

Language Twists and Multilingual Parley

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Over the Hindu Kush Mountains, a bountiful, lush valley, existed once, famously known as The Indus Valley. Central to the Dravidian civilisation, this Indus Valley flourished by the River Indus, within the enchanting citadels of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, in 5,500 BCE approximately. The Dravidians were, a dark coloured race, and spoke a Dravidian language, most likely Tamil.

However, 1,500 BCE, marked the rise of a different type of race. Central Asia, and parts of the Iranian region saw an ambitious tribe of fire worshippers grow. They were Nomads, who travelled far and wide. Unlike the Dravidians, they were skilled horse-men. They traversed as far as the Indus Valley, beyond the Hindu Kush Mountain range. Here, they found this mesmerising land, attracting them like magnet to iron ores.

The nomads were fast riders. An advantage, they had over the Dravidians; they easily took over the valley, settled here, and made this domicile. The new settlers came in waves. The valley, over time embraced about 1,500 of them, http://factsanddetails.com/india/History/sub7_1a/entry-4099.html. Settlements took place in the Bronze age. *Michael Wood's, The Story of India*, suggests that at least one of these tribes originated in Turkmenistan. And that some of the others, branched off to modern day, Iran. Nevertheless, the settlers were termed Aryan, a highly controversial name according to this study, Indo-Aryans <https://www.ancient.eu/Aryan/>.

Aryans, were of lighter skin shade. They drank the Kava, a popular Aryan drink, never before consumed in the valley (please see Michael Wood's Story of India). The new arrivals spoke Sanskrit and Avesta: Avesta, an old Persian language used in ancient Zoroastrian texts. Sanskrit was a liturgic ancient language, and language of the elite, kings, scholars, and Brahmins.

The influences of Sanskrit over Avesta and vice versa, are well documented. They were contemporary languages (<http://www.applet-magic.com/sanskritavestan.htm>), which interacted with each other. There is evidence that old Avesta and Sanskrit had mingled. Over this intercourse, the two exchanged phonetics, borrowed words, had similar lexical patterns and grammar structures. This language interaction probably, preceded migration into the valley. Importantly, the term, Aryan comes from *ārya*, a Sanskrit word, which has an Iranian cognate *ārya* to mean, Kingdom of the Aryans. Both words descended from the same source, an Iranian form *ārya*, which the Indo-Iranian people used to refer themselves in the valley <https://www.ancient.eu/Aryan/>.

However, while the prevalence of Avesta and Sanskrit in the valley is well noted, it is still largely unknown, exactly, which of these Aryan tribes used the Sanskrit. And who preceded whom? In what order did this language evolution or political invasions begin? The language prior to these, was Tamil. The new settlers penetrated the culture, making inroads for the emergence of Avesta and Sanskrit, endorsing words such as *Arya* from a common Iranian descent.

Nevertheless, more light needs to be shed to determine this common ancestry of linguistics and language lineage. Whether or not, they had a common ancestry at all, or is it all just hype. In order to elucidate, a method has been factored in. Issues of linearity: linear vs non-linear approach.

To begin with the linear approach, what happens if the languages progressed linear. Let's assume for argument's sake that two languages, Avesta and Sanskrit arrived in the Indus Valley concurrently. What happens then is this, that the immersion into the culture happens all at once, to say that one continuous path was followed toward homogenisation. That which allowed for the natural acts of borrowing and lending to occur easily, exchange of lexicon patterns and grammar structures, as evidenced from the Iranian word, *Arya*. To follow this line of argument, is to assume that language interactions pre-dated migrations. The common word, *Arya*, had already been sourced from a common pool and entered before Aryan life began in the valley.

If this were correct, then there is a problem. How come Sanskrit became the court language and not Avesta? When both were liturgic, Aryan languages from the same stock. The handmaiden theory maybe that despite these earlier linguistics activities, when the tribes had actually arrived into the Valley, there must have been intervals of several years between the speakers of Avesta and speakers of Sanskrit. Languages may have had the common *Arya*, ancestry, prior to the arrival of the speakers into the valley, however, over the migration period, one language must have dominated until the other one arrived, which is when language interactions restarted, refreshed, renewed, however, in a non-linear way. Then again, if this were true, how would this factor of the time lag effect the language blend? The above already establishes that it could not have been anyway linear. There had to be a break of continuity on the timeline at some point. Because Sanskrit had already been decreed by someone, to become the formal language of court, instead of Avesta.

In the unlikely event of a simultaneous immersion of the two languages into the culture, there would have to be a language revolution in a bid to attain the superior, more prominent ground in the hierarchy. That the speakers of Sanskrit outraced the speakers of Avesta in their contend for the throne. And that somehow Avesta lost and paled in the shadow of an asymmetrical power dynamics of togetherness, much like Tamil. However, there are no records to uphold the view, Sanskrit ever battling the Avesta for office.

A peaceful transfer is also highly unlikely. Because Avesta too, an Aryan language of a winning race, not to be undermined, and equal to Sanskrit, unlike Tamil which had fallen and descended to a vanquished language of a commoner. Given the nature of a warring tribe, a peaceful transition to Sanskrit, to prevail as the high language is implausible, though not entirely impossible.

