

History

Western-Eastern Thoughts Merge

With the arrival of the 21st Century, we have arrived at a spaghetti global culture and universalism. That creates the 'sunny impression' that there is a fusion of dharmic and Western cultures, which is always good. This assumption ignores the *many distortions* and *unacknowledged appropriations* on the on "the Western side" not counting the *highly destructive influences of fundamentalist Abrahamian-ism, Leninism/Maoism, capitalist-ism, and narrow-minded other-worldliness.*

"Talk of global culture and universalism often creates the sunny impression that the fusion of dharmic and Western cultures is always good. This assumption ignores the *many distortions* and *unacknowledged appropriations* on the Western side, as well as the *highly destructive influences of fundamentalist Christianity, Marxism, capitalist expansionism, and myopic secularism.*" (Writes Rajiv Malhotra in *Being Different: An Indian Challenge to Western Universalism*, Harper Collins, page 12). *At an academic level*, it is common to insist that *dharmic thought* is *so different* that it is incoherent or, at best, not worth the effort of understanding. When grappling with dharmic ideas, academicians ask the scholars to see beyond their own heritage they are born into, because of course it is much superior!

When, however, Western scholars do try to grapple with dharmic ideas, they are *only willing to go so far as to shoehorn them into ill-suited academic categories*; it is apparently unreasonable to ask the scholars to try to see beyond their own context, as their context is of course much superior!

On a cultural level, outside of academia, things are only slightly better. Rather than outright rejection, we see misappropriation. Anti-yoga church groups aside, most Americans see Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, and other non-Western religions and philosophical schools not worth deep study and dedication in their own right, but more often as addendums to otherwise largely unquestioned comfortable consumerism.

Rudraksha beads and japa malas are worn as exotic jewelry, yoga mats are status symbols, and statues of Ganesa and Buddha used to instil a sparkle of the Orient to residential and business entrance halls.

Such conspicuous behavior intended to attract self-created attention is malignant. The arrogance which underlies such superficial solicitation of religion and philosophy as a stylish ornamentation, identical with that which is motivated by premeditated dismissal because of fabricated and untruthful cataloguing of the fake scholar who is governed by

a personal sense of innate ethnic prerogative, but bolstered by Western Mindset – especially bolstered by military and economic power.

Narcissist pursues self-gratification through egoistic self-admiration

No person is without a belief system. To most, this sounds obvious, but to a number of Western-trained intellectuals — and especially those who wish they were intellectuals — the goal of training in both logic and science is to attain to “pure reason” or “pure empiricism”. Some are thus able to convince themselves that they have reached that exalted state of being able to observe and think entirely free of assumptions of any kind. It does not take a deep self-appraisal to begin to uncover some of our unconfirmed beliefs that change according to our own reinforcement coming from actual spiritual experience. All belief systems are inherently malleable. Religions are founded upon certain assumptions. This is just the causal basement structure upon which higher order thought occurs: that of spiritualism!

To date, Parmenides ‘broken sentences’ are interpreted as assumptions based on different realm of experience. They are not sounded out by thoughts that are coming from a totally different mode of awareness.

But what is a belief? Most simply, a belief is any notion which a person holds and images to correspond to reality. It is quite true that there are good and not so good beliefs; good beliefs are generally those which do a reasonable job of modeling some part of reality, while bad beliefs range from being too imprecise to be useful, to outright opposing reality. Briefly, we can define “*knowledge*” as: a belief which a) corresponds, more or less, to reality, and which b) we are justified, by experience, observation, inference, etc., in believing.

We all hold beliefs which do not quite qualify as knowledge. Most of our opinions in matters of taste fall into this category, but so do our ideas on politics. It does not take a deep self-appraisal to begin to uncover some of our unconfirmed beliefs. *And nothing is wrong with holding these as long as we are willing to change them with new information.* In fact, having such beliefs is inevitable for minds limited by circumstance; it is in no way shameful to believe, but only to be closed to the equally inevitable testing of our beliefs.

In addition to having uncountable beliefs, each of us also has a *number of assumptions which underlay our whole complex of beliefs and provide context to our knowledge.* To be clear: an assumption is something which a person takes for granted in their worldview. We might say, then, that it is an especially fundamental belief. “Stealing is wrong” and “one should not hit another person without strong cause” are fairly common moral assumptions which, generally, do not require powerful reinforcement.

But that brings us to an important point of epistemology: assumptions can and do change according to factors including our own flexibility, reinforcement coming from actual experience — as well as contrary experiences — but, unlike most other beliefs, *a changed assumption has a ripple effect throughout the entirety of one's belief system* (rather than just its immediate conceptual neighbors). When a fundamental belief or idea changes, all beliefs and ideas which rely upon it, even indirectly, must be rechecked, sooner or later, to see if they are consistent with their modified context.

All of this leads to a rather basic, yet oft overlooked or even denied, act: every individual mind is, in a sense, structured according to a belief system (which, though, is inherently malleable, if we allow it to be), and every belief system is founded upon certain assumptions. This is just the causal structure by which higher order thought occurs (with many layers and details left out of this brief discussion).

There can be no "pure" reason, nor "pure" observation, insofar as there can be no embodied human cognition devoid of these epistemic structures. This is not an especially controversial statement, and its truth and import are easily discoverable through rudimentary self-observation.

As it pertains to religion, we may take the message of Chris Hedges' 2008 book *I Don't Believe In Atheists (Continuum International) as our own: beyond even "believing in" something, it isn't too far to say that everybody worships some ideal*. What differs, side from the object/subject of worship, are the degree of fervor, the source of the belief, and the deliberation with which it was chosen out.

This "inherent religiosity", then, takes its precise character from the complex of working assumptions and experiences which confirm or disconfirm them. This forms a feedback loop — more or less dynamic, depending on the degree of rigidity of one's belief system — in which assumptions are reinforced or weakened by experience, and in turn color the interpretation of those experiences. What is often missed, at least as much by "secularists" as anybody, is that very different life experiences — outer as well as inner, to the eternal chagrin of reductionists — are liable to produce very different landscapes of assumption. I do not here claim, therefore, that all, or even most, of these possible "assumptions capes" are true or equally useful; rather, I assert that those assumptions based in a far different realm of experience cannot be fully sounded by thoughts coming from a totally different mode of awareness.

Acharya Chanakya (321–297 BC) born in ancient India came from a humble background. Popularly known as Vishnu Gupta or Kautilya he is to this date known as one of the greatest Strategists, Philosophers, Economists and Teachers that India witnessed. His character was wisdom personified, morality based on ethics.

Dante must have known Chanakya in his travels!

His "Neeti" is fulfilled with a lots of life lessons, that Dante aspired for.

What were they and who was Chanakya?

According to history, Chanakya was educated at Takshasila, the ancient university of Bharat Varsha. He was connected to two cities, Takshasila and Pataliputra in Magadha. Magadha was an ancient Indian kingdom in southern Bihar, and was counted as one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas, 'Great Countries' of ancient India. Magadha played an important role in the development of Jainism and Buddhism, and two of India's greatest empires, the Maurya Empire and Gupta Empire, which originated in Magadha.

Acharya Chanakya's Arthashastra deals with subjects like welfare, fiscal and monetary policies, war strategies and international relations: all necessarily useful to this day.

With the help of his advice, Mauryan Empire, under the rule of Chandragupta Maurya made a lot of progress. Life lessons of Chanakya and teachings are even taught as an important part of Management Studies, referred to as Chanakya Neeti.

These were in direct contradiction with Church and Governance made unholy with Power and Politicking!

These are some of the life lessons that he gave:

1. Education is the best friend. An educated person is respected everywhere. Education beats beauty and youth.

Any person may be weak in terms of strength or attractiveness or have ample of wealth: but if a wise person he or she gains respect from everyone and everywhere if he is well educated. A rich person can lose wealth, and beauty lost over time; relations and love can fade out but education and knowledge never leaves a person in any condition.

2. Learn from the mistakes of others, because none of us live long enough to make them all ourselves.

3. Never share secrets with anybody. It will destroy you.

4. Before starting a project, ask yourself three questions – Why am I doing it, what the results might be and will I be successful.

5. The fragrance of flowers spread only in the direction of the wind. But the goodness of the person spreads in all directions, irrespective of differences in cultures or communities.

6. A man is great by his activities only, birth has nothing to do with it.

To decide anyone's greatness, allow him or her to prove self, by way of living and activities towards society and humanity.

7. A happy person is humble which is the root of self-control, works to weaken enemies, and increases self-confidence.

8. God is not present in idols or temples but in our feelings and our soul is our temple.

9. A debt is like an enemy; a debt should be paid to the last penny.

10. Learning is a friend on a journey, a wife in the house, medicine in sickness, and religious merit is the only friend after death.

11. One overly attached to his family members experiences fear and sorrow – attachment is the root of all grief. Discard attachment to be happy.

12. Actual knowledge is not confined in books and possessions. Knowledge means to be within ourselves and therefore should be applied in each and every stage of life.

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Impermanence is the philosophical problem of **change**. In Eastern philosophy 'impermanence' is best known for its distinct intellectual or philosophical points of view, rather than a rigid, common set of beliefs. Parmenides (5th century BC) with Plato were perhaps founders of metaphysics. Both expressed the "unreality of change" and that all permanence is an illusion.

Religion of Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian religion refers to the religious beliefs and practices of the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia, particularly Sumer, Akkad, Assyria and Babylonia between circa 3500 BC and 400 AD, after which they largely gave way to Syriac Christianity. [Wikipedia](#) The Syriac language of ancient Syria, is a western dialect of Aramaic in which many important early Christian texts are preserved, and which is still used by Syrian Christians as a liturgical language.

Roman Gaul refers to Gaul under provincial rule in the Roman Empire from the 1st century BC to the 5th century AD.

The Roman Republic began its takeover of Celtic Gaul in 121 BC, when it conquered and annexed the southern reaches of the area. Julius Caesar advanced the task by defeating the Celtic tribes in the Gallic Wars of 58-51 BC.

Gaulish and Roman culture amalgamated into a hybrid culture. The Gaulish language was marginalized and eventually became extinct. It was replaced by regional forms of Latin which in the medieval period developed into the group of Gallo-Romance languages, Roman control over the provinces deteriorated in the 5th century and was eventually lost to the kingdoms of the Franks, Visigoths and Burgundians.

Europe's Origin from Roman Gaul and Mesopotamia

When the Roman Empire collapsed, a diversity of tribes from the Old Civilization of Mesopotamia and Europe competed for control over this region. In time the Franks

achieved political supremacy here and conferred it their historically famous name of 'France'.

Franks were a Germanic tribe of mixed local peoples. They intermixed with emigrants from far-off lands. Many had conquered the area and intermarried with and spoke a Celtic language. In around 500 BC European local upper class tribes, became a dynasty of Frankish kings and ruled shifting areas of present-day France and Germany from the 5th to the 8th century AD. Leadership among the early Merovingianism was based on mythical descent. They asserted constitutional rights through divine patronage.

For centuries, multiple Merovingian kings ruled their kingdom -not unlike the early Roman Empire, which was created as a single realm but ruled collectively by several kings. Meanwhile the Franks in Europe intermarried with other local tribes, and, produced a homogeneous French culture.

Merovingian Dynasty and Canaan

Canaan is a historic Semitic-speaking region roughly similar to the modern-day Egypt, Israel, Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and the western parts of Jordan and Syria.

In the Late Bronze Age in the Amarna Period when under the Pharaoh Akhenaton, (Rehobaum) 1352-1336 BC was a period when Egyptian, Hittite Empire and Assyrian Empires converged, and came under King Solomon, the 10th century son of King David alias Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC). Amenhotep IV or Rehobaum, the son of Solomon made this period in history mysterious. He handed over to him the task of converting Polytheistic Canaan into a Monotheistic religion.

Rehobaum alias Amenhotep IV changed his pharaonic name to Pharaoh Akhenaton, married Nefertiti among other wives, parented six daughters, and set up a new religion.

After Rehobaum changed his name to Akhenaton, disbanded the benefiting Egyptian priesthoods and Solomon's many gods. He declared the Sun (Aten) as the sole God. Unfortunately his reign lasted only a decade. During his 35th year Akhenaton's son Smenkhkare became Pharaoh.

Smenkhkare married his sister Meritaten, who was Akhenaton's eldest daughter. Smenkhkare was queen when Tutankhamen became the pharaoh.

This was the Amarna Period when under Amenhotep III (Solomon) and his son Rehobaum (crowned Amenhotep IV), when polytheism was changed, to monotheism. Its brief lifetime lasted only under Pharaoh Akhenaton and his Queen Nefertiti.

The Egyptians, including the Pharaoh Amenhotep III alias Solomon, and Hindus had traditionally worshiped a pantheon of gods represented as human or animal-headed creatures. Pantheon of gods was a common element of polytheistic societies. 'Re' the Sun god played an important role in the Pharaonic State Religion. The Universal Power of the Sun (fire in space admixed with matter, water and air) fitted well with

prevailing ideas of 'supreme power' of the king within Egypt and beyond its borders in India and the East.

With the establishment of Akhenaton's new religion, solar gods from another geographical location (India) and perhaps another time, became prominent in Egypt. Akhenaton raised the Aten (Sun) to the position of the 'only god'. Through art and texts, there was enduring evidence of closer ties between king and Sun.

People meanwhile were encouraged to centre their attention in the worship of Akhenaton and the royal family.

Over the following four decades, most traditional gods of East and Egypt were abandoned. Teams of workers were sent around the temples of Egypt where they chiselled out the names and images of older gods.

The 'natural philosophy' of Akhenaton's religion was about a monotheistic religion worshipping the Sun as God. Like the Hindus and Buddhists before him, awe and wonder of the natural world was extolled in Canaan. Since ancient times the universal power of the Sun as it rose and set was celebrated with the Gayatri Mantra in the East. Enshrined in the Rig-Veda from long before 2000 BC, it was credited to the sage Valmiki. It was always an important part of the Hindu Canon and chanted when the sun rose, was present or was setting.

Therefore the Amarna Period was perhaps a time when the polytheistic tribes of Mesopotamia like the Merovingian migrated to other parts of neighbouring lands where the worship of the Compassionate form of Gayatri, the Mother of the Vedas, was practiced as the 'Black Virgin'. Meditating on the Glory of the Creator who created the Universe was worthy of Worship because the Sun was embodying Knowledge and Light.

Monotheism enters Europe:

Establishing the Merovingian Dynasty as a line of Frankish Kings in Gaul came from a mythical or mysterious ancestor Meroveus, who gave them a beginning in the line of Frank kings with Clovis. According to tradition, Merovech was born of two fathers.

Europa was already with a child from King Clodio when Merovech's mother went swimming in the ocean. While in the water she was either seduced or raped by an unknown marine creature. It was a sea-beast who was part bull and part fish who came from the Kingdom of Neptune. This creature fertilised Queen Europa a second time. When Merovech was born he had two different bloods running through him: the blood of Frankish rulers and that of an aquatic creature.

By this dual blood Merovech was said to have various superhuman powers. The whole Merovingian Dynasty was wrought with an aura of magic, sorcery and the supernatural. They were compared to Merlin, and often called 'the sorcerer kings'. They were reputed to be able to heal by the laying on of hands, and had clairvoyant as well as telepathic powers. They were also rumoured to have a spell which promoted longevity.

The Phoenicians came to prominence following the collapse of most major cultures during the Late Bronze Age. They were renowned in antiquity as adept merchants, expert seafarers, and intrepid explorers.

