INTRODUCTION

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Primitive Religion

This section is devoted to a brief account of the theories on the origin of religion in pre-historic times and also takes a note of the characteristic features of religion practised by ancient societies.

The word 'religion' may be derived either from Latin 'religare' to bind together or from 'religere' to rehearse, to execute,¹ thereby suggesting group activity or unity. As stated by Galloway "religion is man's faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability of life and which he expresses in acts of worship and service."² Religion in various ages of man's history reflects his attitude to the world and gathers into focus the meanings of his life. In earlier times man's world was much narrower but nevertheless, there were no forces of nature or of life which did not effect or touch the life of a primitive man. At first it might have been a vague endeavour on his part to explain and to influence the world around him, that fashioned his religious thoughts. It was such endeavours that distinguished early man from the beast.

The actual workings of mind of pre-historic man not being known to us it is not easy to discern what his exact religious thoughts might have been. Some parallels may have existed between the religious customs and beliefs of savages known to history and actual religious practices and thoughts of primitive man. But there will be many essential differences. This is because, in case of the former the environments in which historic savages live has a history and experience which in case of pre-historic man is wanting. One can no where find the actual dawn of religion in an entirely non-religious environment, although one can think of some typical characteristics.

Scholars have put forward various theories on the origin of religion. These are being stated below:

**ANIMISM** This theory has been associated with Edward Tylor and Herbert Spencer. According to this theory primitive man believed that what was active was also alive and being alive all objects animate and inanimate possessed some kind of spirit within them. This spirit he felt was same as the one man recognised within himself. On the basis of this recognition of spirit in all objects primitive man peopled the world around him with such objects inhabited by spirits. He felt that all he did in his dreams were actually done by his spirit which went out of his body when he was asleep. Thus, he acquired the
notion of a spirit independent of his body and recognised such a spirit in various objects including animals and men themselves. He also thought that human spirit lives after a man's death, for, he could see the dead in his dreams. So he made offerings to the spirits of his ancestors. Such spirits were in course of time endowed with supernatural power and consequently gods were born. According to Spencer this custom of ancestor worship is the root of all religion.\(^3\)

**ANIMATISM OR NATURALISM** Animatism involves attribution of consciousness or soul to inanimate powers or agents of nature. The foremost propounder of this theory is F. Max Müller. He calls the religion born as a result of naturalism "Natural Religion." According to this theory early man in his endeavour to understand what lay behind various powers of nature felt that where there was power there was consciousness or life. He believed that all the activities in nature had behind them conscious or living agents. He gave these objects various physical attributes and revered them. As a result of such personifications the great and all powerful gods of sky, air, earth, fire, lightning, storm etc. were born. According to Max Müller in course of time with the evolution of human mind the idea of a Supreme Being was born out of these nature gods. This phase of natural religion

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has been referred to by him as "Physical Religion." According to him this is the first phase of development of natural religion which has two other phases. He believed that once the idea of the Infinite was born it came to be recognised not only behind all nature but also behind all men. To say in his words "something not merely human, or very soon, something superhuman was discovered at a very early time in parents and ancestors, particularly after they had departed this life....The ancestors, no longer merely human, approached more and more to the superhuman, and this is never very far removed from the divine." According to him in course of time, the father of all fathers, became identified with some wise and loving ruler who was discovered behind all nature. This aspect of natural religion has been named "Anthropological Religion", by Max Müller. The third phase of development which has been named "Psychological Religion" came into being as a result of man's "endeavours to discover what lies hidden in man considered not merely as a creature, or as a part of nature, but as a self conscious subject." As a result of this endeavour the concept of the self came into being which ultimately led to the realisation of the divine in man.  

MAGIC AS THE SOURCE OF RELIGION  This theory has been chiefly propounded by Frazer who believed that sacrifices were magical rites performed by primitive man who believed himself to be all powerful, in order to gain control over the life of men, animals and crops. Frazer asserted that religion was born from such rites. This happened when man found out in the long run that his magical arts did not bring in the desired results to him. Ultimately he took recourse to the belief in unseen beings who he believed, had the powers he lacked. He sought the favour of such beings through offerings and prayer and thus gods and religious practices were born.

