide such a habitat for them. Figure 23 gives photos of sedges growing on the banks of the Indus River.

The Hebrews then reached the shores of a water body called Yam Suph (Exodus 13:18). Although the common English translation of “yam” is “sea,” “yam” can actually mean “to roar,” likely referring to the sound a large water body makes; and “Suph” is translated as reeds (Strong’s 05488, 03220). The Indus River could be mentioned as Yam Suph since it is a large water body that makes noise. We refer to the Indus River as Yam Suph I in order to distinguish it from another Yam Suph that the Hebrews encountered later. Reeds are known to grow on the banks of the Indus River. People make boats with reeds here (Baloch 1990). A reed named Phragmite *Typha-Saccharum* grows in wetlands of the Nara Canal (Qureshi 2008). A momentous event happened at the river:

God asked Moses to lift his staff. Thereupon the water was divided [and formed] a wall for [the Hebrews] on their right and on their left (Exodus 14:21-22).

This verse is generally understood as God having pushed the waters apart. The Hebrew text, however, does not tell of the waters “dividing.” It uses the word “halak,” which usually means “walking” and can more broadly mean “going” (Strong’s 01980). We interpret this as the waters going downstream while the inflow of waters from the upstream was blocked by a mud volcano as suggested by One theory is that mud volcanoes obstructed the path of the Indus River downstream of Mohenjo



Daro, leading to the creation of a large pond that submerged the city, thus forcing the residents to abandon it. R. L. Raikes has suggested such an obstruction downstream leading to the submergence of Mohenjo Daro (1983). It could be that a mud volcano erupted upstream and blocked the flow of the Indus River. The water of the river flowed down and the Hebrews crossed the river on dry land. Then the mud volcano eroded, the waters came back and drowned the Pharaoh.

A natural phenomenon similar to the mud volcanoes is not known in West Asia. Thus, John I. Durham, author of the Exodus volume of the Word Biblical Commentary, de-emphasizes the physical reality of this event and says that the Book of Exodus is mainly a book of faith (1987, p. xx). We suggest, on the other hand, that the Exodus is as much a record of actual events as it is a book of faith.

Yam Suph I is not likely to be located at the Bitter Lakes, Red Sea or the Gulf of Aquaba. The Bitter Lakes would not have provided much protection from the pursuing army of the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh could go around these lakes and catch up with the Hebrews. Second, the Bitter Lakes are located at the north end of the Red Sea exactly on the shortest route from Egypt to Yisrael (Elitzur 2016).

The Red Sea would similarly not provide much protection. The Pharaoh could easily circuit around the Red Sea through the Isthmus of Suez and catch up with the Hebrews. Further, sedges and reeds also do not grow along its banks since these are freshwater plants, and the Red Sea is one of the saltiest seas in the world (New World Encyclopedia 2017). Sarna recognizes that “Yam Suph would not be an appropriate designation for the present Red Sea because the latter is saline...” (1991, p. 69).

The Gulf of Aquaba would also not provide much protection. The Pharaoh could easily circuit around the north end of the Gulf. The Egyptians had access to Arabia along the Incense Route that passed through that area (Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art 2000). Further, sedges and reeds are not reported to grow along its banks. In conclusion, all three other locations would not provide protection from the pursuing Pharaoh. In comparison, the Indus River fulfills all the three requirements. It forms a natural barrier that would provide protection from the pursuing Pharaoh, it is located away from the shortest route from Chanhu Daro to Yisrael through Mohenjo Daro, and reeds and sedges grow on her banks.

The next stop of the Hebrews was at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:2). The Bible describes an eruption here in the following terms:

On the third day... there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud horn... Moses brought the people... and they took their place at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoke... and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great furnace... (Exodus 19:16-18).

These descriptions may evoke a volcanic eruption. However, we find no true volcano on the route from the Indus Valley to Yisrael. As an alternative we find that this description also matches with the eruption of molten sulphur, which last flowed out of the Taftan Volcano in 1993 that lies on the route from the Indus Valley to Yisrael (Smithsonian Institution 1993). The above verse could be rendered as follows by taking alternative meanings of the Hebrew words as given at the endnote:<sup>2</sup>

On the third day... there was sound like a human voice and flowing material and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud pleasing sound... Moses brought the people... and they took their place at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoldering material... and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great conquered fire...