They developed an expansive maritime trade network that lasted over a millennium, becoming the dominant commercial power for much of classical antiquity. Phoenician trade also helped facilitate the exchange of cultures, ideas, and knowledge between major cradles of civilization such as Greece, Egypt, and Mesopotamia.

Fake Legends encourage Monotheism:

A legend about the Merovech came from the Old Semitic Phoenician Civilizations (1200-146 BC). The tale was widespread on the western coastal parts of the Fertile Crescent of Lebanon.

They believed Europa was Canaan's daughter. Canaan, the son of Poseidon (Greek god of the Sea), supposedly disappeared; princess Europa was not only a beautiful daughter of her a godly father, but her father's favourite.

One day a servant came into the palace and told Europa that a beautiful white bull had appeared mysteriously on the beach.

Intrigued, Europa went to see the beautiful, tame and playful creature.

Europa wrapped garlands of flowers around its horns, and frolicked beside it. Encouraged its gentleness, she climbed the creature and to her utter delight it ran about the beach.

Then, unexpectedly, the creature ran toward the ocean. The bull ran into the waves and out to sea. Europa's handmaiden watched in helpless horror as the princess disappeared off into the distance.

Europa was the mother of a Phoenician princess of Argive origin, after whom the continent Europe is named.

Herodotus (484-425 BC) the old Greek historian born in Turkey wrote the story of Europa was based on a genuine incident. Europa became a historic public figure.

The tale began with kidnapping Europa and finished by the myth of the Quinotaur, **who sired a race of sacred kings all across Europe.**

For the Greek scholars, the sea bull of the Europa saga is seen as Zeus, the god traditionally associated with and as a bull. The figure of the sea bull has been traced directly to the figure of Dragon.

An alternate name of Zeus was Dyaus, or Dragon was Daonos.

They were different labels, applied by different cultures at different times to essentially the same figure.

The kings of most ancient cultures, in time became their gods.

Overtime, the gods of dominant cultures became the gods of less dominant ones. And so it was: that a sea bull of Europa was the Quinotaur of the Merovingian kings.

Because Quinotaur was the famous father of European monarchs, and their mother was Europa, they named their continent Europe.

The Merovingian dynasty when in Europe was not a central government like those of old Egypt or ancient Rome. It was made up of several large kingdoms with cultural and linguistic affiliation.

The **Jesus bloodline** is said to be a linear sequence of descendants of the historical Jesus and this statement has persisted to the present time.

The claims frequently depict Jesus as married, often to Mary Magdalene, and as having royalty descendants living in Europe. These claimed Jesus bloodlines are distinct from the biblical genealogy of Jesus and from the documented 'brothers' and other kin of Jesus, known as the *Desposyni*.

Governance was based on exchange of favours; in exchange for room and board and a share of booty each ruler captured they promised allegiance. Warriors swore loyalty and service⁶.

King Clovis (466-511), was the first Merovingian king who united all the Frankish tribes under one Dynastic ruler who passed down kingship from generation to generation.

That arrangement changed leadership from group of royal chieftains to a single power. They eventually progressed into a feudal system which would later characterize medieval Europe: the king's bonded slaves would offer military service in exchange for sizable tracts of land where they would build their own estates.

In return the vassals would create their personal retinues of loyal men, who would take up arms for the lord in exchange for housing and a share of the food grown on the land and the loot gathered during intertribal skirmishes.

The land grants given by the 'king' were not permanent. Leaders of followers had the power to revoke any grants.

That power over them kept the vassals 'faithful'.

The Merovingian civilization came down from nomadic warriors. Their idea of domination and success was not to build cities or learn to read and write.

Violent barbarous culture of plunder and pillage among the many tribes, eventually gave way to a literate and sophisticated civilizations. Modern Germanic peoples include the Afrikaners, Austrians, Danes, Dutch, English, Flemish, Frisians, Germans, Icelanders, Lowland Scots, Norwegians, Swedes, and others (including diaspora populations, such as some groups of European Americans).

Clovis named Paris his capital city and his seat of government in the year 511AD.

By the end of the sixth century the Merovingian stretched out south and east, by taking over three kingdoms: Aquitaine in the southwest, Burgundy in the south-east, and Austrasia in the northeast. The 'History of Gaul' written around 593 to 594 by Gregory of Tours was his eyewitness account of Merovingian rule.

Jesus is overtaken by Merovingian Society:

Merovingian dynasty was the ruling family of the Franks from the middle of the 5th century. King Dagobert II and his descendants used fables to perpetuate the succession of their royal **bloodline**. Popular culture depicts the Merovingian as descendants of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, also known as **Jesus of Nazareth** is today Christianity's central figure, both as Messiah and, God incarnate. Hindus recognize him as a manifestation of the divine while some Buddhists identify him as a Bodhisattva. For others, he was love-in-action. With a revelation to humanity, it is possible communion with God. Did he intend to establish a new religion?

Jesus' message survived only 400 years. During the first centuries after Jesus, various forms of chiliasm were to be found in the Church.

Beliefs were advanced by some religious denominations that a Paradise will occur on Earth prior to the final judgment and future eternal state of the "World to Come".

Christian teaching claimed Christ will reign for 1000 years on earth after his second coming. The Council of Nicea has rejected the phrase with "whose kingdom shall have no end."

Christianization of Europa's Europe:

Christianization of Europa's Europe is divided into two phases, before and after the year 312. By the time of the momentous conversion of Constantine, Christianity had already converted a significant urban population of the empire including a small number of the elite classes.

Constantine granted tolerance to all religions, but specifically mentions Christianity.

Under Constantine's successors, Salic Law which excluded women to succeed to the throne or inherit land was the Merovingian Legal Code ((500-751 AD).

It was founded by Clovis I, based on an ancient Civil Roman Law and written in Latin. A Burgundian princess Clotilda married Clovis in 492 and persuaded him to become a Christian.

Although it barred women from convert to Christianity. From then forwards, France was a Christian nation.

By the end of the eighth century, the Carolingian rulers succeeded in uniting all the Franks under one central government.

They progressively expanded into Merovingian holdings and created a Carolingian Empire

During the shattering of the Western Empire, then rife with splintering of moral values, Pope Leo III (750-816), the head of the Catholic Church crowned the French king Charlemagne Emperor.

He was motivated by the wish to arrogate to himself the “right to appoint king” and spread papal authority to papal, church and crown lands.

By standardizing worship services in all parishes, Leo III launched a Christian Renaissance which would be lasting.

By 843, the Treaty of Verdun divided Charlemagne’s empire between his three grandsons.

These chronological events would become historically important. For at least four hundred years the French and Germans intermixed into a common ethnic, cultural, and historical event.

By the seventh century, a money economy replaced the earlier barter system of despite centuries of church and political interference Europe set in motion a gradually thriving economy after 1000 AD.

The feudal system was breaking down and private enterprise emerging as a power.

In 911, after unsuccessfully attacking Chartres and Paris, the Viking leader Rollo converted his ethnic group to Christianity.

He swore loyalty to France, in exchange for permission to settle permanently in Normandy as his own kingdom.

A new ruling allowed educating women from powerful families.

Meanwhile, the Church offered education as an alternative to marriage.

Women could enter the scholarly cloistered world and have the skill of rising to power as an abbess.

Nuns therefore became the best-educated citizens of their time.

Fate of the Unlearned:

The **fate of the unlearned**, also known as the **destiny of the unevangelized**, is a question about the ultimate destiny of people who have not been exposed to a particular theology or doctrine and thus have no opportunity to embrace it.

In European Christianity the fate of the unlearned was related to the question of original sin. Dante’s opinion of the Pope.

Church and State:

The mundane empires on earth always depend on its relations with separate cities and kingdoms, but also on its relations with the papacy.

The jurisdictional dispute between secular and ecclesiastical authority, was the most controversial question Dante takes up. He deals with it directly on “the two suns” and in the attacks on the Donation of Constantine. He denied all spiritual and didactic function to the church and criticised greed, corruption, and abuse of their position particular popes and churchmen.

A “true” emperor could be the only figure able to keep peace on earth because of the invulnerability to greed for money and power.

Dante described a church as a form of the life of Christ, sacrifice, teaching, and good example eschewed by a handful of saints, who avoided worldly power and possession.

Disappointed in the existence of an earthly paradise that is guided by the church through faith and spiritual teaching, Dante is led to the Earthly Paradise by Virgil, the poet.

Virgil glorifies an empire’s meaning and history. Heaven is then defined by Beatrice, the figure of theology who has the faith on which the church is based.

Both Dante’s guides Virgil and Beatrice, are substitutes for the malfunctioning organs of Monarchical Empire and the Papal Church.

Title of the "one true church" relates to the first of the **Four Marks of the Church** mentioned in the Nicene Creed (Teachings of Jesus): "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church".

Islam in Dante:

Eastern dissertations on medicine, natural science and mathematics had entered the Italian peninsula chiefly by way of Muslim Spain and Sicily.

Their fingerprints on Dante Alighieri’s 14th-century work comes as a fierce dislike and incomprehension of Islam. He refers to Islam as *meschite* (“mosques”).

Mosques, in his medieval Christian judgment, were a symbol of stubborn heretical allegiance to a false belief. Dante approaches the fortified Islamic citadel of Dis in Lower Hell, where gleaming red *meschite* is seen by Crusaders in the Holy Land. They emerge from the charred and fatty air.

The Crusades were a recent memory to Dante’s generation. For 300 years, knights from Northern Europe had traversed Tuscan regions on their way to the “Promised Land”, returning from Palestine with Islamic silks and spices.

Italians joined the Crusades in the mid-12th century. Dante’s great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida degli Eliseo, a belligerent and haughty character died a Crusader’s death in the Holy Land in 1148.

Muslims are a “foul race,” Cacciaguida announces to Dante who exalts him among the “blessed souls” of heaven, as a martyr to the West’s anti-Islamic cause. By claiming a Crusader ancestry Dante honours that cause.

Dante shared the medieval beliefs that animated Europe’s crusade against the jihad. One such belief was that the Prophet Muhammad was an apostate Catholic cardinal — to mean a fake Christian. — who founded an offshoot of Christianity after his failure to become pope or other eminence in the Roman Curia.

The Divine Comedy of 1308 is virtually unknown in Arabic countries. Dante subjects the Prophet and his son-in-law Ali to a punishment so grotesque that Islam might well protest.

In Canto 28 of “The Inferno” Muhammad’s body is split from end to end, while an attendant devil cleaves Ali’s face in two.

Dante’s “Maometto” is damned not as the founder of Islam but as a “sower of scandal and discord” who ruptured Christianity by preaching a “new law”. In this, Dante had followed the 12th-century Benedictine abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable, who in turn had followed John of Damascus, the Syrian monk active in the 8th century.

Dante saw Islam as a heretical interpretation of Christianity that aggravated East-West antagonisms. Ali is punished because he engineered a schism in the Islamic community (Ummah) by founding the Shia sect soon after the Prophet died in AD 63; this broke up the Caliphate and set Shiites murderously against Sunnis.

While Ali is left fatally cloven, a sword-bearing devil slashes open the Prophet’s wound whenever it heals itself. Thus the dividers of humanity are themselves divided. Accompanied by the ghost of the Roman poet Virgil, his guide, Dante is struck dumb at the sight of the butchered Prophet, who prises open the wound in his chest for him to see, a gesture which intensifies his eternal fate.

Islam an Ancient Religion which Encroaches Dante’s Civilization:

Islam, the religion that could temporarily unify ‘many’ came from scattered pearl-wisdom of mystics from all over the Near East. In the Crucible of Light writings by saints, strewn from all over the Universe, were collated and presented in classical writings as tools for self-development.

Most historians accept that **Islam originated** in Mecca and Medina at the start **of the 7th century AD**, approximately 600 years after the **founding of** Christianity, with the revelations received by the prophet Muhammad.

This ‘new’ monotheistic religion of Prophet Mohamed, took its roots in the Judeo-Christianity of an old polytheistic Egypt. Islam’s further expansion was almost immediately characterized by many vicious conquest and enforced changeovers.

By the 10th century, this significant ‘new religion’ and its splitting up took hold of many parts of the world. Many ethnic Arab tribal groups practicing polytheism changed. They were now a unified sect under one central government in Egypt.

Although approved Islam began as a monotheistic religion with an official language of Arabic, it changed to become culturally Persian. By the end of the 10th century AD, many successive empires recorded the history of the Muslim Empire; it became diverse and cosmopolitan and added Turkish, Persian, and African cultural fundamentals to Arabian ones.

African civilizations were Nubians along the River Nile from northern Sudan to southern Egypt; From Ethiopia, Ghana (750-1076 AD) and extending from North-west Africa, Mali to Senegal; and to Egypt, the lands placed mainly within North Africa.

Foreign invasions, religious conversions, and international trade were the many interactions between these civilizations.

India meanwhile emerged from a five-hundred years of ‘Dark Ages’ before entering the age of the Gupta Dynasty.

With the fall of the Gupta Empire (320-550 AD), Indian Civilization once again entered a chaotic period. Muslim invasions and internal strife broke up and reshuffled independent Indian kingdoms within India.

A fragmented political status of India persisted for ten centuries. Invaders were granted status of host. A feudal system was introduced. Feudalism became the central governing principle of India. Invaders slaughtered people of foreign lands. Fiefdoms were encouraged to create legal and social systems that benefitted the conqueror.

Feudalism rested on an unsettled system of land and estate governance. Rulers inflicted insane dreams of self-glory on masses of peasants who were slaughtered liberally. Land revenue governance gradually erased thriving entrepreneurial trade and economy.

Muslim contact with India began in the seventh century. Interaction of Muslim culture with the Hindu way of life, backed by the superimposition of Muslim rule in India, eventually caused a superficial veneer of a common Indian culture seen in all spheres of life, in architecture, painting, music, and literature. In social institutions of marriage ceremonies, eating habits, in gourmet cuisine, and sartorial fashions Hindus and Muslims always led their own lives.

To this date in the twenty-first century, they mostly exist alone from each other, except for friendships. Even living together for a thousand years has not welded Hindus and Muslims into one people.

Islamic rule in India lasted almost 1000 years. Hinduism continued to develop and change despite their dissimilarities, confrontation and reunions. Old Hindu (Vedantic) ideas and concepts gradually became part of new spiritual awakenings through Buddhism, Jainism.

Justinian I was a Byzantine Roman Emperor born of peasant stock.

Justinian was determined to restore the Roman Empire by recovering the lost provinces of the West, by codifying and rationalizing the legal system, and by reforming the administration.

This “last of the Roman emperors” tried to reclaim the Western empire, and almost wrecked the eastern empire while paying tribute to keep the Persians in the east, persecuting Nestorian theologians in Syria, Palestine and Egypt and alienated the population against the central government. A devastating plague decimated the population when Justinian died.

The next two centuries saw the Byzantines constantly beset by waves of invaders coming from the north, the east, and the west. Centuries of fighting between themselves, Byzantines, Franks and Arabs brought about the end of the Roman Empire in the East.

A much more serious threat suddenly appeared. The Arabs, united and inspired by their new religion, Islam, swept in like a desert storm. The Persian Empire was subjugated.

Byzantines watched Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa fall to the Arabs. After a four-year siege, the invaders were driven back. The use of a new secret weapon, 'Greek Fire', sent the Arab ships into wild uncontrollable flames. The 'secret' defence weapon for centuries was a natural petroleum amalgam.

