

# Alberuni: The Knowledge-Bridge of Indo-European Mythology

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**Abstract-** Alberuni should be revisited and reread. Another chapter and characteristic should be rediscovered and added to Alberuni's records: Mythology. Mythology, as a branch of knowledge, a non-major field and course of study, as a perspective, critical opinion and attitude, nearly an informal subject at universities, a playful part of comments and interpretations, and then, as an approach and informal discipline, criticism etc. intermingled with, philosophy, anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, and poetry, has been also appeared and recorded before and emphatically after Alberuni. He can be realized as a knowledge-bridge of mythology between and across the old and the new eras. With his very silent but controversial India Alberuni may not realistically be ignored and put away at all.

Both Alberuni himself and his book:[ 'Tahghigh ma lil Hind' translated, edited, annotated, and titled in English by Edward Sachau: 'Alberuni's India' in modern and academic sense] are complex, multidisciplinary, abstract and concrete both. What is significantly sorrowful is in fact Alberuni is tried to be absolutely ignored and misjudged as the first and modern mythologist by contemporary mythologists and their colleagues while the subject, terminology, suggestions, hints, and signs in several chapters of his 'India' hand over, and connected to, myths and mythology. This is what, presumably, university graduate students: undergraduates and postgraduates both must appear to, and go through and see it in depth. The paper, necessarily, is also to exploit and emphasize mythological trends and components of Alberuni's writing.

What else this paper would like to do is to explore to what extent the claim or hypothesis of Abu Reihan Alberuni being the mythologist, with his book, does have an approach to mythology of its own. It is also to persuade academics and scholars to investigate why Alberuni should, to such an extent, be ignored **as the great pioneer of Indo-European mythology.**

**Index Terms-** Alberuni, pioneer, IE mythologist, knowledge, myth, deities, self-consciousness, Rig Veda, multidisciplinary, approach

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Rediscovering Al Beruni in the West in the Nineteen Century:

Alberuni was certainly : "the outstanding authority in" all available and diverse fields of knowledge in his era, as all present academics, scholars, and knowledge-based authorities, such as the Encyclopedia of Religion, of Britannica, of Islam, of Brill, of

Americana and the like agree and express. Unfortunately, his legacy of mythology, cultural historiography, and anthropology "remained" inactive and unattended by his own fellow citizens. He was, as some historians of ideas indicate, was unknown until he was rediscovered as the historian of cultures and of religions in nineteenth century, in the West. The 'Concise Encyclopedia of Islam', ( Cyril Glasse edition, London, 1988, p.75) continues: " Alberuni's field of study embraced the human world, plants., and animals, the physical world and abstractions of physics and mathematics". He was the huge convoy of the different grounds of human knowledge to his, and the future generations.

However, his mythology is still to be discovered. It has not been attended and precisely scrutinized yet.

### Mythology before Abu Reihan Alberuni Euhemerus (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C)

It is not possible to determine any exact date for criticizing myths in history except relying on the records and sources available in different shapes discovered and affirmed by explorers.

Euhemerus is Greek Mythographer who established the tradition of seeking an actual as well as historical bases for Mythical beings and events. It is thought he was born at Messina though some claim he was born at Chois, Tegea, or Messena in the Peloponnesus. He lived at the court of Cassander king of Macedonia, from approximately 301 to 297 B.C.

He is chiefly known by his Sacred History, a philosophic romance based upon archaic inscriptions that he claimed to have found during his travels in various parts of Greece." In this work he systematized for the first time an old oriental (perhaps Phoenician) method of interpreting the popular myths. He asserted that gods were originally heroes and conquerors who had earned a claim to the veneration of their subjects. This system spread widely, and the early Christians, especially, used it as a confirmation of their belief that ancient mythology was merely an aggregate of fables of human invention. (The New Encyclopedia of Britannica, vol.4, p. 595 fifth edition 1934 – 2007).

Another ancient Greek critic who criticized myth and mythic events is called Xenophanes.

### Xenophanes (570 - 475 b. c)

"Xenophanes wrote iambic against Hesiod and Homer, reproving them for what they said about gods." The concern here also other philosophical and theological opinions, but whether satirical or poetic, the reputation and denial of some Homeric and Hesiodic fictions are related to the subject Suffice or not. Indeed, but space and time do not allow to cover more.

Anthropomorphism, Theogony and Works and Days by Hesiod, Iliad and Odyssey by Homer are those that can be scrutinized more from Plato and Pre-Socratic philosophers' points of view.

Herodotus: Gods and epithets are created by Hesiod and Homer.

In Homer's Iliad there are different gods appearing and playing roles and doing super heroic actions. 'Works and Days' is by Hesiod in which gods are introduced and well praised. In the following paragraphs more treatment will be presented after introducing some works on the subject and close related topics.

Alberuni, fortunately, went to India with a great deal of knowledge about vast number of subjects, disciplines, and fields of knowledge in the eleventh century A.C. There the man who had known a lot, learned much, and for the first time wrote about many interrelated subjects profoundly in a vast amount of topics on India, religion, anthropology, philosophy, history, and mythology. He again started studying and experiencing things. Much of knowledge he had acquired about ancient Greeks and other neighboring nations were comparatively put on the table of use and work. He was there like a moving laboratory by his genuine and creative mind. In chapter ten of his book, as one of the tightly packed treatises about understanding India, he compares 'ancient Greek Sages' who had talked about religious and civil laws with those of Indian parallel ones. He names Sobn, Draco, Pythagoras, Minos. He is there and is well aware of mythical Zeus, the great deity of all deities of the Greek Pantheon. (ibid.)

