

# **World-Famous Unsolved Mysteries**



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**Published by:**

Mantesh



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Available at [www.vspublishers.com](http://www.vspublishers.com)

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ISBN 978-938-13843-2-9

**Edition: April 2011**

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Our publications are enjoying unquestioned popularity and have been appreciated in reviews of prestigious newspapers and magazines. Authenticity of text matter, nice production, beautiful presentation and the affordable price of books are some of the reasons for this popularity.

The objective of 'World-Famous Series' is to expand the mental horizon of an average reader by channelizing his knowledge and thoughts to international happenings.

This book under the series is a collection of mysteries—consisting of 40 such baffing mysteries which are still unsolved despite the pace of the modern discoveries. The book explores man's cherished myths such as the fabled and of Atlantis, an unending search for an Eldorado whose gold was beyond imagination and other fascinating wondrous megaliths like Stonehenge, Pyramids, etc. It also peeps into the most mysterious world of ghosts, vampires, zombies and monsters, including Bermuda Triangle, U.F.O., etc.

The language has been kept simple and lucid while the authentic photographs make the book a reader's delight.

— Publishers

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Have you ever come across a giant-size creature that looks as much like an animal as he looks like a human? Such a creature is known to have existed in the snowy areas. The creature is often spotted around ice-cold regions and is sure to take your breath away if you look at him. Chances are you might faint at the sight or run away from his dreadful persona. Yeti, as widely known, is one of the most famous crypto-zoological animals in the world. To know more about him, read further...

The Yeti or the monstrous Snowman as he is known in the West has also been called as the Bigfoot and Nessie. However to the Sherpas, the Yeti is not an imaginary creature but a real and alive creature. Since 1951, when the first presence of this animal came out of the Himalayas, several Western explorers have found convincing evidence that the Sherpas were correct. Expeditions into the Himalayas have uncovered mystifying stories of strange human-like creatures that live in the region.

In 1951, Eric Shipton, a world-famous mountaineer, came across a curious set of foot marks. One footprint was 13 inches long and the other was 8 inches wide. It didn't look like it was drawn by a man or an ape. Loren Coleman, who is an expert on cryptozoological animals, was of the opinion that the discovered footprint by Shipton by Shipton is "a very big piece of evidence because it showed toes, individual toes. It showed a squat, square footprint, which a lot of the other expeditions had found." Unfortunately, he adds, Shipton did not carry a relevant photographic equipment to capture a detailed image.

In 1957, a Texas oilman named Tom Slick and explorer Peter Byrne set off for the Arun Valley in north-eastern Nepal in Search of Yeti. Byrne believed that since the Sherpas knew the Yeti was a real animal, they called him "hairy man" that lived separate from them. Sherpas described the Yeti as being man-like ink form and around 5-foot-6, 5-foot-7, 5-foot-8 and totally covered with hair. The face would be bare of hair, and it walked fully erect. In another part of the valley, Tom Slick and his Sherpa guides discovered a set of tracks in mud, which were unique because they knew melting and shifting a now could alter tracks. They measured 10 inches long and 7 inches wide. According to anthropologist Dr. George Agogino, it was similar to the footprint discovered by Eric Shipton six years earlier.

In 1925, N.A. Tombazi, a photographer and member of the Royal Geographical Society, wrote that he saw such a creature at about 15,000 ft (4,600 m) near Zemu glacier. Tombazi later wrote that he observed the creature from about 200 to 300 yard (180 to 270m) for about a minute. "Unquestionably, the figure in outline was exactly like a human being, walking upright and stopping occasionally to pull at some dwarf bushes. It showed up dark against the snow, and as far as I could make out, wore no clothes."

That was in 1957 but surprisingly, the frequency of reports increased during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Westerners began making attempts to scale the mountains in the area and occasionally reported seeing either the giant-size creatures or the strange tracks.

In 2004, Henry Gee, editor of the prestigious journal nature mentioned that the Yeti as an example of a legend needs further research, stating, "The discovery that Homo survived until so very recently, in geological terms, makes it more likely that stories of other mythical, human-like creatures such as Yetis are founded on grains of truth... now, cryptozoology, the study of such fabulous creatures, can

come in from the cold.

In early December 2007, an American television host and his team reported that they came across a series of footprints in the Everest region of Nepal resembling descriptions of Yeti. Each of the footprints measured 33 cm (13 inches) in length with five toes that measured a total of 25 cm (9.8 in) across. Casts were made of the prints for further research. The footprints were examined by Jeffery Meldrum of Idaho State University who believed them to be too morphologically accurate to be called as fake or man made. Meldrum also stated that they were similar to a pair of Bigfoot footprints that were found in another area. Then, during the third season of mid finale visit to Bhutan, Gates' team found a hair sample on a tree that they took back to have analyzed. After it was tested, it was concluded that the hair belonged to an unknown primate.

On July 25, 2008, the BBC reported that hair sample collected in the remote Garo Hills area of eastern India by Dipu Marak had been analyzed at Oxford Brookes University in the UK by primatologist Anna Nekaris and Microscopy expert Jon Wells. These initial tests were uncertain, and an ape conservation expert told the BBC that there was similarity between the cuticle pattern of these hair strands and specimens collected by Edmund Hilary during Himalayan expeditions in the 1950s and donated to the Oxford University Museum and announced a DNA analysis. This analysis has since revealed that the hair came from the Himalayan Goral.

On October 20, 2008, a team of seven Japanese adventurers photographed footprints which could allegedly have been made by a Yeti. The team's leader, Yoshiteru Takahashi claims to have observed a Yeti on a 2003 expedition and is determined to capture the creature on film. A group of Chinese scientists and explorers propose to renew searches in Shennongjia province which was the sight of expeditions during the 1970's and 1980's.

However, the research continues and the mystery unfolds not completely but in bits at every expedition.



## Comte de Saint Germain

Do you know that there once lived a man, well-known in the social circle and was a charmer in every sense, who suddenly disappeared without leaving any trace... Some believe that he died but if he did, neither his body nor his grave could ever be found. Even if he disappeared then where had he gone? Was he a god-send angel, an eternal being? Is it possible for a human being to disappear for decades together and remain a mystery even in today's world of advancement...



St. Germain

The Count of St. Germain who is believed to have died on February 27, 1784 was a courtier, adventurer, inventor, amateur scientist, violinist, amateur composer and a mysterious gentleman. He also displayed some amazing skills with the practice of alchemy. He was known as 'Der Wundermann' (meaning 'The Wonderman'). He was a man whose origin was unknown and who disappeared suddenly without leaving a trace.

Since his death, various occult organizations have adopted him. Some consider him as a model figure and some even as a powerful deity. In recent years, several people have claimed to be the Count of St. Germain. (It must be considered here, that St. Germain was never regarded as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. The "st." Before his name, refers to his alleged home).

The mysterious figure that we today know as the comte de Saint-Germain was first witnessed in 1710 under the name of Marquis de Montferrat. He was best known as a recurring figure in the stories of several strands of occultism, especially those connected to Theosophy where he is also referred to as the Master Rakoczi or the Master R and acknowledged with the divine powers and longevity. Some sources write that his name is not familiar but it was invented by him as a French version of the Latin Sanctus Germanus meaning "Holy Herman" or "Holy Brother Herman". St. Germanus was a lay brother of the Benedictine order. Spotted in Venice by a musician named Rameau and Parisian socialite called Madam de Gergy, he had the appearance of a man between 40 and 50 years of age. It was an appearance he would hold all his life and he would officially die in 1784. However, many people believe that he never actually passed away. To them, this enigmatic character has become the 'Saint-Germain, the deathless'. Saint-Germain's provenance was never revealed, not even by those he had taken into his confidence.

For his entire life he looked like a middle-aged, strongly built man of average height. He was an

amazing storyteller with incredible stories and had some impressive talents. He could create fantastic jewels, had a complete understanding of music and art, and was able to provide people with potions which he claimed were the elixir of youth. He was never seen eating or drinking but he enjoyed the company of women and mixed with the aristocrats well.

He never seemed to age. His great period of celebrity was in Paris between 1750 and 1760. His main role was that of a spy for king Louis XV. However, his friendship with the king created many enemies within the French government and he was forced to flee to England. He re-surfaced in Russia under the name General Soltikov and played a major role in the 1762 revolution. At the start of Louis XVI's reign he reappeared in Paris and, through an old friend, the Countesse d'Adhemar, he issued a warning to Queen Marie Antoinette of the dangers that were building for the French monarchy. Saint-Germain tried to see the king personally, but the police were ordered to capture the Comte by the king's minister. Again, Charles of Hesse Cassel in the Duchy of Schleswig, Austria.

It was said that he revealed many of his secrets to the count but by 1784 Saint-Germain had got bored of his life and he died. However, there is no official record of his death and no tombstone bearing his name. He left all his papers, many of which concerned free masonry, to the count, but like Louis XV, Charles never revealed anything about Saint-Germain's real history. Indeed, even though he claimed to be sad that Saint-Germain had died, many commentators have suggested that he did not appear upset and there is a theory that he may have been privy to a staged death. Certainly, further reports of Saint-Germain have been recorded. In 1786, he met the Empress of Russia and in 1788, he was apparently the official French representative at the World Convention of Freemasons.

The Countess of d'Adhemar said she had met her old friend in 1789, 1875 and 1821, and that each time he looked no older than her memory of him. It is said that he continued to have an influence on secret societies and may even have been a guiding light of the Rosicrucians. So who was the strange character? Parisians who disliked him said he was the son of a Portuguese Jew named Aymar or an Alsatian Jew called Wolff. However, the general feeling at the time was that he was the natural son of Spain's Charles II's widow, Marie de Neubourg. A more recent study has suggested that he may actually have been one of the sons of Prince Francis Rákóczi II of Transylvania. The prince gave his children to the Emperor of Austria to bring up but one of them was said to have died at a young age. It is now considered that this child may have, in fact, been raised by a family in the little village of San Germano in Italy. This would account for how he assumed the name the Comte de Saint-Germain.

There is a huge uproar of myths, legends and speculations about St. Germain that began to be widespread in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They include beliefs that he is immortal, the Wandering Jew, an alchemist with the "Elixir of Life", a Rosicrucian, and that he prophesied the French Revolution. He is said to have met the forger Giuseppe Balsamo (alias Cagliostro) in London. However, some people, particularly those involved with the Theosophy movement, believe that Saint-Germain may have been one of the 'great masters', sent to show developed men the errors of their ways. They believe that he may be still wandering the Earth, waiting for the right time to reappear and counsel man through troubled waters. Until then, however, the mystical figure known as the Comte de Saint-Germain will remain a mystery.



## The cloth that had it all...

Can you ever think a simple piece of cloth can cause a stir that runs throughout generations, mystifying not only the people but the researchers as well as the scientists? A lot of theories have been conducted to arrive at one single conclusion regarding the image the cloth bears on it, from times immemorial. The mystery behind this simple piece of cloth which is known as the Shroud of Turin is still under wraps...



The Shroud of Turin

It was the photograph that got speculations. One hundred years ago this month, on May 28, 1898, an amateur photographer Secondo Pia applied the new science of photography to an inexplicable artefact — The shroud of Turin. It is a linen cloth bearing the image of a man who had apparently died of crucifixion. Most Catholics consider it to be the burial shroud of Jesus Christ. It is currently held in the Cathedral of St John, the Baptist in Turin, Italy. Despite many scientific investigations, no one has yet been able to explain how the image has been imprinted on the shroud and no one has managed to imitate it. Radiocarbon tests date it to the middle ages. However, some believe it is incorrupt and carbon dating can only date things which decay.

Prior to the middle ages, reports of the shroud exist as the image of Edessa, reliably reported since at least the fourth century. In addition, another cloth (the Sudarium) known even from biblical times (John 20:7) exists which is said to have covered Christ's head in the tomb. A 1999 study by Mark Guscin, a member of the multi-disciplinary investigation team of the Spanish Centre for Sindonology investigated the relationship between the two cloths. Based on history, forensic pathology, blood chemistry (the Sudarium also is reported to have type AB blood stains) and stain patterns. He concluded that the two cloths covered the same head at two distinct but close moments of time. Avinoam Danin (a researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) concurred with this analysis adding that the pollen grains in the Sudarium match those of the shroud.

However, Secondo Pia's photographs were stunning. The negative photographic plate revealed the image of a man in far greater clarity than anyone had ever seen on the shroud itself. Copies of Pia's negative image travelled around the world and generated tremendous interest in the cloth. What few were able to see earlier, now, that shroud could be seen by millions via photography. Scientists began studying the image.

Decades of research, especially intense during the 1970's and 1980's revealed many facts about the shroud and raised even more questions. It seems that every time a scientist said something certain about the shroud, another group of scientists would challenge the former's results. That's even true of the 1988 carbon test that dated the shroud's origins between 1290 and 1360.

In January, 2005, things took an about turn. An article appeared in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, *Thermochimica Acta*, which proved that the carbon 14 dating of the Shroud of Turin was fawed because the sample used was invalid. Moreover, this article, by Raymond N. Rogers, a fellow of the Los Alamos National Laboratory explained why the Shroud of Turin was much older. The Shroud of Turin was at least twice as old as the radiocarbon date.

Peer-reviewed scientific journals are important. It is the way scientists normally report scientific theories. Articles submitted to such journals are carefully reviewed for adherence to scientific methods and the absence of speculation and polemics. Facts are checked and formulas are examined. The review procedure sometimes takes months to complete, as it did for Rogers.

Ball, who was familiar with the evidence, had confirmed what all shroud researchers had been saying for years: the images were not painted. Moreover, a 2003 article in the peer-reviewed scientific journal, *Melanoidins* by Rogers and Anna Arnoldi, a chemistry professor at the University of Milan, demonstrated that the images were in fact a chemical caramel-like darkening of an otherwise clear starch and polysaccharide coating on some of the shroud's fibers. They suggested a natural phenomenon might be the cause. If this could be proven, the images could be explained in non-miraculous, scientific terms.

Ball also wrote: 'And of course 'authenticity' is not really a scientific issue at all here, even if there were compelling evidence that the shroud was made in first-century Palestine, that would not even come close to establishing that the cloth bears the imprint of Christ.

In the meantime, Preservation of the shroud has become an issue. It belongs to the pope now (the last king of Italy gave it to him in 1983). The shroud will remain in Turin, but it has been decided that the shroud will never be rolled up again. There is talk of a hermetically sealed, leaded crystal display case that would protect the shroud from further harm for future generations. Those generations, says Father Brinkmann, will develop new ways to determine the date of its creation and discover how the image was created. "These things have natural answers because the things have natural answers because the thing exists in nature," he insists.

Until then the shroud will continue to be an enigma, he says, based on the Passion and the mystical thing that happened to Christ in the Resurrection "and the tantalizing notion that this is a relic of the Resurrection Itself."



## The Dyatlov Pass Incident

The newspaper, dailies are always filled with accidents, murders, Kidnappings, etc. One such incident that created headlines in Russia was occurred at Dyatlov Pass. The weird things that were accounted and investigated at the sight were stranger than the reports. The mystery of the horrifying incident has so far been unable to collect a convincing reason that explains the cause of the murders.



The group of the Ski hikers

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1959, during the cold winter on Kholat Syakhl in Russia, nine intrepid ski hikers decided to do a ski hike (what they referred to as). On February 26<sup>th</sup> the sight of their bodies turned up. But it was the discovery of the campgrounds that added more fuel to the creepy fire. The ski hikers' tent was shredded. The skiers were scattered around the grounds wearing either very sparse clothing or just their underwear. Three of them were sighted with crushed ribs and fractured skulls but there were no visible defence marks or any other signs of struggle. In fact, one of the bodies was missing a tongue.



The Shredded tent of the Ski hikers

Some level of radiation could be traced on their bodies. The official statement on what happened was as vague as possible, saying it was caused by an “unknown compelling force”. The story became

an internet sensation over the years with many people blaming aliens, then, ghosts and then the yeti, or possibly all of them working in tandem.

There are six things that freak people out about this unnerving news: the woman without a tongue, a mysterious orange tan on the bodies, the torn tents, the half-naked hikers, the severely crushed hikers and some traces of radioactivity. What is more baffling is that the bodies weren't found until weeks later.



Some people have an explanation for the missing tongue and that is, a scavenging animal would mostly go for all soft tissue of an open mouth, especially if it smelled like the burrito (the hiker just ate). As far as the tan is concerned, it can be justified that they were laying out in the sun surrounded by white snow for days.

The trauma and the effect of the crushed tents can be regarded to an avalanche. Their state of undress can be explained by paradoxical undressing (a known behaviour of hypothermia victims when their brains start to freeze resulting in malfunction).



The radioactivity is still unsolved and no one had a clue as to what caused it. The researchers have been clueless about it. However, none of the details that have been mentioned above can be counted as straight facts as these are more of less build up on illusions and people normally perceive it as nothing more than a tragic hiking accident.



# The Lost Roanoke Colony

The Roanoke colony was first inhabited by a set of colonists who were sent by Walter Raleigh in order to see how people would respond if all their food supplies would be stopped. As he did so, he noticed something he hardly expected would turn up for him...



Roadmake Colony

The Roanoke Colony was either the first permanent settlement in America, or it was a farfetched illusion. Walter Raleigh sent the colonists there and then left them without supplies for three years, perhaps just to test how the things would unfold. Of all his assumptions, what he never thought was that the colony would vanish completely. When new settlers finally arrived, none of the original inhabitants remained at the settlement (except for the old skeleton of a random guy) and the mysterious word "Croatan" was engraved in the tree's bark.



Colonists Sent by Walter Raleigh

When the whole community of colonists disappear suddenly, some perceived it to be a case of UFO abduction? Perhaps the colonists were held in some kind of suspended animation and are still being anally probed till today.

The issue was deeply looked into and it was found that the second group of habitants didn't ever got the chance to investigate what happened to the original bunch of people because after few years passed away, a more mysterious phenomena occurred. It was noticed that some blue-eyed, pale-complexioned Indians were to be seen on the nearby Croatan Island. The sight of them gave birth to a lot of speculations but no one could arrive at one singlr convincing answer or justification for the presence of such beings.

Can you derive as to what made these mysterious children appear who looked like they might have been the descendents of white and Indian mixed race parents? It's almost as vague today as it was that time that a certain group of settlers realized their colony was not up to the mark and went to locate some natives settling nearby who seemed to know how to live off the land. After which, they also left their shitty colony forever to go and live with contentment on the Croatan Islan.

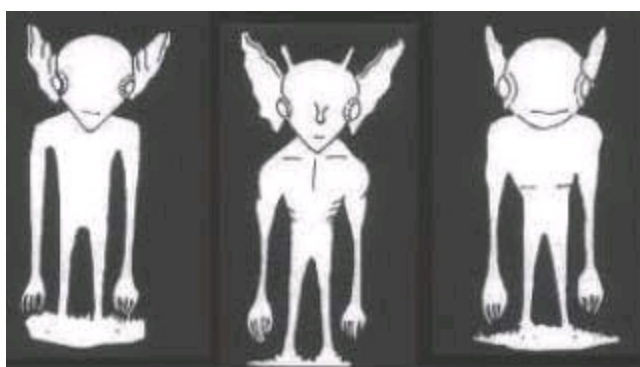


## The Hopkinsville Goblin Case

Can you ever compare an alien or a goblin with that of an animal like owl or vulture or an eagle? Is it practically possible to compare the two considering their physical appearance, body size and height? Following story is a case where a family came across such a supernatural experience but their thoughts were jeered and dismissed by everyone...Why?

In 1995, members of the Sutton family were out on their porch enjoying a relaxing visit and were on a drinking binge with their good friend Billy Ray Taylor. Billy Ray decided to go out and get a drink of water from the nearby well.

As he went there, he ran back to tell everyone, that he'd seen some bright lights in the sky and that everyone should come to look at the spectacular vision. According to one of the members of the Sutton clan as he stepped outside the house, Suttons and another one witnessed:



Rough Sketch of the aliens

“...a luminous, three-and-a-half-foot-tall being with an oversized head, big, floppy, pointed ears, glowing eyes, and hands with talons at their ends. The figure was either made of or simply dressed in silvery metal with its hands raised.”

After seeing these figures coming out of the woods, showing the universal sign of surrender, the Suttons could not think of anything else and tried to kill their asses.

As they shot at the defenceless creatures with their rifles, they claim to have heard clangs and ricochets as if the aliens were wearing some kind of metal armour. They said the aliens “fipped over and fed into the darkness when shot at.”



Owl

No one knows what exactly happened to them. But since the Sutton family was high in spirits, they might have seen another creature. As, Ufologist Renaud Leclet admitted, “It could be a misidentification of a pair of Great horned owls which are nocturnal, fly silently, have yellow tinted eyes and aggressively defend their nests.”

How far the above explanation is true, it is still unsure. So it’s either that or there may still be an inter-stellar invasion force on the way to retaliate.



## The Mad Gasser of Mattoon

Have you ever felt suffocated sitting in the comfy environ of your house? While sitting, have you felt nauseated or complained of some uncontrollable force that gripped your breathing system. Such was the feeling of a number of people living in Mattoon who were otherwise uncomfortable staying in their own home.



Report an gas maniac

In Mattoon, Illinois in the early 1930s, reports started rising when a man or a woman was deliberately spraying poisonous gasses into people's homes via the windows. In some cases, he/she build some crude barricades to keep the victims inside. The barricade thing may be inexplicable but people in the thirties were the ones to be trusted and apparently didn't go out to investigate when they heard the sound of sawing and hammering right outside their front doors.

Soon, the victims complained of nausea and sore throats and sometimes would catch a glimpse of something moving outside in the distance. The town was gripped with panic, terrified that the villain would attack again with his arsenal of quite harmless chemicals.

Finally an official inquiry was started to probe further into the matter and to solve it completely. They gathered eye witness reports and wound up with descriptions of the perpetrator as a tall, short, male, female, fat, thin, human, ghost, Nazi, dinosaur that sounded like the whole spectrum of life past and present on planet earth.

Two week after it all started that Thomas Wright, the commissioner of public health came and said: "There is no doubt that a gas maniac exists and has made a number of attacks. But many of the reported attacks are nothing more than hysteria. Fear of the gas man is entirely out of proportion to the menace of the relatively harmless gas he is spraying. The whole town is sick with hysteria."

It is believed that due to the inability of many officials to solve the case, they referred to it as case of gas maniac.

The town police chief came out and said there was actually no gasser as thought. People were freaking out because they heard a noise, checked the window, and smelled something funny. Not unusual seeing as how their town was filled with the factories and the town itself was constantly fooded in chemical fumes.



People wearing masks going out of their house

After the reassuring statements from Wright and the chief of police, the public decided maybe it was time to calm down. But it didn't last there. There were countless more reports that were seen but none of them ever confirmed.

One can say that there may have been an actual gasser at some point, one of the books pointed to a local medical student who could have carried out the few actual attacks that led to the sudden mass hysteria.



## The Star child Skull

Have you seen a deformed skull and that of a human? It is often seen that such a skull can be of a person who possessed some or the other mental deformity. Following story is that of the famous star child Skull that was found in 1930.



Deformed skull

An odd-shaped skull is believed to have been found in a mine tunnel in 1930, that of an alien or other magical creature. After carbon dating, the skull was found to be around nine hundred years old.

Paranormal researchers were quick to tell anyone who would listen that it was the skull of an alien, human hybrid or just alien or anything paranormal.

One of them had said, “Well...look at it. We only have three full-time archaeologists on the staff here at Cracked, but it’s pretty obvious that that is a human skull. Luckily, skull experts agree that it/is from a young child – 3 to 5 years old, with some type of physical deformity. The list of diseases and defects can cause this kind of abnormality is extensive. The list of napkin smeared with Cheetoh smudges and crazy.”

This one goes back to Ufologists’ rather bizarre belief that aliens would look exactly like us having the same sense organs with only minimal variations (they’re grey or have a weird bone in the middle of their face). Why would beings that evolved on different planets under totally different conditions look alike? If you believe the conspiracy theory that often accompanies the Star child Skull, you’d know it’s because aliens planted humans on earth thousands of years ago.

So either we’re just a giant colony of sea monkeys for extremely bored aliens or years ago, at least one kid had a weird-shaped head like that of the star child skull.



## Black Dahlia

This is a story, rather a murder mystery that remained unsolved in the history of murder and crime. A lot of investigations, researches were conducted but nothing ever materialised into concrete evidence. Read the detailed story of who Black Dahlia was and what went wrong with her that took everyone by surprise.



Black Dahlia

In 1947, the body of a twenty-two year old Elizabeth Short was found in two pieces in a parking lot in Los Angeles. According to the newspaper reports post the murder, Short received the nickname, ‘Black Dahlia’ at a Long Beach drugstore in the summer of 1946 as a play on the movie: The Blue Dahlia. However, Los Angeles County district attorney investigators’ reports state the nickname was invented by newspaper reporters covering the murder. In either case, Short was not generally known as the “Black Dahlia” during her lifetime.

The Black Dahlia is a story that has baffled police and crime investigators across countries for decades now. The story has inspired countless books and movies over the years. Everyone seems wants to know exactly what happened to Elizabeth Short who has created numerous theories as to the true killer’s identity.

The date, i.e. January 15, 1947 was by all accounts an ordinary day. Betty Bersinger left her daughter at home, heading to the shops when she saw a disturbing site. On the first glance, the figure lying in the woods appeared to be discarded mannequin but a second look gave her the impression that the figure was actually the body of a woman.

The police who arrived on the scene found an even more disturbing site. The woman wasn’t just dead but had been mutilated. Her killer had posed the woman graphically but only after first cutting her body in half. Police later estimated that the woman had been tied down with ropes and tortured for several days before death took a toll on her. The scene was devoid of blood indicating that the acts committed against her happened elsewhere.

By the time police removed its barricades from the scene, numerous damage had already occurred to the crime scene. Curiosity seekers carried away souvenirs and raced through the scene. A large amount of evidence was destroyed in the melee. The only thing police could do was take the fingerprint of the young woman in the hope of discovering the identity of the Black Dahlia. It didn’t

take long for police to discover that the woman's name was Elizabeth Short, though she would be better known as the Black Dahlia. Though they knew who she was, they were not sure of what lay ahead of them.