Hence, there had to be a time lag in the immersion process. An immersion had occurred, but at intervals, paving way to a non-linear language growth. In which case, Avesta, came into the culture later, and designated itself as the informal spoken language of the people. Both Aryan languages heavily influenced one another. And that Sanskrit was the formal language. Since Sanskrit had reigned uncontested as the language of power, and aristocracy, it emerged first, and foremost, Avesta at a later stage.

In favour of the non-linearity hypothesis, notably, around 850-600 BCE, a change in the Sanskrit phonetics of the word, Sindh had occurred. This is to suggest that the dominant first language in the culture was Sanskrit. According to Asko Parpola, a Finnish Indologist and Sindhologist, the *s* which had become an *h*, later, is when Sindh had changed into, Hindu. Etymologically, the word Hindu is an Avesta word. In Sanskrit, and according to the ancient text, *Rigveda*, this River Indus was known as *Sapta Sindhava*, the land of seven rivers or Sindh. Until this time, when *Sapta Sindhava* became the Avesta word *Hapta Hindu*, the influence of Avesta clearly emerged on Sanskrit in the valley, but not earlier to 1500 BCE, approximate time of migration.

At some point, the word Hindu took a suffix, *stan*, to mean 'stand' in Avesta. Hindustan, an Avesta word; it meant, nationhood. A time lag was now clearly deciphered, hence. And Avesta's immersion into the culture had occurred, but not concurrent to Sanskrit. Speakers of Sanskrit reached the valley, before the speakers of Avesta, and reigned supreme until Avesta arrived. Sanskrit reunited with the lost cousins, and with more interactions proceeded toward homogenisation.

Based on this short overview, the assumption which can be drawn is this that contrary to the popular belief, the Aryan languages moved into the valley in waves, not at concurrently. The speakers of Sanskrit came first, followed by the speakers of Avesta, at a much later date. Diachronically, the term Hindu alluded to nationhood, a political terminology, which had nothing to do with the Hindu religion as such. A multilingual nationhood which had gradually shaped and formed out of a necessity of an increasingly expanding settlement, who called themselves by this Avesta term, Hindu, whether it be the motley Aryan/ Indo-Iranian crowd, but for the sake of the entire non-Aryan race, the native speakers of Tamil.

Tamil, by the way, is a language of Dravidian origin, which is completely unrelated to Sanskrit or Avesta. Sanskrit and Avesta both belong to the Proto-Indo European or Proto-Iranian language groups. Apart from the Dravidian languages, all other ethnic communities and multi languages coexistent in Hindustan today, Hindi, Urdu, the Gujarati, the Marathi the Punjabi, the Bengali, the Kashmiri are therefore, homogenised Hindu languages. A unique conglomeration, born out of a common corpus of Proto-Indo European languages, which makes all of the Hindu population from this ancient land of Hindustan related, solely by dint of language link.

Thereof, even with all these complexities, the diverse communities are the same people, blended to encompass a nationhood, or brotherhood of culture. Strictly speaking, Dravidians are not Hindu, either by race or by language family; but natives of the Indus Valley, non-Aryan aboriginals, the many languages they speak, classified, as indigenous language family.

Significantly, there have been both linguistics and religious fusions between Dravidian and Aryan languages, just as there have been interactions within the Aryans languages. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dravidian_folk_religion#Influence_on_modern_Hinduism. Evidence of a synthesis is documented in *Rigveda, later Vedic works and Classical Post-Vedic literature*, in terms of borrowings of words, adoptions of sacred iconography, flora and fauna, traditions and philosophy. A confluence occurred, which contributed to the evolution of modern Hinduism, however, *Agni* remained cardinal to Hinduism.

Arguably, the faith *Hinduism*, and the nationhood of *Aryan Hindu/Hindustan*, must not be conflated. One is quite different from the other per se, one could be a Hindu, yet not adhere to Hinduism; although ancient Indo-Aryans or Indo-Iranians were both bonded by the nationhood of Hindu, as well as the brotherhood of Hinduism.

Which brings the Muslim crisis of autonomy in Kashmir, a muddled story, in clear and present danger? This ancient land of Hindustan was also their ancestral land, which presupposes, the Kashmiri Muslims as Hindu, just as their ancestors as Indo-Iranians/ Indo-Aryans. In inception, *Hindu* meant nationhood, the foundation of this Aryan civilisation. An ancient knot with history, ultimately, an umbilical relationship with the roots, much deeper than relationships with any geo-political land or country, at any given time.

That which can never be severed and must not be attempted. An autonomy which will bring them just a notional respite that they are not with India. But loss of this provenance, cannot break the diachronic link with Hindustan or the *Aryan Hindu* of nationhood. If this politics play of separation were to continue, first Pakistan, followed by Bangladesh, then this would defeat the purpose of inclusivity of the golden tradition, “*stan* or *stand*,” represents — “stand together,” to prevail under the one banner of a nationhood of a multilingual Hindustan, in a manner of speaking. This linguistic unity alone can be core, to indemnify the people of the enchanting Indus Valley Civilisation, against the corrosive current winds.