Imperial centuries (750-1025)¹⁴: Disturbances of the seventh and eighth centuries left a different Byzantine Empire from the one that Justinian had ruled. The empire was much smaller, which deprived the government of valuable revenues, but being more compact it was easier to defend. The recent turmoil of iconoclasms made the Byzantine Empire a more ethnically, culturally, and religiously united realm. The largely Aramaic speaking "heretics" of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt were now under Muslim control. A mainly Greek speaking populace united by the same religious views was also more cohesive. They followed a resettlement policy. They took hundreds of thousands of the Slavic people from the Balkans and resettled them on the empty lands in Asia Minor. These industrious folks became loyal subjects and excellent soldiers for the Byzantine state. This revived the fortunes of the Byzantine Empire through the resettlement policy.

Constantinople, the capital city was the crossroads of much of the trade of the civilized world then. A ten percent toll on all imported goods from this trade raised sizable revenues.

The government kept monopolies on such goods as silk, grain and weapons. It kept tight control on all the craft guilds, by strictly regulating their quality of handiwork, wages, prices and competition. Because of this protection, Byzantine industries flourished and its goods were among the most prized and sought after in the Mediterranean.

Arab Empire (632-750 AD)

Prophet Mohammed's death shocked many Arabs who had credited divine qualities to the prophet. To ease their doubts, Mohammed's chief follower Abu Bakr, addressed the crowd in Mecca: "Whichever of you worships Mohammed, know that Mohammed is dead. But whichever of you worships God, know that God is alive and does not die." Their nerves soothed and their faith reassured, the Arabs struck out on a path of conquest almost unparalleled in its scope and speed.

In the beginning, the Muslims were tolerant of Christians and Jews, charging only a special tax, instead of forcing them to convert. By 750 AD, the Islamic Empire had stretched from Spain in the west to north India and the frontiers of China in the east. It was the most far-flung empire of its day.

It began with the first distinctive problem of Prophet Mohammad's Islam. Who should be caliph and spiritual but a secular successor to Mohammed? The first four caliphs were elected by a tribal council of elders and referred to as the Orthodox Caliphs, ruling from 632 to 661 AD. However, clan jealousies were unrelenting. Of the four Orthodox Caliphs;

only Abu Bakr (632-634) died a natural death. Eventually, the Umayyad clan took over and set up the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750). From then on, the dynastic principle of one family choosing the caliph would dominate. That would over time gradually transform Islamic history.

However, not everyone saw the Umayyad as rightful rulers of Islam. Some known as Shiites felt that only descendants of Ali, the last Orthodox Caliph and a member of Mohammed's family, should be caliph. Those who felt any Arab could be caliph were known as Sunnites. The Sunnite-Shiite split is still one of the major causes dividing the Muslim world to this day.

In 750 AD a revolt led by the governor Abbas of Persia, overthrew the Umayyad and set up the Abbasid Dynasty (750-1258).

Abbas was a ruthless man who worked to exterminate the Umayyad clan. He invited eighty Umayyads to a banquet and had them murdered at the table. He ordered covering dead bodies so he could finish his meal in peace.

One Umayyad member of the clan did survive. Abd-al-Rahman, who by using disguises and trickery in Spain founded an Independent Umayyad dynasty. This first crack in the unity of the Islamic state (Sunni and Shia) would never be unified again.

Symbolic of the changes going on in Muslim government and culture was the new capital the Abbasids built: Baghdad. Just as Constantinople was the crown jewel of the Christian world, so Baghdad became the gem for Sunni Islam.

Islamic Civilization

The period of 750-1000 was a cultural Golden Age for Islam. Desert tribe members from all over Arabia assimilated older cultures and infused new life into them. Orderliness and resulting prosperity of Arab rule came from India, China and lands along the Indian Ocean.

Arabs flourished as go-betweens in a trade that involved silks and porcelains from China, gems and spices from India, slaves and gold from Africa, and enslaved European captives and furs from Europe.

The Italian city-states would later adopt Islamic feudal practices and become the premier centres of business in Europe in Frankish lands in the 9th and 10th centuries.

Arabs assimilated Indian, Persian, and Greek cultures and fused them into Muslim civilization: from India, the Arabs picked up the evolution of mathematics: the place value of digit and zero.

From the Persians, the Arabs inherited art and literature. Poetry also flourished, because Arabs already had a strong poetic tradition before the conquests.

Greeks also contributed substantially to Muslim culture. Faraway and distant contributions were especially made in the fields of philosophy, math, science, and architecture.

Strangely, Mohammed had said 'nothing wastes the money of the faithful more than building'. Nevertheless, Muslims were great builders who owed much of their architectural skill and style to the Greeks.

Arab rule and civilization provided economic stability and the spread of their unique architectural knowledge.

Rise of medieval Papacy (900-1300)

Dante life (1265 -1321) was rife with problems of the medieval Catholic Church which began with the death of Pope Formosus in 856 AD. A personal enemy became the new pope, had Formosus' body dug up and put on trial for unlawfully seizing the papal throne. His body was stripped, fingers on his right hand cut off, and his body thrown into the Tiber River. This was a time Church, bishop, archbishop, abbot down to the lowliest monks and parish priests, were all bursting with corruption.

The Church's huge wealth, and 20-30% of the land in Western Europe, was, the main source of wealth and power but was limited to the papacy. Church became an object of political ambitions by nobles throughout Europe. Nobles practiced the feudal system and being warriors (Crusaders) by trade. They ignored the religious interests of Pope and Church.

Even in such troublesome times (910-1073) there were always men of religious conviction, determined to set the Church back on its spiritual path.

Reform started in the monasteries, and in this case it began in the monastic house founded at Cluny, France in 910 AD. The Benedictine monks placed themselves directly under the pope's power. That meant the monks had independence from all outside authority. They were Benedictines Cluniac monks.

Their agenda of reforms was widely adopted and over the next 150 years, Cluniac reforms spread to hundreds of monasteries across Western Europe.

The emperors saw church reform as a way to weaken the power of the nobles trying to control church lands and elections.

Meanwhile, devout bishops and abbots looked to the German emperors for protections. The church affiliated emperor, Henry III, and even appointed four reform popes. One of them, Leo IX, carried out many reforms against simony (selling church offices), clerical marriage, violence, and overall moral laxity among the clergy.

He felt strong enough to struggle against the Greek Orthodox patriarch in Byzantine Constantinople, thus causing an East-West Schism within the Church in 1054. That schism, during the Rise of Medieval Papacy between (900-1300 AD), was never healed. Since then, the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches have functioned as two separate Churches.

Papal Monarchy at its height (1122-1300)

Papal victory in the Investiture Struggle and the higher status it brought the popes led to many people turning to the Church to solve their problems, in particular legal ones. Canon (church) law and courts were generally seen as being more fair, lenient and efficient than their court's legal system.

More the Church's prestige grew; the more its bureaucracy grew, leaving them less free for spiritual affairs. Growing power and wealth again diverted the Church from its spiritual mission and led to growing corruption.

The rising power of kings triggered bitter struggles with the popes over power and jurisdiction. Popes used dubious means to fight rebellious kings by freely using excommunication, explicitly declaring anti-papal Christian enemies, extracting forced loans from bankers, selling Church services to gain wealth, simony, appointing several chiefs per office position for money, and amassing land-wealth.

Ruin of the Church's reputation undermined its power and authority. It therefore led to the Protestant Reformation and shattered Christian unity in Western Europe.

Crusades (1095-1291)

There were several reasons for the Crusades happening when they did. The eleventh century with better agricultural techniques triggered a population expansion.

Many landless younger sons of nobles and a series of bad harvests provided them the incentive to find land elsewhere. Europe's expanding frontiers, in Spain, in Southern Italy and Sicily, and by Germans in Eastern Europe, led them to look towards the Middle East. Meanwhile, by the eleventh century, a new people - the Seljuq Turks, replaced the Arabs in the Islamic world. They over-ran Asia Minor (1071) and seized Palestine from the Shiite Fatimids of Egypt.

The Christian pilgrims to Palestine suffered mistreatment at the hands of Turks and the Byzantine emperor.

The rising power of the Church created a rising tide of piety in Western Europe that expressed itself in pilgrimages to Palestine even before the Turks seized it.

This rising tide of godliness let loose a broader movement demanding Church reform.

It was led by the popes and caused the Investiture Struggle with the German emperors over control of election of Church officials.

There were larger self-serving ambitions of Pope Urban II. If the pope could lead all Christendom in a crusade to recover the Holy Land (Palestine), his moral authority would surpass that of the German Emperor.

Therefore, in 1095 Pope Urban II preached the First Crusade to free the Holy Land from the Turks. His speech struck a nerve, because thousands enthusiastically "took the cross".

Crusaders went to the Holy Land believing that such a journey and killing non-Christians in defence of the faith would earn them forgiveness for their sins. Poverty and greed also

played their role. Going on crusade offered them both the opportunity to win such lands and forgiveness for their mortal sins.

However, many desperately poor peasants also set off for the Holy Land without making any plans or supplies for the march. They became undisciplined mobs, known collectively as the 'Peasants' Crusade.' They gained followers in each village through which they passed. Their growing numbers created ever mounting supply problems. Violence erupted. Brutality was usually turned against local Jews, and thousands were either killed or forced to flee their homes.

Crusades:

The Crusades were part and parcel of a Middle Age Eastern Mediterranean History. The Crusades were a series of religious wars initiated, supported, and sometimes directed by the Church in the medieval period between 1096 and 1271. The objective of recovering the Holy Land from Islamic rule. [Wikipedia](#)

The Crusades are to this day a controversial topic, whose bitter legacy resonates to this day. Jonathan Phillips.

What persuaded people in the Christian West to want to capture Jerusalem? The effect of the Crusades extends far beyond the original 11th-century expeditions to the Holy Land. They took place long after the end of the Frankish hold on the East (1291) and continued down to the 16th century.

The First Crusade was perhaps driven by a religious impulse. The First Crusade was called in 1095 by **Pope Urban II** at the town of Clermont in central France.

The pope's proposal read: 'Whoever for devotion alone, but not to gain honour or money, goes to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God can substitute this journey for all penance.' Christians had been pushing back at Muslim lands on the edge of Europe, as well as in Sicily. The Church had become involved in these events through the offer of limited spiritual rewards for participants.

Since Urban was responsible for the spiritual well-being of his flock that was restless, the crusade presented an opportunity for the sinful knights of western Europe to cease their endless in-fighting and exploitation of the weak people and churchmen, and to make good their violent lives.

Urban saw the campaign as a chance for knights to direct their energies towards a spiritually meritorious act, namely the recovery of the holy city of Jerusalem (where Jesus had lived, walked and died) from Islam which was taken by the Muslims in 637.

The Byzantines were Greek Orthodox Christians but since 1054, had been in a state of schism with the Catholic Church. The launch of the crusade presented Urban with a chance to move closer to the Orthodox and to heal the rift.

Mortal Sin and Confession:

A mortal sin, in Catholic theology, is a gravely sinful act, which can lead to damnation if a person does not repent of the sin before death. A sin is considered to be "mortal" when its quality is such that it leads to a separation of that person from God's saving grace.

Also, in **Catholic** teaching, the Sacrament of Penance is the method of the Church by which individual men and women **confess** sins committed after baptism and have them absolved by God through the administration of a Priest. [Wikipedia](#)

Law of Karma in Sanskrit term expresses in few words the principle of action and reaction, or the Law of Consequences.

Karma is a law of unerring, never-failing justice, the workings of which stretch from the atom to the uttermost and innermost cosmic spaces; from the birth of a thought to that of a universe.

In the New Testament, the action of karma is formulated in the well-known words of Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians 6:7: "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Yet while it has been thus forcibly expressed by the great Christian apostle and initiate, the Christian nations, crippled by a lack in real philosophy of life, have failed to understand the profound meaning in this making of the law of ethical justice. <https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena>

Pope Urban's "Call for Duty:"

"A grave report has come from the lands around Jerusalem...that a race absolutely alien to God...has invaded the land of the Christians....They have either razed the churches of God to the ground or enslaved them to their own rites....They cut open the navels of those whom they choose to torment...drag them around and flog them before killing them as they lie on the ground with all their entrails out....What can I say of the appalling violation of women? On whom does the task lie of avenging this, if not on you?...Take the road to the Holy Sepulchre, rescue that land and rule over it yourselves, for that land, as scripture says, floweth with milk and honey....Take this road for the remission of your sins, assured of the unfading glory of the kingdom of heaven.' [nytimes.com/books/excerpt-holy-warriors.html](#)

When Pope Urban had said these things...everyone shouted in unison: 'Deus vult! Deus vult!, 'God wills it! God wills it! ' "

The reaction to Urban's appeal was a new way to attain salvation and to avoid the consequences of their mortally sinful lives.

People of all social ranks joined the First Crusade, including an initial rush of ill-disciplined zealots who sparked a horrific outbreak of antisemitism, especially in the Rhineland, by confiscating Jewish money to attack enemies of Christ in their own lands. The Seljuk Turks eventually destroyed them.

In June 1097 the crusaders and the Greeks took the formidable walled city of Nicaea. The crusaders moved inland, heading across the Anatolian plain where a large Turkish army attacked the troops near Dorylaeum. The crusaders were marching in separate contingents and this, plus the unfamiliar tactics of swift attacks by mounted horse archers, almost saw them defeated.

Over the next few months the army, crossed Asia Minor with some contingents and others, heading towards the eastern Christian lands of Edessa, where the largely Armenian population welcomed the crusaders.

By this time the bulk of the army had reached Antioch, inside the southern Turkish border with Syria. This was the place where saints Peter and Paul had lived and it was one of the five patriarchal seats of the Christian Church.

In 1098 the crusaders broke into the city and captured it. However, because the citadel, towering over the site, remained in Muslim hands, a problem compounded by the news that a large Muslim relief army was approaching from Mosul. In Antioch, meanwhile, the crusaders had been inspired by the 'discovery' of a relic of the Holy Lance, the spear that had pierced Christ's side as he was on the cross. A couple of weeks later, 1098, the crusaders gathered their last few hundred horses together, drew themselves into their now familiar battle lines and charged the Muslim forces.

The crusaders triumphed and the citadel duly surrendered leaving them in full control of Antioch.

In the aftermath of victory many of the exhausted Christians succumbed to disease. The senior crusaders were bitterly divided. The bulk of the crusaders scorned this political squabbling because they wanted to reach Christ's tomb in Jerusalem. They avoided major confrontations by making deals with individual towns and cities and they reached Jerusalem in 1099.

Forces concentrated around the walled city and as the troops burst into the city and over the next few days the place was put to the sword in an outburst of religious cleansing and a release of tension after years on the march. A terrible massacre saw many of the Muslim and Jewish defenders of the city slaughtered. The crusaders gave for their success at the tomb of Christ in the Holy Sepulchre.

Meanwhile the vizier of Egypt had viewed the crusaders' advance with a mixture of emotions.

As the guardian of the Shi'ite caliphate in Cairo he had a profound dislike of the Sunni Muslims of Syria. His forces confronted the crusaders in 1099 and, in spite of their numerical inferiority, the Christians triumphed and also secured a substantial amount of booty.

The exhausted crusaders were keen to return to their homes and families. Only 300 knights stayed in the kingdom of Jerusalem; a tiny number to establish a permanent hold on the land.

Over the next decade, however, aided by the lack of real opposition from the local Muslims and boosted by the arrival of a series of fleets from the West, the Christians began to take control of the whole coastline and to create a series of viable states.

The support of the Italian trading cities of Venice, Pisa and, Genoa, was crucial.

The motives of the Italians was their keen desire to capture Jerusalem. Italians transported goods from the Muslim interior (especially spices) back to the West.

Now that the holy places were in Christian hands, many thousands of westerners could visit the sites and, as they came under Latin control, religious communities flourished. Thus, the basic rationale behind the Crusades was fulfilled.