Elizabeth Short had come to Hollywood with the common dream of being an actress like the other girls had. Her fair complexion, a black mane and a curvy figure topped with the black short dress that she mostly dressed in, over-awed a number of men. Once there she changed her name to Beth and began spending her time hopping from club to club, trying to meet the right set of people to launch her acting career. Beth quickly became well known throughout the town. She, then, hooked up with a man by the name of Mark Hansen, who was well-known for the lavish parties he threw and the beautiful women he surrounded himself with. She often borrowed money from friends and was not cautious of where she slept. After seeing a movie called The Blue Dahlia, Beth began calling herself the black dahlia.

People around her noticed that Short seemed to be casual when it came to falling in love and was convinced that every man would rescue her from her dreary life. She was about to get married with a military man before he was sent overseas. Soon, another man proposed to her and that romance lasted long after he was shipped to the point where he gave her a pre-engagement ring. Unfortunately, though the man was killed in action, leaving her heart broken, she was back to staying alone again.

Some believe that losing her love is what set her off as following her lover's death she began spending more of her time on the streets, searching for the man who would take her away from her ordinary life. Though she seemed firty and eager to please, men quickly realized that the young woman was not as easy as they thought. That didn't stop the woman from dating a string of men, some of whom would become suspects in her eventual murder.

The hunt for the murderer of the Black Dahlia was far fetched with police following thousands of leads over the years but in vain. A local newspaper office received a letter from the supposed killer containing a number of her personal effects such as some photographs and her social security card. Police discovered that the person had covered everything with gasoline to remove any traces of fingerprints.

There have been a number of theories over the years as to who was the actual killer of Elizabeth Short or the Black Dahlia. One popular theory states that the murder actually committed a number of similar murders in Ohio where he was dubbed the Cleveland Torso murderer. Others have come forward with claims that friends, husbands, fathers, even spouses were the true killer of the Black Dahlia. Despite a long search, the true killer has never been found.

It is surprising that a ffty year old murder can still capture our attention today. Though many people still believe that the murder would be solved. If that is true, then we may never know actually did kill Elizabeth Short. Many rumours have spread about the Black Dahlia and the investigation (one of the largest in LA history) never found her killer.



## The Mystery of the Mary Celeste

She sailed alone across the ocean, her crew missing, never to be heard from again. What could have happened to the crew of the Mary Celeste? An obvious theory was that she had been abandoned suddenly. But what could have caused a experienced captain to abandon a seaworthy ship?



The Mary Celeste

On December 4, 1872, the monotony of sea life was broken up for the sailors on board by an event that they would never forget. A short time after checking his ship's position in the early afternoon, Captain Morehouse sighted another ship several miles ahead. What sails she carried were trimmed the wrong way for the prevailing northerly wind and she seemed to be in trouble. As the mysterious ship grew closer, the captain hailed her through a speaking trumpet but his warnings were ignored. When this couldn't work out, he sent his first mate and two seamen over in a boat to investigate. As they sailed closer, they saw her name, Mary Celeste. As they climbed aboard, they heard only the wind in the rigging and the sound of the ocean slapping against the hull. There was not even a single human that could be seen on board.

The Sailors, then, checked the hold for water. Although they found three and half feet off water, this was not a dangerous amount and could be easily expelled out by the pumps, which were in sound working condition.

As they explored the ship, the mystery intensified further. They looked everywhere but it seemed as if the men had just walked away and expected to be back in a few minutes. Their clothing, boots, money, razors, pipes and other personal possessions were still aboard. Except for the laundry that had been hung, everything was meticulously placed. The ship seemed to have a six-month supply of food and plenty of fresh water. In the captain's cabin, the berth had been slept and there was evidence that a woman and small child had been on board.

Now the sailors were relieved that there was no one on board, hence they returned to the Dei Gratia (name of their own ship). There wasn't any convincing reason but they presumed that the Mary Celeste had been abandoned. Her boat was gone, as were the ship's papers and navigational instruments. From her logbook, it seemed that she had been abandoned ten days earlier and had travelled some 500 to 750 miles on her own before being discovered. Then, Captain Morehouse and the first mate tried to sail the Mary Celeste into port and enter a salvage claim for the ship and her cargo. With only two seamen to assist him, the first mate successfully sailed the Mary Celeste into Gibraltar on the morning of December 13, arriving twelve hours after the Dei Gratia.

Although it was strange that a seaworthy ship with no apparent serious damage would be abandoned, everyone was certain that they must have been rescued by a passing ship and would eventually show up and explain everything. However, this never happened.

Obviously, this didn't stop investigators from devising various theories, each as vague as the previous ones. The chief investigator pointed the finger at the men of the *Dei Gratia*, accusing them of murdering the crew in order to claim the salvage money. This was hard to prove. Besides the fact that Captain Morehouse had a good reputation and the money to be gained was not that big, the two ships had been hundreds of Miles apart in late November.

Then he decided that maybe it was a mutiny and murder. For evidence, he pointed to some brownish red spots on the deck and rail apart from small cut in the rail that could have been made by an axe. He also felt that an old rusty sword that had been found in the captain's cabin might have had blood on it. The ship carried a cargo of alcohol and one barrel was damaged. He felt that this damaged barrel of alcohol might have led to the theoretical mutiny. Yet there was no sign of any fight or drunkenness by the crew. On the contrary, everything was neatly arranged. The sword was then tested and it proved that there were no signs of blood on it. The spots on the deck and rail weren't blood either.

Some felt that the ship might have been driven towards a rocky shore and the men, after losing hope of drawing away, abandoned ship. After this, the wind changed and the ship saved itself, while the lifeboat was driven onto the rocks.

A later investigator felt that the key was the 1,700 barrels of alcohol in the hold and the open cargo hatch. Perhaps the alcohol gave off gas, which someone smelled. Maybe there was even a small explosion and the captain and crew that the ship was about to blow. Abandoning the ship in panic, they must have been lost while the ship sailed off on its own. Hence, the story of the *Mary Celeste* remains one of the great mysteries of the sea.



## Can we see Auras?

All living and non-living things emit vibrations known as auras. These represent the physical and mental environment of the object and are influenced by their surrounding. But is it possible, for humans, to see these reflections? Read further to know more.



The ancient texts of faiths and beliefs depict the God and Goddesses with a halo around their head. This is what can be termed as their aura. It is believed that the auras are the electro-phonic vibrations of various frequencies and are related to our conscious activities like thoughts, emotions, etc. This aura around living beings keeps changing and around non-living things is stationary. It is believed that some people can see a person's aura while others have to develop it through practice or meditation. Auras actually help us find out about person. It can tell about the physical and mental being of one's soul. Perceiving the auras can help in healing the imbalance in a person. Auras are made up of various colours depicting varied moods, emotions, thoughts of person.

In order to see a person's aura, you have to concentrate well. For that you need to increase the sensitivity of your eyes and expand the range of perceived vibration from the visible region. These can be achieved by training exposure and also be better coordination between the left and right hemisphere of the brain.

The colours visible to eyes are surrounded by auras of a different colour like for Red, it is turquoise, for yellow, it is violet, etc. These colour combinations are not same as that on the colour wheel and are applicable on intermediate colours too. Like the reddish-green colour will give a pinkish-turquoise aura. A thorough study of these pairs reveals that contrary to the pairs on the colour wheel, these pairs are supported by the nature too. Auras can also be seen only when you are relaxed and the eyes are not under any strain. Some also say that while in deep thought, it is possible to see auras.

Different aura colours signify different things. Here is a list of various colours that appear in the aura and their associated meanings. These colours are segregated on the basis of clean and dirty colours.

### Clean colours

- Blue indicates relaxed and balanced life and mind. These are born survivors.
- Turquoise gives a dynamic, highly energized personality. These can be organizers, managers and are also capable of influencing others. These are born leader.
- Purple indicates spiritual thoughts and it is never a stable colour of the aura.
- Green indicates joy, freedom and non-attachment. It is associated with a spiritual teacher.
- Yellow symbolizes joy, freedom and non-attachment. It is associated with a spiritual teacher.
- Orange gives the feeling of power. It is associated with exercising power and a will to control others. These are strong spiritual leaders.
- Pink indicates spiritual love. The person has achieved balance between spiritual awareness and material existence. It is rarely seen on earth and is never a strong point in the aura.
- Red comprises materialistic thoughts. It is also associated with thoughts about the physical body.
- White is the high spiritual vibration that is considered divine. It often reflects a pure state and is associated with angelic qualities. It can be seen around pregnant ladies.

## **Dirty colours**

- Sulfur: Pain, anger, unease.
- Brown: Distraction, materialism, non-spiritualism.
- Grey: Depression and a dark personality.
- Black: It is the colour associated with disease and death.

It is difficult to penetrate deep into the mystery of how to see auras, along with the interpretation of the colours. Still, there are people who are blessed to be able to see auras and some practice about it.



## Famous Unsolved Codes and Ciphers

In our ancient history, there are innumerable codes and ciphers that lay mysterious till date but are in some way or the other important for the researchers and scholars to know more on the subject. Following is a compilation of some of the codes that have been enlisted by learned people across.

**Voynich Manuscript** – At least 400 years old, this is a 232-page illuminated manuscript entirely written in a secret script. It is filled with copious drawings of unidentified plants, herbal recipes of some sort, astrological diagrams, and many small human figures in strange plumbing-like contraptions. The script is unlike anything else in existence, but is written in a confident style, seemingly by someone who was very comfortable with it. In 2004 there were some compelling arguments which described a technique that would seemingly prove that the manuscript was a hoax, but to date, none of the described techniques have been able to replicate a single section of the Manuscript, so speculations continue. More information about the hoax possibility is [here](#) and more information about the Manuscript can be found at [voynich.Net](#) and [crystalinks.com](#).

**Dorabella Cipher** – In 1897, the well-known composer Edward Elgar (of “Pomp and Circumstance” fame) sent an encrypted message to a 23-year-old friend. To this day, it still has not been solved.

**Zodiac killer ciphers** – From 1966 to 1974, the Zodiac serial Killer sent more than 20 written communications to the police official. Most of these messages have been cracked, but there are still some that remain unsolved. The killer was never caught.

**Kryptos**—In 1990, a sculpture was installed at CIA Headquarters in Langley Virginia, ask a challenge to the employees at the employees at the Agency. Its thousands of characters contain encrypted messages, of which three have been solved, but there is still a fourth section at the bottom consisting of 97 or 98 characters which remains uncracked. The Sculpture was created and encoded by Washington DC sculptor Jim Sanborn, using encryption systems designed buy the Chairman of the CIA’s Cryptographic Center, Ed Scheidt.

**D’Agapeyeff**—Alexander d’Agapeyeff wrote an elementary book on cryptography in 1939, entitled “Codes and Ciphers.” In the first edition, he included a challenge cipher. Nobody’s solved it, and he embarrassedly admitted later that he no longer knew how he’s encrypted it. It was left out of the second and later editions. Some think it was botched, and many think it could still be solved despite that. It has lots of “phenomena” noted, but nothing close to crack.

**Linear A** – In 1900, a large number of clay tablets dating back to 1800 BC were discovered in Crete. The tablets appear to use two different types of scripts, which were named “Linear A” and “Linear B.” Linear B was finally deciphered in the 1950s. Linear A remains unsolved.

**The Phaistos Disk** – A circular clay tablet about six inches across, discovered in Crete in the early 1900s, and believed to date back to 1800 BC. With an “alphabet” of 45 different symbols, 241 signs are stamped into both sides in spiral patterns. There has been much speculation about its meaning, with wildly variant claimed solutions so far. It’s also been suggested that the disk might turn out to be a Rosetta Stone to help decipher linear A, since it was discovered near a fragment of a linear a tablet. [More information here.](#)

**Chaocipher** – in 1918, J.F. Byrne created a machine-based cryptographic system. In 1953, he used it to create a code challenge as part of his autobiography “Silent Years”. There are at least three

people who know how the system works: his son, and two editors of Cryptologia who were let in on the secret in 1990. There's a lot of known plaintext available, as well as some hints, but no break yet. The mechanism used to generate it fits in a cigar box.

Chinese "Gold Bar" ciphers – In 1933, seven gold bars were allegedly issued to a General Wang in Shanghai, China. These gold bars appear to represent metal certificates related to bank deposit with a U.S. Bank. The gold bars themselves have pictures, Chinese writing, some form of scriptwriting, and cryptograms in Latin letters.

Indus Script – The Indus Valley civilization flourished around 2600 to 1800 BC on the Indian sub-continent, leaving behind thousands of objects inscribed with a pictographic script that seems to have been composed of about 400 signs. A Great deal of work has been done on analyzing the messages that are available, but to this date the script still has not been deciphered.

Richard Feynman's Challenge Ciphers – In 1987, someone posted a message to an internet cryptology list, saying that Caltech Physics Professor Richard Feynman was given three samples of code by a fellow scientist at Los Alamos. Only one of the three was ever solved.

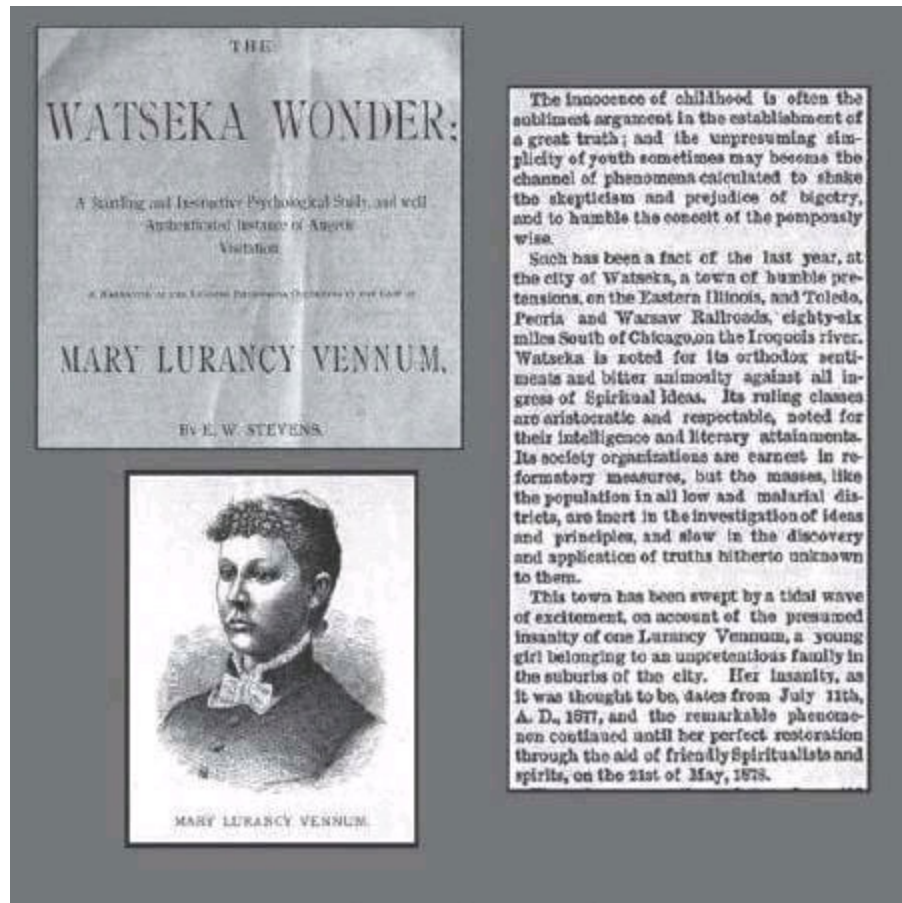
Rongorongo Script of Easter Island – In 1868, Europeans first reported seeing wooden tablet, on the incredibly remote Easter island in the south;Pacific. The tablets were covered with an unknown hieroglyphic script. Only 20 or so tablets are thought to be in existence, with little progress in determining what it is that they say.

There are several other ancient writing systems that are still under wraps, such as the 13,000 Etruscan inscriptions, Proto-Elamite, Meroitic and various other obscure glyphs. The researchers have started their studies and will hopefully crack the few too.



## The Double Life of Lurancy Vennum

Mary Lurancy Vennum was born in April 1864 in Milford, a small town in Watseka in eastern Illinois. She had an ordinary, remarkable childhood until she was 13. Then, in July 1877, she told her family: “There were people in my room last night, and they called ‘Rancy! Rancy!’ and I felt their breath on my face.”



A few days later Lurancy had a seizure, followed by another. She announced that she could see supernatural beings like angels, and people who were now dead but whom she had known. Her anxious family sought medical aid and were grateful when their friends Mr. And Mrs. Roff recommended Dr. E.W. Stevens of Janesville, Wisconsin.



The haunted house of Lurancy Vennum

On January 3, 1878, Mr. Roff brought Stevens to the Vennums' home. Lurancy had become more disturbed and seemed to be having a continual inner struggle. With great difficulty, Stevens calmed the girl down. She then told him that spirit called Mary Roff exclaimed: "That is my daughter Mary Roff. Why? She has been in heaven from last twelve years. Yes, let her come; we'll be glad to let her come."



Marry Roff

Mary Roff had died in July 1865 at the age of eighteen having suffered from fits throughout her life. It now seemed to Roff that his daughter had returned from the grave and taken over Lurancy's body. Indeed, Lurancy was giving every sign of being Mary Roff and was constantly pleading to be allowed to go home to her parents.

On February 11, "Mary Roff" moved to the Roff household. For three months, she behaved exactly as if she was the dead daughter of the Roffs' immediately recognizing friends, relatives, clothes, and belongings. She also remembered scores of events from her past, many of which had occurred up to twenty-five years before. When the Vennums visited, "Mary Roff" behaved as if Lurancy emerged.

On May 7, the personality of Lurancy again emerged. She was sitting down again and asked: "Where am I? I was never here before." She pleaded to be taken home. But five minutes later the "Mary Roff" personality took control once more. Between May 7 and May 21 this temporary displacing of "Mary" by 'Lurancy' occurred several times. Finally, "Mary" announced that it was time for Lurancy to return, and she said good-bye to her family and friends.



Don & Betty Naas  
Restored 2001

Thomas Jefferson Vennum (lower right) with daughters Florence (left) and Mary Lurnacy.  
Second man thought to be son, Henry. Abt 1901; thought to be at death of mother Lurinda.

Lurancy was welcomed back into her family and she settled happily. From time to time the “Mary” personality would emerge, but only briefly and Lurancy was able to lead a normal life. The days of full possession seemed to be over.



Thomas Jefferson Vennum and Lurinda (Dorothy Vennum),  
parents of Mary Lurancy Vennum, in Waupun Co. WI, abt 1895.

The case of the Watseka Wonder, as Lurancy Vennum affair became known, came to the attention of Dr. Richard Hodgson, a notoriously sceptical researcher into psychic phenomena. He studied it carefully in 1980 and concluded that there was no way that the strange case could be explained by any normal means. Either Mary Roff had returned from the dead to possess the body of Lurancy Vennum or Lurancy had developed a secondary personality that used psychic powers to gather details about Mary Roff’s past life. The case of the Watseka Wonder retains its mystery to the present day.



# The Taos Hum

The ‘Taos Hum’ is a low pitched sound heard across countries, especially in the US, UK, and the northern Europe. It is usually heard in calm environ and is often described as sounding like a distant diesel engine. Since it has not been detected by microphones or VLF antennae, its source and nature is still a mystery. Let’s read further to explore more about this sound.



Is this the sanrce of the 'hum'?

In 1997, Congress invited scientists from some of the most prestigious research institutes in the nation to look into a weird and low frequency noise heard by the residents of the small town of Taos, New Mexico. For years those who had heard the noise, often described them as ‘hum’ but do not know the cause of the hum. The investigation consisted of a team of dozen investigators from a number of scientific institutions. Joe Mullins of the University of New Mexico and Horace Poteet of Sandia National Laboratories wrote the team’s final report. Other New Mexico research organizations involved including Phillips Air Force Laboratory and the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Citizens in Britain and portions of the South-western U.S. have been complaining about a maddening hum that just won’t fade easily. Researchers have been unable to pinpoint its source. Not everyone can hear the low-pitched hum and those who do state that it seems artificial in nature.

In 1977, British newspaper received almost 800 letters from people complaining of loss of sleep, dizziness, breathlessness, headaches, anxiety, inability to read or study because of the constant irritating hum.

Most famous in the U.S. is the “Taos Hum”. There the annoyance was so acute for the “listeners” that they banded together in 1993 and petitioned Congress to investigate and help them find the source of the noise. No conclusive causes were discovered. One prevailing theory holds that the hum is created by a military communications system used to contact submarines.

Most people say the noise starts abruptly and never stops. It interferes with sleep and is more noticeable inside a house or car than outside. Some describe it as sounding like a diesel engine approaching in the distance.

The first goal of the investigative team was to interview such people and tried to determine the nature of the hum, its frequency and timing. Next the team planned to survey residents of Taos and the surrounding communities to determine how wide spread the hum was. Finally, the team isolated and

determine the cause of the hum. There was clear understanding by the investigators that something was happening here but just exactly what it was seemed to defy definition.

The initial investigation focused on ten such listeners and determined certain key facts surrounding the hum. It was persistent. It was heard by only a small number of people. The sound was extremely low on the frequency scale between 30 and 80Hz. There was variation in how different people perceived the sound. Some heard a sound like the low rumbling of a truck while others heard a steadier, pulsing and low sound. Interestingly, the investigators learned that the sound was not limited to the area around Taos, but it was heard at places all over the country and around the globe.

According to the August 23, 1993 “Taos Hum Investigation: Informal Report”, most people initially experienced the hum with an “abrupt beginning, as if some device were switched on. “Many of them believed there was a connection between the hum, the military installations in and around New Mexico, and the department of Defense of that the hum was somehow caused by the U.S. Navy’s ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) stations in Northern Michigan. After examining ten people, the team (now including James Kelly, a hearing research scientist with the University of New Mexico’s Health Sciences Center) began a broad survey of Taos locals. Their survey of 1,440 residents led the team to extrapolate that roughly 2% of the Taos population were hearers.

Later, Dr. Nick Begich and Patrick Flanagan (a Sedona-based inventor and scientist), have explored another possibility. Dr. Begich has found some interesting clues in Mullins’ own comments that might lead to another source for the hearers’ unique ability. Mullins has pointed out that, as a nation”, ...we’re slowly building up the background of electronic noise... We’re going to more and more cordless things with electromagnetic transmitters. Whether that’s the cause of the hum, we don’t know, but we can’t write it off.”

Begich theorizes that the cause of the hum may be found within this electromagnetic background set up. He believes that there is mechanism for the transduction of sound which might explain the hum. The key may be hidden in a technology invented by Dr. Flanagan. Neurophonic TM sound technologies were developed based on an understanding of sound transfer using different hearing pathway to the brain

Flanagan and Begich speculate that the Neurophone TM could be pulsed at the frequencies identified by those hearers interviewed by mullins and the investigative team. If the hum was generated by ambient electromagnetic fields then the Neurophone TM technology could be used to ease it. While Mullins investigated the ear canal and our human hearing apparatus, Flanagan and Begich believe that it is to be found through the pathways established by the Neurophone TM, which bypass the ear entirely.

It is very difficult to believe that their theory is correct as it is dependant upon testing of hearers. If Begich and Flanagan are correct, the Neurophonic TM technology can be used to alleviate the suffering of such hearers but the search for the source of the hum still continues.



## Atlantis: Is it a lost Paradise?

It is said that much before Summerian civilization, a great civilization existed in the Atlantic Ocean. It was a paradise, where civilization was at its zenith. But then a volcano erupted and the entire civilization was washed away.

The story of Atlantis was first told by the Greek philosopher Plato. But how far can one believe Plato? This is a question which many ask. After all where did Atlantis disappear? Why do we have no historical proof? Or was the story of Plato a mere fable?

Whether it is a Myth or reality these are the questions which have inspired many to explore further. Yet the truth is unknown, untold.

The story reads like a fairy-tale.

The time is 3,500 years ago. A long hazy summer day was coming to an end. The rays of the sun were shining on a tiny island. The island appeared inexplicably beautiful with sun rays highlighting the volcano which was 5000 ft high. The narrow streets were filled with people. Women were enjoying the pleasant evening. They were laughing and chatting.

The evening passed away easily. When night came, suddenly the pleasant and peaceful atmosphere changed into a turbulent, violent one. The sea changed its colour and beneath the earth came rattling voices. The islanders grew worried. They thought that volcano was about to erupt, the as if the violent forces held by God had awoken from a long slumber. The people of Atlantis pondered over this thought. They here, however, unaware that those were just signs of a great cataclysm. And that occurred. Their whole civilization was destroyed soon.



Atlas : The First King of Atlantis



Plato : Whose description of Atlantis are as vivid as ever.

First a humongous cloud of dark smoke engulfed the entire island. Then a blitzkrieg of pumic stones occurred. This was followed by ash which poured down heavily. A Big bang. The great volcano erupted forming a crater of 37 miles. Between this gap, the sea water accumulated the great civilization finished.

That's how the scientists and seismologists view the destruction of the island. According to them, the destructive forces must have been equivalent to 500 – 1000 atomic bombs. This also believe that the dark ash which fell down on the Aegean must have plunged the entire area into darkness. The deposits of it were found on the remains of the island and the ancient Greeks called it 'Kalliste'.

Scientists believe that Kalliste is the only particle which can solve the riddle that has made the

historians and geographers mute on this topic, which the great Greek philosopher, Plato had extensively described in his discoveries.

According to Plato, Atlantis was a paradise. It was a vast island with lush green plains and impressive mountain ranges. It had variety of animals, even elephants and fruit gardens. The island was rich with precious metals like alloy of copper and orichalc. The city was arranged in five zones and was built in perfect concentric circles. The ports were served with canals.

Plato also said that the city had a great palace and a temple, which were covered with silver and gold. The interior of the temple was made of ivory and the walls, pillars and floors were coated with orchil. A statue of the God was built with gold. This God, standing on a chariot with six winged horses had been described as the God of the Sea. The inhabitants used to worship this God.