Alberuni scientifically, broadly, and unbiased reports and describes the items and the subjects of his social-anthropology and cultural studies: "Zeus, with the Greek" and "Apollo, with the Lacedraemonians" is the source of laws. Alberuni then reports from Plato on some more relevant extent ibid. (p.105-6). "The gods pitying mankind as born for trouble, instituted for them feasts to the gods, the Muses, Apollo the ruler of the Muses, and to Dionysus, who gave men wine as a remedy against the bitterness of old age, the old men should again be young by forgetting sadness, and by bringing back the character of the soul from the state of affliction to the state of soundness." (ibid. p. 6).

## II. ALBERUNI ON RISHIS

Alberuni approaches comparatively the Vedic Rishis and the Greek Sages (deities?) with the same languages and attitudes. Rishis are "the pillars of Hindus' religion". For example, Alberuni narrates, "Narayana who, when coming into this world, appears in some human figure. (Alberuni's India, p.106). If one sees Professor Shrikant Parsoon's Rishis and Rishikas (2009) he will better understand what Alberuni, our fellow colleague, ten centuries before said something about the same but closer, nearer clearer reality who mythologists say now the similar things.

There is mythical, mythological as well as another item of comparison in Alberuni's Eighth chapter. It is on different classes and names of man's forged beings. Again (in Chapter VIII of his India, p. 97) Alberuni goes on by emphasizing that Greek mythology is full of similarity with Indian mythology. The variety of things and differences seems to him the dominant case in believes and traditions: (ibid. 89): "The Hindus are people who rarely preserve one and the same order of things, and in

their enumeration of things there is much that is arbitrary." (ibid. 89) There are also many real cultural traditions and habitual morality that Alberuni has found and expressed them in his book regarding Indians. The use of limitless initials and names at present and modern language is completely and it directly anticipated Alberuni. He was concentrating deeply on culture, and language, as well as real communication and morale of the Indus while he was in India. He utterly discloses that the vast number and absolute general Hindus in their social and everyday life employ and also invent so many topics, titles and names. And they are uncontrollable. Even naming of the deities can be found so. Indian Enumeration is a custom, a repeatedly communicated tradition, a habit that one finds in the understanding of Alberuni's India: He enlists some examples as follow:

"Brahman, Indra, Prajapati, Gadharva, Yaksha, Rakshasa, Pitaras, Pisaca". (p.89).

Details, data, hints, and extra pieces of information, other than those directly listed as topics and subjects of the book, although are hugely numerous and sometime directive, they can be focal and guiding to Modern mythology. Alberuni has almost accounted the most significant and contemporarily the 'approached Vedic deities and issues' in his India in the eleventh century precedent to any research on the Vedic fields and topics modernists and predecessors have done.

The topic 'On the Veda, the Puranas, and other kind of their National Literature': (in chapter VII. Vol.I of Alberuni's India) is one of the most significant sources of Indian mythology among other things: literature, and knowing culture and morale and every day mode of behavior are the examples.

Emphatically, again, not only the author's notes, in one way or another, on the semantic mechanisms of the Veda, but also on oral traditions as well as intuitive importance altogether represent the samples of Alberuni's approach to myths. The writing issue of the Veda and its 'recitation tradition', amongst Brahmins and Rishis, confidential and secret places for the Veda recitation are reasoned and traced by Alberuni. He well narrates and explicates the issues concerned to the above subjects.

The author Alberuni is well aware to report some focal and traditional points about the Vedas: Certain verses of the Veda should be sung in the open fields some particularly in rites, some in rituals, and places: "Hindus maintain that the Veda together with all rites of their religions and countries had been obliterated in the last Dvapara-yuga, a period of time of which we shall speak in the proper place." However, Alberuni gives the philosophy of application and of practice of the Vedic verses and of prohibition of writing of them in open public spaces in details. After offering the main classification of the Vedas texts, he lists the names of rishis who wrote them. Fifty five names are presented in that chapter.

Alberuni names one book called 'Smriti' and says it is "derived from the Veda". Another that he writes that 'Vishnu Dharma, morphologically means 'The Religion of Man'. He also names the books, 'Mimamsa', 'Nayayabhasha' respectively written by Jaimini and Kapila. There is another book written by the son of Parasara called Vyasa and it is called 'Bharata'(Mahabharata?). Alberuni reports that this book has eighteen parts and all parts have one hundred thousand Slokas. As Alberuni is scientifically and methodologically self trained man,

he gives straightforwardly the eighteen topics of the parts accordingly. The first title of the first part is “the King’s Dwelling” (part one) and the last title of the last part is called: “Journeying Towards Paradise.” (Part eighteen). These are interestingly and historically before the book ‘The History of Indian literature, in three volumes, to be written by Winternitz in Centuries later,( i.e. 20<sup>th</sup> Century), A History of Sanskrit Literature, to be written by Arthur A. Macdonell in Oxford University in 1899. And all accounts and reports on history of Sanskrit literature, names of the available books at that time and living authors, living and being known up to then, rites, songs, and rituals analyzed are all before Max Muller, A.A. MacDonnel, Hermann Oldenburg, Keith etc.