There is a strong case for saying that the crusader states could not have been sustained were it not for the contribution of the Italians.

One interesting side-effect of the First Crusade is the unprecedented burst of historical writing that emerged after the capture of Jerusalem.

The Christian West had their own generation who provided men of comparable renown. This was an age of rising literacy and the creation and circulation of crusade texts was a big part of this movement.

Europe celebrated the First Crusade.

Many scholars are looking behind these texts to consider more deeply the reasons why they were written, the different styles of writing, the use of classical and biblical motifs, the inter-relationships and the borrowings between the texts.

Another area to receive increasing attention is the reaction of the Muslim world.

When the First Crusade arrived the Muslims of the Near East were extremely divided, not just along the Sunni/Shi'ite fault line, but also, in the case of the former, among themselves. Given that the First Crusade was, self-evidently, a novel event, this was understandable.

The lack of jihad spirit was also evident, as lamented by as-Sulami, a Damascene preacher whose urging of the ruling classes to pull themselves together and fulfil their religious duty was largely ignored. Ali ibn Tahir al-**Sulami** (died 1106) was a Damascene jurist and philologist who was the first to preach jihad against the crusaders in the aftermath of the First Crusade.

Following in the same attitude was Nur ad-Din (1146-74) and Saladin onwards.

Dante was aware of the First Crusade.

Over the past four decades, the modern jihadist movement emerged in the late 1970s, when several groups began campaigns to overthrow the Arab World's regimes and establish Islamic states.

Jihadists see violent struggle as necessary to eradicate obstacles to restoring God's rule on Earth and defending the Muslim community, or Ummah, to mean the supra-national community with a common history.

Fall of Jerusalem sparked Grief and Outrage in the West:

News of the calamitous fall of Jerusalem sparked grief and outrage in the West. Pope Urban III was said to have died of a heart attack at the news and his successor, Gregory VIII, issued another crusade appeal. Rulers of Europe began to organise their forces.

German army successfully defeated the Seljuk Turks in Asia Minor but their Emperor drowned while crossing a river in southern Turkey.

Soon afterwards many of Germans died of sickness and Saladin escaped facing this formidable enemy. The Franks managed to cling onto the city of Tyre and then besieged the most important port on the coast, Acre.

This provided a target for western forces and it was here in the summer of 1190 that Philip Augustus and Richard the Lionheart landed.

The siege had lasted almost two years and the arrival of the two western kings and their troops gave the Christians the momentum they needed.

The city surrendered and Saladin's prestige was badly dented. Philip soon returned home and while Richard made two attempts to march on Jerusalem, but fears as to its long-term prospects after he left, meant that the holy city remained in Muslim hands.

Thus the Third Crusade failed in its ultimate objective, although it did at least allow the Franks to recover a strip of lands along the coast to provide a springboard for future expeditions. For his part, Saladin had suffered a series of military setbacks but, crucially, he had held onto Jerusalem for Islam.

Portrait of Saladin.

In 1195 Muslims had crushed Christian forces after the disaster at Hattin. To Christians the event seemed to show God's deep displeasure with his people. The most infamous episode of the age was the Fourth Crusade (1202-04) which saw another effort to recover Jerusalem end up sacking Constantinople, the greatest Christian city in the world.

Capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204

One consequence of 1204 crusade was the creation of a series of Frankish States in Greece that, over time, also needed support. Thus, in the course of the 13th century, crusades were preached against these Christians, although by 1261 Constantinople itself was back in Greek hands.

In spite of this series of disasters, it is interesting to see that crusading remained an attractive concept, something made manifest by the near-legendary Children's Crusade of 1212.

The **Children's Crusade** was a failed popular crusade by European Christians to regain the Holy Land from the Muslims, said to have taken place in 1212. The crusaders left areas of Northern France and Germany. The traditional narrative is conflated from some factual and some mythical events which include the visions by a French boy and a German boy. The vision asked the 'Children' to peacefully convert Muslims in the Holy Land to Christianity. Children marching to Italy were sold into slavery. Many were tricked by merchants and sailed over to what they thought were the holy lands but, in reality, they were sold in slave markets.

Throughout history and even to this day, children have been involved in military campaigns. Thousands of children participated on all sides of both World Wars. Children are trained and used for combat, assigned to support roles such as porters or messengers, or were used for tactical advantage as human shields or for political advantage in propaganda. Some children are to this day recruited by force, while others choose to join up, often to escape poverty or because they expect military life to offer a rite of passage to maturity.

Thus, the early 13th century was characterised by the diversity of crusading.

Holy war was proving a flexible and adaptable concept that allowed the Church to direct force against its enemies on many fronts.

The rationale of crusading, as a defensive act to protect Christians, applied specifically to the Catholic Church. When the papacy came into conflict with Emperor Frederick II over the control of southern Italy it eventually called a crusade against him. This expedition had achieved the original intention of the Fourth Crusade by invading Egypt but became bogged down outside the port of Damietta before a poorly executed attempt to march on Cairo collapsed.

Aside from the plethora of crusading expeditions that took place over the centuries, the launch of such campaigns had a profound impact on the lands and people from whence they came. The death or disappearance of a crusader, be they a minor figure or an emperor, obviously carried deep personal tragedy for those they had left behind, but might also precipitate instability and change.

By this stage the political complexion of the Middle East was changing.

The Mongol invaders added another dimension to the struggle as they conquered much of the Muslim world to the East; they had also briefly threatened Eastern Europe with savage incursions in 1240-41.

Saladin's successors were displaced by the Mamluks, the former slave-soldiers, whose figurehead, the sultan Baibars, was a ferocious exponent of holy war and did much to bring the crusader states to their knees over the next two decades. Bouts of in-fighting among the Frankish nobility, further complicated by the involvement of the Italian trading cities and the Military Orders served to further weaken the Latin States and finally, in 1291, the Sultan al-Ashraf smashed into the city of Acre to end the Christian hold on the Holy Land.

Some historians used to regard this as the end of the crusades but, this was not the case. A series of plans made to try to recover the Holy Land during the 14th century. Elsewhere crusading was still a powerful idea. By the early 15th century, however, their enemies in the region were starting to Christianise anyway and thus it became impossible to justify continued conflict in terms of holy war.

Plans to recover the Holy Land had not entirely died out and in a spirit of religious devotion, Christopher Columbus set out the same year hoping to find a route to the Indies that would enable him to reach Jerusalem from the East.

The 14th century began with high drama: the arrest and imprisonment of the Knights Templar on charges of heresy. A combination of lax religious observance and their failure to protect the Holy Land had made them vulnerable. This uncomfortable situation, coupled with the French crown owing them huge sums of money (the Templars had emerged as a powerful banking institution) meant that the manipulative and relentless Philip IV of France could pressure Pope Clement V into suppressing the Order in 1312 and one of the great institutions of the medieval age was terminated.

Crusading survived in the memory and the imagination of the peoples of Western Europe and the Middle East. In the former, it regained profile through the romantic literature of writers such as Sir Walter Scott and, as lands in the Middle East fell to the imperialist empires of the age, the French, in particular, chose to draw links with their crusading past. The word became a shorthand for a cause with moral right, be it in a non-military context, such as a crusade against drink, or in the horrors of the First World War. General Franco's ties with the Catholic Church in Spain invoked crusading ideology in perhaps the closest modern incarnation of the idea and it remains a word in common usage today.

In the Muslim world, the memory of the Crusades faded, although did not disappear, from view and Saladin continued to be a figure held out as an exemplar of a great ruler. In the context of the 19th century, the Europeans' invocation of the past built upon this existing memory and meant that the image of hostile, aggressive westerners seeking to conquer Muslim or Arab lands became extremely potent for Islamists and Arab Nationalist leaders

alike, and Saladin, as the man who recaptured Jerusalem, stands as the man to aspire to.

After this, interest in the crusades fizzled out. Europe had changed dramatically in the 200 years since Urban II had preached the First Crusade.

A money economy had raised Europe's standard of living and people more interested in comforts and not holy wars in distant lands.

Also, the corrupt popes had cheapened and tarnished the image of the church and the crusades. The cost was that church lost a good deal of support.

Meanwhile, the crusader states along the coast of Palestine were gradually being worn down by Muslim pressure.

A brief hope of delivery presented itself with the Mongols (1206-1294). While on a rampage across Asia, they shattered all existing units, one Muslim army after another. They also spread their kind of Islam all over Russia, Europe, China, India, and Northern Africa. However, the Sunnite Mamluk sultan of Egypt, crushed the Mongols and stopped their advance.

This also sealed the fate of the crusaders who had encouraged the Mongols.

In 1291, the last of their strongholds, Acre, fell after a desperate siege.

Dante (1265 -1321) had already died by then but he definitely had witnessed the Muslim Wars against Christians and Muslims from 1095 to 1421.

In the 1300s, Europe entered a period of turmoil that shook medieval civilization to its foundations and paved the way for a modern world as nation-states. Introducing Capitalism, not only shook the Catholic Church but gave birth to the Protestant Reformation.

Amid recurring famines, outbreaks of plague, peasant and worker revolts, rise of religious heresies, challenges to the Church's authority, and long-drawn Hundred Years War between France and England, became a period of stress. The 'change' resulted from better farming methods. New agricultural techniques caused a dramatic rise in population and rising demands for food and fuel.

Irritating these problems was a change of climate.

In the 1300's the climate turned colder and wetter than usual, resulting in floods and early frosts. The Baltic Sea froze over in 1303 and 1316. The resulting malnutrition made people born during that time especially susceptible to disease. **This in turn made many immune-deficient individuals susceptible to the Black Death.**

Bubonic plague spread from China to the Black Sea where Italian merchants would trade for silks and spices so valued in Europe. The Asian black rats, which carry fleas that carry the plague, hitched a free ride across Asia to Europe.

The Black Death had arrived through Italy in 1347 to France in 1348, and the Low Countries, England, and Scandinavia in 1349. By 1350, it had wiped out Europe's population.

The Hundred Years War was interrupted by the plague, and stopped Italy's economic boom and rural to urban migration for construction. Most rationalization of the Black Death made many fretful about divine retribution.

Without any effective cures, people looked for scapegoats.

Many blamed the Jews. Germany and the Low Countries saw bad outbreaks of violence. By 1350, few Jews remained in those areas.

The plague hit Europe six more times by the 1450s. Some 30-40% of Europe's population was lost.

Long-term effects of the Black Death created a higher standard of living; nobles and clergy who were landowners became urban workers.

This higher standard of living led to a more even wealth distribution. Recovery of the economy became obvious after 1450.

Popular Late-medieval Uprisings

Peasant and urban worker revolt was a sign of the times in the 1300's and 1400's. Plague created a 70% labour shortage in cities. Workers and peasants demanded higher wages for their labour, which nobles and guild masters strongly opposed. The Black Death had severely drained the tax base and caused kings to raise taxes to meet expenses from chronic warfare debts of that age. Heavier tax loads triggered a series of urban and peasant revolts across Europe. A combination of these many reasons sparked a sudden uprising which took the church and political authorities by surprise. Many were killed or fled to the safety of local towns or their castles.

In peasant revolts, the unexpected success of their uprising encouraged other peasants to join and vent their frustrations on their lords with incredible ferocity and cruelty. The rebellion would sweep the countryside like wildfire, destroying any opposition in its path. Eventually, the authorities gathered forces and crushed the rebellion in an aftermath of massacres and executions. Workers created protective organizations for higher wages and better working conditions.

The most serious of rebellion of labourers took place in Florence (1378 and lasted four years). Victory for the authorities came with severe reprisals. The savagery of revolts and the atmosphere of fear and hatred led the ruling classes in cities to support princes and tyrants who could then set up law and order. In Flanders, dukes of Burgundy set up law and order under their strong autocratic rule. The security of this collective power and wealth in the hands of rulers supported the cultural flowering of Renaissance.

Nothing better epitomizes the turmoil of the Later Middle Ages than the prolonged and desperate struggle between France and England known as the Hundred Years War. Although, on the surface, the issues concerned who held territories and the French throne, there were deeper issues in the struggle. The two nations were emerging from a feudal and dynastic governmental state. There was a growing cultural assertion of English nation and culture. The tide turned to favour the English.

“Life is not a noun, remember; neither is death a noun. Life and death are both verbs. Existence is a verb; it is not a noun. Life is a process, death is a process. Who is being processed? Who is moving in this cart of two wheels? Who is the pilgrim? Who is it that goes on traveling through many forms? That essential mind, that no-mind, which mirror-like quality, that witnessing has to be found in all the ways and through all the possibilities. “Every move in life has to be devoted to that inquiry, to that search. Only then does one come home, and without coming home you will remain discontented. You can have much money, you can have much power, but you will remain powerless, and you will remain a beggar.

“The day you come to this originality of your being – to this man of no title, this ancient-most, the eternal one – that day you become an emperor. That day all is benediction. That day nothing is missing. And that day you will have a good laugh too because you will see that nothing was ever missing. You just got entangled in reflections. You got entangled with guests and you lost track of the host. Be the host.”

Treason and Subversion by Churchianity during Crusades united Champions of greed for power and loot that might come our way while on life's the journey. The trophy sought during the many Crusaded Wars was the City of Jerusalem. Bloody massacre followed to save the Holy Land from the Islamic 'infidel'. Pope Urban was not mainly concerned with Jerusalem. He wanted to improve relations with the Byzantine Emperor of Constantinople, and promote the union of the Eastern and Western Churches.

In Western France, after the waning of royal power under Merovingian and later the Carolingian control, knights were tasked to defend Christian peoples against their internal and external foes.

Ideas of eleventh century Holy War against the Muslim 'infidel' gained currency.

Pope Gregory VII (1073-85)³⁶ reconceptualised the use arms in the hands of the military classes: to be used in the service of the vicar of St Peter. In religious summons military enterprises were sent out with the idea of a pilgrimage. The general objective of the Crusade was to set free the Eastern Churches and identify the Crusades as Holy War to recapture Jerusalem. They were defending Christians against the heathens unjustly seized it. Crusading carried the promise of specific spiritual benefits.

During the First Crusade (1096-1099), two hundred thousand disorderly rabble set out with Peter the Hermit, an assistant monk of Pope Urban II. They arrived in Constantinople with only twenty thousand men while the rest perished on the way.

The Second Crusade (1145-1149) commanded by an Emperor Conrad III of Germany (1093-1152) and a King Louis VII of France (1120-1180), proved equally unfortunate with the added loss of two hundred thousand men. The crusaders neither had the education to fight nor proper weapons to use.

The Third Crusade (1189-1192), also known as the 'Kings Crusade, was the most famous. Under the leadership of Philip Augustus of France (1165-1223), Richard the Lionheart of England (1157-1199), and Frederic Barbarossa of Germany (1122-1190), the three great monarchs of their age but were also unsuccessful. While combating they met valid army leaders like the Shiite Hasan Sabbah (1050-1124) and the Sunni Saladin who in missionary zeal defended their faith.

Hasan promoted the idea that in Life 'nothing is real or forbidden; everything is allowed' because Human Existence is an illusion. They became known as the Hashashins (later mis-represented by the West as a Secret Society of Assassins who indulged in hashish). Saladin an Arab Sunnite hated these Shiites and destroyed their Ismaili Fatimid centre of learning in Egypt before chasing the Christians from Jerusalem.

Leading actors of the Crusade Wars were Christian Templars and Hospitalliers who had secret agendas to pick up the treasures buried in Solomon Temple. With the help of Hashashins acting as spies, they continued their clandestine search for Solomon's hidden treasures.