Plato has not only described the positives of the society but he being a great judge of human nature describes, “When the divine portion began to fade away and became diluted with mortal admixture... (society) became full of avarice and unrighteous power.” Atlantis embarked on the career of war and conquests. They defeated most of the surrounding areas. The only power that stood against them brilliantly was of Athens. But the defeat was not enough to teach Atlantis a lesson. After the moral decay, even Gods grew against Atlantis and punished them with severe earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. And Plato describes, “Afterwards, there occurred violent earthquakes and foods and in a single day and night of misfortune... the island of Atlantis melted into the depths of sea.”

According to Plato, this happened twelve thousand years ago in the Straits of Gibraltar. And from this point onwards, starts the great controversy of Atlantis. Historians ask whether Plato's story can be trusted? If yes, then what were the circumstances in which he wrote it?

Plato's story travelled across generation to generation. The main source of Plato's story was his nephew Critias, who claimed that he heard the story from his grandfather – Dropides and the latter heard it from Solon, who was famous for his truthfulness and was considered to be one of the wisest law givers and the seven sages of Greece. Solon lived from 640 B.C. to 558 B.C. Plato wrote the story two centuries later. Solon himself claimed that the story was not original. He heard it from a priest in Egypt. Solon was so impressed with the story that he translated it into a poem in Greek.

From this account, it appears that the Egyptians knew about the Atlantis or perhaps, trade existed between them.

However, as far as Plato's narration is concerned it was more philosophical than historical. Plato's student, Aristotle believed that it was not more than a poetic fiction. Many scholars agree with Aristotle. But there are some scholars who believe in the truthfulness of the story.

Crantor (300 B.C.) who was the first commentator on Plato's work, believed that the account was true. Even Stoic, the philosopher and scholar Posidonius (135 – 50 B.C.) refused to believe it and called it a fragment of imagination.

Even after so many centuries, the controversy prevails is it truth or. It is so mysterious that many have taken advantage of the situation and have started weaving innumerable stories about black magic, clairvoyancy, etc.

Plato believed that Atlantis was in the Atlantic itself. This led to serious research and historians found out that once, there existed a continent in the middle of the ocean. According to these historians, the Azores, the Cape Verde Islands, the Canaries and Madeira were the mountain peaks of Atlantis.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century cartographers included Atlantis into the world map, purely out of imagination.

When America was discovered, it was thought that Atlantis had been hibernated. Gradually, the interest in this mysterious island gave birth to a new science department – Atlantology. The prominent member of Atlantology was the American politician and member of the US Congress, Ignatius Donnelly. He published a book, *Atlantis: The antediluvian World*. The book became a best seller.

Donnelly observed some comparisons between pre-Columbian civilizations and ancient Egyptian culture. He gave the examples of pyramids, mummy and the art of developing 365 day calendar. He emphasised that the two civilizations had a common ground – Atlantis. And after its destruction, both the civilizations grew up differently.

Donnelly took the help of archaeology, mythology, ethnology, geology and botany. He scientifically prepared the documents and proved that Atlantis existed. Many believed in Donnelly's theory.



Picture based on the Bible story showing Moses on this journey

However, twentieth century oceanographic studies have completely negated the work of Donnelly. According to the oceanographers, the 36 million sq. Miles Atlantic shows no evidence that cataclysm ever took place and that there ever existed a continent. Although 12,500 miles long mountain range runs from north to south in the Atlantic ocean, but it cannot be claimed as the remains of the Atlantis, as it rises up at the place where Atlantis should have subsided.

In 1912, the controversy was again fared up. An article appeared in the newspaper – New York American, titled 'How I found the lost Atlantis, the source of all civilizations' and the author was Dr. Paul Schliemann, grandson of the discoverer of Troy.

Dr. Paul claimed that he possessed some valuable documents and articles passed on by his grandfather. Dr. Paul showed the bronze vase which was unearthed at Troy and which bore the inscription : "This was the gift of Cronos, king of Atlantis." Dr. Paul tried earnestly to prove his evidence but nobody believed him.

So much has been written on Atlantis that recently a German archaeological journalist, C.W. Ceram counted the number of the volumes written on Atlantis. The number was astonishing. About 20,000 volumes have been written on the subject.

The unique write-up had been by the American prophet and clairvoyant, Edgar Cayce (1877-1945). Cayce claimed that number of his clients were reincarnated Atlanteans. His picture of Atlantis, which emerged during various trances was quite similar to Plato's vision, though he had never read Plato. According to Cayce, Atlanteans were advanced people who brought about their destruction and that Atlantis was between the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits o Gibralter. Perhaps, he was hinting towards America.

Again in 1968, Dr. Valentine discovered some walls which sparked the Atlantis controversy again. He saw a giant wall, submerged in the waters of North Bimini Island. He linked this wall with the Atlantis.

Earlier in 1967, at Greek archaeologist, Sypridon Marinatos made an excavation and discovered Santorini. He compared the cataclysm of 1883 which occurred at Java and Sumatra with the information of a similar cataclysm which occurred 3,500 years ago at Santorini. The Santorini cataclysm was earlier researched in 1965 by two American scientists Dragoslav Ninkovich and B.C. Heezen. Marinatos concluded that the sequence of events of both the volcanic explosions was identical. Moreover, the excavation at santorini resolved many archaeological doubts.

As the science of archaeology is tuning the scientific world historians and archaeologists think that eventually Atlantis mystery would be solved. Till then, various stories and legends continue to hound around the mysterious and vanished civilization. Rivers of ink continue to fow in constructing a new story or a new discovery about Atlantis.



## Do ghosts exist?

When it comes to talking about the evil spirits, we tend to avoid it. Even in today's technology driven world, the reality about ghosts remains a mystery. But human beings have always been inquisitive. Harry Prince spent 40 years in unravelling the mystery about ghosts. Spirits' photographer tried their best to substantiate the facts, but some progressed with little success.

In fact, all efforts have been unsuccessful. Often people who claim to have seen a ghost are labelled as fraud or impractical. Science has totally ignored the existence of ghosts. Yet, the phenomenon exists and is as true as our reflection in the mirror.

A young English lady had come to India with her husband. Early in the morning on March 19, 1917, she was dressing her little baby. Suddenly she felt the urge to look behind her. When she did, she was amazed to see her pilot brother standing there. She thought that he had been posted to India. She was so excited that she moved forward to greet him. But then suddenly she realized that in doing so her infant would fall from the bed. So she turned back towards her baby and assured the baby was safe. As she turned towards her brother, there was no one at that time. Her brother was nowhere to be seen. A few hours later, she learnt the shocking news. Her brother had been killed in an air battle.

In 1869, a woman in Italy saw the body of her mother. The woman was upset by the sight. She immediately penned down a letter to her mother. Soon she got the news that her dear mother had passed away sometime back and was buried on the same day when she (the daughter) had the vision.



Photographer took this photograph near his mother's grave.  
In the rear seat, ghost of mother is clearly visible.

These are not mere stories. And these two are not the only cases. There are innumerable such cases. But what do such stories convey? How should a contemporary mind comprehend these cases? Did the two ladies in the above stories saw ghosts? If yes, then what do we mean when we say the word 'ghost'? These and many other intriguing questions haunt people now-a-days.

Surprisingly, of all the sciences only psychology has given a justified expression. According to psychiatry, ghosts are the result of unfulfilled wishes, guilts and some of our far-fetched imaginations. Accordingly, it is not improbable when a lonely widow sees an image of her dead husband or loving daughter or a son sees an image of a dead parent.

But this explanation has some inhibitions, i.e. How can one rationalize ‘seeing’ of an unknown person.

Margaret Sheridan was a child when she had her first encounter with a ghost. She had gone to stay at Frampton estate with her mother and brother. They awaited the news of their father, who was a British Army Officer. He was serving at the German front in the World War I. In the evening, when Margaret was coming down to the drawing room, she met a little boy on the stairs. Recollecting the incident, Margaret later wrote, “He was wearing a white sailor suit with a round straw hat on back of his head. He looked at me as I looked at him. We passed each other without a word. Nanny had always taught me never to speak with strangers; I assumed, nevertheless, that he had come to play with me. As soon as I got into the drawing room, I announced with shrill anticipation, ‘I saw a natty sailor boy’. An ashen silence followed. I came to know much later that the Sailor boy was a visitor of ill-omen in the Sheridan family. In reality, he was an ancestor who had been drowned at sea as a midshipman. He appeared at Frompton before the death of the heir. The strange part was that the portrait of him was that of young man of sixteen or seventeen, yet what I saw, and saw clearly, was a child of about my own age.”



Harri Price shown with his ghost catching  
modern scientific instruments

The possible reason for Sheridan’s apparition is based on the theory about the recent controversial subject of telepathy. According to this theory, the reason for the child visualization was due to her mother or grandmother or perhaps both. The whole Sheridan family feared the dreaded superstition but tried their best to hide it. And in their effort to suppress the fear, they succeeded in passing on the myth to an impressionable child. She (Margaret) then inadvertently transformed the sailor into a child, a child of her own age. But the climax of the whole episode still remains a mystery, i.e. how did the heir die?



Sketch of Philip's ghost (above). People calling it on the table

In similar content, telepathy has explained another amazing incident which occurred in 1964. In an automobile plant in Detroit, a motor fitter was working on an assembly line. Suddenly a big piece of machinery which was accidentally set in motion started to fall on him. He was too shocked to say or do anything. Suddenly, as he recollected later on, a tall black man with a scarred face pushed him to safety. But when he turned around to express gratitude, the other man was nowhere to be seen. Moreover, he had never seen the mysterious man in the plant earlier. But some of the older workers had seen the rescuer. According to them, he was the worker who had been decapitated twenty years ago while working on the same section of the plant.

The followers of the telepathic theory believe that the older worker who had witnessed the misfortune of the earlier worker must have explained the problem of the earlier victim to the fitter who was removed out of danger. However, doubt remains about the fitter's conviction that he saw the man and was saved by somebody else. The fitter confidently recalled that his rescuer had "enormous strength and just pushed me out of the way as if weigh few ponds."

There are innumerable such stories. And the reason for such beliefs is still untraced. In fact, to explain the reason for such encounters is itself an arduous task. One explanation could be that it is the soul's final visit to distant loved one. It can also be a form of telepathy. Amidst such vagaries, the most scientific (If it could be called scientific!) explanation is that it is the unconscious mind's response to loneliness and worry marked by bizarre coincidence. Yet even this explanation has its limitations. Nevertheless, the role of mind in such encounter cannot be under-estimated.

One of the most rare strange exchange of mind and circumstances occurred in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States. For four years, a prosperous farmer and his family in Tennessee were tormented by wicked force which came to be known as the Bell Witch.

The traumatic experience began with a series of unrelated sights. One day the head of the family, John Bell, noticed a peculiar looking dog in his cornfield. He shot at it. But when he went to see the animal, he could not find it. A few days after this incident, John Bell was walking along with his two sons. They saw a unique bird. John Bell shot at it, but when the boys rushed to pick up the bird, they saw nothing. Later Bell's youngest daughter, Betsy Bell saw a young girl near the same tree. But when

she approached near that tree to talk to her, Betsy could not find her.

In addition to these vents, the family often experienced the rattling of windows, tapping at the door, continuous stepping on the floor and often the growling of two dogs.

These incidents were followed by the family members being attacked by some ghostly hands while sleeping. There were times when they were removed from their beds and children's hair was pulled in the dark. Betsy Bell was the most prized victim. At night, she was often heard shrieking and screaming.

The attacks on Betsy turned frequent. She often complained of being suffocated, suffered from fits, spoke of feeling pricks of pins and needles all over her body and once vomited a stream of sharp objects. The Bell's family members were terrified. Exorcists and spiritualists flocked to town. Questions were put to the unseen 'person', commonly referred to as witch. First the unseen force rolled out indistinct answers to questions. Then it started whistling and whispering, it refused to answer the direct questions and later on turned offensive. It became impossible to detect the purpose of the witch.

However, the witch was kind towards Betsy's mother but Betsy and her father, John Bell, were the favourite victims of the witch.

But soon, the witch turned its full attention on Betsy's father. His tongue swelled up so much that he neither ate nor talked. His face changed. He was tormented to an extent he had to quit working. He was put to bed and never got up again. He went into a coma. The doctor was called in and to his surprise, he noticed a vial of liquid among his other medicines. When asked, the witch replied, "I have produced the mixture and fed some to Bell during the night which fixed him." To test the substance, it was given to a cat. The cat tossed and turned for sometime before finally collapsing. John Bell also died the next morning. The witch still did not move away with this death. Betsy Bell, who was 16 years' old, was about to marry a young man when the witch imposed upon her not to marry that man. Finally she called off her wedding and married another man who died soon. Betsy never married again. She remained a widow till her death in 1890, at the age of 86. After this incident, the witch disappeared.

The sufferings of the Bell family became the focus of many psychologists. Everybody believed in the existence of the unforeseen phenomena, but nobody could analyse the reasons for it.

The post-Freudian world analysed the phenomena in detail. Nandor Fodor, a psychoanalyst, studied the case in detail. He said the symptoms of Betsy – swooning, fainting, dizzy spells, were those experienced by someone who is leaving the conscious self behind. In other words, someone entering a trance mode. While the symptoms of John Bell, i.e. inability to eat or speak and withdrawal from all normal activities were associated with the feeling of guilt. On the other hand, he explained the behaviour of the Bell Witch as malicious but at the same time, very kind towards Lucy Bell. As the behaviour of the witch was not uniform toward the family members, he analysed the psychological factors of Betsy Bell and John Bell extensively. Fodor came to the conclusion that Betsy Bell's behaviour was the result of her intense hatred for her father – John Bell, who might have ruined the father-daughter relationship by his sexual advances. As a result, Betsy alone was incapable of dealing with the situation and subsequently her personality split into two: she and the "girl in the green dress swinging from the oak tree". And it is this latter part of her self, which gathered courage to attack her father.

This was the psychological version of the Bell Witch. And it was impossible to agree or disagree with Fodor because of the remote possibility of ever proving it after a lapse of a century and a half.

that incident. In any case, the subject of ghosts is difficult to dissect. Hence, the theory of Fodor remains ambiguous till this day. At the most, we can only suppose that ghost are the familiar forms of our deepest wishes and fears, of our dreams and perhaps something beyond human comprehension.

In conclusion, one can say that ghosts should be accepted as one accepts fire, a somewhat mysterious phenomenon. For if one is explained about fire, what can one say? Perhaps, it is an event rather than a thing or a creature. Similarly, explains Robert Graves, (one who claimed that he saw the ghost of young Private Challenger) “Ghosts seem to be event rather than things or creatures.”



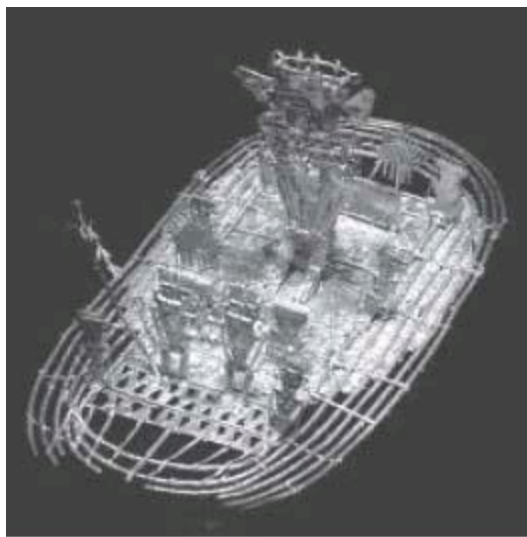
## Is Eldoradoa myth or a land?

Human beings have always been fond of possessing gold. This lure has led to many weird adventures. And the strangest of all the expeditions had been the search for Golden Land - Eldorado.

For centuries the legend of Eldorado, the fabulous land of gold led many to undertake the courageous feat. Some lost their fortune, some their reputation and some their lives. Still, men remained undaunted. Year after year, decades after decades, men went out in search of the Golden Land.

After all what were they seeking? A Golden City? A Golden Man? Or everything was a story that destroyed many adventured?

The year was 1969. Some farm workers were working in a cave near Bogota in South America. Suddenly their hands struck against a model of a raft. As soon as they saw it clearly, they shrieked with surprise – “Eldorado!” It meant the Golden Man. The Model displayed a king on a raft standing with his bodyguards. This solid gold model raft is similar to the one taken from Lake Siecha in the 19th century by the adventurers of Spain and Britain who were on their mission to discover the golden land. However, they couldn’t find the golden land. And soon people forgot all about it. But in 1969, the discovery of golden man once again forced the people to search for the land – the Golden Land whose existence till now was in doubt.



The gold model raft

The mania for gold started in 1530 with the Spanish adventurer Francisco Pizarro who set sail from Panama to procure the treasures of the Inca empire in Peru. In 1535, Sebastian de Belalcazar, veteran of the Inca conquest and founder of Quito, the capital of Ecuador, met an Indian who told him of a King of a tribe who sprinkled his body with gold dust before swimming in a sacred mountain lake. After hearing this story, Belalcazar coined a new name for this mysterious king—'Eldorado'. Meaning the Golden Man. It was this name which became known among the adventurers. The word Eldorado signified different things to different adventurers. To some, it meant the Golden Man but to some, it signified the Golden Land. Anyhow, Eldorado became a hypnotic legend and allured many

adventurers to lose their fortune, reputation, life itself in its vain pursuit.

The first man to think of Eldorado was Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada. He started on his journey in 1536 with 900 men from Santa Marta, situated on Colombia's northern coast.

Quesada's journey was full of peril. He and his men had to face various animals, fight diseases like fever, malaria and the attacks of hostile natives before they reached Chibchas. At Chibchas, Spaniards were told of some more tales about the Golden Man. Going by the tales, Quesada proceeded to Guatavita lake with an Indian guide. They reached the lake which was a deep, dark expanse of water set in the crater of an extinct volcano almost 9,000 ft. Above sea-level. Few huts were there but nowhere could Quesada and his leftover 200 men see the Golden Man or the Golden Land.

Quesada returned but only to sit quiet for sometime. In 1568, the old Quesada haunted by the lake and the possible treasures hidden beneath it and he restarted his journey. He left Bogota, the new city he discovered with a force of 2,800 men. They hunted in vain for three years before Quesada gave up the search.

Even after four decades of expeditions, men had failed to find any gold, leave aside discovering a Golden Man or a Golden Land. In return, expeditions had cost huge amounts. Nevertheless, the lure of discovering huge mass of gold made the men to pursue their search. But by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the interest shifted from Colombia to Guyana.

In 1584, Antonio de Berrio, Governor of a vast chunk of land between the Amazon and Orinoco river set off from Tunja in central Colombia to explore the hinterland of Guyana. He was convinced that the Golden Man was to be found at a lake surrounded by mountains. His first expedition was unsuccessful and so was his second expedition which lasted from 1585 to 1588.



King Eldorado being anointed before taking bath in the lake

In 1591, Berrio launched a third expedition and travelled down the Orinoco. He sailed to the island of Trinidad and established his base for future expedition to Eldorado. In Trinidad, he met Sir Walter Raleigh, who was searching for a new source of wealth for the queen, Elizabeth I. Berrio passed on the information to Raleigh who published his journal – The discovery of the Empire of Guyana. In his journal, he described extensively about the golden city, although with little truth in it.

Queen Elizabeth died in 1603. Raleigh was also convicted of charges for treason and sentenced to death. The sentence was, however, suspended for sometime. Raleigh led a second expedition. But that too was unsuccessful and when he returned he was beheaded in 1618.

His death did not deter other men from searching for the Golden Man. Right up to the end of the

18<sup>th</sup> century, search for the Parima Lake continued. This was the lake which Raleigh showed in his journal, 'Discovery of the empire of Guyana' that on its shores stood the imperial city of Manoa – the City of Gold. The explorers searched for the lake Parima. And like earlier quests, the explorers failed in their effort.

The last Spanish expedition in search of Eldorado was led by Diez de la Fuente. He set off into the caroni river region of southeast Venezuela. At this point he divided his expedition into three columns. The expedition was put under the command of Gonzalo Suarez Rondon. It was assumed, they nearly reached Lake Parima. But a sudden attack by Indians forced the Spaniards to turn back. The Spaniards finally had to give up the search and leave Guvana. The English, Dutch and French divided the colony among themselves.

People began to wonder whether Eldorado really existed. But myths die hard. And in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the quest for Eldorado passed to a new breed of adventurers. The two new adventurers were Humboldt (with scientific interest) and Bonpland (a botanist). They travelled extensively and finally concluded that the search for Eldorado was futile and that there was no such lake as Parima. However, Humboldt noted the spot where Sepulveda's expedition had made a breach in the Crater wall in the 1580's. So once again interest was drawn on Lake Guatavita. Humboldt had no interest in the treasure of the lakes but others had. So, in 1912, a British Company – 'Contractors Ltd.' Arrived in Colombia with 150,000 dollars worth of equipment to pump out the Lake Guatavita's water. The company partially succeeded in pumping out the water. The ground was covered with thick black mud and little bit of gold, which was not even enough to repay a fraction of the costs spent. More valuable than this search was the raft gold model found at Lake Siecha earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Thus, ended the search for Eldorado – the Golden Man – the Golden Land. The expeditions failed to discover the Golden Man or the Golden Land but in their pursuit they discovered unknown tribes metals like platinum, silver, bauxite and manganese. And above all, they discovered oil in the Lake Maracaibo basin of Venezuela. The Golden Man on the raft still stares into the eyes of the adventurers, as if questioning – "Are you ready to unfold my mystery – the mystery of Eldorado?"



## Where did the Olmecs disappear?

One of the Most intriguing unsolved mysteries of the world is the knowledge about Olmecs. The world doesn't know who Olmecs were and where did they disappear?

Archaeologists believe that Olmecs were the precursors of the Mayas. They were the great sculptors who created remarkable sculptures. Even the intensive research of the archaeologists has revealed little about them.

A century before nobody knew about Olmecs, the name was completely unheard of. But today Olmecs are regarded as the precursors of the American Civilization that came into full force with the Mayas.

Thanks to the intensive research by the archaeologists, the world knows quite a lot about the Mayas. But we hardly know anything about the Olmecs who influenced most of the Middle America from the 13<sup>th</sup> century till their disappearance many centuries later. If reasons for their downfall are unearthed, then perhaps, our knowledge about the American Civilization will be more accurate and precise.

The civilization of Olmecs started at a very odd, unyielding territory – Gulf of Mexico. This low lying, swampy ground was covered with jungles and was often flooded. Despite such geographical barriers, the Olmecs created the first accountable ceremonial centres of Middle America at this place. They not only created but lived harmoniously for many centuries.

Surprisingly, till now only four centres have been explored. These four sites are: Laguna de los Cerros, San Lorenzo, Tres Zapates and La Venta. These areas are surrounded by forests which are surrounded by rubber trees. These rubber trees are called Ollin by the natives. Perhaps from Ollin was derived the name Olmec.

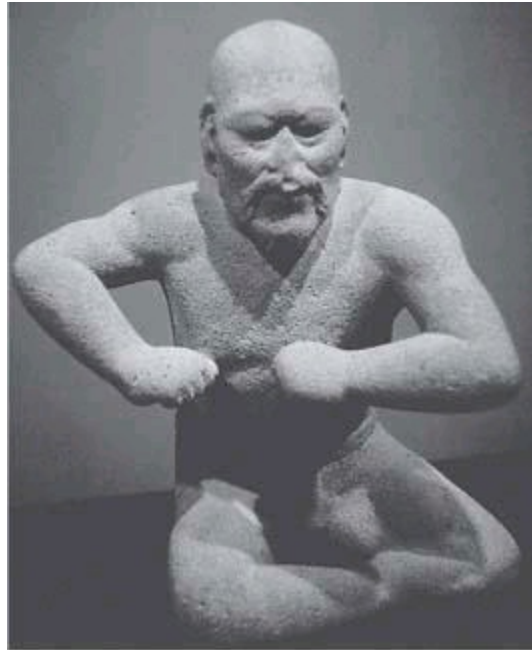


A mysterious sculpture of Olmec art

Archaeologists assume that La Venta must have been the largest religious centre at the height of the Olmec civilization between 800-500B.C. The architecture of this area foreshadows the town planning of the pre-Columbian Mexico. Olmecs built a small stepped pyramid with a quadrangle in front of it. The four corners were edged with basalt pillars. Near this pyramid are the two parallel mounds which form the boundary of the oldest sacred ball game court in the Americas. This complex appears like a model of a large man-made volcano. The scholars believe that it must have been constructed to be used as a burial ground.

Inside these complexes are the carved stone slabs with rich decorated altars and huge basalt heads. This, indeed, is the most striking art work of the Olmecs. The facial features of the heads are unique. The heads are fattened with thick heavy lips, drawn corners, short and broad nose and slit eyes. Such strange mixture of facial characteristics has even astonished anthropologists. They cannot establish their origin.

However, after seeing the remains, one cannot question the Olmecs' credentials as great sculptors. A green stone statue has been excavated in a Mexican village. This statue depicts a Virgin and a child. In fact, this statue is an eighth century B.C. Olmec carving and it shows a male figure carrying one of the Olmec Gods. Scholars assume that it must be the Rain God.



Sculpture of an Olmec wrestler

A similar sculpture has been found at the basalt pillar. In this sculpture, a monkey like face is looking up at the sky. It is still an enigma that who is this man and where is he looking? Is he a star worshipper or an astronomer? Is it a man or an animal? Some specialists have suggested that often Olmec Gods took the form of a half human, half jaguar figure. The markings on the face and limbs, together with the thick drooping lips and slit eyes seem to be the special features of the Olmec sculpture.

A group of statues have been discovered at La Venta. These statues made of jade and serpentine, are about 8 inches tall. They are facing a statue made of red stone. We still do not know about the central statue, whether he is a priest or a prisoner on the point of being executed. The exact meaning of these statues is still a mystery.

These are not the extremes of their remarkable art. A figure seated in an alcove in the front of basalt altar is made from a single block of stone. Another man with a crown is holding a rope which is around the wrist of figure shown on the altar. This figure is probably the prisoner who is being taken for sacrifice to the Olmec God. The alcove, scholars assume, may be depicting the open jaws of the Jaguar God.