Among the chapters: X, XI, XII, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XXII, XXIII of Alberuni’s India, the chapter VIII of the first volume :[ ‘On gods and goddesses of India] is one of the very compressed books about the comparative mythology of Indo – European people generally. He for the first time in the history of knowledge of myths seems, methodologically and comparatively, to be talking about Parajapati, Indra, Pitars, Devas, Indra’s love affairs with the wife of Nahusha the Brahmin, and the metamorphosis into serpent, Rishis, and then goes to Israelites and ‘Tura’ the Hory book of Jews, Zoroaster, Greeks, Zeus and Galenus’s Book of Deduction, Aratos and Homer (Ibid. Chap. VIII,p.98). His awareness of Homer represents his mindful, thoughtful, and conscious knowledge of mythical stream, his Indo-European ancient knowledge of myths and of literature Noting and hinting at different and significant characters, books, ideas, opinions, and writers, points of view, theories, hypotheses and myths prove that Alberuni, in fact, is the walking, thinking, and living encyclopedia of various fields of knowledge.

The Terminology of mythology has deliberately been coined and created for the first time in the contemporary world by Alberuni since the semantic signs and directives about, and of, mythology had not been dealt with up to the date he was considering them.

The records of Analogical approaches of Alberuni, from mythology to religious knowledge, shows that he had, in one way or another, hidden and self-censored the representation he had grasped in a great deal. Perhaps because of political as well as religious observations Analyzing, for example, Three Forces in Hinduism and within the Hindus which are Brahman, Narayana, and Mahadeva (Samkara Rudra?) must have taken him to the result to put: “Here there is an analogy between Hindus and Christians, as the latter distinguishes between the ‘Three Persons’ and give them separate names: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but unite them into one substance.” (ibid. p.94). That is why it is, or can be inferred that Alberuni’s idea on Indology significantly anticipates the German tradition of the Vedic studies such as Oldenberg’s, Hillebrandt’s and others’ before and after him. (Not very far is the Alberuni’s analogy, and then theory, of trinity from anticipating Dumézil’s tripartite theory). The author of ‘India’ also narrates some mythical stories Hindus believe: The story of King Somadatta when he wants to depart the earth. There are the body and soul issues and their everlasting metamorphoses and developments. The story of creation by Brahman and Viraj (right) and Manu (left side) is another myth Alberuni narrates in his chapter. Manu, his son. The famous and the prolonged periods derived from Manu’s name: Manvantaras

etc. Aryaman, Varuna, Mitra, Agni, Mahendra, Marici and Kasyapa are associated with the story of Pole are named in the chapter XXII of his book. (pp. 239-42): ‘Traditions Related to the Pole’.

Centuries before Max Muller, A.A. Macdonell, Hermann Oldenberg, Hillebrandt, Darmester, Kieth our mythologist understands and evidently expresses that : “The multiplicity of names of the sun as exhibited in the previous table was the cause which led the theologians to assume also a multiplicity of suns, so ... the name are derived from words with generic meanings, eg. Aditya, i.e. the beginning, because sun is the beginning of the whole. The data and facts about the Moon (Soma) the sun Surya, Savitr ... what German scholars analyzed Alberuni had noted at his careful experimental, and knowledge – based research in eleventh century. [See ‘al Biruni’ in the Encyclopedia of Religion, vol.2, of Islam, vol.2].

He is a man of truth finding, how he is a man of logos, of logic, of distinction, and of theory and practice.

### III. ALBERUNI IS THE MYTHOLOGIST

If the mythologist is someone who clearly and deeply distinguishes between ‘logos’ and ‘mythos’ (as to standing codes of ‘wisdom’ and ‘imaginariness’ respectively) and deliberately and logically recognizes their principal differences, Alberuni is the one who has the main qualification of being called the mythologist. If the mythologist is somebody who separates deliberately and comprehensively fiction from non-fiction, false from true, imagination from reasoning, feeling from thought, Alberuni is that somebody. If the mythologist is to be the person who cognitively draws shining lines to distinguish simple from complex, is the person who knows well logically the difference between the simplicity and complexity of believers and rituals Alberuni is that person by and through a great deal of evidences available per se. If the mythologist is to be mythographer as well as historian, anthropologist and historiographer and he is who that frankly and demonstratively draws lines of differences between them, Alberuni is the mythologist. He distinguishes between “image loving crowd” and ‘knowledge loving elites’. He is objective as lets others express and represent themselves whatever they may say and be.

Who knows? If there were the realm of knowledge called mythology, as there was logic, philosophy, Astronomy Geometry and Alchemist etc, Beruni would be the first pioneer to develop and transcend it. However, he was Indologist within which many subjects such as mythology dwell, bear and lives.

Alberuni was the first well- aware mythologist to give the well structured, stratified, and properly detailed illustration of, i.e., the Fourteen Vedic Manus as one of his smallest units of attended subjects of exploration in the eleventh century A.C. He regards, in another focus, both Gayomart and Manu as the first man. Alberuni in his ‘Chronology of Ancient Nations’ expresses that “ Gayomart is the first man, reported from the point of view of ancient Iranians, mostly from the Avestan sources. Manu has very interesting and directive representation, character, and meaning. Literally, the root of Manu is ‘man’, and man linguistically and morphologically means “to think...” And if it is so, the language capacity, and the language orientation, linguistic approach, and its philosophy indicate a great deal of

semantic, natural, and logical explications and implications that have been also dealt in mythology.