TOTEMISM  This theory has been connected to E. Durkheim. Durkheim emphasised on a social origin of religion. Totemism is essentially a social cult in which a social group believes itself as being in some intimately friendly relationship or in close kinship to a particular animal or plant or some other object. Such an animal or plant or object is called the totem of that social group. A totem is not precisely regarded as deity, but is respected as sacred or tobooeed. Veneration was shown collectively by the members of a totemic clan through their rites and cultic practices towards their totem which they believed

to have united them. In case of clans with animal totems, the cultic practice involved sacrificing the totem animals and eating the flesh in order to renew their bond with their totems. Durkheim believed that such totemic cults constituted the elementary forms of all religious practices.\(^7\)

**RELIGION AS AN OUTGROWTH OF HUMAN RELATIONS**

This theory put forward by Simmel holds that "religion is the heightening and abstracting from their particular content of human relations of exaltation, devotion, fervency, and the like - that are found widely in social life. Faith for example, is first of all a relation between individuals... In faith in a deity the highest development of faith has become incorporate, so to speak, has been relieved of its connection with its social counterpart."\(^8\)

All the above mentioned theories on the origin of religion have faced various criticisms from various quarters. It appears that not any one of these theories by itself can throw light on the origin of religion and god in remote past. In the religions of various ancient societies can be discerned many of the afore-stated charac-

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teristics such as animism, animatism, ancestor worship etc. While some of these characteristics have been more prominent in one society, they were not so in another.

Animism and animatism seem to have existed in almost all ancient societies. Ancient man worshipped stones, hills, plants, trees, flowers, rivers, air, wind, the sky, fire, the clouds, the sun, the moon, the animals and birds and even himself. According to Hopkins what he in reality worshipped through such practices was power which he feared but at the same time sought to possess. 9

As a result of man's animistic beliefs, he venerated animals as living powers. He recognised in animals a spirit akin to the one in himself but at the same time different from it. He saw in animals superior power, strength and speed and also considered them as gifted with occult powers. Thus, for example, in ancient Egypt the bull was worshipped as an epitome of strength and power. Some such bulls were the ones called the bull of Apis, the bull of Baka and of Memphis which was of more massive breed. Some other animals venerated by them as living images of the divine were the oxen, cows, cats, dogs icheneumons, snakes, falcons, wolves etc. which after their death were mumified and buried in sacred sepulchres. Should any one willingly kill such animals his penalty was

death. If on the other hand a man killed an ibis, a falcon or a ram even unwillingly he had to die. In totemic societies animals were revered, for such societies derived their origin from animal totems. In some cases animals like serpents, sharks, tigers etc. were venerated for these inspired fear and awe. Thus, the Vedic people showed respect to the serpent. Similarly in the Pacific the Shark was treated with respect. Beasts that served man in various ways also came to be treated with respect and veneration. Similarly some birds and animals came to be treated with respect because of the belief that they were gifted with fore-knowledge of incoming good days or impending disaster.

Another reason for animal worship has been the practice of fetishism. Fetishes are objects both animate and inanimate, regarded with awe as being embodiments of some potent spirit or as having some magical power. Animals treated as fetishes were worshipped not because they were looked upon as sacred by themselves but because of the belief that they were filled with divine powers or were looked upon as living images of gods.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP As it has already been stated according to Max Müller, ancestor worship supposes worship of natural phenomena. According to upholders of animism on the other hand, it is the result of animistic beliefs. Tylor is of the opinion that ancestor worship is one of the great branches of a religion of mankind. According to Max Müller among nations whose historical developments are known to us, spirits of the dead were raised to a status of fellowship with the nature divinities. He is also of the opinion that no ancient society has probably devoted itself exclusively to the worship of nature or has exclusively worshipped ancestors. It should however, be remembered in connection with this view of Max Müller that the Semitic societies of ancient Babylonia and the like had no cult of ancestor worship.

DIVINATION OF MAN Yet another characteristic feature of some ancient religions had been the divination of man. In ancient Babylonia kings were considered divine both before and after their death. In Egypt tradition the dynasties that ruled before the Pharaohs of divine origin and were as such considered divine. There were two divine-kings- one belonging to upper Egypt and