The skill which Olmec artists brought to carving colossal works can also be seen in tiny figures like the well-known statue of the 'weeping child'. It is just 5 inches high and is made of jade, a favourite material of the Olmecs. The head is disproportionately large in respect to the body. Olmecs

often depicted a baby in their art, although sometimes with the features of a jaguar.

The stone slab called King's Stele, comes from the Olmec religious centre of La Venta. It is about a feet high and shows several figures in bas-relief. Perhaps, the figures surrounding this warrior king vassals are who have come to pay homage in token of submission.

Seemingly, Olmec artists were also fond of carving huge heads from a single block of basalt. This basalt weighed about 18 tons. Archaeologists have found 14 such heads. The largest one weighs 30 tons and is more than 10 ft. high. The blocks for this must have been carried on rafts by rivers from the quarries which were 60 miles away. This implies that there must have existed an efficient social organisation. Archaeologists believe that these heads must have been of leaders.

Much different from all these sculptures, is the sculpture of a 'wrestler'. It is made of porous stone and is considered to be one of the masterpieces of pre-Columbian sculpture. This sculpture is different as the figure is not shown with a fat nose, slit eyes and thick lips. This man has fine features, a beard and a moustache. Thus, Olmec sculptors were capable of making various figures. They were original and creative in their works.

Nonetheless, Olmecs were not only great sculptors. They were also great carvers of jade and towards the eclipse of their history, they developed interest in mathematics and in the calendar. A few scholars also believe that they originally developed the system of writing numbers which Mayas inherited.

Despite having such a remarkable civilization, the Olmecs collapsed. And they disappeared completely that we are not left with any clue of the cause of the downfall. Perhaps, had we known the reason of their downfall, our knowledge about American prehistory would have been more refined.



## Who was the queen of Sheba?

For many centuries, the queen of Sheba has baffled people. According to the Bible, Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon with rare gifts. But the question is how far can one believe the Bible? Did she really exist? And if she existed, then where was the land Sheba? Was she a queen, a noble woman, a witch or simply a seductress? Did she marry Solomon? Was Haile Selassie, the last emperor of Ethiopia, the direct descendant of a union between the Queen and the King Solomon?

Innumerable questions surround the personality of the Queen of Sheba. And the incident is open to controversy and research till now.

The name – Queen of Sheba, first appeared in the Bible in the tenth chapter of the First Book of Kings. Her story is narrated in the following way: “And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to probe him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones.”

“King Solomon answered Queen of Sheba till she was satisfied. At last she was pleased with his answers and presented him with her gifts of gold, species and precious stones. After that she returned to her own country with her servants.”

The same story stated above is repeated in the ninth chapter of the second Book of Chronicles, although with some changes despite the extensive accounts of Queen of Sheba. Both the Books in the Bible do not mention anything about Sheba’s country, her race, her name or about her appearance. While in the Gospel of St. Mathew, Jesus or about her appearance. While in the Gospel of St. Mathew, Jesus speaks of the queen of the south who, “came from far away part of the earth to test the wisdom of Solomon.” Thus, the Bible ceases to inform further about Sheba. And because her name has been mentioned in the Bible, people took it for granted that a character existed by the name of Queen of Sheba. But the pertinent questions could not be answered. For distance, who was she and from where did she come? Because such questions were not answered in the Bible, the name Queen of Sheba has remained mysterious for many centuries.

The question arises whether Bible can be taken as a base for historical truth? The first half of the First Book of Kings is the story of forty years of kings. And in this, the story of King Solomon is written. It is assumed that the story of King Solomon must have been written shortly after his death. So, there must be some historical truth in the text.

According to the Bible, Queen Sheba Visited Solomon when he was at the peak of his power. His garrison controlled all roads from the Euphrates to the Sinai Desert and from the Red sea to Palmyra. The visit of Queen of Sheba is mentioned carefully. When she arrived, Solomon had completed the great temple and the royal city of Jerusalem. Queen of Sheba saw his wisdom and power and was greatly impressed. She gave the King a hundred and twenty talents of gold and great store of spices and precious stones. As she gave these things to the King, historians often guess that she must have visited the place for commercial agreements. And it is here that the Book of Kings fails authenticity. It says nothing about the practical objective of her visit. It says that she merely exchanged gifts and departed.



King Solomon meeting the Queen of Sheba

As far as facts about King Solomon matters, the Bible gives enough evidence. According to the Bible, Solomon was the son of King David. He killed his eldest half-brother Adonijah. Solomon retained peace in his kingdom by raising a great army of 12,000 horsemen and 1,400 war chariots. He consolidated his rule over the tribes of his kingdom. He formed alliances with his neighbours and for cementing these alliances, he married. He also married the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Solomon took the help of the Phoenicians and traded extensively. He sent 10,000 men a month to work in the mountains of Lebanon. At home, he had 70,000 hauliers and 80,000 quarrymen, working on his great temple. Solomon accumulated so much gold that he used it to cover the walls of the great temple to the glory of Jehovah. He himself sat on the throne of ivory laid with gold. He also ate in gold utensils.

Queen of Sheba also heard of such wealth. She was intrigued by the wealth and splendour of King Solomon, and hence, she paid a visit to the King. The Bible, no doubt, has little to say about her but the tradition and folklore have much information to impart. The religious arts of the Christian Middle Ages and Renaissance often portray her. The sculptures of the Gothic Cathedrals of France, England, Germany and Italy often show her as a queen and at times as a sorceress.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, she played another role. In Gustave Flaubert's 'Temptation of Saint Anthony' (began in 1846 and completed in 1874), the queen is made to represent Lust. She attempts to woo the hermit Anthony in the desert near Thebes. First she tempts him with her wealth and when she fails in her attempts, she tempts him with her body. When Anthony is not tempted by her physical charms also, she reveals a deformed foot and goes away.

While in the Koran, the queen is called to the court of King Solomon after an exchange of letters between them. In the Jewish Book of Esther, she is supposed to have met the king in a room with a glass floor. She has hairy feet in the story. This hairy feet, in the later stories transforms into a hairy body—a mark of the demon. In addition to all these stories, some of the Jewish stories also identify the queen with *Lilith*, a demonic seductress. This concept is, perhaps, borrowed from Assyrian and Babylonian myths.

According to the Islamic myth, Solomon married Sheba. He first converted her into Muslim and then married her. She is called Bilkis in Islamic tradition. The Temple of the Moon in Yemen is often called the Haram Bilkis, meaning the palace of Bilkis, the Queen. The inference here is obviously to the Queen of Sheba.

The view about the Queen of Sheba had hardly undergone a change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She remains seductive. W.B. Yeats often portrayed her sexual and then secular nature. Her name is mentioned in

Rudyard Kipling's stories and in John Dos Passos' novel, 'Three Soldiers'. In 1934, French journalist, Andre Malraux claimed to have discovered her white city while flying over the desert of Southern Arabia. What he saw, nobody could comprehend.

Some ancient writings point the Arabian Kingdom bordering the Red Sea as her Kingdom. Legends and myths surround her name. In fact, the birth of her name can be traced to Genesis where it was not a place but a person, a descendant of Noah's son, Shem, the father of the Semites. Sheba had twelve brothers. The names of the brothers were adopted by people and places in Arabia. Till 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Hazarmoth, Sheba, Ma'in and Qataban were combined together. Out of these four, the place Sheba was the biggest. Frankincense and myrrh tree were grown on the mountain slopes of the country. Trade formed the basis of these trees. A Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus (1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.) described the riches of the capital city.

The natives of Sheba worshiped the Sun, the Moon and Venus. Their government led by priest kings was similar to the Sumerian system. And their writings and alphabet were similar to those of the Phoenicians.



Temple of the Moon : Had it to do something with the name of the queen of Sheba?

Sheba was protected from all sides by desert. In 25-24 B.C., Roman army under Aelius Gallus invaded Sheba but many soldiers died from heat and thirst. It was only four centuries later that the region could be attacked again.

The name of Sheba appears in Classical writings too. Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny-the Elder and Diodorus Siculus, all mention Sheba.

There are lots of tales about the Queen Sheba. But hardly any fact emerges about Sheba, the land. Many of the stories which surround her are far away from rationality thus, her mystery still attracts people to probe further and around the true story.

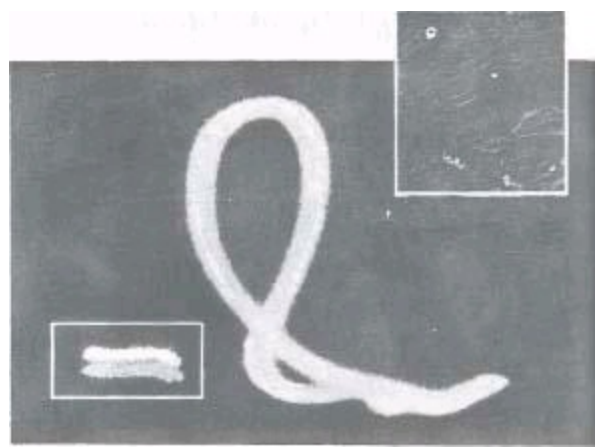


## UFO's, still unidentified...

Throughout the ages, man has always been eager to explain the mysterious occurrences in the sky. Unidentified Flying Objects (U.F.O.) pose a great mystery to the present scientists. Some American scientists have categorically negated the phenomenon. But some do agree. They explain U.F.O. as objects from other distant galaxy. Yet no unanimous decision has been reached. The mystery of U.F.O. continue to be elusive and intriguing.

Almost everyone have heard of it, if not seen it. Reports of sighting U.F.O. have come from 133 countries of the world. Out of the 70,000 reports, 95 percent have been dismissed as fake. They have been explained as weather balloons, lightning, rockets, birds and even insects. But the remaining five percent have not been explained till today. And these mysterious sightings have been called U.F.O.

In 1978, a unique case occurred in Melbourne. Pilot Frederick Valentich noticed something approaching towards him. He aired, 'The thing is orbiting on top of me. It's hovering and it's not an aircraft. It is " At this point, the transmission broke off. Nothing was heard from Valentich after that. It was thought that his plane must have crashed into the Tasmanian Sea. But no traces of the plane were found. On the other hand, there occurred more reports of mysterious objects in New Zealand.



A Computer study of U.F.O.

These bizarre incidents caused Melbourne television crew to mark the air route between Wellington and Christchurch. The TV cameraman shot some 20,000 frames of 16mm film. They documented the presence of some mysterious objects. So, when research was carried out by Dr. Bruce Maccabee, Optical physicist at U.S. Navy, the film revealed an intriguing mysterious flying object that oscillated at a constant frequency from a large bright, yellowish-white circular shape to a dim yellow and red triangular shape. Dr. Maccabee suggested that the object was emitting a powerful light, equivalent to 100,000 watts. He also calculated that each object must be between 60-100 ft. And that they might be travelling at the speed of 3000 miles per hour.

The history of sighting such objects in the sky is primitive. Some of the sightings were raised to the pedestal of Gods by ancient people. Even in the biblical book of Genesis, Jacob dreamt of an angel-lined ladder ascending to Heaven. Colombus also reported, "a light glimmering at a great distance."

Some scholars have suggested that U.F.O. was nothing but space ships from another galaxy which visited earth. The most active propagator of this theory is the Swiss author, Erich Von Daniken. He published a book in 1968, 'Chariots of the Gods'. In this book, he suggested that many of man's

ancient works like pyramids and the entire Summerian civilization must have been built up by the help of the superior beings from other planets.



Such rare cloud configurations are often mistaken for U.F.Os.

The actual modern research began somewhere in 1947. Kenneth Arnold, a businessman and a pilot, was flying his private plane when suddenly he noticed a disc like objects. The objects, he explained were flying in a chain and must be travelling at a speed of 1200 miles per hour.

The experience of Arnold was elaboratively stated in newspapers. Following his report, a series of such incidents were reported from elsewhere. Some claimed that they had seen seven foot beings wearing transparent suits, while some narrated that they saw three footed of ways. A few even claimed that American government had arrested three such mysterious men and that President Eisenhower had personally met them.

The sudden outburst of so many hypothesis forced U.S. Airforce to deal with the subject seriously. The name given to the team was Project Blue Book. The research with barely three to four people continued for 20 years. The consultant of the team was Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who was an astronomer with Ohio State University. He later became associate director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and Chairman of the astronomy department. For a few years, Hynek did not believe in the existence of U.F.O. but in 1960, he proposed that a proper research should be conducted in this field.

It was because of his efforts that today we have a centre for UFO Studies at Evanston, Illinois. The director of the institute is none other than Dr. Hynek. He has divided the sighting of U.F.O.s into three classes – nocturne lights, daylight discs and radar visuals.

Hynek further classified three different types of encounter – first, second and third kinds. The first encounter of the UFO is just visible. It does not have a direct physical trace on the environment but emotionally it does leave an impact on the observers. He cites the case of Dale Spaur of Ohio. In the morning of April 17, 1966, Spaur and another person stopped at the side of a road to investigate an abandoned car. Suddenly, they saw something rising above a nearby wood. They chased the object for more than 70 miles at the speed of 105 miles per hour. In this chase Spaur was helped by other policemen and radio too. The chase ended in Conway, Pennsylvania.

In 1970, an incident occurred in Saladare in Ethiopia. A red ball, making a sound like an aeroplane swept the area. It destroyed houses and knocked down the stone walls of a bridge and uprooted trees. Surprisingly, no incident of fire was reported. In 1972, several mysterious radioactive impressions

were discovered in Nams Fjora. Contrary to the reports of destruction caused by UFO, there are many cases in which patients have felt better and they found that their wounds were healed.

The third category of encounter with UFO is completely different. In this category, some of the creatures of the UFO are said to look like humans. Such encounters have usually occurred with clergymen, housewives, physicians and farmers. They claimed that they flew with UFO. But when asked to prove it, they merely said that they were kidnapped by Humanoids (as UFO beings have been nicknamed).

Most amusing are the reactions of people toward UFO. The reactions of the people depict their cultural pattern. French curiously approach towards UFO humanoids. US citizens react with fear and hostility and the priests of Papua Guinea wave at them.

The vital question is what are UFOs? Since scientists have failed to explain them in contemporary term – natural phenomena, fabrication or mental aberration. A poll done in the U.S. in 1978 indicated that most citizens perceive it to be some form of extra terrestrial intelligence. Some scientists believe that intelligent life might exist beyond earth. However, scientists reject that UFOs are real.

In 1978, French government appointed a four-member committee with a psychologist. They interviewed eleven people who have been part of the UFO incidents and reached at the conclusion that these people did see some objects which were beyond the comprehension of human understanding.

The United State had earlier appointed a committee under Dr. Edward U. Condon to speculate about extra-terrestria hypothesis. But Condon committee gave the judgement about UFO. Condon said that no such thing can be proved scientifically. Dr. Hynek did not believe this report, rather he blamed Condon for not researching on Extraterrestrial hypothesis (the cause for which Condon Committee was formed).

French researcher Jacques Vallee got interested in the idea. In his book, “Passport to Magonia”, Vallee dissected the parallels between close encounters and myths from practically every culture which talked about UFO. He came to the conclusion that – “In antiquity they were visualized as ‘gods’ in our time, as interplanetary travellers. It may be that it is inherent in our species, a sort of built-in defence mechanism that reveals itself in times of extreme social stress. And one of its manifestations is the phenomenon known as UFO.”

Majority of scientists believe that UFO is not a spaceship or any other planet’s peculiarity. They do not know what it is. Although Dr. Condon categorically stated that all such literature on UFO should be banned and people who claim to have seen UFO should be ostracized.



A saucer like craft built by the U.S.

Despite such strong recommendations, people continue to witness UFO films and fiction is written about them. If so much continues to happen around the syndrome of UFO, certainly Dr. Condon could not have been right. Whatever UFO maybe, whether visitors from outer space distant galaxy or natural manifestation of unknown forces of human mind – the mysterious phenomenon does continue to elude answers.



## The Iron that never rusts....

The famous Iron Pillar situated in Mehrauli (New Delhi) has never rusted although scientific studies reveal that the metal from which the column is made, is full of impurities. How is it possible? Many are still groping in the dark to the truth.

Mehrauli, few kilometres drive from New Delhi, is known not only for its vast landscape and malls but because of the Iron Pillar. It was built as a memorial to a king named Chandra.

The height of this massive pillar is 22ft. It has a diameter of about 4 ½ ft and is a solid shaft of wrought iron with an ornamental top. Its metallurgical skill haunts artistic genius for the workers and the era in which it was constructed. Scholars believe that it must have been constructed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

This Iron Pillar attracts attention not because of the ancient time in which it was constructed, but because of its undying. Despite years of exposure to wind and rain, it has not rusted or has worn out.

Many theories have been put forward regarding the pillar not having rusted. The most acceptable theory is that of Erich Von Daniken. In his book, “Chariots of God”, he has written that structures like Pyramids and Iron pillar could not have been constructed or built without the “Super Intelligent” forces.

However, this theory is something which is open to criticism. The startling fact is that how can the Iron Pillar stand erect strongly without any patch of rust, even though scientific tests have proved that the iron used is not hundred percent pure. And when science fails, myths and legends obviously take birth.



There is no sign of rust on this ancient iron pillar –  
A fact that has baffled all

It is true that the actual nature of the material used has not been known. But this also does not mean that science should give way to myths and suppositions. Maybe, some day scientists will be able to know the true nature of the metal from which the column is made of. And the curtain of mystery would be raised away from the dark, tall, round and slippery Iron Pillar.



## The Tutankhamen's Mummy

It is known that American archaeologists succeeded in locating the Tutankhamen's mummy. They also unearthed the large amount of wealth buried inside it. However, they could not solve two mysteries.

Inside the mummy, archaeologists discovered 150 amulets. They could not fathom its meaning. Secondly, no one knew why Tutankhamen's mummy had started decaying.

The historians and archaeologists are still experimenting and speculating the significance of 150 amulets and the reason for decay of Tutankhamen's mummy.

Egypt always inspires a traveller with awe and admiration. It is not only known for its historical civilization but also because of innumerable secrets buried beneath its monuments. Historians, archaeologists and scientists are still uncertain about the purpose of erecting pyramids and mummies.

The most bewildering mummy is that of Tutankhamen. Twelve centuries after the rule of Pharaoh Cheops, Tutankhamen became the ruler. His mummy is as mysterious as the construction of pyramids.

The first one to enter inside the mausoleum were Cartar and Karnakhan – two American archaeologists. They discovered four graves. On the first grave, artistic designs were made out of gold and on the other two graves, pictures of Gods and Goddesses were found. This was done, perhaps, to protect the dead. In the fourth the dead body of Tutankhamen was kept. His 3,500 years old mummy was found inside three coffins. The body was decorated with gold ornaments. An iron billow was kept below the head and a well decorated mask depicted the artistic maturity, the civilization had attained.



Head of the Tutankhamen's mummy



Gold Chair discovered  
from the grave

There were other precious articles too in the grave – green glass, Neelam and Cornelian necklace. The fingers of both the hands were decorated with rings. There were five rings in the right hand and eight rings in the left hand. On the waist, was a gold chain in which the sword was hanging. Even the sword was decorated with precious stones. Besides all this, the coffin was made of precious gems and stones. In fact, Tutankhamen's body was decorated with 143 valuable articles.

So far the discovery spoke of the artistic traditions of the civilization. But the intriguing mystery is

of the 150 amulets which were found in the mummy of Tutankhamen.

The 150 discovered amulets are the specimens of highly developed artistic traditions as well as they highlight the mysterious incomprehensible traditions of the Egyptians. The two well-known amulets are 'Eye of Horus' and 'Buckle of Isis' but the most important amulet is Scarab – a symbol of life and dedicated to 'Ra' – the Sun God. The Scarab was placed on the heart of the dead body before burying. It had a magical spell carved on its back, request to God for immortality. As Scarab was in the shape of dung beetle, gradually, the latter became associated with the Scarab's power and infertile women began using it frequently in the hope of getting a child. The 'ankh', a cross with a ringed head, appeared as frequently as the scarab and perhaps symbolised life and immortality.

Out of the 150 amulets discovered on the body of Tutankhamen, historians have been able to decode the meaning of only these three amulets. Horus and Isis also symbolised God. Horus was the God who weighed dead man's heart before pronouncing the final decision about him.

How strongly did the Egyptians believe in the power of their amulets and the reality of the life after death is evident from their amulets and the reality of the life after death is evident from their mummies. But as far as Tutankhamen's mummy is concerned, it has given rise to another mystery – why did Tutankhamen's mummy decay? There are so many other mummies, much older than Tutankhamen's which have not yet decayed. Then, why his? This is the question which many historians ask.

According to some scholars, the practice of rubbing oil on the dead body proved to be fatal. The scholars assume that with time as the oil penetrated inside the skin, it automatically ruined the skin. But they have 'not been able to prove it scientifically.

Meanwhile archaeologists have found immense wealth in this mummy. A part from the precious gems and stones, they have also found a well-decorated throne, decoration pieces, artistic wood articles and a sculpture of Tutankhamen's queen.

The throne carved with gold and diamonds attracted many archaeologists before the two Americans could enter inside. And unfortunately, all others (20 in number) died midway in mysterious circumstances. The reason for their death has not been known till this day. The two successful American archaeologists did not find anything dangerous in the tomb



Bust of Nefertiti the Queen of Egypt

If the mysterious cause for Tutankhamen's mummy getting spoiled is unravelled, perhaps, the world will also know the secret of mummies' construction. But till now archaeologists have been unable to decipher the hidden meaning.

## The Jungles of Angkor

Angkor Thom, the remarkable capital of the Khmer empire was the perfect combination of religious faith and economic necessity. The dense jungle of Angkor hid the secret of a civilization where the rice farmers, with the help of their God-kings controlled the hostile surroundings. The kings built magnificent buildings, temples and tanks.

Yet, it saw its doomsday. It declined, degenerated and the people disappeared into thin air. Even after so many years, historians have failed to know the place where they have disappeared.



In 1860, Henri Mouhot, a French naturalist had gone to Indo-China in search of rare species of birds and insects. He didn't find any such birds or insects but found monumental highways, artificial waterways and magnificently constructed towers. These, he realized, were not ordinary buildings but were the remnants of a splendid civilization. He recorded in his diary, "It is grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome."

Unfortunately, Mouhot fell sick. He could not pursue his quest and died of tropical fever. His reports were passed on to others and all the details arrived at one conclusion – that there occurred a brilliant civilization. The minute details were later on discovered by the French government who set up an Exploration Commission. By 1885, they had worked up a chronology of the rulers and developed the outlines of description of the civilization that had produced the magnificent city. They could document that Angkor had been constructed by south-east Asian people, called Khmers. They developed militarily and technologically for 500 years. But the question which they could not answer was that how did the civilization decline and people disappear in the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D.



Temple was built during 12th century

The civilization began with the trade and other contracts between India and South East Asia. It took spiritual inspiration from India. And after a few years, modern Kampuchea was formed. It was called Phnom or Funan which meant 'mountain'.

The founder of the Funan, according to the Khmer tales was Kaundinya, a Brahman. He came to the shore where a young woman paddled out in her canoe to greet him. She was Queen Willow Leaf, ruler of the country and daughter of a serpent deity. She was against Kaundinya, so she seized his

ship. But Kaundinya proved to be more powerful. He shot a magic arrow into her craft. The queen realized that she was no match for him. So, she made peace with him and shortly afterwards the two married. And from their union were born the ancestors of Funan rulers and generations of Khmer rulers. The kingdom progressed for five centuries and then around 550 A.D., the Funan Kingdom was overthrown by the Kambjas.

The first great Kambujan leader was Jayavarman II. With him, started the brilliant Khmer empire and a royal dynasty. This dynasty flourished for more than 600 years. Jayavarman, meaning 'protector of victory' was a military genius. He ruled for 48 years and unified the state and kept the state militarily strong. He set up a new capital on the mountain of Kulen. There he brought an Indian skilled in magic science to exercise all foreign demons and to establish the protection of his empire by Lord Siva. And to make his position all powerful, he declared himself as the God-king, the incarnation of Siva. The concept provided the mantle of legitimacy for 30 Khmer kings. It also became the inspiring force behind the feverish buildings which created the urban complex on and above the plain of Angkor.



The remains of the splendid architecture

Jayavarman created a hereditary office of high priest to assist in the task of administration. With him, Jayavarman established a religious hierarchy to supervise every aspect of national life.

Jayavarman was followed by his nephew, Indravarman I. He ruled for 11 years and strengthened his empire by building barricades and raised water storage lakes. With the facility of storage water, the condition of peasants improved. They could irrigate their land throughout the year.

Indravarman's son and successor, Yasovarman I, also did much for the good of the kingdom. He constructed a funerary temple in the middle of a lake. He also created a stone pyramid and a barrack to the east of the royal city, nearly 5 sq. Miles in size.

Thus the construction work continued from generation to generation and the empire continued to prosper. The kingdom touched the peak of success in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Yasovarman was followed by Suryavarman who kept the torch of progress burning. But after his death, the Khmer empire entered a period of decline, primarily, because there was no direct heir. The struggle for throne began. Jayavarman VII, (brother of the dead king) who was in exile came and took the reigns

of the state into his hands. he gave new light ot the kingdom – architecturally and politically. He built temples in memory of his parents – To Prohm and Preadh Khan. He also polished and completed the earlier unfinished temples. He dedicated a temple to himself and the Buddha, called the Bayon. The Bayon represented changes in architectural construction. Compared with earlier temples, this temple is cluttered and its 51 towers make the construction difficult to understand. More unique and unusual is the sculpture with huge smiling faces which is representation of Jayavarman VII in the aspects of Buddha.

He died in 1219 and from the thirteenth century onwards, no Khmer king undertook the construction like that of Jayavarman VII. In addition to the laid-back kings, many social and economic factors contributed in weakening the empire.

The Chinese commercial envoy and traveller, Chou Ta elaborately described the classes and division of people in Khmer. He noted the there existed slavery and not everything was green and pleasant. The gulf between the rich and the poor had widened up. And this, perhaps, finally paved the way for the disintegration of grand empire.