#### **Alberuni's Approach to Manu, Gayomart and Manvantaras**

It is interesting that Alberuni (975-1048 AC) in his study of India approaches Manu as the lord of period (Alberuni's India, p. 130). He writes: "When Brahman wanted to create mankind, he divided himself into two halves, of which the right one was called Viraj, the left one Manu. The latter one is the being from whom the period of time called Manvantara has received its name. Manu had two sons..." (ibid.p.179)

"The Brahman is the lord of the world, but the lord of the, Manvantara is Manu." (ibid,p.297)

"There are fourteen Manus, from when the kings of the earth, ruling at the beginning of each manvantara(ibid.p.297). He then in the next page gives the detailed classified Manvantaras. Perhaps, nearly assured, it is the first scientific stratification in the realm of Indo-Iranian, if not the Aryan mythology that a well learned modernist, an advanced post-renaissance scholar has ever presented. There Alberuni states that "Manu, as the ruler of the first Manvantara, is Indra, who has nothing in common with any other being." ( Alberuni's India, p. 298). Moreover, the scientifically detailed chart represented in this page is perhaps the first one in an introductory text about the Rig Vedic Manu illustrating different features of the first sacrifice. Because there is no any other texts on India's 'mythology' outside India that might have been written by an Iranian, Arab or others except Alberuni himself.

Chapter forty four of his book elaborates on Manvantara periods of Manus(pp.297-99). He chronologically gives, among other things, the chain of Manus Kings and their periods all of which used and alluded to by other later and modern scholars searching for the understanding the history and mythology of the country.

One can frankly inattentively express that there is no any ungrounded, basic, and directive information in Max Muller, Macdonell, Christesen, Schrader, Bergaignel, Oldenberg, Hillebrandt, Bloomfield, Mallory's and other later scholars' works about myths of India that may not be, in one way or another, pointed out in Alberuni's eighty chapter book called in French: *Memoire géographique, Historique et scientifique sur l'Inde*, and titled in English '**Alberuni's India**' [officially printed in France in late 1840s, and in English in early 1870s] Most research and knowledge based-academicians and scholars would confess this if they saw the great book of Alberuni's India, say '*Alberuni's Indology*': [*Tahghigh ma lil Hind*]. Alberuni's other important book about some Iranian myths is 'Chronology of Ancient Nations':[Asar al Baghiya]. There he states about Gayomart from various points of view. [ See Chronology of Ancient Nations, English translation by C.E.Sachau, London, 1879; this research's reference is the recent Farsi translation: 'Asar al Baghiya' by Dana Seresht, Akbar, printed by Amirkabir Publications, Tehran,2007]. Moreover, Windischmann, Spiegele, Noldeke, Marquart, Darmesteter, Husing, according to Arthur Manuel Christensen, all follow what Alberuni found and said about Gayomart in the eleventh century. And Alberuni himself has not added anything further than what Tabari said in the ninth century A.c. And this is what may be rediscovered by still unbiased men of research and knowledge.

Alberuni who experienced and got direct touch to, and sources of, the Sanskrit language, believes, philosophies, myths, religions, Morphology and philology, science, and technology in India and lived there for methodic and experimental study founded the 'Comparative Cultural Studies', 'Anthropology' and 'Intercultural Approach to Mythology and Ethnology.' [See Sachau, Edward,1888, his introduction to Alberuni's India, pp .IX-XLV, 521-648]

Nevertheless, Alberuni in chapter forty-five of his Indology, called 'On the Constellation of the Great Bear' give a brief analytical record and report on the missions of Indra, Manu, and the sons of Manu:

"... The theologian believe that the Seven Rishis[the holders of all knowledge-omniscient'] stand higher than the fixed stars, and they maintain that each manvantara there will appear a new Manu whose children will destroy the earth; but the rule will be renewed by Indra.... The angels are necessary, for mankind must offer sacrifices to them and must bring to the fire the shares for them... (Alberuni's India, p.303) The table presented on the following page of 304 of the book [new print March 2003] illustrates fourteen Manvantaras periods and the seven Rishis necessary for renewing the Veda and...

Again most later mythologists, scholars, and anthropologists have been using this unique and great multidisciplinary Eighty-chapter Book of 'Alberuni's India' in one way or another, without mentioning the original pioneer status of the book, the author, and indeed without honouring and without even naming Alberuni. Egocentrism deny, keep aloof from, and avoid academic fairness, even from and in the advanced, industrialized countries, unfortunately. But nonetheless, no one can deny the functions, uses, and effects of this eleventh century giant text of Alberuni on Indology and 'Multidisciplinary Comparative Study' about India, her people, culture, ethics, and spirit.' This huge research designated to one of the most ancient nations of the world. Alberuni, Abu-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad( 973-1048 ) was a giant in comparative and inter and multi disciplinary studies. He was the great pioneer of Indo-Iranian as well as Indo-Aryan studies, too. "He criticized manuscript tradition like a modern philologist". (Alberuni's p.viii, preface)

"He composed about twenty books on India, both translations and original compositions, one of the concerned books to me and my study show a complete scholarly qualities\_when your start to read chapter one, you start objective and dramatically scientific language revealed.