Mount Sinai could not be located in the Sinai Peninsula in West Asia because there is no volcano here and because the area was largely under Egyptian control.

The Hebrews may then have crossed the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers downstream of their confluence at Al-Qurnah as marked at Route (6) in Figure 22. This was the second “Yam Suph” encountered by them (Numbers 21:4). We may repeat that the word “Suph” refers to reeds. These grow on the banks of the Tigris River (Alisan 2016). Thus, was completed the momentous journey of the Hebrews from the Indus Valley to Yisrael.

Question arises why the origins in the Indus Valley are not mentioned in the Bible when the existence of India is recorded therein? The Book of Esther (1:1, 8:9) describing the events that took place in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE mentions India by the name “Hoddu” as noted by two recent dissertations (Dascalu 2016; Fausett 2020). A possible answer is that the memory of the events having taken place in India before 1500 BCE may have been lost in the time gap of 1000-plus years between the Exodus and events mentioned in the Book of Esther.

We may note though that a number of scholars in the recent times have note the similarities between the Biblical- and Hindu Five Persons. William Jones suggested that Biblical Adam was parallel to Hindu Swayambhu Manu, Biblical Noah was parallel to Hindu Vaivaswat and Biblical Raamah was parallel to Hindu Rama (Jones 1799:313). Thomas William Doane, a pioneer of free thought in the nineteenth century, drew a parallel between Adam and Swayambhu Manu; and Noah and Vaivaswat (Doane 1882:26). Joseph John Campbell, professor of literature at Sarah Lawrence College in New York observed parallels between the making of woman from man’s ribs in the Book of Genesis and the splitting of the primeval being into husband and wife as described in the Hindu texts (Campbell 1962:9-10).

### **The Hebrew Language**

The Hebrew language should have its origins in the Indus Valley if the Hebrews migrated from here to the Yisrael. However, it is difficult to reach a conclusion on this possibility because the Harappan script has not yet been credibly deciphered. Still, we may examine the signs used by the two languages.

Marine archaeologist S R Rao has demonstrated the similarity of these signs as shown in Figure 24. Column 2 in this figure gives the Late Harappan signs up to 1500 BCE while Column 3 gives the Hebrew signs beginning 1500 BCE. For example, the sign “□” at No 1, the sign “X” at No 5, and the signs at Numbers 6, 8, and 10 to 14 are identical in the Harappan and Hebrew. These similarities indicate a possible connection of the two languages though much more study is required to accept or dismiss this possibility.

### **Genetic Evidence**

Stephen Oppenheimer had suggested that *homo sapiens* originated in Africa around 160k years ago. He also said that the anatomically modern humans left Africa at about 70k years ago and rapidly spread around the Indian Ocean including South Asia. Then, he says, a branch left South Asia “to populate Europe.” (Oppeneheimer 2012, p. 770). This is mentioned here to dispel the notion that the lineage of the Jews in West Asia *necessarily* came from Africa. The migration from Africa to West Asia of the people who became to be known as the Jews could have taken place through South Asia.

The Out-of-Africa theory propounded by Oppenheimer has been challenged and it is suggested that modern humans evolved in separate parts of the world (Maystad 2007). Irrespective of this objection, it is quite plausible that among the many parallel evolutions of the modern man, one particular stream spread from Africa to South Asia and then to West Asia and Europe as suggested by Oppenheimer.

Genetic studies indicate that the Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jewish Communities shared a common lineage in West Asia until mid-first millennium BCE. The Cohen Modal Haplotype was present in the

L.NO.	2500-1900 BC HARAPPAN SIGNS (BASIC)	1900-1500 BC LATE HARAPPAN SIGNS (BASIC)	1500-1000 BC NORTH SEMITIC SOUTH	PHONETIC VALUE	1500-1400 BET DWK BC	1400-800 BC MEGALITHIC SANURETC	3RD CENT. E ASOKAN BRAHM GIRNAR
1	□	□	□	h			□
2	∧	∧	∧	g			∧
3	△	△	△	d			△
4	≡	≡	≡	n			≡
5	Y	Y	Y	r			Y
6	≡	≡	≡	h			≡
7	⊙	⊙	⊙	th			⊙
8	∩	∩	∩	k			∩
9	∪	∪	∪	n			∪
10	≡	≡	≡	s			≡
11	○	○	○	(ōy)			○
12	◊	◊	◊	P			◊
13	△	△	△	r			△
14	W	W	W	s			W
15	X	X	X	t			X
16	↑	↑	↑	s			↑
17	+	+	+	h			+
18	X	X	X	m			X
19	U	U	U	a			U
20	↑	↑	↑	r			↑
21	X	X	X	s			X
22	∩	∩	∩	ch			∩
23	∩	∩	∩	z			∩
24				y			∩