With the weakening process already started in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, darkness finally engulfed the whole civilization in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The city fell to the Siamese. The end came in seven months and Siamese returned with much loot and plunder. Siamese returned next year. But by that time, the entire city was deserted. There was no trace that civilization ever fourished in the jungles of Angkor. Where did the people disappear? Why didn't the people with such a splendid civilization and culture fight back? These are some of questions which are still inviting attention of the archaeologists and historians and asking them to widen the research!



## PSI—The extra sensitive wing of Science

PSI can be described as a science of knowing something or about somebody without having been told or met or seen. It is a science of extra-sensory powers. Animals are supposed to have been endowed with it but some human beings also have it. And modern science's attempts to prove the existence of extras-sensory powers have inevitably given birth to extensive research resulting in a few facts but in the process giving rise to much more controversy around it.

How is it possible for two people to have direct mental communication. i.e. Telepathy? What is clairvoyance or second sight, the specific perception of an event or object? And how can some people perceive the future without deducing their occurrence from existing knowledge? These were some of the phenomena which were baffling psychologist. To these investigations, Professor J.B. Rhine added yet another query – the psychokinesis, which was the use of the mind's powers to effect change in external matter. These four areas are called PSI – a word derived from the 23rd letter of Greek alphabet. This is referred in scientific terms as an unknown quantity.

Rhine wanted to prove these phenomena scientifically. But he also realized that to prove them, it would require accumulating of anecdotes about PSI experiences. But even anecdotes and stories were not devoid of shortcomings. Rhine himself remarked, “there is no way of coming to grip with them. They happen and are gone, leaving nothing but memory, none of the hard reality of a meteorite or a fossil.” So Rhine designed a series of sound, replicable experiments, for example, the card game. There were 25 cards and on each card laws imprinted a star or a circle or a rectangle, a cross or a wavy parallel line. During the play, the dealer was told to carefully shuffle the cards and then place the deck behind a small screen. Through this game Rhine was looking for evidence of a strange and remarkable capability which he called extra-sensory perception.

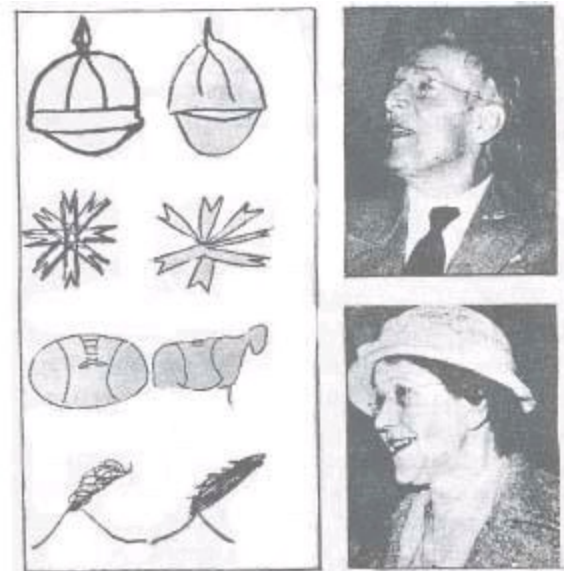


J.B. Rhine (right) working with his card game

However, as soon as Rhine began to probe the unexplained world of PSI, the crucial factors began to confront him. These crucial factors were – are conventional methods of scientific investigation appropriate in examining paranormal subject matter? Is it not possible that the act of scientific investigation may deform the subject that is being studied?

Rhine, however, was not the first scientist who edeavoured to study PSI phenomenon scientifically. Before him, Charles Richet in Paris, introduced statistical analysis, John Coover at Stanford

University and George Estabrooks and William McDougall at Harvard University examined that phenomenon. As early as in 1920's, the author Upton Sinclair experimented with his wife, Mary. He attempted to show "Mental radio" – Telepathy. The book Sinclairs published described their research including 100 simple drawings that Sinclair had tried to transmit telepathically to his wife. Surprisingly, she had made parallel sketches and comments in response. The preface of the book was written by Albert Einstein. He commented that, "Sinclair's good faith and dependability should not be doubted."



Upton Sinclair and his wife. He experimented on her.

However, Rhine was the only researcher who brought devotion to psychic research. To test telepathy and other psychic abilities, he recruited subjects at random. He focused his research through Zenner Cards (named after Karl Zener, a fellow member of the Duke Psychology Faculty). In this experiment, the sender concentrated on the symbol of the card he had turned up and the subjects, maybe in the same building or somewhere else, record his impression of the symbol. While for the clairvoyance experiments, the subjects tried to perceive either the card being turned over or the order of the cards in shuffled deck.

After two years of research, Rhine found eight subjects who scored above the chance elements on the tests for telepathy and clairvoyance. These eight subjects, Rhine said, "underwent a total of 85,724 trials and achieved 24,364 hits. This was 7,219 more hits than might be expected by chance." Out of these eight subjects, Hubert Pearce, divinity student at the Duke Scholl of Religion was most successful. In 1933-34, Pearce took part in long distance test conducted by J. Gaither Pratt. Out of the 1850 trials, Pearce achieved stupendous success which made even the critics concede that "something besides coincidence seemed to be operating."

In 1934, Rhine published his results in the book entitled 'Extra Sensory Perception'. This "little monograph", as Rhine called it, created widespread interest and controversy. Critics were against it because his result were against the laws of physics. One explanation which critics unanimously voiced was that the Zener cards were shuffled by hand rather than in a scientific way. Another point of disagreement was that subjects might have gained knowledge of the card's markings through some ordinary sensory means. A British psychologist, C.E.M. Hansel, was one of the most active PSI critics. In his book, 'ESP: A Scientific Evaluation', Hansel insisted that cheating could not be ruled out. Surprisingly, when Rhine himself attempted the test so as to shut the critics, he achieved mixed

results. Rhine and some other parapsychologists interpreted the failure to replicate due to the elusive, unpredictable prey to the mood of both subject and experiment. To continue the experiment without any interference, Duke established a parapsychology laboratory with Rhine as its director.

Untouched by the criticism, Rhine once again plunged into the PSI research with new researchers. He continued his work with Zener cards. The procedure of Zener cards was tightened up with automatic card-shuffling machine.

Rhine died in 1980 at the age of 84. The half a century preceding his death was full impressive results – millions of trials with ESP cards, random number generators and dozens of other devices had recorded significant scores in telepathy clairvoyance, precognition or psychokinesis. Despite the progress, PSI research remained outside the mainstream of science. In fact, even now scientific journals exclude PSI articles from publications.

The remarkable feat of the PSI researchers is that despite the odds, they continued their research constantly. And they claimed that telepathic senses, clairvoyance and precognition not only existed among human beings but in animals too. Animals can sense dangers before-hand by the sudden change in weather and they could even locate their master at distant places by telepathic abilities.

Despite several successes and failures experienced by the PSI researchers, till now no researcher has come up with a theoretical framework in which all the fragments of PSI research can be appropriately included.

Nonetheless, we can conclude with the remark made by the Nobel Prize winning physiologist Charles Richet about precognition, “I will not say that it is possible. I will only say that it is true”. Some parapsychologists believe that they have successfully proved the existence of PST. But unless such researchers can experimentally demonstrate PSI as one critic opined, “they must develop a plausible theory of PSI operations,” it is difficult to believe them. And till then it is, “a no man’s land between the lunatic fringe on one hand and the academically unorthodox one on the other.”



## The Incomplete Mayas

Archaeology in America is in infancy. Still, we have discovered a civilization par excellence. This civilization was called the Mayas. they were far ahead of the Egyptians and Greeks. They had the knowledge of Zero and built impressive architecture.

The world is still waiting for documents to prove that how did these people build up such a magnificent civilization at a place, where even today, life is an unending struggle for survival? How was it that a fourishing civilization was created by the people of Stone age? And who were these people whose classical age collapsed before even Columbus could discover America?

Some scholars were exploring the forests of Middle America. Suddenly they discovered some mounds covering the buildings. These buildings were apparently ruined by the forest. It was also clear that these buildings were no ordinary structures. They were remnants of a great civilization. The scholars got interested and started excavating. They discovered the remains of al fourishing civilization—the Mayas, as they named it. Thus, it was as late as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the secrets of a new civilization were revealed.

For sometime, the scholars believed that Mayas must have been the descendants of ancient Egyptians or one of the lost tribes of Israel. Maybe, the Mayan culture might have been founded by the Greek colonists or Scythians or even by the Chinese and South East Asia's immigrants. But they could not come to a unanimous decision. Nonetheless, the fact remains that even today Mayan culture is one of the most fascinating ancient civilizations. Its vast buildings with modern lines, surrounded by impenetrable forest, force the scholars to discern their antecedents.



This Mayan statue depicts a player playing a kind of ball game

The civilization of the Mayas was situated in the heart of Middle America. It covered an area equivalent to France and spread across Guatemala, Belize and some parts of Mexico, Honduras and EI Salvador. The civilization started somewhere in 2500 B.C. and continued its progress till 34 centuries. Throughout their period of progress, they curtailed and struggled against the invading forest. They used to burn off the plant cover and made the land fertile for cultivation. Their staple food was maize but with it, they also grew various small plants which ultimately prevented the land

from becoming infertile. however, this process was quite strenuous for the land remained fertile for a short time and then they had to repeat the process elsewhere. Despite such time-consuming practice, they found time to build remarkable buildings with good mortar, sandstone and volcanic rock.



Chichen Itza

Like the Egyptians, even the Mayas believed in eternity. And like the pyramids of Egypt, even Mayas built temples in the shape of pyramids. The head of these were priests who had such accurate knowledge of mathematical and astronomical tables which even Europeans did not know. The Mayas knew the art of writing, which perhaps, was one of the reasons for their being so successful. Some of Mayas texts are found on stone tablets, wooden panels, on pottery and in books made of vegetable fibre paper. These books have been written in 800 hieroglyphic signs. Fortunately quarter of their text had been deciphered. Their language is quite similar to ancient Egyptians and modern Japanese. It was written in a complex hieroglyphic script and composed of ideograms which represented words or ideas and partly had phonetic symbols for sound. However, not all of their language is known. Scholars are still busy in trying to unravel the mystery of the language.

In mathematics also, they were better than other civilizations. They were well acquainted with the idea of zero. Because of their acquaintance with the zero, the Mayas were able to express any number by the use of three symbols: the dot, the bar or dash, and a shell shape for zero. While the Greeks, despite being innovative, wrote numbers by using letter of the alphabet and the Romans used graphic system which meant writing four figures, e.g. if they had to write 8; they write VIII. As the Mayas were primarily agriculturists, the knowledge of seasons and time was necessary. To know the accurate season and time, Mayas invented calendar. They divided their year into 18 months of 20 days. To this, they added five extra days and called it *haab*. These 360 days were called *Tun* by them. To date important events, they based the system on three different time scales – the solar year, the religious year and the venusian year. The Mayas calculated that 405 full moons occurred in a period of 11,960 days. Today's astronomers make it 11,959.888 days. So, the Mayas were wrong in their calculation by one day every 292 years or to be precise less than five minutes, a year. They fixed the venusian year, i.e. the time which the planet takes to make a complete circuit of the sun at 584 days. The current calculation is 583.92 days. Thus, they increased by six minutes, a month. This is their achievement for they calculated all this without any elementary system of hour glass or a water clock or a telescopic instrument.

The archaeologists have divided the Mayan civilization into three periods. The periods from 2500 B.C. to 300 B.C. is known as the formative period. This was followed by the so called pre-classical period. And next came the classical age which extended for 600 years and was in full bloom in Peten.

A great renaissance took place in Yucatan and it took the thread of classical period from Peten. The Mayas' civilization in Yucatan bloomed from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Mayas' empire was divided into small political units. These units were bound to each other with culture, religion and a uniform system of writing. But each unit had its own government policies and above all, had its own unique style in architecture and arts.

The highest authority in each unit or city was priest, who was authorised with the religious and civil powers, somewhat similar to Egyptian pharaohs.

The Mayas' society was divided into classes. Beneath the ruler and his nobles were craftsmen and then peasants. The peasants were in large numbers and they did not disappear when the Conquistadores arrived. These people can still be found at places like Muna where they live in thatched wattle and daub huts and they still talk in the old Mayan language.

Besides their language, Mayas contributed to the world by their splendid architecture. Their buildings were very large. Some of them were as high as 230 ft. with a base of upto 130 by 130 ft. The slopes are steep with a dizzying stairway. At the top of the structure is often placed the shrine of the Mayan Gods. The design which adorn the Mayas' palaces and towering structures is often geometrical and each elaborate face is carved to the precise design.

The culture with such advancement also succumbed to the law of nature, every rise has a fall. For many years, their end baffled historians and archaeologists. They supposed the reason for decline was epidemics and famines. Some reasoned it due to the internal wars. While some theorists lay the blame on the recurrent attacks by the nomadic tribes. These recurrent attacks, theorists argue, must have weakened the refined, complex structure of the life of Mayas. Most of the scholars agree on the last possibility.

Thus, going by the above reason, the internal wars from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries must have broken down the entire civilization. Therefore, when the Spaniards came at Yucatan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they were met by only the primitive descendants of the most advanced cultures.

In addition to it, Spaniards were least bothered about the Mayas culture. The Spanish bishop Diego de Landa organized a series of solemn ceremonies at which the historical, religious and scientific writings of the Mayas were burnt. And all this was done in the name of Inquisition. Prior to this Inquisition ceremony, he had written a book, "Account of the Affairs of Yucatan" in 1566. In this book, he had written about the Mayan people and their life style. But the book by no account can suffice the loss which we incurred by the mass burning of the Mayas literature. Perhaps, it would have revealed to us more about the mysterious and rich culture:



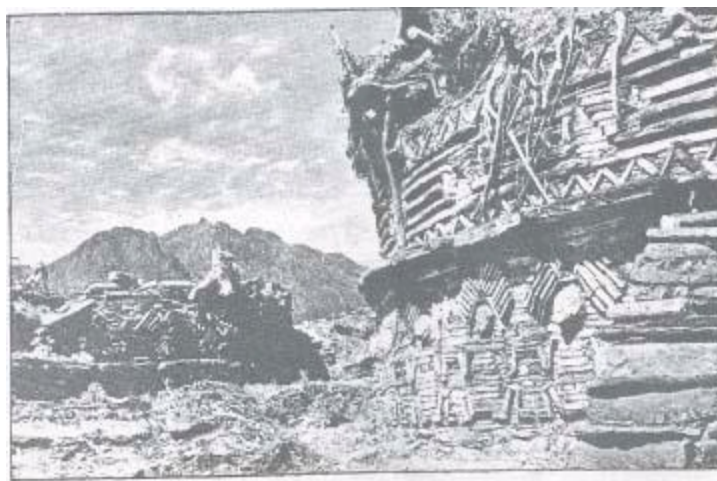
## Where does the Inca Treasure lie?

Conquistadors destroyed the great Inca empire. They destroyed it in such a devastating state that no evidence can be found. These Spanish Conquistadors indulged in loot, plunder, pillaging and burning. They enslaved the last Inca ruler and killed him. But before his death, he escaped to jungles with the wealth. What happened to the great mass of wealth, is still to be identified. In fact, the identification of two primary cities - Vitcos and Vilcabamba is itself unknown. The Spanish colonial maps do not mention it, but historians believe otherwise.

The scholars and adventurers have been eager to locate the last refuge of the Incas, one of the greatest civilizations of America. The scholars have been eager to locate the last hiding place of the Incas (Vitcos or Vilcabamba) because the rumour goes that the last ruler had buried his treasures there. No one knows how true this assumption can be. The place has still not been unearthed.

Inca was a powerful kingdom in America. But by 1527, a virulent epidemic swept Peru. It claimed the life of the emperor, Huayna Capac Inca and his successor, Ninan Cuyachi in the confusion that prevailed, Huayna Capac's two sons seized power. Huascar became the ruler and Atahualpa took the command of the imperial army. Both the brothers tried to usurp the power from the other. Naturally, civil war ensued and finally Atahualpa won. But he was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his success for a long time. In 1532, the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro seized Atahualpa.

Atahualpa was eager to get himself released. For this purpose, he lured the Spanish Conquistador. Atahualpa filled up a room with gold, other jewels jars, pots, tiles and plaques. He filled another room with silver. Pizarro accumulated the wealth and planned a plot against Atahualpa. He accused Atahualpa of plotting against him to kill him. He then appointed Huascar's brother Manco as successor to the slain emperor.



Was this the last refuge of Incas?

Manco's fate was no better than that of Atahualpa. He was subjected to daily insults and harassment. The frightened Manco when attempting to flee the capital was overtaken and imprisoned. Manco did not accept defeat. He plotted revenge and in 1536, Manco smartly took the permission to pay homage to the ancient Gods at Yucay Valley. Manco promised to bring back the life-sized gold statue of Huayna Capac. Pizarro's judgment betrayed him at this point. The lust of gold blinded him. He gave permission and with days Manco assembled an army of 100,000 strongmen. He attacked the Spaniards and thus began a struggle led first by Manco and later by his sons that was to last 36 years.

– 1536 to 1572.

The Spanish forces accepted the challenge forcefully. These forces under Rodrigo Orgonez forced Manco to flee again to the valley of the Vilcabamba. The Spanish forces indulged in loot and plunder at Vitcos. When they returned to Cuzco in July 1537, Manco and remnants of his army disappeared into the mountains.

In the court of Francisco Pizarro, human greed took a great toll. The insatiable hunger for gold and empire led the Spanish to indulge in killing one another. Pizarro was murdered and when Manco's soldiers heard this news, they burst into Pizarro's palace and hacked him to death with their swords. Some learnt the fighting techniques. Manco himself learnt to ride a horse and fire an arquebus (an old fashioned hand gun).

But even this blessing proved to be short lived. Soon the fresh Spanish forces arrived from Spain and Manco was finally killed. Then the reins of rebellion were undertaken by Manco's son, Sayri Tupac.

Some years later Sayri Tupac accepted the Spanish offer. He was pardoned and taken to Cuzco where a Christian marriage with Cusi Huarca was formalized. This marriage proved short-lived. After two years, Sayri Tupac died (or was killed?) on his estate in the Yucay Valley.



The place, where Manco took shelter

After this death, second son of Manco Titu Cusi succeeded to the Inca throne. He died after eleven years and the succession passed on to Tupac Amaru, another son of the Manco. He was the last Inca emperor who led a strong crusade against the Conquistadors, which his father had started three decades earlier. In March 1572, the new viceroy of Peru, Francisco de Toledo, sent an emissary to Vilcabamba. But Toledo's envoy could not reach Vilcabamba. Inca soldiers intercepted and killed him. This enraged the new viceroy so much that he launched a brutal assault on the Inca's citadel.

The Spaniards entered the gates of Vilcabamba and were received by the smoking ruins of a deserted town. Tupac Amaru with his followers had already fled into the vast Amazon jungle, only to escape death for a short-time. He was ultimately caught and beheaded before a huge crowd of prostrate Indians.

Surprisingly, despite such political intrigues, none of the Spanish Colonial maps revealed the exact location of Vilcabamba or archaeologists and scholars for they believe that the last ruler buried his treasure there.

In 1768, a theory was put forward that the legendary city of Vilcabamba was the ruins at

Choqqequirau when is situated in the steep range near Apurimac river.

American scholar, Hiram Bingham started the search for Apurimac region in 1909. He found in the jungle the infested ruins of Choqqequirau. But Lima historian, Don Carlos Romero and Bingham himself did not believe that Choqqequirau was Vilcabamba for the description of the 16<sup>th</sup> century writers just did not correspond with the area discovered.

However, Bingham re-read the accounts and restarted his search. On the way, he met an Indian, named Melchor Anteaga. He offered to reveal the secret to him and guided Bingham to some ruins in the hollow peak towering more than 2,000 ft. above the Urubamba. These ruins were no doubt exemplary in their construction and beauty but that it was the last city of Vilcabamba, it was doubtful.

As late as in 1964, the question of Vilcabamba again propped up. A group of farmers who set out in search of arable land in the north of Peru came across some unknown ruins. They named these ruins as Gran Pajaten. This newly discovered city is situated on a crescent-shaped cliff about 9,500 ft. above the sea level. Its architecture is round with paved paths, short flights of steps and small squares. An aerial survey showed that there were many ruins at Gran Pajaten. About three thousand have been recorded so far. They are scattered over seven hills and are linked by a roadway. This roadway is in some places not more than 4 yards wide and disappears into the forest.

Still unsatisfied with the discovery, Americans started a new expedition in 1964-65. The expedition was led by General Savoy. He started where Bingham left. He identified the ruins discovered by Bingham at Espiritu Pampa and based his assumptions on several pieces of evidence. He observed the walls, the ceramics, the art and related them with several reports furnished by the Spanish writer. He finally drew the conclusion that Espiritu Pampa was infact, Vilcabamba. But several researchers do not agree with such vaguely drawn conclusion. Only recently, one of the General Savoy's guides discovered yet another lost city with an area of just over a square mile. The entrance to this town is cut out of a single block of stone and instead of being trapezoid shaped the Inca tradition, this is in the form of a half moon. Some scholars put forward a theory that it could have been an attempt to build a arch, a sign of the presence of Spanish influence. The Indians who live there call it Hatun Vilcabamba, meaning Great on High.

However, not all agree to this suggestion. The Indians who claim to be the only legitimate heir of Inca tradition do not agree with the several finds. According to them, the Inca treasures lay at the bottom of a lake which only they could approach. Even the Peruvian archaeologists do not make any remarks. They remain silent as there are many more ruins which are yet to be dissected.



The sacred stone at Machu Picchu. Its prism-shaped pillar was probably used as a Sundial

Thus, even till this day the controversy remains open. Nobody has or could so far authoritatively prove the place where the last Inca ruler hid his treasures. The mystery is still unvalued.



## Is the Earth Shrinking?

A few decades earlier, nobody believed in the Continental Drift Theory. Now geophysicists accept the fact. They believe that many centuries ago, the entire world was one place. It was united. But several geographical factors separated the continents. And they cannot answer that for how many more centuries, the world will remain in its present condition.

Will the earth keep on shifting slowly, or suddenly something drastic will happen? The scientists and scholars only speculate the situation.

Sometimes we read incredible piece of news in the newspapers. Scientists declare that settlements around sea are seeping inside the sea or at times we read that mountain ranges such as the Himalayas, the Andes and the Pamir are shifting from their place. However, scientists claim that it is happening so gradually that the process will take millions of years. The important point is whether the parts of earth are moving or not?

The process of 'earth moving' is called the Continental Drift Theory. A microscopic look at the world map reveals that various islands which presently have a zig-zag outline must have been a big circle. During earlier times, scientists used to think like this but they were not able to prove their thought scientifically. It was in 1915 that German meteorologist Alfred Wegener, produced a coherent picture of how the pre-historic earth might have looked with all its landmasses joined. At that time, he was ridiculed. But today Wegener is considered to be the father of Continental Drift Theory. He is regarded so great in his theory that some have suggested naming a crater on the moon after him. It was as late as in 1960 that geologists found some evidence to support Wegener's hypothesis. Today, they have many evidences. They have based their result of modern topographic and core-sampling techniques. Out of these techniques, the geophysicists have been able to draw out a more dynamic picture of the earth's crust.



The map of the earth 20 crore years ago

Some years ago, scientists proclaimed that Australia, South Asia, Africa and south America must have been joined together. They derived this conclusion after conducting an extensive research in Antarctic. This declaration created an uproar in the world. Two American scientists – Dr. Robert and Dr. John too challenge and to test the authenticity of the declaration, they started doing experiments. The various points on which they carried out research were the speed at which an island floats, the

direction where it shifts, its boundary line, the present position of the island, the expansion of oceanic rock sand, the earlier direction of ocean bodies.

After researching on the above lines, Dr. Robert and Dr. John arrived at the conclusion that 22,50,000 years ago all the continents must have been joined together. This meant that there must have existed only one ocean. And this ocean was called 'Payjiya'. During those ancient times, South America and Africa were very close to each other and the boundaries of eastern America touched northern Africa. India was between South Africa and Antarctic.

Australia was part of Antarctic. According to them, the entire world was situated between 60 degree and 120 degree longitude.

However, this situation could not stay for long. After 50 lakh years of such an existence, the earth started dividing. At first, it was just divided into two parts – Laurashia in north and Gondwana land in south. In Laurashia, North America and Asia were included and Gondwana Land had South America, Africa, India, Australia and Antarctic.

The shifting continued and the earth came into its present shape nearly 6 crore 50 lakh years ago.

According to the geophysicists, the continents and large islands are believed to ride on top of plate-like slabs of lower crust. These plate like slabs, collectively called lithosphere, foat in turn on a semi molten sea of crystal slush called lithosphere, foat in turn on a semi molten sea of crystal slush called the asthenosphere. As a result, when molten rock from the asthenosphere boils into a crack separating two plates, it forces the pates and the continent apart. Dr. John and dr. Robert also believed in this theory.

Dr. Dave and Dr. Bird aggravated the above theory. They claimed that when two continents – India and Asia collided, a crater was formed into the land. Both the continents slide down and their sides slide down into the crust. And below the crust when they again collided, they came up vigorously and powerfully. So powerful was their thrust upwards that they took the form of a mountain. And this mountain is called Himalays. It was difficult to refute Dave and Bird. For this is one of the reasons accepted for the formation of mountains.

Mt. Andes in South America was formed in a different way. Ocean crust moved under the crust of the continent and the earth buckled up high, which came to be known as Andes mountains. Scientists believe that such changes in the earth crust must have happened simultaneously.

Geophysicists have finally agreed to the theory that all continents are slowly moving sideways. What will happen next to the earth? Nobody can answer this question. One can only hope that nothing traumatic happens by which the entire mankind may vanish.



## What does Nazca drawings signify?

Some Specialists believe that the world's largest astronomical calendar was drawn by the Nazcas on the dry plains of Southern Peru. While others believe that the lines drawn on the expansive wastes are huge birds, animals and geometric figures. What exactly do these lines signify? Yet they are laid across the desert by the Nazca Indians 1,500 years ago, even long before man could fly.

The Nazca region lies between the Pacific Coast of Southern Peru and the Andean foothills. The entire region is made up of strange lines – some in geometric shapes, some in the shape of animals and birds. The lines and pattern on the desert floor seems to be the work of a mad geometrician and a giant. The archaeology and the archaeologists have vague answers.