More blood was shed at the famous siege in Acre, which lasted three years. One hundred battles took place under its walls. Jerusalem, which was retaken by the Sunni Saracens, remained in their hands, and was never reconquered by the Europeans.

The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), incited by Pope Innocent III (1160-1216) three years after the end of the Third Crusade, ended with divisions in States of Christendom (Catholicism of Rome, Eastern Orthodoxy of Constantinople and the Nicene Creed of 4th century AD), without weakening the power of the Sunni Muslim Saracens.

The Fifth Crusade (1228-1229), commanded by the Emperor Frederic II of Germany (1194-1250) was diverted from the Holy Land and spent its force on Constantinople. A naval attack was made by the Venetians in revenge for treacheries and injuries of the Greek emperors to former crusaders. Venetians brought back treasures from Constantinople, by pillaging that city and slaughtering fellow Christians on their way to kill the "infidel," which came a far second in Venice's calculations. Venice gradually grew to be a major empire by owning trade routes while the Crusaders were warring with the Muslim infidels.

During the Sixth Crusade (1248-50) ships entered Egyptian waters and crusaders captured Damietta in 1249, on the banks of the Nile. By then, conditions within the city were increasingly desperate with dwindling food supplies.

The Battle of Fariskur was the last major battle of the Seventh Crusade (1248-1254). It was fought between the Crusaders led by King Louis IX of France (later Saint Louis) and Egyptian forces led by a Kurdish Sunnite, Turan Shah(?-1250) the son of Ayyubid Dynasty. The result was the complete defeat of the crusader army and the capture of Louis IX. The last of these miserable wars was the most unfortunate of all.

The saintly monarch of France perished, with most of his forces, on the coast of Africa. The ruins of Carthage were the only conquest. Europe was sickened over the losses and defeats of nearly two centuries, during which five millions lost their lives.

Famine and pestilence destroyed more than the sword. Before disheartened Europe could again rally, the last strongholds of the Christians were wrested away by the Muslims. Gallant but unsuccessful defenders were treated with every inhumanity, and barbarously murdered despite truces and treaties.

Such were the famous Crusades. All were marked by prodigious personal valour. All were disgraceful events for the want of unity of action and the absence of real leadership.

They point to the enormous waste of forces, and the apparent waste of nature and fruits of the earth. It was a time of transition between the time when men roamed in forests and the time when they cultivated the land. All the good which resulted to Europe from the temporary possession of Constantinople was the introduction into Europe of Grecian literature and art.

In the Middle East, there was cost in lives and money, but no permanent conquest of the Holy Land. Islam was not slowed. Crusades only hastened the fall of the Byzantine Empire. The divided and quarrelling Muslim powers found temporary unity against the Europeans, but in the long run a distraction made them more vulnerable to invasions in the thirteenth century by Mongols from Central and Northern Asian steppes of Mongolia. Finally, relations between Muslims and Christians disappeared. Respect almost disappeared. When hostility took political expression among Muslims, it birthed a new political radicalism with a militant edge.

The growth of cities and urbanisation came simultaneously with the decay of feudalism. Nobles became impoverished while merchants became enriched. They began building ships in shipyards for the Crusaders to venture into wars. Florence, Pisa, Venice, Genoa, Marseilles became centres of wealth and of increasing political importance. Seeds and roots of new fruit trees and vegetables arrived in Europe. Knowledge of silkworms from China and India led to creating the silk fabric woven in Italian and French villages.

The Venetians learned from the Tyrian the art of making glass. The Greeks brought in gunpowder. Architecture of churches became less sombre and more graceful and beautiful like Arabic style. Ornaments of Byzantine churches and palaces were brought to Europe. Houses became more comfortable, churches more beautiful, and palaces more splendid. Manners improved and communication became more polished. Chivalry borrowed its courtesies from the East.

From Constantinople Europe received the Greek philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, in the language in which it was written. Greek scholars came to Italy to introduce their literature. Study of Greek philosophy gave a new stimulus to human inquiry, and students flocked to the universities. They went to Bologna to study Roman law, as well to Paris to study Scholastic philosophy. Thus the germs of a new civilization were scattered all over Europe.

With the shock feudalism received from the Crusades, central power was once more wielded by kings. Standing armies supplanted the feudal rabble of serfs and slaves. Military science of Romans and Saracens was studied and revived. With an overall development of energies in every field of human labour, new hopes and ambitions spread among the people. Interest in spiritual power became less forbidding and dismal, because wealth and freedom bred less fear in their Lives.

The Crusades changed conditions of all facets of society in the thirteenth century, but they triggered individual and collective change. The Crusades found new uses for their experiences. Citizenry scattered its experiences to gradually heal the nations of Europe.

Enterprises of all types succeeded against the apathy of convents and castles that still imagined they had control over the people. Villages became urbanised into towns where manufacturing began in factories and industries thrived.

Modern merchants were born in Germanic and Italian cities, which began capitalism by supplying the necessities needed by the crusaders over nearly a century.

Feudalism ignored the power of trade and barons gradually discovered rivals in the merchant-prince. Feudalism disdained art, but increased their wealth by turning their fiefs into carpenters and masons during their feudal tenure.

They would later come together and defy their old masters. They left their feudal estates for the higher civilization of cities, and built urban homes for the merchants instead of castles for nobles.

Handicrafts found different types of employment.

The marked progress of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries affected the natural development and evolution of the Germanic races.

Burdened by the suffocating influence of church and politics and their hunger for power, peasants, city workers and the middleclass society rebelled against church and monarchy.

In Western Christian history, these centuries were interrelated and interconnected with the Crusade Movement of the Middle Ages. A chronic Holy War against the Muslims by the crusading masses was a hunger for more land in a feudal society. Competing religions of both Islam and Christianity drew many retaliating crusaders into Asia, where other creeds like Shia'ism and Sunnism flourished.

Jihad spread within a Europe preoccupied by greed and Islam infiltrated lands of the Christian fold.

Constantinople and Solomon's Temple

A German priest named Gottschalk gathered a band from all sides of Germany. Whole population of villages enrolled in the Battle of the Cross. They expected miraculous triumph against the infidels with the help of a host of imagined angels.

After disgracefully molesting the Jews of Central Germany they advanced along the Danube River, where they suffered and inflicted suffering on everyone in travels through Hungary and Bulgaria.

Finally they descended on Constantinople like a cloud of locusts. They were transported to Anatolia, where Turkish sabres cut them down at Nicaea in 1096.

A few escaped back to European shores.

Christians had only recovered Jerusalem from the Sunni Turks with the help of members of the Ismaili Fatimid Shia Caliphate.

An Egyptian garrison of proved fighters was left on guard. Despite the bold defence of the city, its downfall was only a matter of time.

Arriving Christian reinforcements from Jaffa sealed the doom of the Saladin's Sunni Muslims.

A war of systematic extermination and fierce massacre followed. Killing and slaying went into the Temple of Solomon, where the slaughter was so great that men waded in blood to their ankles.

Each marauder claimed as his own any particular house which he had entered, with all it contained. Then the pilgrims reached the city warily and boldly killed the citizens.

They penetrated the most distant and out-of-the-way places and broke open the most private apartments of the foe. As the city became quieter and the tumult subsided, the bloodthirsty and bloodstained pilgrims laid aside their arms and, with tearful sighs and heartfelt emotion, advanced to pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Old 'Pagan' Cultures from India becomes Churchian in Byzantine Empire. These Pagans were all non-Catholics from Polytheistic Reconstructionism, Hellenism, Slavic Native Faith, Celtic Reconstructionist Paganism, or heathenry, as well as modern eclectic traditions such as Wicca and its many offshoots, Neo-Druidism, and Discordianism. Vedic, Egyptian and Kabbalist theosophies were combined with words of Jesus and Ezekiel, the Hebrew prophets.

Roman emperors refused to be considered "kings". By the time of Diocletian (244-305) they were both emperor and "monarchs" (284-305).

Imperial succession was declared hereditary if acceptable to the army and the bureaucracy.

The Eastern (Byzantine) emperors adopted the formal title of 'king.' The title of Emperor was reserved for the last native rulers of the Sassanid Empire (531-579) before Arab conquests of Persia.

In fact over time, two-thirds of Eastern Roman Empire and Persia embraced Islam.

Frankish Kings become Divine Emperors:

Besides their churchian pontifical office, Frankish kings were made emperors and given divine status: at first after their death, but later from their accession. As Roman Catholicism prevailed over paganism, the emperor's religious status changed to that of 'Christ's regent' on earth.

Their Empire's status was seen as part of God's plan to Christianize the world.

The Western Roman Empire was dealt fatal blows in the Italian Peninsula in 475 and 476. Dividing the empire into Western and Eastern was formally abolished as a separate entity by Emperor Zeno.

Zeno's successors ruled from Constantinople (modern Istanbul) until the conquest of that city by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

In 323 AD Constantine created a 'Caesar' by raising his third son Constantine II and enforcing taxation reforms that would create extreme hardship for the citizens.

The Byzantine economy under the father was the most advanced in Europe for many centuries. When Constantine V succeeded his father as sole emperor in 741, his reforms of 765 AD marked the beginning of a revival that continued until 1204.

Constantine V (718-775) ascended the throne at the age of twenty-two as emperor for the Byzantine Empire. Shortly after his succession, Constantine lost possession of Constantinople through the treachery of his brother-in-law Artavasdos, who assumed the title of emperor, and kept possession of the throne for two years. Artavasdos increased his influence by favouring the Greek Orthodox Church.

Constantine was preoccupied with a civil war with his brother-in-law while Saracens pushed further into Europe with frequent random incursions.

In the emerging middle class populace of the Byzantine Empire few individuals had any scruples of violating the political constitution of their country. If self-serving activity could increase their power nothing was forbidden.

Bulgarians who also fought for Constantinople were more dangerous enemies than the Saracens, though their power was inferior. The Bulgarians looked on war as the most honourable means of picking up wealth and profit. To resist their incursions, Constantine repaired all fortifications and fortified passes with guards. Constantine then gradually rooted out and looted these bands.

The habitual barbarity of legal punishments by Constantine V was an ever-ready torture against enemies of his authority.

The political dependence of many of the cities to Rome was not withdrawn from the empire until a new emperor of the West was created by **Charlemagne (742-841), who threw off Constantine's authority ((718-775).** Wars wiped out Europe's population and Greeks, Slavs and Christians were imported to Constantinople. Venice gradually became a playground for the upper crusts of society. They were intermixed Turks, Greeks and Germans.

The Byzantine state had inherited from the Greeks and Roman 'pagan' times their organizational and monetary routine of administering religious affairs.

These expertise and routines were then later applied to the Christian Church.

It followed the pattern set by Eusebeus (263-339 AD) of Palestine.

Eusebius of Nicomedia (died 341) was an Arian priest, the man who baptised Constantine the Great. He was a bishop of Berytus (modern-day Beirut) in Phoenicia. He was later made the bishop of Nicomedia, where the Imperial court resided. He lived finally in Constantinople from 338 up to his death.

Christian mysticism refers to mystical practices and theory within Christianity. Mysticism is not so much a doctrine as a method of thought.^[1] It has often been connected to mystical theology, especially in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_mysticism

The attributes of Christian mysticism range from ecstatic visions of the soul's mystical union with God and humans gaining divine qualities to simple prayerful contemplation of Holy Scripture.

In early Christianity the term *mystikos* referred to three dimensions, which soon became intertwined, namely the *biblical*, the *liturgical* and the *spiritual or contemplative*.

The biblical dimension refers to "hidden" or allegorical interpretations of Scriptures.

The liturgical dimension refers to the liturgical mystery of the Eucharist; the presence of Christ at the Eucharist; and **the third dimension** is the contemplative or experiential knowledge of God.

Presence defines Christian mysticism as that part, or element, of Christian belief and practice that concerns the preparation for, the consciousness of, and the effect of a direct and transformative presence of God.

Presence versus experience argues that "presence" is more accurate than "union", since not all mystics spoke of union with God. There is a "consciousness" of God's presence, rather than of "experience" of knowing and loving based on states of awareness in which God becomes present in our inner acts which supplies knowledge - based on a feeling of the infinite.

Personal transformation that occurs through mystical activity that relates to this idea of "presence" instead of "experience":

Mysticism flourished from the middle of the thirteenth century to the middle of the fifteenth in many parts of Europe, including Germany, Italy, and the region of northwestern Europe, and England.

The greatest figures in Germany were Meister Eckhart, a Dominican friar of formidable intellectual gifts, and his pupils, also Dominicans, Johannes Tauler and Henry Suso. A Trinitarian mysticism owed much to Eckhart, despite his apparent disagreement with the earlier teacher.

In Italy, the Franciscan scholar Bonaventure, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Catherine of Genoa upheld the mystical flame, and there was also a mystical outpouring in England, associated with the names Julian of Norwich, Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

Many of the continental mystics were members of the ***Friends of God***, a movement that worked for the spiritual revival of people at a time when the worldliness of the Catholic Church, the ravages of the Black Death, and the cracks in the traditional social order created a desire in many to develop a deeper spirituality.

Although some of the mystics were hermits, like Rolle, others combined their mysticism with practical concerns such as preaching, administrative duties, and caring for the poor and the sick.

Although many were all loyal to the Church they expressed their mysticism in a wide variety of themes and tones.

Taken as a whole, the writings of the medieval mystics provide a remarkable record of the vitality and variety of the spirituality of the period.

Eusebius's history was not written to record the deeds of the church after Jesus's ascension. His history traced the rise of Christianity during the first three centuries from Jesus to Constantine.

He wanted to show that with Constantine's conversion (306-337), Christianity had reached the pinnacle of humanity's long climb. Just as Eusebius was writing about churchianity's defeat of paganism, Arius (256-336) from Libya emphasised on the ideology of the relationship of man and God.

The argument spread throughout the empire, promising to rip the church in two. **Constantine was God's chosen instrument not dissimilar to Moses.** Eusebius saw both Constantine and Moses as God's servants.

Constantine called the First Ecumenical Council of the Christian Church held at Nicaea in 320 AD.

At the council he condemned Arianism which denied that Jesus was of the same substance as God and that he was only the highest of created beings.

Jesus loses his importance as a Prophet from God:

Eusebius was enthralled with teachings of the Greek theologian scholar Origen (185-254), who has been criticized for 1800 years for his belief the Trinity as a hierarchy, and not identicalness.

Ridiculing the Trinity:

Eusebius thought the entire debate brought Christianity the "most shameful ridicule" was among the first to ask that he be reinstated.

Eusebius was less a mediator of knowledge and perhaps more a mediator of propaganda. Eusebius was not only a recorder of history, but he was one of the key players at a significant turning point for the church.

About many events of his time, **Eusebius wrote an eyewitness record of the adaptation of paganism into Churchianity and labelled it rituals of Christianity by getting rid of pagan professionals and authority:** “We saw with our own eyes the houses of prayer [pagan] thrown down to the very foundations, and [their] divine and sacred Scriptures committed to the flames in the market-places, and the shepherds [guides] of the churches basely hidden here and there, and some of them captured ignominiously, and mocked by their enemies”. He was born around 260 and presumably grew up in Caesarea of Palestine, where he came under the influence of Pamphilius, a learned teacher from Alexandria. **Pamphilius** was a devoted student of Origen who wrote commentaries on the Scriptures. The library of the martyred Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem (251) provided the basis of Eusebius’s learning. Pamphilius was imprisoned in 308. Eusebius visited him often and the two wrote five volumes of ‘A Defence of Origen’ together. When Pamphilius was later beheaded for his heretical beliefs, Eusebius called himself “Eusebius [son or disciple] of Pamphilius.” Eusebius’s moderate stance on Arianism (250-336) about the relationship of God to the Son, earned him temporary excommunication. His fanatical support of Constantine as a messenger of God.