other to lower Egypt.\textsuperscript{15}

Ancient religions have further been characterised by anthropomorphic, theriomorphic and therianthropic concepts of god. In anthropomorphism as we know gods are conceived of in human forms and are endowed with human qualities. Theriomorphism involves concepts of deities as animals. Therianthropic concept of god on the other hand involves imagining a god as a combination of human and animal forms. Scholars believe that anthropomorphism presupposes theriomorphic concepts of deities. Anthropomorphism according to them represents a stage typically later than theriomorphism. This means that the first to be worshipped were animal totems or animals considered divine. According to these scholars in the absence of details or evidences to the contrary, theriomorphism points to presence of totemic practices. Accordingly the first to be worshipped were totems and then came the concept of deities in animal forms.\textsuperscript{16} Such a stage of development can be discerned in ancient Egyptian Religion. Egyptians at the beginning worshipped animal totems. Some of the animals in course of time came to represent various deities and these deities were depicted in those animal forms. At the second stage of development


came the therianthropic deities and at the final stage the six gods Osiris, Isis, Amon, Phtah, Geb and Min took purely human forms.\textsuperscript{17} It appears that majority of the Egyptian gods were in therianthropic forms.\textsuperscript{18} In Babylonia on the other hand there was as it were, a reversal of the above mentioned situation. As pointed out by Farnell in Babylonia there was a "characteristically unstable anthropomorphism", where the imagination of the religious poets in its highest exaltation was on the whole anthropomorphic. But these poets in their flights of imagination often found "human image too narrow and stained for their struggling sense of the infinite." Whenever the poetic expression became mystic, the poet took recourse to theriomorphism.\textsuperscript{19}

While concluding this short discussion on primitive religion, it would be in appropriateness of things that we take an account of the emotional factor or factors that since time immemorial has stimulated religious thoughts and practices of man. Fear of unknown powers or a desire to acquire such power could not have acted as the sole religious stimulus. As a matter of fact, religious practices besides resulting from fear evolved

\textsuperscript{17} Cf. Moret, A., \textit{The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation}, New York, 1927, pp. 361-64.
\textsuperscript{19} Cf. Farnell, L.R., \textit{Greece And Babylon}, Edinburg, 1911, p. 55.
out of man's emotional needs to tackle the ultimate problems of life. Religion had been and still is to save the language of Yinger "an organised effort to meet the virtue of" man's "ultimate necessities." Religion was created not merely for the sake of religion but "to deal with the forces that press in on" man thereby "endangering" his livelihood, health, as well as "his survival and smooth operation of the groups" he belonged to and without which he could not survive. The beliefs, customs and rites of a particular society were created by the members of that society who intensely felt tragedies of death, frustration, the destructive effects of hostility so on and so forth. They believed that such customs and rites would help the members of the society to bear the peak load of their ultimate needs. The nature of such emotional needs kept changing with the changes in social conditions. The religious beliefs and practices of a particular group of people at a particular point in history was shaped by the nature of the peak load of their ultimate needs of that society. Thus, the traits of pre-historic religion reflect the ultimate concerns of pre-historic society to safeguard life and its basic needs such as rain, cattle, land etc. As such primitive religions are essentially materialistic in nature.


Almost all scholars like Max Müller, Keith, Macdonell, Winternitz, Griswold etc. agree to the fact that Vedic religion has for its basis naturalism or animatism practised by the Vedic Aryans. As a matter of fact, Max Müller considered Vedic religion as the best example of "Physical Religion" which according to him was the first phase of development of natural religion. It has been his opinion that it is only in the Veda that one can perceive physical religion in all its fullness and that the Veda has thrown new light on the origin and development of religion not only in India but also in other parts of the world such as Greece, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and other Semitic nations, the Polynesian island etc. According to Winternitz in the Rgveda we can see as if it were, the gods arising from various natural phenomena. He is of the opinion that the transformation of these natural phenomena worshipped and glorified in the hymns of the Rgveda into mythological figures took place in the Rgveda itself only in a gradual manner. Again Keith is of the opinion that probably during the period of "Indo-European Unity" itself the anthropomorphism of deities of the sky such as Dyaus, Mitra and the like has

already been accomplished.³

In India as far back as in about 700 B.C. Yāska revealed his awareness of the fact that Vedic gods are personifications of various forces of nature. This fact is clearly discernible in Yāska's derivations of the names of various Vedic gods such as Āditya, Indra, Vāta, the Maruts, the two Aśvins etc.⁴ Yāska has also pointed out the fact that the myth of Indra's fights against the demon called Vṛtra in reality is a depiction of a natural phenomena. He has stated that according to the Nairuktas Vṛtra represents the clouds and has said: "apām ca jyotīṣas'ca miśrībhāvakarmaṇo varṣakarma jāyate, tatropamārthena yuddhavarṇā bhavanti."⁵