Despite all the research, no plausible explanation has been offered. On the other hand, it has facilitated the birth of innumerable suppositions and superstitions. Some people believe that these drawings must have been made by unknown extra-terrestrial beings. While others point out that the Peruvian desert was being used as an astro port by space craft thousands of years ago.

The lines are more bewildering as sometimes lines could only be seen from an altitude of above 1,000 ft. and some designs are closely intermingled, that they reflect a picture of a sci-f novel. In addition to these drawings and incomprehensible lines, the Nazca region has experienced no rain for 10,000 years. But this has been due to scientific reason – the cool prevailing winds from the ocean could hardly pick up the moisture from the chilly waters of the Humboldt current. Furthermore, the erosion on the slopes of Peru is quite similar to the space probes on Mars. To test it scientifically, the NASA (National Aeronautical and Space Administration) has sent a team of scientists to study the erosion and the possibility of life on Mars.



Maria Reiche, who spent her entire life studying the mysterious Nazca lines

It was only in 1947 that these mysterious, enigmatic lines attracted attention. Dr. Paul Kosok of Long Island University was the first one to examine the land. He examined the plain from the plane and named the unique area as, “the largest astronomy book in the world.”

His work was followed by a German mathematician and astronomer, Maria Reiche. She studied the area for more than 30 years and is now 70 years old. She criss-crossed it step by step on triangular, quadrangular or parallel lines and sometimes on zig-zags. She researched exhaustively and drew the conclusion that tons of small stones must have been moved to create the outlines of each

lines. And the positioning must have been done in accordance with a calculated plan. To draw lines, she proposed the theory that they must have stretched strings from posts. These posts are still visible. And the carbon – 14 method has dated these post back to 500 A.D. Maria Reiche also found out from the designs the unit of measurement that the Nazcas must have used.



Made out of only one line a fifty yards long spider's web

The two members of the International Explorers Society of Coral Gables, Florida based their ideas on a painted Nazca ceramics. These two members – Julian Knott and Jim Woodman, they along with some other members believed that Nazcas could not have composed such complicated designs without having an aerial view.

Some other researchers have tried to reason out the secret of Nazcas by studying tombs in the Paracas region. They believe that the nearby site, Necropolis dates to the same period and was used as the burial place for nobles and priests. In the excavation, about a 400 mummies wrapped in shrouds and elaborate cloaks have been found. The date of their burial is estimated to be around 2000 years ago.

Some Peuvian archaeologists share the views of Paul Korok and Maria Reiche. They agree that Nazca drawings are an astronomical calendar. It is also presumed by some scholars that the Nazcas used to read the news of different weather signs from the flight patterns of seabird. In fact, Indians of Peru still believe in the magical powers of animals and they see the shapes of these animals in the stars. A few theorists believe that the figures of the desert zoo are reproductions of the shapes made by groups of stars. Another theory is that they could have been the magical religious cult expressed in a theatrical ritual.

Of the reason behind triangular, trapezoidal or quadrangular ‘runway’ opinions differ. According to some, there were places of assembly. Others believe that they must have been astronomical observations. And according to some, it would have been a ground, guided by the spirits. Another group believes that burnt offerings were made to the Nazca Gods there. There are innumerable beliefs. Theorists have not arrived on a single platform for agreement.

Astronomer Gerald S. Hawkins used computer in 1960 to check the astronomical interpretation of the Nazca complex. The result was disappointing. The computer totally negate the research of so many years. It proved that Nazca lines were not designed as a calendar.

The question remains – what did these unique lines signify? However, the Peru government has taken precaution to avoid spoiling these designs. It has banned walking or driving over the area except on special permission. The tourists are allowed to see the enigma from a roadside observation

tower.



## Is there a Second Life?

Reincarnation till this date remains a mystery, beyond the comprehension of believers and non-believers.

It is believed that child prodigies, e.g. Mozart who composed simple music at the age of four and the 17th century mathematician Blaise Pascal, who had outlined a new geometric system by the time he was eleven, may have been reincarnations of talented people from an earlier time. Annie Besant, 19th century feminist and leader in London's theosophical Society was convinced that she would be reincarnated.

In the 20th century, the case of Shanti Devi is too well-known.

Despite all abnormalities of the cases, science has not been able to agree with it. It demands scientific explanations

She was in Old Delhi hailed from a middle class family. She grew up faster than the children at her age would. When she was just three years old, she started narrating stories about a family living in Mathura. First, her mother just ignored her prattling. But when she repeated it quite often and said that she was the wife of a man named, Kedarnath, her parents got curious. They checked her story and to their amazement they found it all true. This little girl's name was Shanti Devi.

Shanti Devi provided extraordinary details about her past life. She could remember the colour of her house, the location of the house, the people living there and the circumstances in which she died in her last life. There were enough details to provoke her family members to plunge into action. A close relative, professor Kishan Chand took the challenge. He wrote a letter to her alleged widower, Kedarnath. Her husband doubted the truthfulness of the letter but at the same time became curious and asked his cousin to investigate the matter. The cousin arrived in Shanti Devi's house in disguise. But Shanti Devi recognized him. The cousin was shocked. He invited Kedarnath. The husband along with his son visited Shanti Devi. This was an extraordinary reunion. The little girl Shanti Devi not only acted as a dutiful wife but a loving mother to her son too.

These were enough incidents to attract publicity. The media got interested and the case was reported in almost all the national dailies. Shanti Devi became popular in a short time.

Shanti Devi's case was one amongst the thousands which came into limelight. There must be numerous others which remained unreported. Such cases abound in almost all parts of the world – Latin America, Western Europe, Southern Asia, England and United States. Even folklore, myth and legend are based on the theory of reincarnation. Beneath this belief is the theory that each life is born according to one's Karma. The theory of Karma is the idea behind rebirth. According to the Karma theory, one is born again in accordance with one's deeds in past lives. The Hindus who strongly believe in the theory of Karma propagated that the soul may increase in purity during successive existence until it reaches a divine world.

The psychologists believe that this theory travelled to the western world with traders and migrants.

Dr. Ian Stevenson, Director of the Division of Parapsychology of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia strongly emphasized the above point. And to confirm his theory, he interviewed many migrants from Asia who reported memories of the former life and came to the conclusion, "I can imagine the 'perfect case' but have no expectation of finding it."

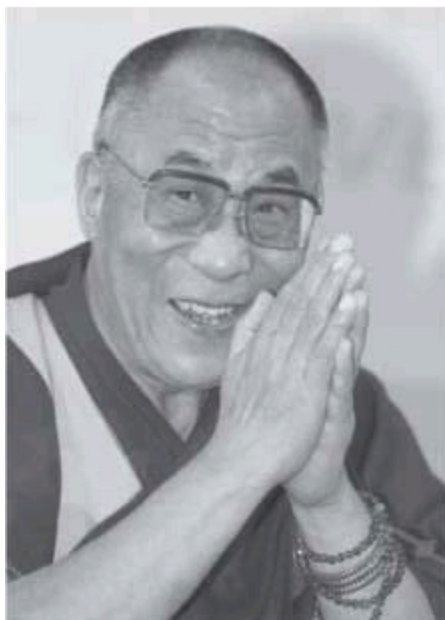
In Ohio on April 21, 1970, Mrs. Dolores Jay began to have visions of her past life. She stated that in earlier life she was Gretchen Gottlieb and had lived in Germany during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She started having visions when one day her husband, Reverend Carroll E. Jay, a Methodist minister was applying hypnotherapy to ease her back pains. While he was attending her he heard a strange voice in German. For sometime, Mr. Jay was unaffected. After a few more vision, Mr. Jay got used to it and started conversing with it. The various sittings suggested that Mrs. Jay perceived herself as Gretchen, daughter of Hermann Gottlieb, Mayor of the German town of Eberswalde. The Gottlieb family was not in the good books of the Federal council of Germany and hence their daughter was murdered.



Dr. I. Stevenson



General Patton believed that  
he was a Roman warrior in  
his previous life



Dalai Lama

Researchers got interested in this case. And Mrs. Jay replied to the queries in German. To verify her statements, research workers and psychiatrists went to Germany but returned with little success. Finally, the Jays themselves travelled to Germany and did succeed in finding correlations between the names of local places and the family names mentioned by Gretchen.

Jay later wrote that the Gretchen case was an indication of reincarnation. Mrs. Jay could merely explain her vision in the following words, "Gretchen is a part of my life. I did not ask her to come, but she has been with us so long, she now seems like a part of the family."

These are the problems associated with reincarnation, which are still shunned by many parapsychology researchers. The only solution to the reincarnation theory is suggested by some as spirit possession, telepathy and even poltergeist activity. The last one is the physical disturbance due to a restless or mischievous spirit. In addition to psychological factors, some researchers have attributed it to religious and cultural beliefs also.

Greek ideas on reincarnation were formed after communication with India. Ducasse elaborated on Plato's ideas about reincarnation in the following words, "The soul which has seen most the truth shall come to the birth as a philosopher or artist, or musician or lover; one who has seen truth in the second degree shall be a righteous king or warrior of lord, the soul which is of the third class shall be politician or economist or trader, the fourth shall be lover of gymnastic toils or a physician." The last degree of the soul is the tyrant. Professor Ducasse explained these theories in a simpler way as "one who lives righteously, improves and one who lives unrighteously, deteriorates."

Now-a-days hypnosis is the medium by which researchers analyse the psyche of a person who claims to have a vision of the past life. Morris in his book "Past Lives' Therapy" claimed that "almost invariably my patients have found that their mental anguish in this life could be pinpointed to a physical situation in a past life." Elucidating his finding, Netherton cited if someone suffers from an acute fear of heights, chances are that in the past life he must have succumbed to falling off from a height. However, he does agree that such visions of the past could be "creative daydreams," and he himself admitted that "I personally believe in the theory of reincarnation."

Similarly Dr. Edith Fiore wrote in, 'You Have Been Here Before,' that she was convinced that her patients' memories were not mere fantasies. She also noted that memories about past life may affect marital harmony or family relationships.

Psychologist Helen Wambach of Walnut Creek, California believed that hypnotic regression was the most appropriate means of discovering and studying accounts of earlier incarnations. She examined 2000 subjects that could successfully recall scenes of their past lives. She also concluded that the 1088 past life descriptions she collected reflected estimates of components of the world's population. That is, she wrote that men and women were always equally represented in the hypnotically induced past life tales, whether or not there were equal numbers of male and female subjects in the group that had been hypnotized. Past lives of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were twice as numerous as those of the 16<sup>th</sup> century while past lives of 20<sup>th</sup> century were four times as frequent as those of the century before.

Like Stevenson, Wambach also believed that earlier incarnations helped to account for existing emotional disturbances. She found through her research that people "who committed murder in a previous life often feel emotionally disturbed. Once their past is revealed and they see the reason for their trauma, they lose their feeling of guilt and can lead a normal life." Stevenson who investigated many cases also reached conclusions on similar lines. He found that people who were drowned in previous lives were particularly frightened of water.

Stevenson examined nearly 1600 past life claims. And he finally drew the conclusion that "We can never show that it does not occur, nor are we ever likely to obtain conclusive evidence that it does occur. All the cases I have investigated so far have some flaws, many of them serious. Neither any

single case nor all the investigated case together offer anything like a proof of reincarnation. They provide instead, a body of evidence suggestive of reincarnation that appear to be accumulating in amount and quality.”



## Is Bermuda Triangle the deathly hallow?

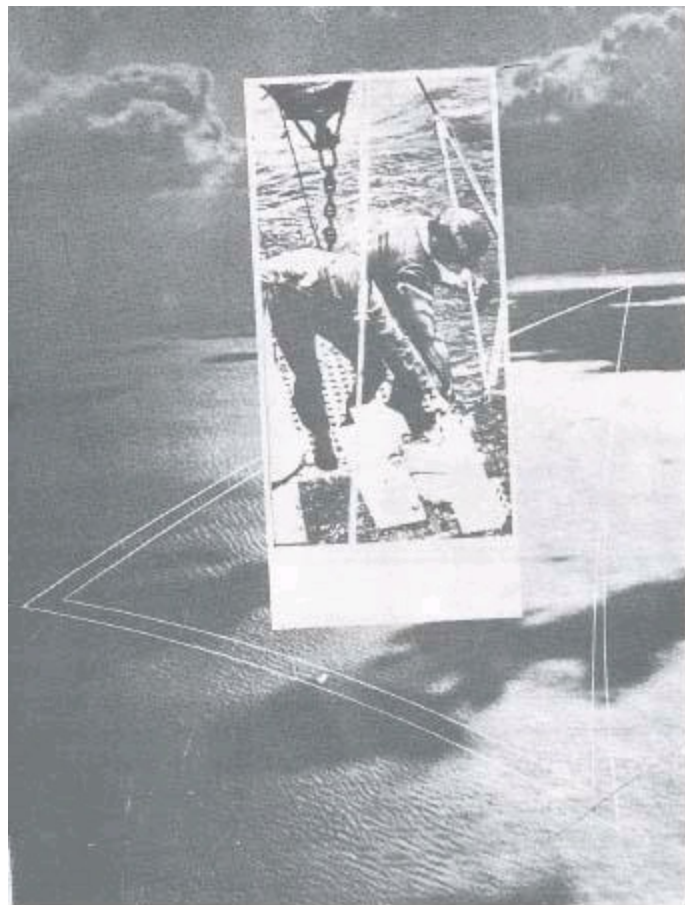
Is there any point in the Atlantic ocean which is suicidal? Or is Bermuda Triangle mere writers' imagination?

Many books have been written on this topic. The U.S. - Soviet scientists have even done a lengthy research on the Bermuda Triangle. Yet, till now, no satisfactory evidence has come forth. The Triangle still baffles everybody and people is taking this route. Perhaps, the mystery of Bermuda Triangle can be summed up in the following sentence - 'at times truth is stranger than fiction.'

One of the puzzling and intriguing mysteries that has bewildered the world so far is the famous Bermuda Triangle.

Situated in the western Atlantic, it has seemingly swallowed up hundreds of ships and thousands of human beings. Yet no scientist has been able to detect the reason for its being a death trap and more so why its victims have left so little evidence of their unpredicted, fate.

This fatal Bermuda lies between Florida, Bermuda and Puerto Rico. In the beginning the sudden and unexpected disappearance of the ship and human being was considered coincidental. But gradually the number of victims increased and people became curious to know the reason. They could not arrive at one conclusion. The victims had not left any evidence behind. The case became interesting and the scientists took it as a challenge.



U.S. and U.S.S.R. scientists working at the Bermuda Triangle

All assumptions were hence put forward. Some observers think that it may be due to the extreme gravitational and magnetic deviation that radios fail and compasses provide wrong readings. Others suppose that extraordinary modern machinery of the lost Atlantic civilization is still functioning and that Bermuda triangle is the base of it. Overlooking all scientific explanations, the third group proposes the theory that the triangle may be the hunting ground for predatory visitors from outer space.

There is no end to hypothesis. No wonder, almost all hypothesis have failed to impress or satisfy rationality of the human mind. The question that arises what is the truth about the mischievous Triangle?

The history of the Bermuda Triangle is not very ancient. It originated in an article written by Vincent H. Gaddis for the 'Arogosy' magazine in 1964. Some other articles followed Vincent's claim and most of them were a repeat of original writing. However, Ivan T. Sanderson, an occult writer took the subject seriously. He studied Vincent's article seriously and further write that the Bermuda Triangle was one of the many unknown regions, 'Vile Vortices'. By 1973, the mysterious Bermuda Triangle had created so much interest that even 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' accorded it recognition and mentioned it. In the same year, the first bestseller on the subject was published. The book was Wallace Spencer's 'Limbo of the Lost'. In 1974, Charles Berlitz wrote, 'The Bermuda Triangle'. It took the publishing market by surprise and became one of the biggest bestsellers. And as if these books were not enough on the subject, Lawrence D. Kusche published a devastating attack – 'The Bermuda Triangle Mystery Solved.'

Kusche was pragmatic. The first question he asked was whether there existed a mystery. Kusche approached the topic in a completely different way. He analysed the reports of a lost ship and aircraft – in the triangle from 1800. To the surprise of many, he explained that either disappearances never occurred and if occurred, they were purely explainable. He pointed out that such accidents had occurred in other oceans too.

To prove his analysis, Kusche took the story of the Lost Patrol (1945). In this incident, five Fort Lauderdale based Grumman Avenger torpedo bombers disappeared during a routine patrol on December 5, 1945. Surprisingly, it was manned by the five most experienced pilots and the flight leader had called the Fort Lauderdale control tower saying that they were lost. Before the final disappearance, he had said, "we don't know which way is west. Everything is wrong Strange we can't be sure of any direction. Even the ocean doesn't look as it should." And then after sometime another voice eported to the control tower, "we must be about 225 miles north-east of base. It looks like we are " This was followed by a complete silence. The control tower immediately dispatched a 13 man Martin Mariner fying boat. But after a few transmissions, even the boat turned silent. No traces of either the avenger or the Mariner could be found.

Kusche took this case. He researched and carefully dissected the Navy report. To everybody's surprise, he declared that the Avenger was not managed by the experienced pilots. He declared that all were new except the flight leader, Lt. Charles Taylor. And even he was new to the area. Kusche proved that no transmission took place between the Avenger and the control tower. This he substantiated by saying that, 'Taylor's compass malfunctioned and he got lost. By 8 p.m. they ran out of fuel and because of the complete darkness, the Avenger crashed.'

As far as Mariner fying boat matters, Kusche explained that it did not take off before 7.27 p.m. He reported that the members of the steamship Gaines Mill which was stationed some miles away saw an explosion in midair. Kushce also stated that Mariner planes were quite prone to accidents and the

accidents were so common that public often mocked at Mariners as “flying gas tanks.”

Kusche’s analysis might be convincing. The scientists have only believed it with the prefix ‘if’ and ‘but’. Anyhow, continuing the scientific research, the United States-Russian scientists combined their research in the Triangle. The Russian scientists discovered whirlpools in the Bermuda but they could discover no mysterious forces working on the spot. As they could not find any invisible forces at work, the U.S. Coast Guard second Kusche’s view, “The combined forces of nature and the unpredictability of mankind outdo even the most far-fetched science fiction many times each year.”

The incidents may be stranger than fiction but the question still arises that why did so many accidents occur only at one given point?



## The mystery behind Stonehenge

The huge upright stones standing erect with an air of mystery make an unforgettable impression. These are called Stonehenge. They have attracted men from all fields to study them. Scientists, astronomers, archaeologists, spiritualists - all have studied but failed to come to a conclusion. The questions remain unanswered. Was it a temple? Was it an observatory? Was it a magic shrine? Was it a computer built much before we came to know about the computer?

There are neverending questions. Perhaps one day we will be able to discover the true and actual meaning of these splendid stones.

In southern England on Salisbury Plain, a ring of grey stones usually 13 ft. high, makes powerful impression. The centuries of rain, frost and wind have made crevices in the sandstone. But their beauty has not depreciated. The stones stand erect and tell the story of the powerful tools which shaped them 4,000 years ago. These are called Stonehenge.

Stonehenge is the only monument whose stones were artificially shaped and combined into an architectural plan. The stones were carefully cut on the curve so that when they were assembled, they formed the outline of a circle. The upright stones were shaped with a bulge, similar to the columns of many classical Greek temples. This was apparently done to give the effect of a straight line when seen from below.

The effort behind shaping these remarkable structures must have been of the highest magnitude. The question then arises what purpose these stones serve? Was Stonehenge a royal palace? Was it a temple for magic and ritual or was it a scientific observatory built for watching the sun, moon and stars in their courses?



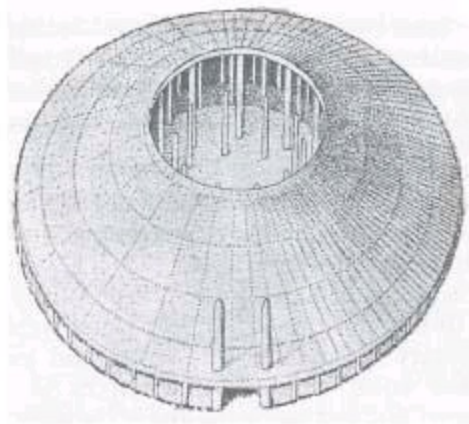
Stonehenge: After all what was the purpose?

The historians in the 17<sup>th</sup> century believed that Stonehenge was built by the Druids—the white-robed Celtic priests of Britain and Gaul. Little is known about these priests as Roman writers have hardly mentioned anything about them. Some scholars do agree with this theory.

But the Druid is not the only one. Seventeenth century architect, Inigo Jones believed that Stonehenge must have been the work of the Roman architects. He said that the thoughtfully and carefully planned designs could have been done by the Roman architects. Somewhat similar theory was proposed fifty years ago by some scholars. While archaeologist Elliot Smith proposed that the designers must have been Egyptian or Phoenician.

Stonehenge aroused more interest with the discovery of a number of pre-historic graves. These

graves were full of bronze daggers, personal ornaments of sheet gold, bone amber and fine glazed pottery. In 1808, a well-known English antiquary, Sir Richard Colt Hoare set his labourers to excavate a pre-historic burial. In the burial, he found the skeleton of a tall, sturdy man, an axe, several daggers and ceremonial equipments such as mace, polished stone head and carved bone mounts. In addition to these, there was a gold hook and two lozenge shaped ornaments of sheet gold.



4000 years old wooden structure. It perhaps influenced the builders of Stonehenge

The artistry of the gold work found in the burial and the unique quality of the Stonehenge architecture made Hoare and some of the other archaeologists draw the conclusion that the ancient Britons must have imported their skills from abroad. A few also suggested that the number of Bronze Age warriors establishing themselves at Stonehenge must have directed the inhabitants to construct such a monument. The question then arises as to who were the invaders? To this, the archaeologists suggest that the invaders must have been Mycenae—the place where gold was in abundance, so much so that it was called the ‘Land of Gold.’

However, these hypothesis became useless with the fact established by the carbon – 14 dating method. It proved that the architecture of Stonehenge was inspired by the Aegean era because these stones belonged to a time as much as four or five centuries before the Mycenaean belief, the two different types of burial objects along with the gold objects were found to be belonging to a much later period. The scholars believing in this school of thought substantiate their reasoning by saying that the gold article must have been imported from the Mediterranean. This ultimately means that trade existed between Stonehenge and the Mediterranean people. Whoever constructed them one fact is apparent – the people who built this were skilled carpenter.

Archaeologists divide the construction of Stonehenge into three phases. The first period covered almost 1000 years of mysterious features of Stonehenge called Aubrey Holes, were constructed during this period. Aubrey Holes were named after the 17<sup>th</sup> century discoverer, the writer and antiquary John Aubrey. These holes consisted of ring of 56 shallow pits carefully spaced out just inside the line of the bank. The famous Heel Stone and irregular lines of wooden posts were also constructed during this phase. These posts were set outside the entrance to the north-east.

The second phase of Stonehenge began from 2000 B.C. It began with the building of a long avenue of twin parallel banks and ditches. The stones for this were brought from Hampshire Avon, a place nearly two miles away. Each stone weighed more than 4 tons. That they were particularly transported from such a distance, means that these stones must be having some sacred value.

The third phase started from 1900 B.C. and after seeing the construction of these places, one really

wonders whether the Stonehenge people belonged to the primitive sarsen, in the region around Avebury. Each sarsen stone must have been dragged by ropes to the site to Stonehenge, which was nearly 20 miles to the south.

After the transportation, the stones obviously must have been given shape and after giving them shape, lintels must have been placed accurately on top of the uprights. As the ground on which Stonehenge stands is not levelled (it slopes downwards for 18 inches across the ring towards the north-west), providing stability to each stone must have depended a great deal on the experience and judgement of the workers.

No doubt, archaeology has succeeded in solving the riddle of its method of construction but it fails to provide any answer to the most vital question why were they built and what was their use?

No debris has been found near Stonehenge. The very fact has made some believe that Stonehenge must have been a sacred place, visited only on special occasions.

The other theory makes Stonehenge an observatory. As early as in 1740, William Stukeley wrote a book, "Stonehenge, a temple restored to British Druids." He noted that the axis of the monument pointed to the mid-summer sunrise. In 1840, Reverend Edward Duke proposed that the monuments situated across the Salisbury plain were set out as a gigantic model of the solar system and Stonehenge represented the orbit of Saturn.

In 1901, Sir Norman Lockyer and in 1963 Gerald S. Hawkins, astronomer at the Boston University compared it to a computer. Scientific curiosity or religious motive, or perhaps a mixture of both were the reason behind the construction of such mysterious stones which speaks of the architectural skills of a surprisingly high order. Besides bowing down to the architectural genius of that prehistoric period, we have little evidence about the motive behind such a construction. The primary reason remains elusive and a mystery of air surrounds them.



## The Navel of The World

Easter Island is called the ‘Navel of the World’. Its inhabitants are cut off from the rest of the world. It is the loneliest spot on the earth. Yet its inhabitants produced one of the most magnificent statues. They managed to create a prosperous society. They built and transported giant statues weighing upto 90 tons.

The mystery that prevails is around their motive behind constructing such sculptures and how did they manage to do it?

The tiny Easter Island is the most isolated spot in the Pacific ocean. It is separated from the rest of the Polynesian chain by the ocean water. The island is surrounded by three volcanoes – Rano Kau, Maunga Terevaka and Katiki. These three volcanic make the island appear triangular. The island is full of volcanic soil but it is evident that years ago there must have existed vegetation and animal life. Today there are hardly any trees and animal life is sparse. Its temperature is moderate – about 72 degree F and it gets an yearly rainfall of about 50 inches. As it is situated in such a remote place, the earliest inhabitants called it–te pito o te henua, meaning ‘the navel of the world’.

This tiny island was first discovered by the English woman, Katherine Routledge in 1914-15. She described the island as the one where “the past is the present “. Indeed, the Easter Island is a fascinating place with surging breakers, precipitous cliffs, towering volcanoes and open, windswept slopes. But the most spectacular of all are the island’s statues.