Figure 24: Signs of the Indus Script and Hebrew, 1500 BCE. Photo: Rao (2013)

priestly class of both the communities indicating that their common ancestor must have lived before mid-first millennium BCE (Weitzman 2017). Thus, we know that the Jews spread from West Asia after this time. But these studies do not enlighten us on the origins of the Jews before 1500 BCE. One theory is that the origin lies in the Caucasus (Das et al 2017). This theory has, however, been challenged (Weitzmann 2017). Another study concluded that such a study may not even be possible because of difficulties in the retrieval of the relevant DNA materials (Rosenberg and Weitzman 2013).

The R-M124 project provides some indicators of the spread of the Jews from South Asia. The R-M124 gene is almost non-existent in Europe, except among Ashkenazi Jews and a small handful of Sinti Romani people. This lineage began in South Asia and it spread to Central Asia and Southeastern Europe (Paull no date). This spread may have taken place at two or more points of time. It may have spread with the migration of the Jews from the Indus Valley to Yisrael at the time of the Exodus at c. 1500 BCE as proposed by us above. Alternatively, it may have spread from India to Persia; from there further west to ancient Babylonia; and may have come in contact with the Jewish populace that had

been brought to Babylonia as captives in 586 BCE. It cannot be precluded, therefore, that the R-M124 may have entered the Jewish genes when Moses led the Jews from India to Palestine c. 1500 BCE.

The Jews returned from Babylonia to Yisrael in 538 BCE. After this same time some migrated from Israel to India (Benhur 2015). The westward movement at the time of the Exodus c. 1500 BCE and the reverse eastward movement may have taken place after 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Thus, this later eastward migration to India does not preclude the earlier westward movement from India.

## Conclusion

We have tried to show that the time, genealogy, geographical location and the life events at the time of the Five Persons run parallel in the Biblical and Hindu traditions. This similarity leads us to suggest that these could be the same Persons. The fact that the geographical descriptions match with the Indus Valley suggests that they may have lived in the Indus Valley and their narratives travelled from the Indus Valley to West Asia and not from West Asia to India. The decline of the Indus Valley c. 1500 BCE may have led to migrations from here. The Hebrews may have carried the memory of the earlier Four Persons with them when Moses led them to Yisrael during the Exodus. The Hindus may have carried the memory of the same Five Persons with them to the Ganges Basin. In course of time both could have lost memory of their original home in the Indus Valley. Both traditions have evolved in different directions in that the 3500 years since their separation hence today they may appear different and some of their practices may even be contrary to each other. This present reality, however, does not cancel the common roots in the ancient past.

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## Notes

1. Routes 2, 2A, 5, 6A, 7 and 8 have been adapted from Waugh (2015). *Route 3 has been adapted from* Lendering and Bosman (2015). Route 4 had been adapted from Encyclopedia Iranica (2106). The article mentions an ancient route from Isfahan to Kerman. This has been extended by author to Taftan and Kandahar.
2. The Hebrew word for “thunder” places stress on loud human voice rather than noise form a volcanic eruption (Strong’s 06963). Origin of the Hebrew word for “lightening” means “to lighten (lightning):-cast forth.” The latter indicates the flow of lighted material. The origin of the Hebrew word for “horn” means “to be pleasing, be beautiful, be fair, be comely, be bright, glisten” (Strong’s 07782, 08231) Thus the horn must be read as a pleasing sound such as the hissing flow of molten sulphur. Origin of the Hebrew word for “smoke” is also used in the sense of smoldering or slow burning which matches with the burning of

molten sulphur (Strong's 06227, 06225). The origin of the Hebrew word for "furnace" means, "Subdued, forced, conquer, found necessary to subject, enslave, overcome..." (Strong's 03536, 03533) The sense is of a subdued and conquered fire, not that of a volcanic eruption.

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