Byzantines: Saracens in Holy Land

Sybilla (1160-1190), queen consort of Sicily, heir and queen of the kingdom of Jerusalem from 1186 to 1190, married the French adventurer Guy de Lusignan and knight caused dissension among the crusaders when he became king of Jerusalem. Guy was hated when he came to the throne in 1186 and was therefore unable to exercise any real control over Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Queen Sybille’s chief concern was to check the progress of Saladin’s armies as they advanced into the kingdom.

Guy was sent to the front with the entire fighting strength of the kingdom, but his inability to cooperate with the other crusader knights was fateful.

Saladin routed them at the Battle of Hattin in 1187. Guy was among the prisoners. By 1187, Saladin was besieging the Holy City, and Sybilla personally led the defence. Jerusalem surrendered in October, and Sybilla was allowed to escape to Tripoli with her daughters.

Reciprocal influence of culture flowed constantly between them. Both sides kidnapped and imprisoned educated captives who were well treated.

Knowledge was exchanged between *Byzantines of East Europe* and the *Saracen from Baghdad*. The capitals of the two Empires learned and outmanoeuvred each.

The Shiites were also known as 'Sons of Grace'. They were a secretive tightly-knit religious sect whose origins could be traced in Egypt over 1000 years *before the birth of Prophet Mohammad.*

Once they declared themselves as a sect of Islam, they followed an eclectic system of doctrines and thrived in Fatimid Cairo.

During the oppressive rule of later Abbasid caliphs, the Shia Imams were heavily persecuted and held prisoners.

Their followers secretly interacted and consulted their Imams through foot soldiers and trustworthy sincere messengers.

Within Shi'a Islam various sects came into being because they differed over their Imams' successions. Each successional dispute brought a different 'sect' within Shiite Islam.

Each Shi'a sect followed its own particular Imamic dynasty. When the dynastic line of the original Imam ended with no heir, then either the last Imam or his unborn successor was believed to have gone into concealment: called **Occultation**.

Hassan and Hussain were under 5 years old when Muhammad died. He reportedly said "Hassan and Hussain are the Leaders of the Youths of Paradise. Hussain is from me and I am from Hussain. *Allah befriends those who befriend Hussain and He is the enemy of those who bear hostility to him.*

Now, the Shi'a majority of adherents are the Twelvers. They are Isthnashiri Shi'as. The Isthnashiri sect chose Imam Hussein ibn Talib (626-680), as their leader. He was the second son of Fatima (Mohammad's daughter) and Ali and the second grandson of Prophet Mohamed. Meanwhile, the Nizari Shi'as became known as the "**Ismailis**". Those known as the "**Bohras**" was a schism within this sect.

The Druze were Shi'a who separated from the Ismailis just before the Dawoodi Bohras did and after the death of the Fatimid Imam and Caliph Hakim. These Shi'a Seveners sect no longer exist. Another small sect is the Shi'a Zaydis also known as the Fivers who do not believe in Occultation.

When Imam Hassan died, the *office of Divine Leadership was transferred to the 'Last Luminous Pearl of the Household of the Holy Prophet, Imam al-Mahdi.'* Although His Eminence did not appear among the people, some people in whom he had trust and confidence were allowed to visit him and present him the problems and questions of the Shiites. They then communicated to the people the guidance and commands of the Divine Luminous Light.

The *Tenth Imam al-Hadi* said to his followers about him: "Whatever he says to you he says so on my behalf, and whatever he does he does on my behalf." This representation continued till 254 AD when Imam al-Hadi died.

Then, the Eleventh Imam is reported to have praised the character of Abu 'Umari who became the deputy of the *Twelfth Imam, who reportedly said,* "From now on, no one will see me, unless and until Allah makes me appear. My reappearance will take place after

a long time. *Men will by then become cruel and inconsiderate, and the world will be full of injustice and violence.*”

The honour of seeing Imam al-Mahdi was not exclusive to some special Shiite scholars only. Many devout Sunnis and illiterate people also had this honour and opportunity to meet him. *Valuable writings of Imam al-Mahdi during the major occultation are the most important guidance for his Shiites followers.*

In 941AD the fourth deputy of the Shia imams announced an order by al-Mahdi, the deputy would soon die and the deputyship would end and the period of the Major Occultation would begin. The fourth deputy died six days later and the *Shi'a Muslims continue to await the reappearance of the Mahdi.* According to the last letter of al-Mahdi to Ali ibn Muhammad “Henceforth no one will see me unless Allah makes me appear.” During the Minor Occultation it is believed that al-Mahdi keeps contact with his followers. Whenever the believers faced a problem, they would write their concerns and send them to his deputy.

Another view is the Hidden Imam is on earth “among the body of the Shia” but “disguised.” “Many stories” exist of the Hidden Imam “revealing himself to prominent members of the ulama.”

According to the majority of Shi'as, namely the Twelvers Isthnashiri there are rightful successors to Muhammad. Each Imam was the son of the previous Imam except for Hussein ibn Ali, the brother of Hassan ibn Ali. *The Ismailis differed greatly from the Twelvers because of having a living Imam for centuries after the last Twelvers imam went into concealment.* The Ismaili line of Imams for both sects (The Nizari and the Mustali) continued undivided until Mustansir Billah (1094). Imam Mustansir Billah was born in Cairo in 1029AD. He would become the eighth Fatimid Caliph at the early age of seven years, and reign as Imam and Caliph for a period of more than years.

During his reign, political unrest amidst a massive earthquake contributed to much of the insecurity and economic instability throughout the Fatimid territory of Egypt.

Notable personalities who lived during the ‘Alamut Period’ included among others Hassan bin Sabbah (1050-1124), Nasir Khusrau (1004-1088), and Omar Khayyam (1048-1131).

At the death of Imam Mustansir Billah, a split took place among the Shi'as. The seceders came to be known as the Shia ‘Bohras’, who became followers of Caliph Mustali.

After his death the line of the Imamate separated into the Nizari and Mustali dynasties. The line of Imams of the Mustali Ismaili Shia Muslims of Bohras continued up to Amir ibn Mustali. After his death they believe their Imam went into concealment. In the absence of an Imam they are led by a missionary who manages the affairs of the Imam-in-Concealment until re-emergence as the Imam.

The line of Imams of the Nizari Ismaili Shia Muslims (also known Agakhani Ismailis) continues to their present living 49th hereditary Imam. They are the only Shia Muslim

community today led by a current and living Imam. The Sufi Shi'as still argues only descendants of Ali could lead Islam.

The Nizari Ismaili schism and Saladin's need to wipe out the Shi' from Egypt and other areas where they lived would centre itself towards Alamut. For over 150 years, they would park themselves here.

In Jerusalem among other places, they worked with Christian Crusader Knights as spies against the Sunni forces of Saladin who hated all Shiites. Hassan bin Sabah meanwhile took possession of the fort in Alamut in Northern Iran in 1090.

The Ismaili rule in Alamut lasted for 171 years (1090-1256). In its early period, three hujjats were the rulers of Alamut: Hasan bin Sabbah (1090-1138); Eight Imams flourished during the Alamut rule:

Imam Ruknuddin Khairshah (1255-1256) reigned as Imam for two years only. He was murdered by the Mongols. After the 'Alamut Period' of 150 years, the Mongols not only managed to destroy the entire Ismaili State (the scientific instruments, observatories, libraries, and thousands of houses and buildings), but were also responsible for the death of 80,000 Ismailis.

The Mongols rebuilt Alamut and Lamasar and held them for their own use.. After Ruknuddin Khairshah's assassination and the massacre of the Ismailis in 1257 they searched for a successor. A group of Ismailis managed to take possession of Alamut in 1275.

According to Tarikh-i Guzida (1:583), "They held Alamut for one year before they were again dislodged by a force sent against them by Hulegu's son and successor of Abaqa in 1282."

The post Alamut Period is an obscure dark interlude in the Ismaili history. While the Seljuqs and Crusaders both employed murder as a military means of disposing of factional enemies, during the Alamut period almost any murder of political significance in the Islamic lands was credited to the Ismailis.

During the medieval period, Christian and Western academic bias against Ismailis contributed to the popular view that they were a radical Muslim community of murderers. By the 14th century, European view on the topic had not advanced beyond tales of unfounded information from Knights and the Crusaders.

Ismailis, also known as Hashemite, to mean having common ancestry with Prophet Muhammad became known by Europeans as Assassin who was addicted to 'hashish'. They had taken on the meaning of "professional murderer".

In 1603 the first Western publication on the topic of the Assassins was authored by a court official for King Henry IV based on the narratives of Marco Polo (1254-1324) from his visits to the Near East. The author failed to explain the.

In fact, both Crusader Knights and the Shia Seljuq Turks who in the 11th and 12th centuries lived along the periphery of the Muslim World, employed assassination as a military means of disposing of factional enemies. For centuries the Nizari Ismaili

community was regarded a radical and heretical sect known as the 'Assassins'. Originally, a "local and popular term" first applied to the Ismailis of Syria, the label was orally transmitted to Western historians and thus found itself in their histories of the Nizaris. Only this branch of Shia'ism has a currently living Imam, in the person of Aga Khan IV. The Nizari Ismailis gradually made many changes to their beliefs due to their Indian surroundings. By the nineteenth century its popularity was fully revived after a long period of relative obscurity. Today it has a worldwide following, mostly consisting of businesspeople from the Indian subcontinent. Today there are about 20 million Khojas, with 2 million living in Pakistan.

Doctrine of Qiyamah

Jesus' Christianity and Pre-Prophet Mohammed's Shiite Islam was always a period of deep learning carefully designed for the serious spiritualist who treated and experienced God in His transcendence and immanence. For ages the mystical experience was distinctly defined in Vedic Scriptures, Zoroastrianism and in 'pagan' literature from Greek, Roman and Egyptian times.

Dante's Divine Comedy was an example of medieval literature written when firm and unambiguous attitudes were created by deep thinkers of all cultures. Universal Thought needed learning, critical insights without personal or institutionalized prejudice. Islamic Sufism was an example of such universal mysticism and jealously guarded by Nizari Ismailis.

Despite these uncertain times, because of the Imam's patronage of science and learning, intellectual activity flourished greatly, and attracted many scholars from outside the Fort of Alamut. Imam Jalaluddin Hassan forced his people against preaching the doctrine to the public. He encouraged the knowledgeable sages to adopt such rare practices only in solitude with the few spiritually advanced. That was also the common tradition and practice with many Sufi and Druze traditions in the past.

Imam Jalaluddin Hassan played a significant role in explaining Qiyamah, first declared by his grandfather in 1164AD. The Imamate spanned about 44 years -a span of time (1166-1210.) Even inside of Alamut there were some who denied mysticism of experiencing 'One in Many and Many in One'; they therefore succeeded in killing a sage.

The Imam died of poisoning and was buried in Alamut in 1210AD.

Islam

During the lifetime of the Prophet Mohammed, and for some years afterwards, Islam was a united faith. But by the 650s AD, Islam had split into two main sects which fought bitterly with one another. Both Sunnis and Shiites still exist today and they are still fighting.

Many of the Mawali, non-Arab people who had converted to Islam, became Shiites, though many Arabs were Shiites as well.

In India, Mughals who were of Persian lineage were Sunni. Many Mughals subscribed to Sufistic views. Mughal courts were knowingly or unknowingly instrumental in some religious reawakening among scholars and thinkers, especially Sufi saints of India. Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) introduced a new religion called 'Din-i-Ilahi' which consisted of good elements from other religions. He had set up a sprawling kingdom through military conquests but was best known for his religious broad-mindedness. He was dyslexic and therefore could not read or write. Akbar practiced tolerance between Hindus and Muslims. Introducing Din-i-Ilahi helped him to promote this tolerance.

Although Islam experienced a golden age of art and culture under Prophet Mohammad's uncle Abbas, the Abbasid Dynasty from Baghdad only lasted from 750-1258. The empire gradually fell apart as Arabs, province after another, broke away. Weak caliphs of smaller sized empires and the disaffection of Shiites led to their break-up. The Seljuq Turks arrived to revitalize them.

In the early 1200's, a Mongol leader Genghis Khan united the various Mongol tribes in Central Asia into a fearsome war machine. Striking at incredible speed riding on horses up to 100 miles a day, they burned a path of destruction from China to Europe and the Muslim world unsurpassed until the wars of the twentieth century. Cities daring to resist them were methodically destroyed and their populations put to the sword.

The defiance of the Assassins brought the wrath of the Mongols on the Muslim world. In 1258, they sacked Baghdad and killed the last in the line of Abbasid caliphs. The Egyptian sultan Baibars finally halted the Mongols' relentless advance in 1260. The Mongols eventually settled down and even adopted Islam in the Muslim areas where they ruled. However, their rampage had far-reaching effects on the Turks and the Islamic world.

Early Christianity till 300 AD

Western Civilization was and still is linked to the history of the Judeo-Islamic-Christian beliefs but not their cultural systems. Many political and historical influences were self-destructive on Christian thought. Jesus was recognized the Deceiver and great Enemy of humanity (Ego's) influence when self-opinionated Peter rebuked him for talking about his upcoming crucifixion.

Arrogance and a sense of smugness has therefore created in human race a feeling of 'divine right' to rule for God's side as His equal or his superior. Separation of soul from ego is deeply rooted in humanity. Medieval Christian monasteries became notable by producing stalwarts who identified religion as a relationship between humankind and the supernatural.

In its basic form, Christianity is a simple religion centring on the brief life of a humble Jew, Jesus. At the age of 33, Jesus was brutally executed on a cross because of his teachings. Early history 30-31 AD Jesus' ministry left a message of love, forgiveness, and eternal salvation for all people while on their search for The Christ within. His apostles were

encouraged to spread his strict view to both Jews and non-Jews. At first, such preaching was confined to pagans and worldly Jews.

There was a brief resurgence of a Christian-Jewish Movement. A turning point came with St. Paul of Tarsus (5-67 AD)⁷¹, saw Christianity as a religion for all peoples: Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). Therefore, he started spreading the message throughout the Roman world. The Christian religion grew in popularity during its first century and a half (30-180). There were occasional persecutions in these early years, for their refusal to worship the Roman emperor and state gods.

The ruling Romans saw it as a sectarian offshoot of the Jewish religion. The Great Persecutions: The third century was a time of intense anarchy. Civil wars, barbarian invasions, and plague wracked the empire and threatened its existence. This affected Christianity. The third century anarchy was also because of more intensive extermination and subjugation of Christians. When things started falling apart, Romans blamed Christians for abandoning the old gods who in turn abandoned Rome.

The late third and early fourth centuries saw periods of intense persecutions 303 to 311 AD. Ironically, persecutions gave Christians publicity, won them widespread sympathy and many new converts. In 311, Roman Emperor Constantine declared toleration for Christianity in the Western half of the Roman Empire. The Christian Church quickly became the dominant religion in the dying old Roman Empire, largely from the favour presented on it by Constantine and his successors. Christianity was well organized much like the Roman Empire.

In the 7th century, the papacy would fraudulently retroactively claim Emperor Constantine had granted his Palace and property to the Church in the 3rd century. Rome therefore became the capital of the empire where Peter, the most important of Jesus' disciples, started Rome's first Christian congregation.

After 600 AD Rome was free of control by the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) emperors. Roman and Byzantine Churches now had more freedom to expand their influence when more peaceful times came after 1000 AD.