The two most noteworthy commentators of the RV viz. Skandasvāmin and Sāyaṇa were both aware of the naturalistic basis of Vedic gods. This is clearly discernible in their commentaries. These commentators have made extensive use of Yāska's naturalistic interpretation of Vedic words.⁶

³ Keith, A.B., The Religion And Philosophy Of The Veda And Upanishads, Part I, Delhi, 1976, p. 58.
⁴ Cf. Nirukta, 2.13; 10.8; 10.34; 11.13 and 12.1.
⁵ Ibid, 2.16.
⁶ Cf. a) Skandasvāmin on RV, 1.3.8, 10.12; 1.6.1, 1.24.10; 1.30.20; 1.32; 1.84.15 etc.
   b) Sāyaṇa on 1.3.4; 1.32; 1.84.15; 1.85.5; 1.92 etc.
As can be gathered from Yāśka's *Nirukta* the various names and epithets of gods in the *RV* are expressive of various activities and powers of nature. Different roots expressive of different shades of meaning have been used to express different aspects of various nature gods. Some such epithets are expressive of human and animal attributes and are used to denote particular characteristics of the gods. Over and above this the Vedic seers in their flights of poetical fancy bestowed human and animal attributes upon the gods. This has led to anthropomorphic and theriomorphic concepts of such gods. As it has already been stated, according to Keith anthropomorphism was most probably inherited by the Indo-Aryans from their Indo-European fore-fathers. If this be so and if we take into account the opinion of scholars that anthropomorphism belongs to a later stage of development, we may arrive at the conclusion that Vedic religion represents a higher level of religion than that of ancient Egypt.

As to the nature of anthropomorphism in Vedic religion, it has been pointed out by Max Müller that Vedic anthropomorphism does not involve concepts of deities as "plastic images" of human beings as it has been the case in ancient Greece. Keith has stated that in the Veda "the

7. See *Nirukta*, 2.13; 12.16; 7.31 and 12.16 for Yāśka's interpretations of the words aditya, surya, savitr and pūṣan all of which are names of the sun-god.
anthropomorphic character of the gods in reality faintly veil phenomena of nature." In fact Keith has called Vedic anthropomorphism "imperfect."\(^9\) The same is true of Vedic theriomorphism. In the Veda we do not find gods being depicted as clear cut images of animals and birds, as it was the case in ancient Egypt. Again in the Veda one does not come across any deity imagined as a combination of human and animal forms. There are however, two instances of evil spirits depicted in therianthropic forms in Vedic literature.

So far as animism in the Veda is concerned Rgvedic deities like "the spirit of the field" (Kṣetrasyapati) and "the spirit of the house" (Vāstospati) and the spirit called Uttuda mentioned in the AV may be the creations of animistic beliefs.\(^10\) In the same way venerations paid to Iṣudhi, the Oṣadhis, Vanaspati, the Ulūkhala and Musala, the Svadhitī (razor), the sacrificial post and the various objects used in the sacrifices\(^11\) might have been due to such belief.

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10. Cf. RV, IV.57.1-3; VII.54.1-3; VII.55.1; AV,III.25.1.
11. Cf. RV,VI.75.5; X.97; 1.13.11; 1.142.11; 11.3.10; V.5.10; VII.2.10; 1.28.5-8; VS, Chapters I-V; SB, 1.33.3; 5.4.3.25, 26; 5.4.4.2,3; 7.4.2.27 29, 39 etc.
ANCESTOR WORSHIP As it has already been stated in the previous section Max Müller considered ancestor worship as the second phase of development from naturalism whereas, according to Spencer it points to animistic beliefs. Ancestor worship in the Veda is the same as the worship of gods. In Vedic religion Śrauta i.e., rituals in honour of the departed souls, Pitṛyajña in which veneration is paid to the ancestors, fall into the domain of Grhya rites. The veneration in the RV to the mythical priestly families such as the Bhṛgus, Aṅgirasas, Atharvans, the Navagvās and the Daśarūpas seems to reflect the Vedic Aryan's deep rooted sense of respect towards their fore-fathers. These ancestors, though associated with the gods, are however, not looked upon as Devas in the truest sense of the term. Their origin was never forgotten. While the ancestors called Pitṛs the gods are Devas i.e., the lustrous ones.

In this connection it may be noted that in the Dānastutiṣ the benevolence of the kings who were lauded they were not looked upon as divine beings as was done in ancient Babylonia or Egypt.