"Alberuni was a learned scholar, with mastery over several languages, especially Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. He was also a specialist in many subjects."( Sachau, p.ix, Alberuni's India).

His main interests were, among other fields, religion, philosophy, cultural studies, traditions, believes, history, geography, and anthropology, and certainly original Sanskrit texts. Knowing Greek mythology and philosophy the first man of knowledge who scholarly touches Indo-Iranian myth from a comparative point of view was Alberuni. Only the tiny instances of the considerable insights are in the last paragraphs of chapter eight and in the whole chapter twelve of his book *Tahghigh mal lil Hind* that he comes to the result. There in chapter eight he talks about three categories of anthological being from the point of view of the Indian sage "spiritual in the height" and then "men in the middle", and the final and the meanest one goes to

"animals in the depth.(Alberuni's India,(a translation of Tahqiq Ma-lil-Hind) translated, edited, and annotated by Edward Sachau, Indology, India,2003,pp.57-64) In this chapter Alberuni deals with Greeks, Zoroaster and Hindus myth. The title of this chapter, as Edward Sachau translates it, is "On the Different classes of created Beings, and on their Names.(Ibid.) He deals with different myths in the vast range of their contexts in a certain comparative manner.

Alberuni for sure is the first anthropologist (consequently, the first mythologist of the sort) who applied comparative means and methodology and research into his vast scientific investigation on culture, believes, traditions, myths, and rituals in India. The great deal of material and data he collects and represents in his book are valid and examined. Alberuni is objective, comparative, and critical in his working in modern scientific senses of the epithets and doing research within this frame work.

He is not only physical scholar and he has worked on natural philosophy and objective experimentations but also he is mentally and logically metaphysician , among other specialties he has in other relevant fields to two mentioned categories of knowledge. As Edward Sachau and other scholars have investigated, Alberuni in his objectiveness, comparativeness, and criticism is well a textual scholar in its completely modern sense." He criticizes manuscript tradition like a modern philologist."(p.xvii). He is the man who composed about twenty books on India, both translation and original composition.(p. xviii).

One of the manifestations of Alberuni's self consciousness in a sense is his general Anthropology. He was to discover varieties of other cultural trends and characteristics and religious believes. The other one is his particular multi-perspective 'In Search of India'(Tahghigh ma lil Hind). That is his Indology where mythology dwells. He, in his Indology , the first and long-lasting approach to see India intercultural, establishes a serious objective observation. He constructs a polylogue discourse in his inspection of the great subcontinent land of complex imaginations. It is a search on a multidimensional feature of man on the earth. Alberuni invites us to be aware of others own selves, cultures, feelings, lives, and settings. This was the first experience in the realm of multi-cultural consciousness, of knowledge, and of multi-disciplinary observation as well as the anthropology in which mythology is lodged.

#### IV. MYTHOLOGY AFTER ABU REIHAN ALBERUNI

Max Muller(1823-1900) is well Known to indologists, specially to Indian Scholars as he, among other things, worked on Rig-Veda and the Sanskrit language in a great deal. Max Muller , perhaps, as one of the first and main applicants of, presumably, scientific approach to mythology and the etymology of Aryan language in the nineteenth century, refers the start of his study of mythology, and of his scholarly findings of it, to the philological bases of Indo- Aryan languages. Max Muller's explanatory discovery was that of 'one family-origin of Indo-Aryan languages' is, and should be, the basis of explanation of myth, Aryan myths( Indo-European as well as ethnologically related people myths...). Although "the philological processes" of the "evolution of etymology are still unexhausted" in order to

understand a myth, Max Muller insists, "Discover the etymology of the names."(=Linguistic explanation).

However, these feelings and thinking of one of our great Indian scholars, professor Chandra Chattopadhyayar reflects on the western scholars carefully. He look into the matter carefully.. He sees regarding Max Muller and other western Orientalists, as professor Chandra looks, are perfectly understandable in this context; he in his inaugurating statements in a conference expresses that the Western orientalist "have not always been able to get at the true significance of our culture for the lack of understanding of the actual psychological reaction to religious situation"( 'Vedic Studies: New Directions in The Light Of Indo-Iranian Material', Vedic and Indo-Iranian Religion and Literature, 1979).

It is also the scholarly objection of Professor Chattopadhyaya , India, in his Vedic and Indo-Iranian Religion and Literature to Max Muller's wrong historical assumption that caused the later Europeans' misunderstanding that makes us think more carefully about the western orientalist's findings and theories. They are usually Eurocentric or Euro-oriented in their research approaches. Thus this does not disclose truth in human science, culture, and history.

However, several theorists in different fields of study have worked on other possibilities of explaining and theorizing about myth and mythology after Max Muller. This comes from Edward Butler Tylor (1832-1917), J.G.Frazer (1854-1941), the very famous Scottish anthropologist. His influential, main, and very famous work is the 'Golden Bough' believing that myth is of primitive religion. Frazer is the one who with E.B.Tylor think that myth is completely primitive and "is the victim of the process of secularization."