These statues are massive and built of buff coloured volcanic stone called Moai. About 1000 of such statues have been found which are 12 to 15 ft. tall and weigh about 20 tons. The largest of such a statue is 32 ft. tall and weighs 90 tons. Some unfinished statues have also been found. These are more than twice the size of the finished largest statue.



In 1960 these stones were restored to Easter Island

What surprises a viewer is that what do these giant structures symbolise? Who constructed them? What happened to the men who carved them and from where did they get the timber to accomplish this task?

Jacob Roggeveen, the first European who visited this island never answered these questions. He visited the island in 1722. Roggeveen is covered that islanders lived in thatched huts and could barely make out a meagre living by doing a little bit of cultivation.

In 1770, the Spaniard Felipe Gonzalez visited the place. Four years later, the great English

explorer Captain James Cook visited the island. For a few years, the island hardly saw any visitors. Then in 1786, French Admiral Jean Francois La Perouse visited the Place. But all these visits were very short and hardly gave any insight to the world about the island except that the number of people living was 3000 to 4000 and these people ate human beings. The tribal chiefs were always busy fighting with each other.

By 19<sup>th</sup> century, the situation changed. Explorers became exploiters and soon the isolated islanders were transformed into slaves. In 1805, the American Ship 'Nancy', carried away 22 islanders as slaves. Peru also invaded the island from 1859 to 1862. About 1000 islanders were shipped off to Peru as slaves. Many of the islanders who were put into slavery were skilled artists and with them passed away the secrets of the trade too. Later on about 100 were released but only 15 of them reached the island. Others died on the way and even the 15 who reached the island were infected with the dreaded small pox. The disease spread and soon the population of the island decreased further. By 1877, only 111 of Easter Island's inhabitants were left. When the Chilean colonists arrived, they found the islanders living in complete misery and poverty. From then on, the island came into the possession of Chile and the world started taking deep interest in the giant statues.

The notable research was done by the American W.J. Thomson (1886), Katherine Routledge of England (1914-15), Alfred Metraux of France and Henri Lavachery of Belgium, (1934-35), the German missionary, Sebastian Englert (1935-39), the Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl (1955-56) and by the American anthropologist William Mulloy. Because of these researchers, many fallen statues were restored to their original positions.



Engravings on the rocks

The question arises that who were those men who carved such beautiful statues? Some scholars have revealed interesting stories. According to them, Easter Island was the lost continent. Some opined that it was inhabited by beings from outer space and some said that they were direct descendants from ancient Egyptians. However, modern researchers have unanimously put forward the theory that the people who carved moai were no other but Polynesians.

Contrary to these surmises, the islanders give their own tale of descendancy. According to their legend, their religious leader was Hotu Matu'a defeated in the battle and forced to leave his homeland, archipelago of Hiva. One of his associates had a vision of a new homeland somewhere in the direction of the rising sun and seven men were sent to locate it. And on this way, Easter Island was discovered. Hotu Matu'a arrived on the island with various plants and animals. Hotu Matu'a did

not live for long. But before his death, he divided the island among his children – a reason for the island being divided into so many groups.

To some extent, scholars do agree to this native legend. They believe that the descendants of Hotu Matu'a produced the great statues. From A.D. 1110-1205 and till A.D. 1650, they built classical statues. During this time, the islanders were divided into two main groups. The dominant group was called Hanau Eepe, meaning 'heavy set people' and the other class was called Hanau Momoko, meaning 'slender people'. According to the belief, second class was the direct descendant of Hotu Matu'a.

Tired of oppression, Hanau Momoko rose in revolt against Hanau Eepe which made the master to flee to the slopes of the volcano Poike. At this site, Hanau Eepe dug a long fortified trench. They filled the trench with fuel to repulse any further attack. Unfortunately, a spy betrayed them and the enemy attacked from behind. Hanau Eepe themselves jumped into the flaming pit and ultimately only one person was spared. Some of the present day islanders still claim descent from him. Even the remains of this historic is still visible.

From the radiocarbon dating, it is known that all construction stopped by A.D. 1650. The question remains how far did it take islanders to carve the giants and how did they transport and raise the statues? Archaeologist Arne Skjolsvold of the Heyerdahl expedition did some careful experiments and concluded that a 16 ft. long statue could be completed in a year but by many sculptors. The second question how could statues be transported also gave birth to many assumptions. According to the island traditions, the statues were full of supernatural powers called 'mana' and themselves walked to their appointed places. Another island story is that carpets of sweet potatoes and crushed yams were laid on the slopes and the statues were slid along them.

Recently, William Mulloy suggested that the Statues were put on a Y-shaped curved bottom sledge. He argued that the jutting out belly and chin were not done to give any style but because of the use of the y-shaped sledge. Once the statue was kept on the sledge, the statue was pulled by the ropes on a road covered with seeds and grass.

Despite such research on the topic, the truth about the purpose of constructing such giant statues still eludes us. We still do not know that how did a civilization evolve on such a remote island? We still do not know the reasons for its destruction. We do not know what compelled the islanders to produce a vast wealth of art and architecture. The grave faces of the stone giants of Easter Island are still looking up into the sky.



## How were the pyramids built?

The skyline of Nile Valley seems to be dominated by the mountains. But these are not natural mountains. They are man-made mountains, known as Pyramids.

What exactly was the purpose behind the construction of these pyramids, is unknown. Perhaps they were intended by the god-kings of Egypt as the everlasting sanctuaries for their dead bodies since they believed in the theory of life after death.

The question arises how did the ancient Egyptians raise such tall structures? Who built them? Is it true that the kings had some secret motive which passed away with them? There questions are abundant as the enigma of pyramids astonishes a traveller.

For more than forty centuries, the majestic pyramids have dominated the skyline of Egypt. These monuments are the only witness of the technological advances which ancient man possessed. Still we do not know why and how these structures were constructed? Although Arab scholars had earlier declared that the whole of ancient Egyptian knowledge was inscribed inside the Pyramids.

As late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the European scholars began to take interest in these giant tombs. The scholars came to know that these structures were in fact expressions of religious faith as Egyptians believed in life after death. About the royal tombs, they said that there may have been solar monuments, as the sun was the symbol of the falcon-headed God Ra. In fact, the shape of the great Pyramids suggests the rays of the sun falling from the sky.



Chephren, who constructed the second pyramid of Giza

As the Egyptians believed in the life after death, they perfected the art of embalming to preserve the body and the personality – for all eternity. It was called mummification which was a long and costly process in which the internal organs that to decay fast were removed and the body was dried by soaking it in a salt solution and then a carbonate of soda was sprinkled on it. After this, the body was wrapped in bandages which was then soaked in oils and finally put in painted coffin. As Egyptians

believed that mummies enjoyed perfect life, and they placed all the necessary items beside the dead. Often the rich Egyptians set aside a part of their wealth to maintain a priest. The duty of the priest was to re-stock the tomb regularly.

During the golden age of the Old Kingdom – 2686-2181 B.C., the concept of pyramids reached its zenith. The first great pyramid was built during the reign of Zoser. The pyramid was called The Step Pyramid and was built by a brilliant artist Imhotep.

The greatest of the pyramids was built for King Khufu, the son and successor of Seneferu. This monument just a few miles away from Cairo is about 756 ft. square at its base, spreads to over 13 acres and the sides vary in length by 7.9 inches. It was built from about 2,300,000 blocks weighing a total of 6,500,000 tons.

The fact that such a massive structure was built by ancient people has obviously aroused debate and speculation. The Scottish astronomer Charles Piazzi Smythe and the London publisher John Taylor evolved the theory that the Great Pyramids were built under divine guidance and that it incorporated cosmic wisdom as the true value of 'pi' (the ratio of the circumference of a circle to diameter).

In 1954, a sealed pit was discovered. In it, an intact cedar boat, about 140 ft. long and 16 ft. wide was found. This, archaeologists argue must have been a solo boat in which the king must have taken his voyage to immortality.

The second giant stone – the pyramid of Chephren stands at a higher level than the pyramid of Cheops. Near this pyramid is built a funeral temple and the guardian Sphinx. Near them is a small pyramid of Mycerinus'. After this probably the construction of pyramids stopped. Mycerinus' successor Shepseskaf abandoned the Giza site and had his own funeral monument which looked like a giant sarcophagus. He built this in the southern necropolis of Saqqara.

The pyramids were built during the golden period when there was no one to challenge the supremacy of Pharaohs. So, the Pharaohs built the pyramid to symbolise the distance between them and the masses. They made themselves appear like god-kings.

This Golden age lasted about five centuries and was followed by a period of uncertainty and unrest. The supreme power of the Pharaohs was challenged by the nobility.

A vital question arose that how did Egyptians build such massive structures when the knowledge of wheel was unknown? Archaeologists believe that they must have built a big ramp. Stones must have been hauled to the lip of the ramp before sliding them into place on a bed of liquid mortar. With the rise of the pyramids, the ramp must have been lengthened. After finishing the work, the ramp, archaeologists say, must have been dismantled. Remains of such ramps have been discovered at the pyramids of Maidum and Lisht, south of D-ahshur.



Napoleon examining the Sphinx of Giza with his men

Contrary to the above suggestion, Herodotus, the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greek historian mentioned that the Egyptians possessed hoisting machines. These machines were made out of short planks of wood. But, till now, excavators have not found any traces of such wooden hoisting machines. Herodotus also gives the figures of the labour force. According to his account, the work force for Cheop's pyramid was 100,000 men who were replaced every three months for a period of twenty years.

Contemporary historians have not disproved it, neither have they accepted the figures in totality.

Despite all the contradictions and speculations about the minute details of these pyramids, one cannot overlook the fact that these structures were built by the workers whose skill till today is incomparable. The Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus, contemporary of Julius Caesar wrote, "It is agreed that these works surpass anything in Egypt, not only for their great mass and high costs but also for the beauty of their construction. The workers are more worthy of praise than the kings the kings merely provided wealth, gained through inheritance or extortion."



The great pyramid of Cheops at Giza

The Roman Author Pliny Elder A.D. (23-79) was critical of pyramids. He called it, "a foolish ostentation of the fortunes of kings."

Whether the exercise was foolish or not, we cannot comment on till all the mysteries regarding the purpose and motive behind the construction is unravelled. And it is immaterial to know whether Pharaohs achieved immortality or not but certainly these monuments have by being untouched as one of the seven wonders of the world.



## Black Hole of Siberia

Do you know what hit Siberia on June 30 at 7.17 a.m. in 1908? Scientists have proposed many suggestions but they are not unanimous on one.

Many suggest that it was a meteorite. Some say it was an atomic blast from some distant and unknown spaceship. To some, it was a black hole.

There are various suggestions and the speculation is rife. But one thing is certain that it was a catastrophe of the highest magnitude and it scarred the face of the earth.

June 30, 1908 was dooms day for Siberia. A catastrophe happened. The Tungus area of Central Siberia suddenly experienced a mid-air explosion. All trees within a radius of 20 miles were uprooted. The effect was visible in 1960 also. The charred tree trunks with their bark torn off were seen from the plane. It formed a striking pattern of lines radiating from the centre of the area where the devastating explosion occurred.



If earth is made to appear like a tennis ball than its gravitational pull  
would be so strong that nothing would escape it.  
It would be a black hole.

The entire experience seemed to be unbelievable. The researchers were mute. They did not know what had happened. Some of the inhabitants who witnessed the entire exercise explained the phenomena – “A fire ball crossed the sky. It was so bright that it made even the light from the sun seem dark.” The force of the explosion was felt more than 400 miles away at Kansk. Houses blew away and some people sustained the fash burns. A farmer, S.B. Semenov, who was sitting on the steps of his house at a distance of 40 miles saw the fash. He closed his eyes but experienced the heat. Narrating the incidents, he described his experience, “My shirt was almost burned on my body and when I opened my eyes, I could not see the fire ball. A little later it appeared as if somebody hurled me away from the stairs. I became unconscious.” His neighbour, P.P. Kozolapov experienced burning sensation in his ears.

It was so devastating that it burnt the entire clothes and silverware of one herdsman. (The explosion even wiped out 1500 reindeers)

The scientists were puzzled. They researched hard to know the causes of such a devastating explosion. Subsequently, five different theories were put forward.

The first theory put forward was that the heat must have been generated because of the fall of

meteorite. But experts on the expedition to Tungus could not find any meteorite.

In the 1950's, some scholars suggested that it must have been the impact of mid-air nuclear explosion by some advanced civilization. In 1958 and 1959, high level of radioactivity was detected there. But in 1961, the investigation of the area once again proved the theory as fictitious.

The most accepted theory is that a comet's head entered into the atmosphere with such a speed that it inevitably exploded in mid-air. The scientists argue that it must be held responsible for the pale 'white night' skies visible over Europe for so many days after the incident.

Another theory was put across in 1965. According to this theory, 'anti-rock' made of anti-matter entered the atmosphere and collided with atoms of ordinary matter. This accident produced gamma rays and an explosion. This, scientists accounted caused the flash burns and the reason for absence of any residual material.

The latest explanation is that a tiny 'black hole' hit Siberia. According to this theory, the scientists argue that it passed through the entire earth and emerged in the North Atlantic.

The concept of black hole on the surface appears to be vague. The idea to many scientists appear to have been directly lifted from science fiction. Yet some scientists have done an indepth study and research. They have endeavoured to coin the term 'black hole'. According to them, a black hole is a huge lump of matter which had shrunk so much that it has become invisible. But any light rays passing near, automatically drawn in. And because of its density it generates gravity of such a magnitude that not even light could escape it. This is a black hole.

Such concepts obviously aroused interest among the scientist. The theory of anti-matter aroused the interest of British scientist P.A.M. Dirac in 1928. He suggested that there must be a particle identical to the electron. This particle, he opined must be having positive electric charge instead of a negative one. Four years later, his theory was proved correct in the laboratory. It became clear that each particle had anti-particles and if each particle laws gathered into atoms and atoms into stones, they would become anti-matter. And as soon an anti-matter meet an atom of ordinary matter, they are destroyed. And their destruction is full of consequences. An intense flash of light with violent radiation also occurs.

The above theory was further examined by the well-known Nobel Prize Winner, Williard F. Libby. He got the award for his discovery of radioactive carbon dating. He concluded that both anti-matter and matter would be converted into energy if it falls in to the atmosphere. The reaction of this, he claimed, would be equal to that of an atomic bomb.

Libby and his colleagues examined the Siberia mystery and concluded that the effect was only one seventh of what it should have been, if there occurred a meteorite of anti-matter. So they dismissed the theory of anti-matter being the reason for the Siberian explosion.

In 1973, two scientists of Texas University, A.A. Jackson and Michael P. Ryan, Jr., offered a theory that the 1908 Siberian devastation was caused by a mini black hole. A mini black hole is the leftover of a giant star that has collapsed and has left behind a mass more than twice that of the sun.

This theory was totally rejected by the scientists. They asked if such a black hole did hit Siberia, then, where are the cataclysmic signs of its passage. A somewhat similar incident should have happened somewhere else too on its route to Siberia. And since no such incident was recorded elsewhere, scientists totally disagree with this suggestion.

Majority of the scientists do agree to the concept of meteorite hitting the earth and disintegrating. Once again some scholars fear that in future if something like this happens, then perhaps, atomic war

may arise, for its explosion resembles it.

So, once again the concept of black holes attracted attention. In fact, the concept of black holes lies far back in the history of astronomy. In 1844, F.W. Bessel discovered that the path of the Sirius, the brightest star, was irregular. Bessel concluded that Sirius has an unseen companion and that the two stars were encircling each other. This other star was seen after 19 years by an American telescope manufacturer, Alvan Clark. The new star was as white as Sirius. The star was called 'White Dwarf'. Later on, other white dwarfs were also located.

British scientist R.H. Fowler and Indian scientist Subramanyam Chandrasekhar gave the theory of a star burning up all its fuel and collapsing because of its own weight. The star became an object of great density – like a big frigid molecule. Chandrasekhar believed that 50 times bigger stars than the sun are burning so intensely that their life times are limited to 10 to 20 million years only. Innumerable stars must have already experienced such a fate but he gauged, “A star of large mass cannot pass into the white dwarf stage.” So, the question remained what happened to those stars?

J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the prominent leaders in the making of an atomic bomb, studied the collapse of the stars, intensity of gravity on the heart of the star and supported this theory. Einstein theory of gravity (widely known as theory of relativity) helped scientists to understand the mystery of stars and the ultimate destiny of such a black hole.

With the advancement in science, ‘pulsars’ or pulsing radio sources have also been discovered. With them, the possibility of even more extreme forms of contraction black holes also seemed possible. But all astronomers do not agree to this theory. They argue, “Either there are holes in the sky or there are holes in the general theory of relativity.”

If black hole did not hit Siberia then what was that which created such a stir? The answer is unknown.



## Scythians – The Blood Suckers

The Scythians were immensely rich. They had large amount of gold and made many beautiful artefacts. But they were not mere smiths. They were nomads of the Russian plains. They exercised unimaginable brutality and barbaric acts. They used to peel off skin of their enemies. They drank blood. But above all, they were great warriors.

Surprisingly, they had no knowledge of writing. We have no written account by them. Their history is known to us by Greek historian - Herodotus. Living on chivalry, obviously they faded out of history, leaving the query about their origin for scholars to resolve.

Scythians were magnificent warriors. They were embodiment of horror. Nobody dared to fight against them. They were quite barbaric when dealing with their enemy. They used to behead their enemy and often peeled their skin in consciousness. Even this was not enough to quench their thirst of Scythians indulged in the most brutal tactics of cleaning their enemy's skull by sawing through below the eyes and dipping it into a richly appointed drinking vessel. The royal funerals were drenched in blood.

However, Scythians were not only barbaric, they were remarkable military strategists and created many dazzling golden objects. Combs, breastplates, chalices, scabbards, helmets, rings, all made of gold, have been found amidst the carnage of royals graves.

Scythians were an odd mixture of gold and blood, beauty and beastiality, fact and myth. These are some of the inexplicable paradoxes of the Scythians. Besides these, we do not have much details about them. Scholars, however, pose a lot of questions like who were they, where did they come from and what was their life like, 2,500 years ago? As they have left no written record there is no evidence to prove their odd mixture of beauty and cruelty.



A warrior on the horse

Fortunately, Father of History, Herodotus, and Peter the Great have mentioned about them in their accounts. Herodotus has written about them in his book, 'Persian Wars'. He took great pains in accumulating facts about Scythians. He travelled to the Don river, to the west of the Carthian mountains, to the Danube river and to the Pontic steppes.

Herodotus wrote that Scythians made coats, caps and cushions out of the human skin. The skull was cleaned and used as a drinking cup. The guests, Herodotus wrote, were often served drinks in these cups and the host proudly narrated the incident where and how they committed the 'glorious' act. With all this, Scythians themselves were blood-thirsty. They drank the blood of the first enemy they killed. It was considered to be a disgrace for a Scythians not to have killed anyone since the last festival. They used the scalp of their enemy as a napkin. The more the number of the napkins, the more chivalrous he was regarded. However, all prisoners were not scalped. They left some to be offered as a sacrifice to God of war. Even the sacrifice was offered in the most peculiar way. The prisoner was first killed, then his right hand and limb were butchered. The severed arm and limb were tossed into the air.

Besides these interesting incidents which Herodotus has described at length, he has also provided a grim picture of Scythians society. He tells that Scythians were wild people with cavernous eyes, long and untidy hair hardly ever took a bath. Herodotus tells that men were cruel and hard and had many wives. Herodotus has also described the Scythians' victory over Darius' powerful armies. The Persian force of 700,000 was clearly licked out by Scythians who fought brilliantly and used to take the enemy by surprise. Finally, Darius had to leave because of the sudden paucity of food. The Scythians were left complete masters of the steppes.

Scythians were not agriculturists. They depended on cattle for their living. They had no houses and lived on wagons. Hippocrates, the Father of medicine described the wagon having four wheels, constructed in the manner of houses and being pulled by oxen.

Despite the vivid portrayal of Scythians' nature, their origin remains unknown. Herodotus himself told three conflicting stories about their origin. According to one story, it is suggested that they came from Asia. Second theory suggested that they descended from Targitaus and the third story suggests that they descended from the union of Heracles and a half woman, half snake creature who lived in the Scythians woodlands.

Such bizarre tales were not believed and Herodotus' version about Scythians' origin was dismissed as craftwork of the 'Legend monger'. Herodotus was called 'Legend monger' by the philosopher Aristotle.

It was in 1715, that the truth about Scythians came to limelight. A Siberian mine owner gave a gift of gold to Tsar, Peter the Great of Russia which sparked the excavations. The graves of Scythians were excavated. And with each opening of the grave, the gold treasure unearthed from them, scholars came closer to Herodotus' view about Scythians' funerals.

Scythians used to slit open the dead body of the king. They used to clean the corpse and used to fill it with various aromatic substances, such as crushed galingale, parsley seed and anise. Their body was then sewn up and was coated over with wax. With the king his concubine, butler, cook, groom, steward and chamberlain were also strangled to death and buried with him. Horses and gold cups were also buried with king. After the burial ceremony, the tribesmen used to raise the mound of earth as high as possible.

In 1898, N.I. Veselovsky excavated Kurgans at Ueski Aul in the Krasnodor district, north east of the Black Sea. After digging 49 ft. high grave, he discovered 360 skeletons of horses. In 1971, a Russian archaeologist discovered a similar grave near Ordzhonikidze on the Dnieper. These discoveries once again show that on every death anniversary, fifty of the dead king's attendants along with 50 horses were strangled and buried.

The Scythians believed in Shaman – a unique mixture of partly medicine man, partly magician, soothsayer, an animal. The shaman, it is assumed, might have served as kind of artistic touchstone and the vital source for the animal themes which dominated Scythians art.

These are not enough factors to explain the myth surrounding Scythians. One cannot comprehend their barbarity and love for gold. Perhaps, there exists some more secret evidence! Or it could be that Scythians purposely exerted in barbarous acts so as to frighten the other enemies. For, they had enemies all round as they occupied the most primary route of invasion between the East and the West.



Grave of a Scythian tribal leader

This is a mere hypothesis. But whatever good or bad, we know about Scythians, it only highlights the brutal chapter of human history.

The riddle of Scythians remains unsolved. We have no indepth knowledge about their society and origin. However, facts exist about their decline. They were driven out by Souromatae. Some Scythians crossed to Romania, while some remained in Russia and mixed with the invaders. Their final annihilation came in 106 B.C. when they were completely defeated and killed by Mithradates the Great, King of Pontus.

But with their destruction, the history of Scythians did not end. Even today, historians are busy solving the riddle of a race which was an odd portrayal of barbaric qualities.



## Was Sahara Desert ever green?

The name, Sahara makes one think of sand and heat, men and animals dying of thirst. But few knows that once upon a time, Sahara was a beautiful fertile land where rainfall was a common feature and trees grass and streams flourished. Many animals were found there.

This was Sahara, centuries ago. No one knows what transformed the green, pleasant Sahara into a horrid desert. Why did rainfall stop occurring? Were inhabitants responsible for the drastic change?

There are many queries which still surprise scientists and they are groping in the dark to search answers.

The scenic land of sand and heat with tall dunes and vast waterless regions was first described by Herodotus in about 430 B.C. He described it as a desert with hillock of salt and inhabited by people with strange and exotic customs.

More than 2000 years have passed since this description was alive but the picture has not changed. Spreading on an area of 3.3 million sq. miles, it has still some unknown areas which are inaccessible and has violent extremes of climate. The persistent drought has forced its population of 20 lakhs to dig wells at random. And this practice of digging wells frequently, has in its turn, lowered the level of the water table. Even the modern scientific methods have proved futile in reversing the trend.

The vast Sahara desert was not always like this. Many centuries ago, it was a green and fertile country. The Negroid people lived there. They hunted a large variety of land and water animals. The geological and archaeological factors reveal this fact. The cave and rock paintings found at Tassili N' Ajjer highlight this bewildering spectacle. In fact, the number of rock paintings at this place is higher than it is found anywhere in the world.



The growth of this shrub indicates that the Sahara desert was not a desert long-long ago

Well, then the question arises as to what happened to the green fertile land? What caused it to become the perfect death land today?

The scientists reason it out due to the monsoon rains. According to the scientists, the Sahara fourished during pre-historic culture as the monsoon rains expanded far northwards. By 10,000 B.C., the climate remained wet for most of the part. But after that due to some unknown reasons, monsoon

rains began to be less and an imbalance was created between rainfall and the rate of evaporation. As a result, the moisture soaked up by the sun's rays was more than the moisture the land received from the clouds.

Environment was not only responsible for the deprived condition of the Sahara but human being also contributed to it. The increasing number of domestic animals destroyed plant life. Mountainous woodlands were burnt off and reduced to grazing land. Gradually vegetation degenerated – from *savannah*, it became steppe and from steppe it became desert. The only remnants left were paintings and artefacts which reminded later generations of the past glory of the vast desert land.



Details from a painting found at Tassili N Ajjer

The journey into the Sahara's glorious past came to be known during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Europeans entered the desert. The first three adventurers were Dixon Denham, Hugh Clapperton and Walter Qudney. In 1826, Major Alexander Gordon Laing, a Scotsman crossed the Sahara and became the first European to reach the fabled city of Timbuktu. He was murdered there. In 1828, the Frenchman Rene Caillie, disguised as an Arab started from Timbuktu. He reached Morocco after facing torrid heat, whirlwinds, water shortage and often lured by the torment of the mirage.

Caillie's journey was a remarkable one. From then on, followed the regular encroaching journeys of the French. Soon, Frenchmen embarked on colonial activity – military campaigns and building of trans-Sahara railways. For their excursions, they had to produce the definite maps of the area. And the map revealed the true picture of the Sahara. It showed the high mountains, dotted with olives and cypresses. This map was prepared by the German explorer —Heinrich Barth. It was his findings that sowed the seeds for archaeological research. Going by the Barth's research, the Sahara period was divided into two—pre-camel and post-camel periods. French geologist, G.B.M. Flamand did comparative study of the cave engravings of Southern Oran in Algeria and supported the findings of Barth that there existed in pre-camel and post-camel period.