12. Cf. RV IV.42.8; VI.22.2; X.14.6.
TOTEMISM  So far as totemism is concerned, as it has been pointed out by Keith there exists in Vedic literature not a single instance of any totemic practice of sacrament eating of any totem animal or plant, although one comes across family names like the Matsyas, Aśvī, Śīgrus, Kāśyapas etc. 14

Animals were venerated in the Veda because, some of them were looked upon as fetishes of gods, while others were considered precious because of the service rendered by them to man. Yet a few other animals like the serpent, the tiger and the wolf were shown respect because of the fear inspired by them.

While concluding we take a look into the nature of Vedic religion from the functional point of view. We take a note of the attitude of the Vedic people towards their gods.

The Vedic hymns clearly reflect the fact that religion serves the purpose of rendering help to man in bearing the "peak load" of their emotional needs. The hymns tell us about the ultimate concerns of a pastoral and agricultural people such as rain, cattle, progeny, protection from hostile forces of nature such as drought, diseases of men, animals and crops so on.

forth. The Vedic people performed numerous rituals and sacrifices with a view to attain well being on earth. They were primarily concerned with life on earth. Their religion was as such basically materialistic in nature. The rituals abound in priestly ideas and elaborations. Nevertheless, Vedic religion cannot be termed as purely heiratic. Had it been purely a product of priestly cult having no regard for popular beliefs and customs, it would not have survived through the centuries defying the assaults of Buddhism and Jainism. The priests even if they were above the society, could not have been outside it.

So far as the attitude of the people towards their gods is concerned we see that the Rgvedic worshipper who fears and hopes is also full of admiration of the supernatural powers of nature. In the AV however, in the invocations of Rudra Paśupati one discerns fear on the part of the worshipper. In the RV Varuṇa - the god of ethics is regarded with awe but not with that "shuddering awe" with which the "Psalmist looks up to Jehovah." In the RV we actually come across many instances where the seers speaks of familial and friendly relationships between the worshippers and the worshipped.

15. Cf. RV.II.33.
18. Cf. RV.I.1.9; I.89.70b; I.132.3a; II.1.9; VIII.19.27; VIII.21.4; IX.97.30; X.61.17; X.72.5a etc.
Scholars vary in their opinion as to who were the architects of the civilisation of the Indus Valley. According to Swami Sankarānanda it was a creation of the Ṛgvedic people themselves. He tried to establish Vedic origin of the Indus culture in his work Ṛgvedic Culture Of The Pre-Historic Indus, Vol.II Swami Pratyagatmananda in his fore-words to this work says that "there is lack of concurrent and coherent not to say of compelling and convincing evidence that the Vedic Aryans had actually come from somewhere out side India." He holds that "it is not an inescapable position to maintain that the Vedic Aryans must have come from an unknown home out side India and entered the Punjab not earlier than 2000 B.C."\(^1\) Again in 1978 it was claimed by archaeologist S.R. Rao that the language of the Indus Valley people in its vocabulary, meaning of words and phonology was akin to Vedic Sanskrit and Indo-Iranian.\(^2\) He stood by his opinion and expressed a similar view again in 1987.\(^3\) As against this few there has been the view that the Vedic Indians overthrew the Indus Valley Civilisation in about 3000 B.C. Indus Valley Civilisation according to these scholars has a definitely

un-Indic character. According to W. Wust the Indus Civilisation was destroyed by some other people even before the advent of the Vedic Aryans into India. The Vedics simply saw the ruins of Indus Valley. Of late however a new theory has been put forward by B.G. Siddharth of Planetoriam, Hyderabad on the basis of astronomical data as well as excavations done in Turkey by H. Heupmann of Germany that Vedic Civilisation belongs to about 7000 B.C. He holds that the Ṛgvedic people entered India about 4000 B.C. He is also of the view that Indus civilisation of 2000 B.C. displays traits of post Vedic culture.

Whatever may be the theories regarding the architects of the Indus Valley Civilisation, the fact remains that the Vedic texts reflect that there have been intermingling of various races and it is possible that the Vedic people incorporated into their religion and culture beliefs and customs of the non-Aryan inhabitants of the land. Thus, e.g., the concept of Paśupati according to Marshall had its origin in the Indus Valley Civilisation.

The concept of Rudra as Paśupati in the Vedic religion occurs in the 
Atharvaveda, XI.2.