Oligarchy by State and Church: The Donation of Constantine was one of the best known forgeries in European history. The document pretended to be written in the early fourth century, to Pope Sylvester I (314 – 335) and his successors. It gave the church large areas of land, political power, and religious authority. The fake document 'Donation', was written somewhere between 750 and 800 AD in Latin during the coronation of the German King Pippin the Short in 754 when he was also king of the Franks.

A more popular view states the Donation was fabricated in the mid eighth century at the command of Pope Stephen II.

Their intent was to communicate the Pope approved the transfer of the great European crown from the Merovingian dynasty to the Carolingians. In return King Pepin would give the Papacy rights over Italian lands, and reinstate what Constantine had granted.

It was Pope Leo IX in the mid eleventh century who produced a document of the Donation as "evidence." From then on it became a common weapon to carve up power in the struggle between the church and secular rulers. Its legitimacy was rarely questioned, although there were dissenting voices.

Paganism inducted into Catholicism

In 393 the Emperor Theodosius ordered public worship in pagan temples be ended throughout the empire.

By creating a more decentralized Church, it **drove Christian-Pagans into hiding.** Persecutions led to a **triumph of hypocritical Christianity as a State Religion** and publicity attracted switchovers for the sake of acceptance and need for membership with the popular vote.

Former pagan intellectuals joined the Church and Greek philosophies were suddenly added to Christianity.

Religious disputes started spreading to monasteries.

The most confusing facade of **papal Christianity** was the environment it had invented that the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Papal Christianity denied the triune relationship with one another and the Whole.

The most serious disputes centred on the relationship of humankind with the natures of Jesus and his teachings on how to reach the Christ (Agya Chakra, which is placed on the crossing of the 'optic chiasma.' The nerves that supply the eyes go backwards in the opposite direction and wherever they cross, this subtle centre is situated. It has a continuous connection with the other centres along the sushumna or spinal cord through the 'medulla oblongata.')

Meditation was declared a sin by Catholics. Within the Church, the legitimate search for new methods of meditation became and has become the essential element of authentic Christian prayer in the meeting of two freedoms, the infinite freedom of God with the finite freedom of man.

Today, some use eastern methods solely as a psycho-physical preparation for a truly Christian contemplation; others go further and, using different techniques, try to generate spiritual experiences similar to those described in the writings of certain Catholic mystics.

They now propose abandoning not only meditation on the salvific works accomplished in history by the God of the Old and New Covenant, but also the very idea of the One and Triune God, who is Love, in favor of an immersion "in the indeterminate abyss of the divinity."

Constantine and even the later ruling emperors would not tolerate integrating their powerful authority with churchian demands, disputes and heresies. Such imperious activity backfired on papacy during the following century and continues to do so to this day.

Jesus and Apostles: The apostles of Jesus were called on different occasions by Jesus to aid in his own work, irrespective of where they were from or their varied professional backgrounds. Jesus saw the potential in them and told them he would make them fishers of men by converting them in the search of the Christ. This was misunderstood as an instruction to convert all to Catholicism.

The original Bible is the Old Testament which is based primarily upon the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible, a collection of ancient religious Hebrew writings by the Israelites believed by most Christians and religious Jews to be the sacred Word of God. The New Testament was written after Jesus' death and the Book of Revelation is thought to have been written, probably about 96 AD.

Jesus most likely died on Friday, April 7, 30 AD, the first book was probably 15 or more years after that.

There was still no 'bible' because binding together of the ancient scrolls was not done till about 300 years later when Christians in Alexandria, Egypt sewed scrolls together. There were many writings, some were thought to be reliable, and others were written by splinter groups.

Meanwhile, the churches of cities coalesced into groups with a leader in major cities. The leaders gave guidance as to which books were written with the authority that Jesus gave to apostles and believed to have been written by the apostles themselves or their known companions who were familiars with Jesus, especially his brothers, James and Jude.

The earliest of these lists was probably about 200 AD, which would be well before the 'council of Rome' in 382 AD. The other books were written well after the apostles' deaths. Jesus is the Jewish messiah who is prophesied in the Hebrew Bible, which is called the Old Testament in Christianity. Christians believe that Jesus was both human and divine—the Son of God.

Trinitarian Christians believe that Jesus is "true Divinity and true man"—both fully divine and fully human. Jesus, having become fully human in all respects, suffered the pains and temptations of a mortal man, yet he did not transgress against divine law. Many today think of Jesus as a "historical happening."

The New Testament talks about the spread of Christianity through the Roman Empire. Here are a number of sermons in Acts in which the apostles are trying to convert people. They talk about the death of Jesus, but they never mention that Jesus's death is an atonement for sin. Instead, they say is that Jesus's death was a huge miscarriage of justice.

What really matters isn't Jesus's death. What matters is the secret teachings that he delivered that can bring salvation.

This was opposed by other Christians, and so the books containing this particular view didn't make it into the canon.

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus states there will be a cataclysmic judgment of the world this end of the age.

He tells his disciples in Mark, after describing how the heaven will turn dark and the moon will turn to blood, that the stars will fall from the sky - in other words, the whole world is going to be uncreated when this catastrophe hit - and he says to his disciples: This generation will not pass away before all these things take place.

And so this was a view found in the earliest documents we have about Jesus.

Death of Jesus' teachings: From 300 to 1700, religion and politics went hand in hand, and any decision made in one realm had serious implications in the other realms as well. Together Church and State had suppressed followers of Jesus in Galilee, the strategic location between Egypt, Syria, and Palestine.

The ministry of John the Baptist, which preceded Jesus' by six months, ran from 26 to 29 AD. It was his calling to prepare the people for the factual appearing of the expected Messiah.

Jesus' Parables and Miracles:

At least five of twelve disciples were living in the region where Jesus was. Nineteen out of the thirty-two parables Jesus gave were spoken in Galilee. Twenty-five of Jesus' thirty-three great miracles were performed in the area.

Jesus' first public miracle was at the wedding in Cana of Galilee; his last one performed on the seashores of Galilee, was after his resurrection. It was from Galilee that Jesus gave his "the sermon on the mount" (Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:20-49).

Meanwhile, shifting power from Galilee in Israel to Constantine's Rome led to strong undercurrents of resentment and rebelliousness against the Catholic Roman church and government.

When the more tolerant Arab Muslims invaded these provinces in the 600's, instead of meeting Christian resistance, they found the populace welcoming them against political Roman oppression.

Some devout members of the Jesus' Ministry who were wanting to purge Roman Catholic Church of worldliness retreated into the desert to live pure Christian lives away from worldly temptations.

Some performed incredible feats of endurance, abstinence from food. Some became famous "super-hermits" and their Jesus-like actions spread.

Short lives through brutal deaths under Roman rule ensured that Jesus' message would spread across Judea and the Byzantine Empire.

Need for a Jesus-like life led to forming organized communities called monasteries. In the East, St. Basil set up the first monastic rule.

In the West, it was St. Benedict who arrived at a more moderate idea of a monastic order known -the Benedictine Rule.

A new monk took three vows: poverty (no material possessions), chastity (clean living), and obedience (to God and the superiors in the monastery). The monks worked around the monastery and in the fields, in the belief that idle hands are the devil's playground.

The moderate expectations of the Benedictine Rule led to the spread of their monasteries all over Western Roman Catholic Europe.

Monasteries became centres for social and economic relief in the Dark Ages. Many 'pagan intellectuals' moved into the monasteries, fleeing the growing anarchy of Roman Church and State.

Over time, 'pagan' classical training of that 'pagan culture' was incorporated into monasteries and forever preserved during the tumultuous Middle Ages of Church and State oligarchy.

Throughout these Middle Ages, contributions made by monasteries became important part of theology and rituals practices followed even in the 21st century.

As the Roman Empire faded from history, Churchianity survived as a contribution to Western Culture without understanding the preserved theology of the Old monasteries.

The Dark Ages

Break-Up of the Roman Empire in the West left a patchwork of ruined Germanic kingdoms ruled by the Germanic ((Indo-European) general, who called himself the King of Italy after Odovacar (480) annexed Sicily and Dalmatia.

King Alaric (370-410) of the Visigoth tribes sacked Rome and held Spain and southern Gaul.

King Genseric in 439 AD entered North Africa and set up the realm of the Vandals. Meanwhile, Britain was divided between the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, known to us simply as the Anglo-Saxons. And the rest of Gaul gradually fell under the sway of tribes called Franks. .

Converging interests come together on Italy:

With the fall of the Roman Empire, the Indo-European Germanics (German, Dutch, and Scandinavian) migrating tribal rulers and East Roman Byzantine emperors from Constantinople (Turkey) began converging. They settled in Gaul (France, Belgium, and Switzerland) and Spain as part of a political arrangement with Rome. They were employed to remove their deadly common enemy, the barbarian nomadic from North Central Asia (Huns).

They were the warlike nomadic Asian herdsmen from the steppes of Mongolia, sometimes called Seljuqs who would create their own Empires, whoever they adjusted with, and then overpowered their host enemies.

Emperors in Constantinople felt the lands in the West were rightfully theirs and kept their claim until they were strong enough to take them back. They played different tribes against one another. In 487, the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, led his people into Italy, which they conquered. Theodoric's rule in Italy for over 200 years allowed Germanic

tribes to absorb Roman culture. Theodoric showed tolerance for his Roman Catholic subjects who formed most of the population. He had swamps drained, harbours dredged, and aqueducts repaired. Because of this enlightened rule, Italy, became self-sufficient for the first time in 500 years.

In 527, Justinian I the last Greek and Latin-speaking, clean shaven Roman emperor who hated Catholics waged warfare up and down Italy. In the end, Justinian conquered Italy, but it was a costly victory. A devastating epidemic of Bubonic Plague left the Eastern Byzantine Empire exhausted and open to 200 years of invasions from all directions, which nearly destroyed it. Three years after Justinian's death in 565, the Lombard invaded from the north and conquered half of the peninsula. Italy would remain fragmented into warring states for 1300 years until its final reunification in 1871. The social structure of the old Roman lands largely continued as before. There remained nobles on country estates who would intermarry with the ruling Germanic nobles. This blending created a new ruling class of rulers by 700 AD. The late imperial trend where peasants sought protection from nobles was resurrected in return for their freedom.

Bishops suddenly began running their own courts, hospitals, hostels for travellers, supervised agriculture to receive church revenues from its lands, and became the major patrons of new buildings and religious structures. As government funds declined, soldiers were paid with land instead of money. Kings, nobles, and bishops typically kept their own private armies of retainers, and began private feudal armies of a later age.

While the Frankish kingdom under Merovingians and then Carolingian Dynasties had been wrecking themselves in civil wars and palace intrigues, a power was rising in the East: the Muslim Arabs.

United and inspired by their new religion, Sunni Islam, swept the east and Shiites conquering North Africa and Spain while marauding Seljuk's were raiding southern Gaul. In 733, a Frankish palace mayor Charles Martel introduced the Mongolian tradition of saddle, strap and stirrups, allowed Frankish riders the ability to ride a horse more efficiently. A common helping hand between church and politics, when needed, added to their political strength.

Charlemagne (768-814)

A legendary figure in Medieval Europe was Pepin the Short's son, Charles, or Charlemagne. Although Charlemagne ruled his empire efficiently, there were few trained officials to rule and too many lands for to run effectively. For some 850 years, Germany was the Holy Roman Empire and would be a source of problems for Germany. The later years were neither holy, nor Roman, nor empire-like.

Charlemagne's' death sent Western Europe into its darkest centuries ever. The money from the Arab Muslims dried up as the caliphs in Baghdad spent themselves into bankruptcy. A decline of trade caused a reversion to a land-based economy and a weaker government. Arabs and Vikings turned to raiding and piracy, which weakened the

Frankish economy and state. There was no money to pay knights and nobles, and king had to give them land. That regenerated wealth in the form of crops, making nobles independent of the king's authority and more rebellious. These rebellions invited invasions, and more revolts. In the end there were many independent states under self-regulating nobles, in a weakened economy, and turmoil at courts – thus inviting rogue invasions.

From the south the Muslims devastated parts of Italy and southern France. From the east the Hungarian Magyar nomadic horse riders defeated the Franks and founded the kingdom of Hungary. From the north came Viking raids and invasions and tore up the Frankish state into pieces and just about overwhelmed England. In 911, the Viking chief Rollo was permitted to rule Normandy in return for military service to the crown. By 1000 AD, France was a patchwork of some 55 independent principalities. The king was a nominal ruler of all this, and a new political order emerged: Feudalism.

Western Europe was by then a backwoods frontier compared with the real centres of civilization in the east. Constantinople's location between the Aegean and Black Seas was ideal for controlling trade between trade routes that converged there to link Asia and Europe.

Commerce during Middle Ages

The title of Emperor (Imperator) carried with it the role as protector of the Catholic Church. As the papacy's power grew during the Middle Ages (5th to 15th centuries), Popes and emperors came into conflict over church administration. During this 1000-year span came the fall of the Roman Empire (476 AD) and the beginning of European Renaissance. It was a life timeline of the ordinary person under feudalism, the ascent of the Carolingian Empire, the birth of Crusades inspired by the Catholic Popes, Mongolian and Arab invasion of Europe, mixed with legends of Heraldry and Chivalry by Knights of the Round Table. The most notorious event of this time is bubonic plague which started in the early 1330s in China.

Medieval China (5th to 15th century) was one of the busiest of the world's trading nations. An outbreak of plague in China spread to western Asia and Europe. In October of 1347, several Italian merchant ships returned from a trip to the Black Sea, one of the key links in trade with China. When the ships docked in Sicily, many of those on board were already dying of plague. The disease struck and killed people with terrible speed. The Italian writer Boccaccio said its victims often "ate lunch with their friends and dinner with their ancestors in paradise." A terrible killer was loose across Europe, and Medieval Medicine had nothing to combat it. In winter the disease disappeared, but only because fleas-which were now helping to carry it from person to person-were dormant then.

Each spring, the plague attacked again, killing new victims. After five years 25 million people were dead-one-third of Europe's people. Even when the worst was over, smaller outbreaks continued, not just for years, but for centuries. The survivors lived in constant fear of the plague's return, and the disease did not disappear until the 1600s.

Medieval society never recovered from the results of the plague. So many people had died there were serious labour shortages all over Europe. This led workers to demand higher wages, but landlords refused those demands. By the end of the 1300s peasant revolts broke out in England, France, Belgium and Italy. The disease took its toll on the church as well. People throughout Christendom had prayed devoutly for deliverance from the plague. Why hadn't those prayers been answered? A new period of political turmoil and philosophical questioning lay ahead.

Medieval Society and Historical Figures who influenced Dante

Medieval Society was complex. Like in modern times, it was governed by laws, and people had rights and obligations. A legal framework of land tenure, taxation and fiscal immunities were also in existence then, both for urban organization and a rural one. A feudal system had relationship laws between lords and peasants, and between feudal lord and the king. Military organization was based on units of hereditary aristocracy and their households, but also i bodies of professional soldiers.

The Church services secured influence over the populace and with it came wealth because extensive possessions.

Besides teaching people religion, the Church was also a governing body, exercising its jurisdiction by controlling and punishing the unruly. It was the main educational agency in the society but also ruled the duties of a monarch. To enforce justice, and protect the lands from invaders, armies were needed. The abbots and bishops who were rulers of these estates. They maintained order, held the courts, and raised the army.

They were judges and officials of the king, and had power to condemn criminals to death. They directed the schools, collected the feudal dues, and made war and peace. The powers kings once held gradually passed into the hands of the nobles, and the feudal customs determined the political, social, and economic relations within the Middle Ages society.