Then Lucien Levy-Bruhl (1857-1939), one of the most famous anthropologists and philosophers of the twentieth century, of France. The eminent French anthropologist, having worked on primitive societies, holds that primitive people and their thinking are illogical, and science divides and separates them from the modern ones. In opposing to the Emile Durkheim's theories and hypotheses, he wrote three books on primitive feeling, assuming and their working of mentality. All of his three books (How Primitives Think, The Primitive Mentality, and The Soul of The Primitive) concern magic, super natural, and mental activity of pre-historic tribesmen.

Freud (1857-1939), famous with his theory on Oedipus Complex, C.G.Yung (1857-1961), famous for his "the Unconscious" theory on also myth; Ernest Cassirer (1874-1945), Malinowski (1884-1942), Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) and George Dumezil(1897-1986), he tried to employ multidisciplinary discourse in his analysis of myth:

#### V. TRIPARTITE SYSTEM OF EXPLANATION

George Dumezil somehow revolutionized the study of comparative mythology especially comparative Indo-European mythology. It is true that solar mythology of Max Muller faded out by publishing Golden Bough of Frazer. Frazer's theory rose up as a newest formulation of myth formation and religious believes, and that was this explanation: every religion in the world is reflections of the attempts to revive the world and nature by periodical killing and replacing kings and other heroes who are symbolic of divine begins. Dumezil, looking for a new

formulation and justification to replace Frazer's and other nineteenth century theories, formulated his 'Tripartite system of explanation'.

• **Tripartite Social Class System:**

Tripartite cognitive model( in Mallory's terms) in terms of which ancient Indo-European speakers ordered their social and supernatural universe: that is three level three function- model  
 The tripartite system of explanation can be counted as the

following appendix of Marx's, Weber's, and Claude Levi Strauss's theories. Dumézil's system of structuration is applied, or can be applied, not only to describe mythologies but also the whole social systems of the most parts of history and geographical territories of the world.

**Examples of Tripartition in Various Indo-European Traditions**

INDIA	Mitanni deities	RV	Mahabharata	Indic Classes
I:Soverign	Mi-it-ra Aru-na	Mitra Varuna	Yudhisthira Pandu	Manu 8.113 brahman swears by truth
II:Warfare	In-da-r	Indra	Arjuna	Ksatriya swears by truth
III:fertility	Na-sa-at-tiya	Nasatya Dasra	Nakula Sahadeva	Vaisya swears by cattle, grain and gold
IRAN	Avesta	Iranian scoail classes	Sacred fires initiated by early Iranian kings (Shanameh)	Prayer to Ahgura mazdah to ward off
I:Soverign	Asa Vasista Vohu Mana	Ithrvan fire priest	Atur Farnbag 'priests'	demonic evil and heresy
II: Warfare	Xasthra Vairya	rathaestar chariot 'warrior'	Atur Gushnasp 'warriors'	military conquest
III: fertility	Amrtat Haurvatat	vastryo fsuyant 'herdsmen	Atur Bazzen Mihr	bad year of harvest
GREECE	Judgment of Paris		Athenian social groups	Lycrugus's reforms
I:soverign	Hera promises kingship	.....priests	establsih senate	
II: warfare	Athene promises military victory	... guanls	established military messes	
III: fertility	Aphrodite promises love of most beautiful woman	.... farmers	redistributed land	
ROME	Deities	Major Roman priests	History	
I: Sovereign	Jupiter Dius Fidius	Flamen Dialts (jupiter)	Romulus Numa	
II: Warfare	Mars	Flamen Martialis (Mars)	Tullus Hostihus	
III: fertility	Quirins	Flamen Quirinalis (Quirinus)	Ancus Martius	
SCANDINAVIA	Deities	Hemskringla		
I:Soverign	Odth Tyr	on Winter's Day a blood sacrifice for a good year		
II: warfare	Porr	on a summers Day, a sacrifice for victory in battle.		
III: fertility	Njordr Freyt Freyja	in the middle of Winter, a sacrifice for a good crop.		

(The above chart is Quoted from Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture, by James Mallory and Q. Adams).

And Mircea Eliade(1907-1986), he also holds that” myth is “an extremely complex cultural reality which can be approached and interpreted from various and complementary viewpoints.” we will see more in detail later that Eliade is one of the most hardworking and significant scholars of twentieth century. Eliade believes “myth narrates a sacred story, it relates an event that took place in primordial time, that fabled time of beginning”; and then the pioneer founder of structural theory and analysis of myth Claude.Levi.Strauss(1907-2009), the first structural anthropologist whom will be discussed later; Jean Pierre Vernant(1914-2007) the new post-Straussian structural ethnologist who, like his pioneer, look for underlying patterns in myths. There are anthropological explanations, psychological, psychoanalytical, ethnological, sociological, as well as intellectual and epistemological interpretations and explanations.

However, it seems that the working approaches to studying myth should be, in one way or another, open to various points of view according to definite and recognized methodological principles. That will let the scholar choose, decide, and academically manoeuvre over his data in order to reach a scholarly reliable result. As the indo-Aryan and indo-Iranian multi-dimensional linguistic and cultural example of enquiry in the realm of civilizations requires a great flexibility and openness, myth naturally will be very small part of it.

Consequently, imposing irrelevant limitations upon the framework within which myth is being investigated will lead to unreliable consequences and the result, and the outcome would be incomplete. As still doubt exists whether mythology can be an ancient science at all or not; the scientific study of myth is under several questions . Although it is anthropology that burdens the most heavily loaded strains and clogs burdens of mythology, as John Beattie, Andrew Lang, Overring and others hold, mythology can still be the subject of study of other socio-human sciences, too.