The civilisation of Harappa and Mahenjodaro popularly known as the Indus Valley Civilisation had for its basis a highly developed urban economy and discipline. While the West Asian civilisations raised magnificent structures in honour of their gods, the Indus people erected fine dwelling houses and buildings for the comfort of their citizens.

As it has been a case with all ancient cultures, so also in case of the Indus Civilisation it is not possible to draw a sharp line of demarkation between secular and religious practices and customs. A picture of their religion and culture has been put together by scholars from the information offered by clay sealings, copper tablets, a variety of terracotta figurines, stone images etc. unearthed during the excavations of Harappa and Mahenjodaro. Among these the most common and most striking have been the female figurines. So many of these female figurines have been found that they have led to the opinion that in the Indus Valley there must have been a cult of Mother Goddess or Goddess of Nature. In some female figurines vegetation is shown issuing from their wombs which probably indicates the idea of the earth as a Mother Goddess.  

such statuettes in conjunction with the fact that no ruins of temples have been found in Harappa or Mohenjodaro indicates that the religion of the Indus people consisted largely of domestic practices.\(^9\)

Some of the figures mentioned above indicate the prevalence of fertility cult. The gods represented through the male figurines are generally found seated either encircling their knees with their arms or are shown in Yogic Āsanas. A characteristic feature of these gods is that they all sport horned head-dresses. One seal depicts a three-faced deity with such a head-dress. He is seated in a Yogic posture on a "low Indian throne." To either side of this deity are four animals. There are an elephant and a tiger to his right side and a buffalo and a rhinoceros to his left. Two deer have been depicted beneath the throne as standing with their "heads regardant and horns turned towards the centre."\(^10\) This is the figure which Marshall has thought to be a prototype of Śiva as the lord of the creatures. A similar view has also been held by Piggott.\(^11\)

Evidence of animism can be detected in the worship of trees and animals. As can be gathered from the seals, \(^9\) loc. cit. 


tablets and sheds of potteries veneration was shown to pipal and the acacia trees. Arches of bent boughs of pipal enshrining the tree have been shown in a few seals. In one the deity stands below the arch. In one seal unicorn heads have come out from either side of a pips stem. The acacia in one seal has been represented enclosed in a platform.  

Among animals depicted in the seals, tablets and potteries and those found as toys, there are humped cattle, humped oxen, buffalo, bison, elephant, tigers, rhinoceros, bear, sambur, spotted deer, monkeys, snakes, doves, parrots, eagles and many other birds and wild animals. The people were also familiar with rams, cock, squirrels, geese, pigeons, owls, frogs, scorpions, tortoises and crocodiles. Some of these birds and animals are no longer found in present day Indus valley.


On the seals the bison, the tiger and the rhinoceros are invariably shown as eating from a trough. On the other hand, the elephant and the buffalo are not always shown as feeding from troughs. The oxen both humped and humpless which have evidently been domesticated are also not depicted as feeding from troughs. The fact that the oxen have been domesticated can be gathered from the clay and bronze models of these animals hitched to carts with solid wheels. The placing of troughs under the animals cannot be an indication of domestication of the buffalo and the elephant, because, this would also indicate domestication of the tiger and the rhinoceros. It is possible that the troughs are evidences of food-offerings made to these animals in order to propitiate them.

The seals also depict many "chimaeric" animals compounded from animals like the elephant, the tiger, the bull, the ram, fish etc. These chimeras consist of two headed, five headed and six headed animals, with the heads emerging from a common body.

Monsters have been depicted in therianthropic forms in which humans have been combined with ferocious

beasts. These forms have always been depicted with horns on their heads. The horns probably symbolised some kind of supernatural power of these creatures. In one seal a semi-human and semi-bovine creature is shown as attacking a tiger. According to Kosambi this is a local portrayal of Babylonian-Mesopotemian Gilgamesh.

From the large number of animal and fish bones found at Harappa it appears that the people used a good number of animals and a variety of fish as food. Among the animal bones, bones of pigs have also been found. On the other hand no portraiture or remains of the camel, the horse and the cat have been found among the ruins of Indus Valley.

It is interesting to note that the tiger and the rhinoceros which have not been mentioned in the Rgveda were known to the people of Indus Valley. On the other hand the camel and the horse mentioned in the Rgveda were not known to them. Again in the Rgveda the elephant has been called a Mṛgahastin which probably indicates the Rgvedic people's new acquaintance with this animal.