Medieval History shapes Dante's Divine Comedy through Hassan ibn-al-Sabbah

An eleventh century Sunni to Shiite Ismaili convert, Hassan ibn-al-Sabbah (1050-1124), also known as "the Old Man of the Mountain," appeared in Islamic Persia. For nearly fifty years he led the struggle against both Sunni orthodoxy and Turkish rule.

Persecuted and hunted, he therefore set up the mountain fortress of Alamut, which "became the greatest training centre of fanatical politico-religious assassins the world has known." (Franzius). Hassan sent young men (fida'is or "devoted ones") singly or in small bands to kill military, political, and religious leaders aligned against him.

Such was the suicidal fanaticism of Hassan's skilled killers that it was widely believed they must be motivated by hashish.

They were called "hashish-eaters," shortened in Arabic use to Assassins of Hassan" (Franzius). While always on the alert against Sunni infiltrators from Sunni camps under Saladin, they also worked with the Knight Crusaders in Jerusalem.

Unknown to Hassan, the Knights were clandestinely searching for gold and riches hidden in Solomon's Temple. These riches were later in the possession of Knights Templar in Cyprus, and in Europe.

Through murder and intrigues Kings of France made many efforts to recover it from the Knights Templar.

Since the 16th century, Templar enemies who exist to this day were made assassination targets. Methods of assassination and their symbolism do not coincide with the factual history of Hassan ibn-al-Sabbah's trained Assassins. Over time, 'assassin' came to mean one who killed an unsuspecting victim without warning.

The original sense of a political purpose for an assassination was never lost, and became increasingly strong. Political motivation distinguished assassination from other deadly violence. Political motives, were often hidden or unclear, and could not merely be inferred from the political significance or prominence of a target.

The Knights Templar

According to accepted wisdom, two French knights, Hughes de Payens and Godfrey of St. Omer, founded the original Knights Templar or the Poor Knights of Christ who began digging under the Temple of Solomon around 1118 AD. They traveled to the Holy Land and approached King Baldwin I, the King of Jerusalem. They were taking with them the blessing and sponsorship of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, a prominent member of the Cistercian Order of Monks. He was also the spokesperson for all of Christendom in that era.

Supposedly, their objective was to protect pilgrims traveling to and from the Holy Land (area around biblical region of Palestine, Bethlehem, Jordan River and Jerusalem).

After the first Crusade pilgrims allegedly were attacked by assorted Muslim (Saracen) thieves and bandits. Evidently King Bedouin, himself a former crusader, was delighted at the prospect of safe passage for the pilgrims. He promptly presented them with a wing of his palace, to use as their headquarters. However, what happened after that is open to speculation.

The numbers of the fledgling Knights Templar Order were swiftly made up to nine in total. Then for the following nine years, almost nothing is known about them. All that is certain is: no new members were admitted, and although they made occasional patrols on the pilgrim trails, the original nine were seldom seen to leave their quarters.

Their quarters donated by King Bedouin were connected with the ruins of Solomon's Temple. The warrior monks appeared to have spent their time digging under the temple for treasure: both material and spiritual.

Details about these items secreted away in Solomon's Temple were mentioned in "The Dead Sea Scrolls". The "copper scrolls" were found at various sites, but especially in Qumran, a site on the West Bank of Israel.

The starting point of the Order of Warrior Templar Monks had little to do with protecting pilgrims and a lot to do with gathering political information on Saladin's Movements, with the help of Hassan ibn-al-Sabbah's trained spies and finding Solomon's fortune.

So, who sent them and why? It is worth noting that Templars were, due to their strict discipline and religious fervor, probably the most feared and efficient fighting men in the Christian world. They were therefore held in high regard even by their sworn enemies the Muslims who were themselves fierce and disciplined warriors. It was from this mutual respect with the Saladin's Sunni warriors, that they learned their considerable pharmacological and metalworking skills.

This probably resulted in the Templars absorbing some of the spiritual beliefs of Hassan ibn-al-Sabbah's Shiite Islam (Ismaili-ism), which had it been generally known, would not have found much favour with the church authorities. It was during this time that Templars, because of their wealth and influence began operating a form of a banking system.

A pilgrim would deposit money with a local preceptory where he was issued with an encrypted letter. This letter he took with him on his journey and on arrival in the Holy Land, the letter was taken to a Preceptory House of Knights Templar. Their money was returned to the pilgrim depositor.

Following the fall of the fortress of Acre in 1291, the last Christian bastion in the Holy Land, the Templars fought to the last man. They lost their goals and ambitions for their existence in the Holy Land. They were only too aware of their shaky position. The order therefore regrouped and made their headquarters on the island of Cyprus where some members of the Shiite Hashemite Islamic members had also continued to call home-base. Here, the Knights Templars turned their attention to Europe, trying to devise a method to justify their continued existence. Due to their unique position, they continued to attract recruits and the attendant 'gifts' that came with them. Since they no longer had to finance the heavy costs of battle, their wealth accrued from King Solomon's Temple, grew quickly. The organization soon became incredibly wealthy, and became bankers to the rest of the Christian world. Their wealth, influence and power were to prove their eventual downfall. The Order of Knight Templars owed its rapid growth and popularity to the great passions of the Middle Ages.

Stories of religious fervour and martial prowess were rampant even before the Templars proved their worth. Ecclesiastical authorities heaped them with spiritual and temporal favours.

The popes took them under their immediate protection. Much of their accumulated property was assimilated into the Roman Catholic Church estates. Personal gains made by Templars were exempted from all taxation.

That brought about conflict with the clergy of the Holy Land. Their church coffers were diminished and they had become inoperative.

As early as 1156 the clergy of the Holy Land tried to restrain the privileges of all military orders.

However Rome ignored every objection raised by the Holy Land. Holy Land churches objected to the temporal benefits which the Order received from sovereigns of Europe. Such arrangements allowed Templars to act as temporal sovereigns.

The Templar Knights had a Secret Commander in every state, including England and Pennsylvania. In France there were forty-two command centres. In Palestine it was with sword the Templars extended their possessions of the defeated Saracens (Muslims). Castles were built between 1140 and 1217 to command and prevent strategic corrupt sea-coast invasions.

In these castles, were both monasteries and cavalry-barracks.

The life of the Templars was full of contrasts.

They were both monks and disciplined soldiers. As an army they were never numerous. There were only 400 knights in Jerusalem at the zenith of their prosperity. They were a picked body of men who, by their noble example, inspired the rest of the Christian forces. They were a terror to the Saracens. These frequent slaughters made it difficult for the order to increase in numbers.

It also brought decadence of the true crusading spirit. All that was required of a new member was a blind obedience, as imperative in the soldier, as in the monk. To prove his sincerity, he was subjected to a secret test concerning the nature of which nothing has ever been discovered, although it gave rise to the most extraordinary accusations.

The great wealth of the order may have contributed to a certain laxity in morals, but the most serious charge against it was its insupportable pride and love of power. European incursions, conquests, and colonies as far away as Indonesia and the Americas would make the Knights' assets look like 'small potatoes'.

However, the Knight Templars were soon opposed by the Order of Hospitallers (1113-1309) which had in its turn become military and later became rivals of the Templars. This ill-timed interference multiplied the internal and public dissensions.

Meanwhile, the formidable power of Saladin (1138-1193) threatened the existence of the Roman Christian (Latin) Kingdom. While the Templars sacrificed themselves with their customary bravery in this final struggle, they were, nevertheless, responsible for the Fall of Jerusalem, to Saladin.

To put an end to this rivalry between Muslim and Christians powers made alliances. King Richard signed a treaty with Saladin allowing Christians in the Holy Land and thus ending the Third Crusade. Saladin was a chivalrous knight whose humanity often prevailed over his natural hostility for Christians. Saladin was neither a Turk nor an Arab, but a Kurd, and therefore, like the crusaders themselves, of the Persian stock.

Knights of Christ become Victims of Oligarchy:

The Poor Knights of Christ and Temple of Solomon with the Hospitalliers belonged to the greatest Monastic Crusading Orders in Medieval history. The Templars got their name from the Temple of Solomon, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The fates of Templars and Hospitalliers, however, would be different. Templars are today remembered for the manner of their end rather than for what they did during the Crusades. Unlike the Hospitalliers, the Templars were not a charitable order, but were conceived from the first as a military force, to protect pilgrims against Islam.

In this capacity, the Templars staffed various castles including Lebanon, north of Palestine (Galilee), in the Jordan Valley, and southeast of the Dead Sea.

The Templars later also got into financial services, where with a letter of credit a traveller could have ready access to funds in distant places. Templars therefore became an international banking concern.

Kings were interested in these large sums of cash with the Templars. Some had already borrowed and were in debt.

A particularly ruthless greedy was King Philip IV of France. After robbing and expelling Lombard bankers and the local Jews, Philip conceived a scheme of suppressing the descendant families of Templars, many of whom had died twenty years earlier, vainly defending the last Kingdom of Jerusalem against the Mamluks. He began by accusing them of outrageous crimes, and then confiscating their wealth.

This was done in a show of legitimacy because the Templars worked directly under the authority of the French Pope.

Philip had already showed how he dealt with Popes. In 1303 his agents kidnapped, assaulted, and humiliated Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303), thus hastening his death. Only an independent and fearless Pope could then be expected to stand up to Philip, and Boniface's second successor, Clement V (1305-1314) did try.

Philip then simply arrested all the Templars in France, including the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay. Unbroken in spirit himself, de Molay invited two Knights Templar to appear with him before the Throne of God. They were accused of outrageous blasphemies, heresies, and unspeakable secret rites, and, questioned under torture. Many Knights confessed to such activities. With such confessions, Philip got the Pope to order a general seizure of Templars and their possessions everywhere.

Pope Clement went with events. Eventually de Molay was suddenly burned at the stake, without Papal announcement. Despite the appalling and outrageous nature of these events, the most interesting thing about the Templars continues to be the charges begun by Philip and the stories that have continued to build on them, even today.

Dan Brown's books involve notions the Templars found something important on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the Free Masons carried on the task of the Templars in preserving what was found.

His take is the Templars simply found documents testifying to various noncanonical truths of early Christianity: that Jesus is not God, he married Mary Magdalene, and had children

who later became, or married, the Merovingian Kings of the Franks. This “bloodline” was the true meaning of the Holy Grail. The “bloodline” now seems to be a popular take on the Grail legends.

The Priory of Sion

The origins of this shadowy organization are far from clear-cut. It was either set up following the death of the Merovingian dynasty in the seventh century AD, or it has existed only from 956 as a natural successor to the Order of Sion which was founded in 1090AD. The Priory was created with one objective: to restore the Merovingian House to the throne of France and the continent of Europe.

It was also suggested the Priory was directly responsible for the existence of the Knights Templar whose military wing they are asserted to have been. There is ample evidence the Templars were in existence from 1115. History books tell The Order of Sion had its own abbeys: one on Mt. Sion in Palestine and others throughout the Holy Land. The abbey on Mt Sion was called ‘Notre Dame do Sion and was in use until 1291, when it was seized by the Muslims. Each Priory had its own Grand Masters. Of these grand masters, there were a number who favoured strong scientific and alchemical beliefs; it is known for example that Flamel, an alchemist, with the assistance of some Spanish rabbi’s, translated the text of the ‘Abra Melin’ ritual⁸⁹ .

The Merovingian Dynasty

The involvement of this early French royal house was linked with churchian, papal and political issues and included other diverse reasons. As far is known, the Merovingians descended from a Germanic tribe, the Sicambrians, who collectively were known as the Franks. According to tradition, one ‘Merovee’ sometimes referred to as Merovech, founded the dynasty. According to the attendant mythology he had two fathers, one was human enough, but the other was allegedly a sea creature, or at least amphibious: a ‘Quinotaur’. It was seemingly from this heritage the Merovingian reputation for the having supernatural abilities arose.

According to the seminal work, ‘The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail’, the Priory was formed with the express purpose of restoring the deposed Merovingian dynasty to the throne of France and Europe. This was also to be achieved by especially appointed ‘Rex Deus’ families (Jesus’ bloodline), the Sinclair’s (Rosslyn Templars), the builders of Rosslyn Chapel were one such family.

The Knights Templar who were the Priory’s military wing searched for, and probably found both actual and spiritual treasures beneath the Temple of Solomon. What the treasures were is still hotly debated, but consensus suggests that they comprised a fortune in gold and artifacts, and the lost gospels of Jesus Christ. The Priory therefore would have had access to at least some of the spoils and documentation, enough to finance any of its plans.

Egyptian Shiites

The Shia Nizaris were already a settled Ismaili state in Persia. They lived among the medieval Turko-Persian Empire. Over the following decades the Nizari Shia mixed with the local population, adopted the Persian culture and gained control over vast areas. They had no Islamic tradition or strong heritage of their own. They adopted the cultural language and religious interpretation their leaders (Imams).

With the arrival of Sunni Islamism in Shia dominated Persia, many were driven from the land and parked themselves in castles. The Near the Holy Land, both Nizaris and Crusaders worked together as spies for each other against Sunni Invaders. Both employed murder as a military means of disposing factional enemies. During the Alamut Period under Hassan bin Sabbah who lived in the Alamut fortress and controlled the Nizari Ismaili State of Alamut, almost any murder of political significance in the Islamic lands was rightly or wrongly credited to the Ismailis.

However the military approach of the Nizari Ismaili State of Alamut was largely a defensive one, with strategically chosen sites that avoided confrontation wherever possible, without the loss of life. But the defining characteristic of the Nizari Ismaili state was that it was scattered geographically throughout Persia and Syria.

The Alamut castle bought by Hassan bin Sabbah in northern Persia therefore was only one link of strongholds throughout the regions where Ismailis could retreat to safety if necessary. The long post-Alamut period then became obscure in the Ismaili history for the longest time. Large number of Ismailis began coming to the fortress and Hussein Mahdi (a Shia martyr who refused loyalty to anyone but Allah) was compelled to open his doors because of a growing influence of Ismailis in the vicinity.

By 1090 Hassan bin Sabbah, most of Alamut's garrison and many the inhabitants had embraced Ismailism. Alamut was known as daru'l hijra (place of refuge) for the Ismailis. Hulegu Khan (1217-.) the Mongol commander reduced the fort of Alamut. The fortress of Alamut offered a desperate resistance to the onslaughts of the Central Asian hordes. By 1256, they plundered and then set fire to its building and its library. The Mongol destroyed the Ismaili library containing one and one half million volumes. The Ismaili rule in Alamut lasted for 171 years (1090-1256). In its early period, three 'Hujjats of Allah' were the rulers of the Alamut: Hassan bin Sabbah (1090-1138); Kiya Buzrug Ummid (1138); and Muhammad bin Kiya Buzrug (1138-1160)

Hassan bin Sabbah trained his army based on Three Principles of cautious existence, based on a strong set of values, which governed their lives and of their Society. The beliefs have existed since Ancient Times. They are: First, never to harm an innocent person; second, to hide from obviousness and become one with the crowd; third, never to compromise the safety of the Brotherhood.

These principles permeated every aspect of a Hashimite's daily normal life. It was a life-struggle for 'peace in all things'. Its work was carried out as duties towards humanity for peaceful existence, even if it meant through political and strategic assassinations. It was hoped that killing one individual would lead to the salvation of thousands. They fought for

those who did not have the abilities, resources or knowledge to speak against those who misused their power. Since even before 2500BC there were two ways to enter the Ancient Hashimite's Order: being born into it or through recruitment. Training and testing over a long period of time was to ensure a candidate's honour, honesty, bravery and truthfulness.