**If the two Samples of work on the 'Vedic Mythology' after Alberuni be comparatively studied with his Indology, in which his mythology dwells, by scholars of comparative study, Alberuni will be re-known and re-comprehended better. The two good Samples are as follow:**

1. **The Religion of the Veda** by Professor Hermann Oldenberg, translated into English by Shridhar B. Shrotri, published by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Ltd., New Delhi 2004 – [first ed. 1988].

[It is a well structured and broadly documented four chapter research on Indo-European Mythology.]

Professor Hermann Oldenberg’s book, among other books on the Vedas, especially on the Rig Veda, is a unique one and has particular linking. It is one of the main sources of scholarship on the subject all scholars such as Arthur Macdonell should refer to. It is one of the best analytical and at the same time comparative study books with some hints at Indo-Iranian culture and myths. It is remarkable. The Vedas and the Avestan scriptures are both the most ancient creation of the Aryan mind.

Both are chronologically contemporary products with slight different time scan.

However, the four chapter work of Professor Oldenberg is one of the best sources of Indology after Alberuni's Indology. It covers a great number of comparative items and topics of discussion and analysis. Its exploration of the Rig Vedic deities and subjects gives the reader a vast information and textually documented data. The introduction of the book first goes to offer information about the four Vedas: the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda and a few hints at the Same Veda. The writer does not fail to talk about other and the later literature such as Brahmanas and Sutras. This is interesting to have a comparative look at the Veda and the Avesta by a German expert of early Hinduism like Oldenberg. He allots a few pages to announce that both literatures and indeed ancient cultures are from the same source and have many sites of similitude. The parallels in deities and rituals and rites that most Avestanists and Vedists emphasize are eminent opportunities for the writer to demonstrate throughout the book. It is emphatically in its introduction of the Religion of the Veda that Oldenberg registers the new discoveries of archaeologists and the general aspects of common elements of originality of the Aryan people.

In Chapter one the wide aspect of the Vedic Gods is recorded. Deities, Adityas, demons, Animals, features of animals and their relation with the Gods are detailed. Symbolism, Totemism, and pluralism of Gods and objects are also discussed. Oldenberg accepts that Durkheim’s Totemism, and general respect for animal and plants have existed since the Vedic period in India. The primitive tribes of Aryans and non-Aryans have honoured plants and animal, and subsequently the nature. Although cases of violence are shown in other works such as Doniger’s and Thapar’s Respect for animals is one of the basic believes in India from the farthest time and the most ancient period. Sacrifices for deities in certain rituals are for the sake of fertility, food and ceremonial requirement for the satisfaction of gods (deities). The writer like most orientalist and also Indian Scholars realizes Varuna, Indra as the most superior gods of the Vedic Pantheon. Agni, Mitra and other Adityas are exposed according to the Vedic literature in the research of Oldenberg.

In chapter two the discussion starts with fire god. Schroeder, Bergaigne, and Macdonell before him in their search on Indo-Iranian importance of the fire god have suggested a great deal of analysis and data. Azar, Athar in the Avestan literature and Agni in the Vedic hymns illustrate the significance and sacredness of fire. If we compare the fire in the myth of Prometheus in Greek, the reality of respect and of worship of fire by Indo-Europeans and Indo-Iranians in different stages manifests the significance.

The association of the sun with the phenomenon of fire and fire gods represent some deliberate idea and belief. The other topics such as animism and the rituals of sacrifice, prayer, magic rites, and belief in immortality, and funeral ceremony, magical medicine, divine magic, the traditions of curse and oath and treatment of the dead etc. show the overwhelming study of Oldenberg on the Rig Veda and comparative mythology. His analytic approach as well as documentary orientation both makes

his work one of the classical researches at the very end of the nineteenth century.

The problem with the Oldenberg's book is the methodology and the philosophy of research, and lack of orientation. The book does not fail to fall into some 'mass-treatment' of particular data of the Avesto-Vedic texts. The issue is massive documents, topic, data and subjects of study that have already been fragmented and split. There exists neither horizontal nor vertical observance over the philosophy of comparative research and the philosophy of human sciences. The mass of methodic representation of data and organized information - that is new strategy of modern academic institution fails to offer the persuasive motivation to the reader. However, of many books, and among many books on the subject Oldenberg's **The Religion of the Veda** offers a very strong and resourceful set of details, data, and references for thought and research. One should remind that this source book is written in 1894,. Therefore it is a reliable reference oneself that has been remained from the nineteenth century.

2. **The Vedic Mythology**, by Alfred Hillebrandt, translated into English by Sheeramula Rajeswara Sarma, published in two volumes printed in India by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Private Ltd., New Delhi, 1990, (first edition 1980).

This book is another reference particular source on Vedic Studies and Indo-European comparative mythology after Alberuni. It is written in a serious German tradition of 'ancient text analysis'. Hillebrandt approaches the subject matter by and through philological tradition of the nineteenth century. He himself expresses in the book that Max Muller's etymological and philological analysis is his confirmed assessment till then.