By 1956, the scientific interest in Sahara grew. Numerous French expeditions were sent to Tassili N. Ajjer. On the fragmented plateau of Tassili N' Ajjer, numerous paintings were discovered. The proper examination of the paintings revealed that the earliest one were probably made by a negroid ethnic group. Some primitive artefacts were also found at various places. These artefacts showed that the area, perhaps, was inhabited from the dawn of man's existence.

Besides the art, research also unmasked the political history of the Sahara desert. It revealed the continuous struggle between the tribes. Due to the frequent appalling warfare, the population decreased, the kingdoms disintegrated. The reason for the warfare might have been acute droughts. Even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, famine and drought are the two recurrent factors. In 1913, a terrible famine struck the region. In this famine, more than one million people died. Murder and fratricide occurred

commonly.

However, gradually life began again. And then in 1972-74, another disaster hit the Sahara. Famine and influenza epidemic heightened the horror of the Sahara region and of the human beings there. Hunger made them commit the most dreadful acts—murder, loot, killing ones' own children. Surprisingly, there are no statistics of the victims but it is assumed that international aid prevented the tragedy of 1913 famine.

Despite such catastrophies, the Sahara still exists. People are still living there. These people continue to practise the disastrous habit of their predecessors as they plunder the dwindling vegetation and sink deeper wells. Will they also face the fate of their predecessors? This is a question which haunts every scientist. People look up the sky and ask, “can Sahara ever be made what it was thousands of centuries ago, a fertile land.”



## The forgotten Voyagers of the New World

Some 500 years before Columbus discovered America, men from Norse tribe had already reached America. But now some disagree with this. There is an increasing belief that much earlier than the Norse tribe, Phoenicians, Chinese and Portuguese had reached this amazingly controversial land. Many remains of these cultures have been unearthed at the New World.

A constant research is going on, on this topic. And it is debatable whether these voyagers ever reached the Western Hemisphere?

Since time immemorial men have been fond of discovering new things. From 1450 to 1550 various discoveries were made. So, rightly this century was called the 'Age of Discovery'. It was in this century that man's longing for the new world was appeared. America was discovered by Columbus and this discovery obscured other discoveries.

If we believe in the assumption that American Indians crossed from Asia into the Americas more than 40,000 years ago by land bridge, the question arises that why they continued to remain in the primitive state, although the inhabitants of Mexico, Yucatan and Peru created complex societies much earlier than Incas and Aztecs?

Phoenicians claimed that they were the first voyagers to embark on the journey of discovering America. More than believing in their claim, it is better to believe in the fact that they were the finest sailors of the ancient world. There are accounts describing how these men set sail down the Red Sea and returned after three years. Pharaoh Necho of Egypt commissioned the voyage. After sailing around Africa, they claimed that they saw the sun on the right side. Herodotus laughed at their claim and dismissed it by saying, "which some may believe, but I do not". Whether we believe this statement or not is immaterial. But this statement convinced the scholars that Phoenicians voyaged around Africa and they sailed beyond the Tropic of Capricorn where the sun crosses the sky in the north, to the right of the ships heading east.

The Phoenicians of Carthage also sailed the Atlantic. They reached Azores where many Carthaginian coins were discovered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1872, on a Brazilian plantation, a stone with an unknown inscription was found. The Director of the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, Ladeslau Netto, translated it. The coin inferred that the sailors were in the sea to please the Gods and Goddesses. They had also sacrificed a boy and were out in the sea with ten ships, "We were at sea together for two years around the land belonging to Ham (Africa) but were separated by storm and we were no longer with our companions. So, we have come here, twelve men and three women, on a new shore which I, the Admiral, control. But auspiciously may the exalted Gods and Goddesses favour us!" so read the inscription on the coin. The words 'new shore' was interpreted as 'an island of iron', because the coin where it was found, has enormous reserves of iron ore.



This Phoenician stone writing suggests that the  
Phoenicians sailed across the sea



Sculptures of a Chinese and a Negro

Not all agree with the above story. Samuel Eliot Morison, author of the definitive history of the America's discovery, completely dismissed the version. He said that it was "purely an invention as neither the stone nor the original copy of the inscription can be traced." Even Frank M. Cross of Harvard outrightly rejected the story.

Another relic found at Bourne on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 1658, confirmed the Phoenician landfall in the Americas. But Yale historian Robert Lopez rejected the Bourne stone as "hoax".

There are many who believe that Phoenicians were the first one to discover the New World. They have advanced a number of evidences in support of their theory. One of these is a map of the world, prepared by the Turkish admiral and cartographer Piri Reis. This school of historians believes that the Reis map is cent percent true as it was based on charts, that were housed in the giant library at Alexandria before fire destroyed it completely in the giant library at Alexandria before fire destroyed it completely in 47 B.C. Even the Greek author Diodorus Siculus who wrote in the 1st century B.C. believed Phoenicians to be the true founders of America.

Besides Phoenicians, Chinese have also been considered the founders of America. The Chinese traveller Hui Shen and four other Buddhist monks who set sail in A.D. 429, it is assumed, may have taken the great circle route across the north Pacific. They may have reached North America and then perhaps sailed down to the coast to Mexico.

The Chinese traveller discovered the 'Fu sang tree' about which he wrote, "the tree had sprouts like bamboo shoots that the people eat." He also wrote, "these people spin thread from the bark and make coarse and also a finer fabric. The wood is used to built houses and the bark to make paper."

Hui Shens' description also mentions horses, cattle, and deer which were used to draw carts. But history tells us that American Indians had not seen vehicles with wheels before the Spanish conquests. Hence, the account of Hui Shen, inevitably presents contradictions.

However, archaeological discoveries apparently confirm the link between Asia and America. In Mexico, pre-Columbian terracotta heads of Chinese, Phoenician and Negroid have been found. And amidst the Mayan ruin at Copan, a carved elephant head and mahout have been discovered. Because of so much Asian links, anthropologists and historians do not hesitate in saying that Asiatic influence changed the structure of the native society.

The third theory put forward is by Jacques de Machieu, a French explorer. He said that Viking ships on their way to Iceland in A.D. 967 were blown off to Mexico and that their leader Ullmann became the original Quetzalcoatl and over the next 300 years, they established societies in Mexico and the Andean high plateau. There are many indications that Vikings set up a culture at various places and named the places according to the specialities of the place, for instance, the place which produced vines and grapes was called Vinland.

In 1004, Viking Thorvald discovered Cape Keelness. But whatever little information we gather from the accounts of Viking is all very incoherent and we cannot even believe or disbelieve it completely.

However, modern scholars agree that Helluland of the past is the present day Baffin island marked with white beaches, is on the 30 miles long Labrador and Vinland is New foundland.

In addition to the already stated theories, there is one more inclusion. Even Portuguese claim that they discovered America. The Portuguese historian, Dr. Antonio Baiiao argues that “the existence of lands beyond Azores was known to Portuguese.” And he further states that Columbus took the hint from Portuguese and sailed to America.

Florentine Amerigo Vespucci, after whom the country has been named, has nothing to do with the discovery of America. He falsely claimed to be the founder of America and German cartographer Martin Waldseemuller liked the name and put it on the map of the New World in 1507.

There are many suggestions about who discovered America. The question is whether Columbus was the real founder or the claim of Phoenicians, Chinese and Portuguese is true? If the claim of Phoenicians, Chinese and Portuguese is untrue, then where did they go? But the primary question is was it geographically possible to discover the New World before Columbus?



## Which was the First City of the World?

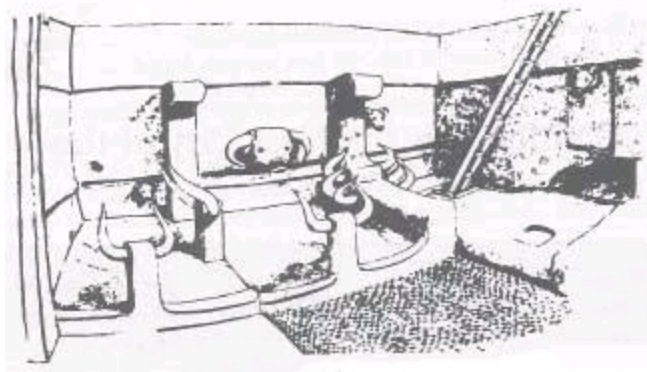
Till recently, it was believed that the first civilization was found in Sumeria. But not now. At Jericho, a 9,000-year-old wall has been excavated. At Catal Huyuk and Lepenski Vir also, various findings indicate the birth of a civilization.

The findings at these three places shattered the belief that the world's first city originated 5,000 years ago in Sumeria. Now the question arises: whether developed cities came before Jericho and what happened between the gap of these three cities and Sumeria?

Few years back, it was believed that the world's first city was built by Sumerians about 5,000 years ago in the area between river Tigris and Euphrates. It was believed that Ur, Vruk, Eridu, Lagash and Nipur were the wealthy cities of the Sumer, where civilization dawned. Before these cities, there was a void in pre-history.

However, recent discoveries made the historians to review their records. They had to announce that it was not Sumer where civilization took birth but even before it, there were cities with an advanced culture. These cities were Catal Huyuk, Jericho and Lepenski vir.

The advance in pre-historic research began after the Second World War. The carbon 14 dating technique enabled researchers to date ancient sites. They found out that man has been the only form of homosapiens on earth for the last 30,000 years. After this fact, the researchers were sure that civilization could not have started just 5,000 years ago, but it must be older than that and subsequently they discovered three cities which were much older than Sumer. However, with this discovery, they also faced another question – are these cities much older than Jericho, Catal Huyuk and Lepenski Vir?



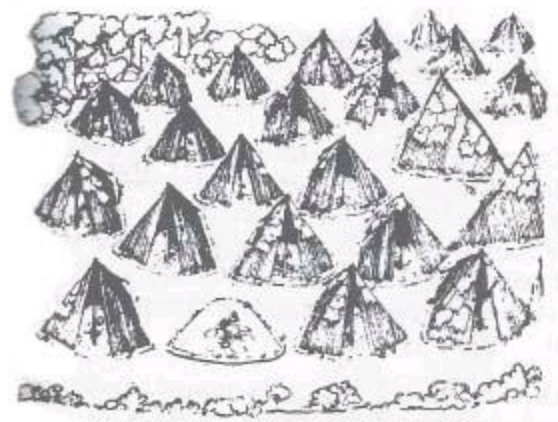
A line drawing of a temple found at the Catal Huyuk

The Bible mentions Jericho as the 'city of palm trees'. It owes its existence to the fresh waters of the Aines Sultan spring or fountain of Elisha. They discovered that this city existed 9000 years ago, which is 4000 years ago before Sumer.

The biblical account of Jericho comes from the Book of Joshua. It says that Moses died before he could cross Jordon. His son Joshua guided the people of Israel out of the desert and across the river. After crossing the river, these people captured the first Canaanite city – Jericho. The entire city crumbled and the local population was murdered.

Archaeologists proceeded according to the above mentioned account. For nearly a century, they

excavated in futility. Between 1952 and 1958, British archaeologists, Dr. Kaithleen Kenyon found some ancient crumbled walls. By carbon-14 dating, the researchers came to know the exact date of its existence. The dates indicated that the walls were built approximately in 7000 B.C. and according to the history, the people of Israel fought their battle sometime between 1400-150 B.C. So, it became clear that Joshua destroyed a city which was already at least 5,500 years old.



Lepenski Vir must have looked something like this

After Jericho's discovery, another city was discovered by the British archaeologist, James Mellaart at Ankara in Turkey in 1961. This was Catal Huyuk. Following this discovery was the knowledge of Lepenski Vir, situated on the right bank of the Danube river in Yugoslavia. This city was discovered in 1965.

Archaeologists yet do not know how to place them in the general story of the evolution of the New Stone Age Culture. Catal Huyuk, particularly offer rich archaeological material for further research. It progressed as a city from 6250 to 5400 B.C. In 5400 B.C., it was finally abandoned. Unlike Jericho, Catal Huyuk offer plenty of thoughts. It was at Catal Huyuk that archaeologists discovered a well-developed economy and religious and artistic life.

Contrary to Catal Huyuk, the remaining at Lepenski Vir suggests that there occurred a society of hunters and fishermen, belonging to the old Stone Age. The research has shown that this city was in the transitional stage. They were moving from encampments to houses.

Out of the three cities, the oldest one is the Jericho. It is an oasis in a valley at the northern end of the Dead Sea. While Catal Huyuk stands at an altitude of 3000 ft. in the middle of a fertile valley on the Carsamba Cay river, Lepenski Vir is situated in a small valley near Danube, in the middle of the Iron Gate Gorge.

The common feature among all the cities was water. In physical appearance, all the cities were not that big. Lepenski Vir was only 185 yards long and 55 yards wide. The population was not more than 200 to 300. Jericho covered about 10 acres of land and had population of about 2000 to 3000. While Catal Huyuk must have been 492 yards long and had a population of about 6000 to 10,000.

On the surface, these cities appear a molecule in front of Sumer which covered hundreds of acres of land and had thousands of inhabitants. Still these cities exhibit a great diversity in architectural design and planning.

The excavation at Jericho has revealed that these people lived in houses made up of curved mud bricks. The natives built rectangular houses which were built close to each other and had just one door as an opening.

At Catal Huyuk, there were no surrounding walls. The houses were joined with each other and the only way by which one could enter was through the roof. Hence, in their long history of 2000 years, we have no records of the city being ever sacked. The houses were built of rectangular clay bricks which were joined room was about 20 by 13 ft. and the other room was used as a granary.

The outline of Lepenski Vir was entirely different. The houses were built separate from each other. But they were all same and had a ten-like shape.

At Catal Huyuk and Jericho, we find evidence of many public buildings. While at Lepenski Vir, there are only four buildings which could have been temples. The excavations at Catal Huyuk has also revealed that women were respected and the mother goddess was worshipped. The diseases which often struck the inhabitants were malaria, pneumonia and arthritis. At Lepenski Vir, people followed strict traditions and were dependent on a community for a livelihood. But in Catal Huyuk, social life was more complex and social inequality persisted. This is evident from the varying sizes of buildings and differences in possessions and burial gifts.



A 9000 years old portrait of one of the first city-dwellers, found at Jericho

In fact, Catal Huyuk achieved a level of technological advancement as they utilized both copper and lead metal art, the main researcher suggests “Catal Huyuk is nearly as great as that of developed civilization of the Early Bronze Age.”

There is no doubt that recent research as a fundamental force has made the historians rewrite the history of civilization. But they still do not know the answer to the question what—happened in the period between these cities and Sumer? How did the civilization progress between these two points? This is a missing link that is still unlocked.



## Where Gods Lived...

Long after its fall, Teotihuacan continued to influence middle American civilizations. It was the religious capital of Mexico. Its art and architecture was supreme.

Even the brave Aztecs were moved by the grandeur of the place. They called it, “the place of those who possessed the road of the Gods.”

But it disintegrated and crumbled. The natives disappeared. Temples fell and streets became dark and lonely. After all who were they? Where did they come from? Where did they vanish? These are the queries which yet to be resolved. Like Gods, people of the city of Gods also left a puzzle behind. 1400 years ago when barbarious tribes were attracting the attention of missionaries in the Western Europe, a city was developing on the other side of the Atlantic. About 150,000 people were living in this place and it was called Teotihuacan.

Teotihuacan was the religious capital of Mexico. According to the American scholar, Thelma Sullivan, the word Teotihuacan suggests “the place of those who possessed the road of the Gods.” When Aztecs occupied Southern America, the city was in complete ruins. After on elaborative research one can know the details about Aztecs but still they do not know about the people who lived in Teotihuacan, from where did they come and how did they vanish and which language did they speak?

About 9/10 of the city is still buried. The city was built on a plateau which is situated at a height of 7,500 ft. It links the valley of Mexico and the valley of Puebla. Teotihuacan was surrounded by a fertile valley and streams which provided water to the inhabitants. Besides these, the Volcanic environment gave out obsidian, a raw material which was used for making utensils, instruments and weapons.



Pyramid of the Moon and pyramid of the Sun

The plateau was inhabited by Indians. They lived in wattle-and-daub huts in villages of 100 to 300 people. It is believed by the historians that these local people must have helped the founders of Teotihuacan in constructing a magnificent architecture. Moreover, as before Teotihuacan another culture blossomed in America, they left a legacy for others to follow. This culture was called Olmecs

and they rose and fell between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C.

The civilization was first discovered by a Frenchman, Desire Charnay in 1880. He took it to be a Toltec city. But later research showed that Toltec culture began in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. By this time, Teotihuacan was already in ruins. Moreover, Toltec had their capital in north at Tollan, the present day town of Tula.

Some archaeologists do agree with Charnay. Their bone of contention is that as the word Toltec means – ‘great craftsmen’, it symbolises the unparalleled architecture of the Teotihuacan. But this is an explanation at a very superficial level.



The Temple of Quetzalcoatl

French archaeologist Laurette Sejourné has recently given a new explanation. He has suggested that the entire Teotihuacan city must have been built to the glory of Quetzalcoatl. Sejourné opined that since Quetzalcoatl represents the creation of the universe – (the alliance of the heaven and earth and the union of spirit with matter), Teotihuacan must have been built by and for men who believed and understood their role in the cosmos.

A few others believe that the Quetzalcoatl was by and large worshipped by priestly class, who built and governed Teotihuacan. But who were they and from where did they come to make Teotihuacan a spiritual centre is still unknown.

The city Teotihuacan was constructed in a vast geometrical pattern on two huge avenues which crossed each other at right angles. The main road was called the Avenue of the Dead. It was named the Avenue of the Dead by the Aztecs, who took pyramid-shaped platforms along its length to be tombs. Hence the name – Avenue of the Dead.

To the east of the Avenue of the Dead was the Pyramid of the Sun. Rising 216 ft. above the ground and with a base of 720 by 760 ft., this pyramid was completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. It is estimated that it took 50 years for completion.

At the north end of the Avenue of the Dead is Pyramid of the Moon. This pyramid is smaller than the Pyramid of the Sun but is constructed similarly. At the other end of the Avenue of the Dead, is the Citadel. It is surrounded by platform temples. And rising up from the centre of this Citadel is the Temple of Quetzalcoatl.

In spite of the various theories suggesting it to be a religious centre, there are many reasons to believe that Teotihuacan were excellent artists and sculptors too. Their artistic skill is shown

remarkably in the burial masks which were huge with oval eyes and broad faces. They modelled their masks in clay, obsidian, opalite or onyx which surpassed the art of Egypt also.

Various frescoes discovered in Teotihuacan confirm the fact that they were excellent artists. It is unfortunate that till now historians have failed to decipher the hieroglyphic code inscribed on the art piece. If the code is deciphered, the world would be in a better position to appreciate their masterpieces.

Excavation at different places has revealed that Teotihuacan's influence reached till Guatemala. The Olmec country and Gulf coast were also influenced by Teotihuacan's culture. At Kaminaljuyu, pyramids were made in the style of Teotihuacan.

Despite having such a splendid civilization, Teotihuacan decayed. Scholars have attributed different reasons for its downfall. Some say that Teotihuacan was invaded and destroyed by nomadic warrior tribes from the north. They argue that as the Teotihuacan were unprepared for any warfare, they must have been easily defeated. The Swiss writer Henr Stierlin believes that the barbarian invasion must have occurred which forced Teotihuacan to indulge in mass exodus. According to him, the natives migrated towards the Kaminaljuyu, 700 miles south east to Teotihuacan.

Most of the scholars agree that the downfall started in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. They say that if decline was not due to outside invasion, then it must have occurred due to the new aristocratic class, scholars must have rose to compete with the oppressive form of government, giving rise to general disorder and finally causing the downfall of a civilization.

But these are all hypothesis. No accurate data is available to tell us the reasons for the downfall of a blooming civilization in a pre-Columbian past. Only one fact remains that there exists a priestly culture – a pure source of civilization in ancient Mexico. But who were they and how did they construct such a beautiful land, the city of the Gods, is still a mystery.



## Magically Healed

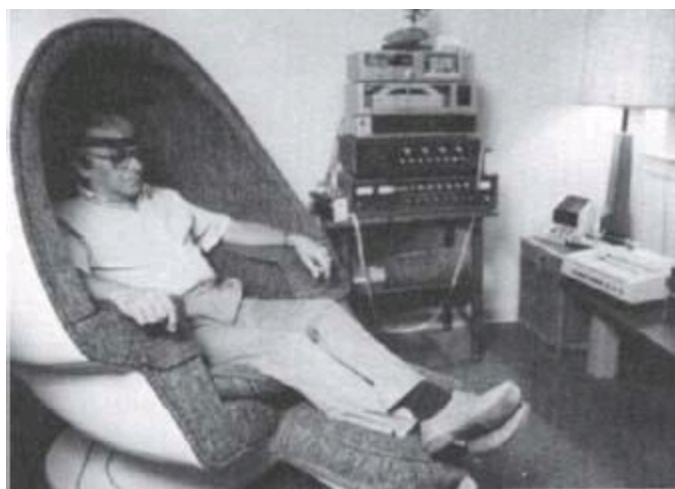
Psychic healing and bio-feedback system are the two most mysterious medical science treatments. These two treat patients without any medication or tests.

In psychic healing, a patient is cured by a touch and by bio-feedback, a patient is taught to concentrate. Surprisingly, both the branches of medical science have taken birth from the ancient Indian culture.

Some patients have been cured by these two. Yet the medical scientists refuse to believe in this therapy. But the founder thinks otherwise.

The patient, a 61-year-old man, was suffering from throat cancer. All the medicines failed to cure him. So, he agreed to Dr. O. Corl Simonton's experimental regimen of brief mental exercises. These exercises were to be repeated three times a day. First the patient was told to meditate for two and a half. He had silently repeated the word 'relax' with every breath. At the same times, he had to relax his jaw and throat muscles. Next, he was asked to visualize something pleasant. Then he had to imagine tumour and then think of particles of radiation bombarding it and finally to imagine the cleaning process done by the white blood cells.

The patient followed this routine for seven weeks. After this his condition improved. The growth of tumour stopped. The patient was released from the hospital. He was declared fit.



Dr. Green is shown attached to the biofeedback devices

This is not the only case where magic healing was done. In fact, science is one field where magic often works. At times, a patient becomes perfectly normal after a touch by someone who claims to be possessed with some magical charms. And at times, without even touching the patient, the disease disappears. Both the systems are unique and have cured many patients. The second system is called bio-feedback system and the former one is merely psychic healing or therapeutic touch. Both the systems have nothing to do with medical science in the traditional way. Hence, the scientists are clueless in attributing any definition to them for these two branches have no relationship with either acupuncture or the traditional age old custom of magical witchcraft. The research still continues.

However, only some experiments have been conducted.

In 1971, Dr. Dolores Krieger of the New York University found out that there existed similarities between haemoglobin and the energy-giving substance which Hindus called 'prana' – the force that keeps the body alive. She made a theoretical connection between the two and worked with Sister Justal Smith on the effect of a healer's treatment on the enzyme trypsin. Sister Justal Smith was a biochemist and had done research on the effects of enzymes by touch.



Dr. Green examining a yogi sitting on a bed of nails

Krieger took the help of Oskar Estebany. She transported a test group of 19 sick people and a control group of nine healthy people to farm in Massachusetts. During the six days of the experiment, each sick person was treated by Estebany. All medication was stopped and sick and healthy people were given the same diet and had the same routine. Haemoglobin was taken in the beginning and at the end of the experiment. The results were remarkable. Changes occurred in the haemoglobin of those who were ill.

Krieger wrote about the experiment, "Taken together they indicate impressive evidence that something happens during laying on of hands ...." She further asked upon that the topic should be researched further.

Similar results were obtained in other experiments of psychic healing. The scientists explain that something may happen when healers direct their energy to the sick but what that energy might be and whether it triggers of cure is still open to controversy.



Dr. Krieger

In the meanwhile, therapeutic touch has gained immense popularity in America. Dr. Krieger wrote in the 'American Journal of Nursing', "I became convinced that healing by laying of hands is a natural potential in man. The two intervening variables, that I think are critical to the process: the intent to heal another and a fairly healthy body." Krieger herself first experimented with it, then expanded her research to include 32 nurses. She reported that the results were as seen before. The treated group recorded significant changes in the haemoglobin value.

In 1972, Krieger began teaching her therapeutic touch at nursing schools and soon organised a national network of nurses trained in the technique. Today, therapeutic touch is the common practice. Even though the medical groups are unconvinced of her claims, they have not been able to disprove it either.

Another magic treatment is the bio-feedback system. This system trains people to control many bodily functions and processes like temperature, blood pressure, muscle contraction and even heartbeat. In bio-feedback, a patient is connected to a body activity. The patient is asked to picture his body, for example, to lower his heartbeat or blood pressure or any other thing. The patient tell, his body to do it and he himself relaxes. After this, the monitor begins to feed the information back to the patient that his heartbeat slowed down by one count or two counts. The repeated announcements fill the patient with more confidence and he starts doing it more confidently. Ultimately, the signs of disease disappear.



The famous spiritual healer applies her healing touch

Presently, Kansas is the most well-known place for biofeedback system. Alice Green and her husband Dr. Elmer Green are the founders of this system. They say, “It does nothing to the person. It is only a tool for releasing a potential”.

However, the research is still prevailing on this subject in America. At Emory University in Atlanta, bio-feedback is used to rehabilitate damaged muscles. At the centre for Behavioral Psychiatry and Psychology in Birmingham, Michigan, this system is used to cure migraine. While at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Centre in New York, Dr. Kenneth Greenspan, a psychiatrist has used bio-feedback to treat post surgical cardio-vascular patients. He achieved a great success. He treated 22 patients over a period of three months and cured them completely. By the end of the treatment, all the patients achieved remarkable improvement in mobility and relief from pain. Dr. Greenspan has included in his bio-feedback treatment, mediation and breathing exercises too.

In fact, the abilities which bio-feedback begins in patients – control the nervous system and concentration are similar to the achievements of Indian Yogis. Anyhow, the efforts to improve the bio-feedback system throughout the world has started. Research is being conducted to make it more accurate.

Inspite of the success met by both the unique medicine research, there are still many questions which remain unanswered. The words why, what and how are still not satisfactorily explained by the believers and founders of the treatment. If the satisfactory answers are given to these questions, then perhaps these two – psychic healing and bio-feedback system will become an integral part of the medical science.