This thorough, broad, and very detailed documented research covers overwhelmingly the most significant deities and the textual and cultural issues of the Rig Veda. It is more detailed and expanded than Oldenberg's, Keith's, and Macdonell's researches on the Vedas. He has more concentrated on mere Vedic deities and their possible meanings and significances through digging into the linguistic roots and their probable parallels in Indo-European and mostly Avestan texts and myth. He starts with lovely Usas who brightens the world everyday soon after his twenty pages introduction.

In the introduction of the book, Hillebrandt offers the subject matter, and exposes his detail procedure and method as well as some comments on imagination and poetry. He also yields his philosophy and attitudes towards myth and poetry as well as nature: "mythology has a sister of kindred nature in poetry. The same power of fantasy which is active in the creation of the gods shows itself at work in poetry. Poetry also depends on the environment, on the phenomena of nature, on the climate and of course, on spiritual factors, on the individuality of a people." (pp. 2-3).

Hillebrandt points to Iranian scriptures and some of parallels in the introduction of his valuable book. Chapter two is placed for Ashvins while the whole chapter three is decorated for Agni. Different manifestation, moves, and materialization of Agni on earth in water, and in the sky is chased. His relation with other deities, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and Aditi the mother of Adityas is scrutinized.

One of the most eminent characteristics of Vedic Mythology of Hillebrandt is its vast evidential reference to the

original texts of Vedas. You see and read the main scriptures while studying his comment and analysis. It is in your hand as you comprehend the detailed and playful comments of the writer of the book. This is when you feel that the book is a comparative study not a Vedic explanation only. The writer is well aware of the tribal feeling of the writers of the Vedic hymns and knows how they migrated and how rivers, horses, chariots, cow, milk, and meat are vital and significant for those Aryamen. Here and there throughout the pages the information and details of their life are distributed. The remarkable thing about the writer of the **Vedic Mythology** is his sensitivity to nature, its manifestations, and the reflection of it on the Vedic verses and rshis.

Another aspect of the book is its critical attitudes towards other theorists and Indologists, even those German friends of his. The writer of the book frankly utters his oppositions and reputations to other ideas and writers. Nevertheless, the approach of the book appears to be somehow naturalistic as well as naturist. This two volume well-evidenced work engages the reader with a lot of data and linguistic information. His comparison and contrast points mirror the imaginative perspective of the rshis of the Vedas efficiently. Chapter four of the second volume of the research well illustrates Soma the plant and Soma the god in all ritualistic way and poetic manner. Details about the meaning and significance of Soma are amazing in the context of the book. Related and associated items are even more exposed and explained.

However, the book is one of the legacies of studies on the comparative mythology of Indo-European and Indo-Iranian culture. The characteristics of the research are no more than nineteenth century ideological and naturalistic as well as linguistic with romantic trends. It does not fail to move forwards to the twentieth century modernism, but with the surviving remains of romantic idealism that is melted into philologist and naturist etymology. That means the writer goes little beyond all his century's wisdom though he is strong enough to overcome the difficulties of semantic questions of ordinary philosophers of Germany. The writer presents a fairly equipped analytical achievement of '**explication de text**' (explanation of the text), close reading approach of modern critical schools to literature and texts. That is a very formal and close analysis of any literary work (poetry, particularly). Explication of the text tries to examine all structural and formal elements of the object of the analysis: form, content, style, imagery, interior and exterior decoration and so on. His genuine wit anticipates modernists emergence. Therefore, he can be a phenomenal discovery for one who works in literature and criticism as well as literary schools. He, like other fellow countrymen, follows their precedent pioneer, Max Muller.

Indeed, Arthur Manuell Chritensen's work on Iranian Mythology and Arthur A. Macdonell's works on the Vedic mythology and Sanskrit literature should be added on the above ones.

It is nevertheless, interesting to see that only after the availability of Alberuni's Tahghigh ma lil Hind, India, in Europe that some great works such as Professor's Hermann Oldenberg's, Arthur Macdonell's, and Hillebrandt's appear. [*Memoire geographique, Historique et scientifique sur l'Inde*], and titled English '**Alberuni's India**' [formally printed in Franch in late 1840s, and in English in early 1870s].



Therefore, there is a need of overwhelming 'comparative critique' of Alberuni, a textual, historical, and cultural critique.

Alberuni should be re-visited and re-read. Another chapter and characteristic of his should be re-discovered and added to Alberuni's records: Mythology. Mythology, as a branch of knowledge, as a non-major field and course of study, as a perspective, critical opinion, attitude, playful part of comment, and then, as an approach and informal discipline and criticism intermingled with, philosophy, anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, and poetry, has been also appeared and recorded before, and emphatically, after Alberuni. He can be realized as a knowledge-bridge of IE mythology, between and across the old and the new eras with his very silent but controversial India. Alberuni may not realistically be ignored and put away at this entire branch of knowledge.

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## VI. NOTES AND REFERENCES

If someone has talked or written about Alberuni's approach to myths or mythology claiming or arguing that Beruni is a mythologist and his Indology really indicates and explicates mythology, that I have not seen nor read up to now. This is peculiar! How could this has been happening! Since one of the basic subjects of 'Alberuni's India' is myths and related items and terminology. How the Vedic mythologists of different schools and approaches could have not referred to him!! While he is the main and first source to the outside world and on the Vedic and Hindu myths since the eleventh century, few writers of this sort and of this subject, intentionally or unintentionally has alluded to him and his as mythologist and mythology.

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