

Did Ancient Israelites Form Eastern Religions? (Part I)

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Introduction

Eastern and Western thought, often perceived as antithetical to one another, developed from a common root during the First Millennium BCE's formative years. Israelites were forcefully moved east in the 8th Century BCE. This particular diaspora became the Saka or Shaka nomads of Central and South Asia. For our purposes, they were one branch of Israel's famed "Lost Tribes," scattered among Eastern nations. A few hundred years later, the biblical stage also moved east from Israel to Babylon. Babylon was then conquered and absorbed by Persia. Eastern sages like Siddhartha and others shared the limelight with biblical prophets, characters, and events. In this expansive Persian context, seemingly incompatible faiths sprung from close proximity to one another and shared a common history.

In this essay, I suggest the founders of Eastern religions are Israelite descendants from the first Israeli diaspora that moved to and was eventually deported to the East from the 900s BCE to the 700s BCE. After this initial diaspora prepared the "soil", Eastern religions formed in conjunction with later biblical events within Babylon and then more specifically within Persia's Achaemenid Empire (559-331 BCE), including its surrounding trade partners and allies. Ironically, Siddhartha Gotama, known as Buddha, grew up within the shadow of Persia's great empire and under the influences of the same biblical prophets, texts, and events which eventually inoculated Augustine and many sculptors of Western thought. These influential prophetic texts were canonized in the West but not in the East.

The 1st Millennium BCE

The Israelites' long history as slaves in Egypt, culminated with the Exodus under Moses. They were given the Torah with its well-defined laws, stories, civil codes, and methods of governance. Their military exploits in their conquest of Caanan are still known 3500 years later. All that to say, the Israelites were highly developed before the 1st Millennium BCE began.

Israel's King David and King Solomon were at the helm of Israel's advanced civilization when the 1st Millennium BCE started. Together, in alliance with the Phoenicians (biblical Tyre and Sidon), they brought Israel to its zenith, suppressed two superpowers, Egypt and Assyria, and built Solomon's Temple, which was one of the great wonders of the ancient world.

Sadly, Solomon's later years were marked by spiritual decay and sin's divine consequences: God promised to tear ten of the twelve tribes from Solomon's dynasty. After Solomon's passing, ten northern tribes separated themselves from Judah in the

south. The northern kingdom kept the name Israel and is also known by their prominent tribe Ephraim or Joseph. The South was known by its prominent tribe, Judah. According to the Script (Bible), the northern tribes (Israel) had a propensity to turn away from God to foreign gods and traditions. The Script's God called this unfaithfulness adultery, so He divorced Himself from Israel.

The Era of Prophetic Writings (900s - 400s BCE)

In the context of this divided nation, an era of biblical prophets and their sacred texts was birthed. Today, this prophetic section of the Good Book is called The Prophets. These unique Hebrew Prophets started calling the inhabitants of Judah and Israel to reform their ways, seek justice, and turn back to the God of their forefathers. If the people didn't return, the prophets said God would scatter or "sow" Israel among all nations. Similar calls to reformation and justice were central to Siddhartha's message and the teachings of

Confucius and other Easterners

The prophets' fascinating proclamations were written, transmitted, and eventually canonized in the West. Their interesting lives and eccentric actions were recorded. One eccentric prophet wasn't allowed to cry when his wife died. Another had to go naked through the city as a sign that the people would be stripped. One had to publicly lie on the ground on one side for a year as a visual lesson for the people. Their eclectic lives are still mirrored by many Eastern teachers.

Mechanism for Sowing Israelites Across the Globe

The northern kingdom of Israel didn't return to God or heed the warnings. Instead, they became corrupt and weak, so inhabitants left the kingdom. Maritime Phoenicians, who were allied with Israel, used Israelite refugees to populate Hebraic Carthage and other colonies. Phoenicia was only comprised of two city-states and didn't have a large population with which to populate their colonies. As if divinely orchestrated, the maritime Phoenicians and Carthaginians were the perfect mechanism for sowing fleeing Israelite "seeds" to distant coastal colonies around the Mediterranean and Atlantic, fulfilling the promise that they would be sown among the nations.

Other groups of Israelites fled Israel's corruption, instability, taxes, coups, and abuse by traveling overland to Semitic Urartu in modern-day Armenia. Those who wanted to keep their horses would have chosen this overland route as opposed to the Phoenicians' maritime route. The highly civilized nomadic Scythians burst into history from Urartu at this historic moment. Like Carthage, Urartu was Semitic, and like the Carthaginians, the Scythians could only have been populated primarily by Israelite migrants from Israel's shrinking population. Fast-moving, horseriding Scythians could not have been a better

mechanism for sowing Eurasia with small Israelite camps that dotted the landmass. Biblical prophets had said God would sow Israel like seed among the nations, and sure enough, many city-states suddenly appeared in history as Israel's population fed into these two "seeding machines". One could say that nations, cultures, and religions germinated and sprouted around the world during this epoch.

Culturally, the Scythians could only have come from a sophisticated populace with technical skills, management, and military background. They were highly civilized even though some Westerners typify them as savages. The population probably developed their skill, technology, and finesse while building Solomon's empire and temple. Scythians were not from undeveloped Siberia as many scholars hypothesize. They quickly moved from their home in Urartu (modern-day Armenia) and skillfully planted small, civilized nomadic tribal groups from China, Siberia, and Mongolia and into Europe and the Middle East.

Assyrian Deportation (740-720 BCE)

Since David and Solomon's military power had been divided, diminished, and dispersed, Assyria slowly reclaimed dominance. From 740 BCE, the Assyrians started attacking Israel and deporting its citizens. Assyria finally conquered Israel's depopulated capital, Samaria, in 722 or 721 BCE. The Script says captives were taken to Hara, Habor, Halah, the river Gozan, and cities of the Medes on Assyria's Eastern borders. Hara could be the Indus Valley Civilization, previously called Harappa or Harappan. Bukhara on the Silk Road also has Hara or Khara as its root. In Hebrew, the city Habor is Khyber, like Afghanistan's Khyber Pass. And by 600 BCE, the Medes occupied the birthplace of many Eastern religions - territory as far east as modern-day Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan, which brings us to Kashmir, Northwest India, and the Indus Valley. To this day, Kashmir, NW India, and the Indus Valley are not only known as the birthplace of many Eastern Religions but also as hotspots for the Lost Tribes of Israel and home of the former Saka people.

Birth of the Saka People (700s BCE)

History suddenly introduced the formidable Saka (Sak, Sacea, or Shaka), also known as Eastern Scythians. The Saka, like their Western Scythian counterparts from Urartu, sprung into existence quickly. They dominated their region, Central Asia at the gates of Earth's most populated areas, China and India. Steven M. Collins (1995) and George Moore (1861) are two of several scholars who brilliantly trace the emergence of the Saka from Israel's deported captives, claiming that Sak comes from Isaac. (Interestingly, my Kyrgyz name, Irisbek, also drops the initial "I" and becomes Risbek, just as Isaak became Sak.) The timing, geographic location, ethnonym, skills, culture, and habits of the Sak in Central Asia also match what scholars expect from Israel's deportation.

There is also a long list of scholars and authors who have reported on the presence of Israelites east of the well-established Saka origin or Afghanistan and Kashmir. Moving east, I've documented the Israelite roots among ethnic Kyrgyz. A slew of 19th-century missionaries have reported an Israelite presence in Asian communities as far east as China's Sichuan Province and Myanmar in Southeast Asia. Margot Crossing and Don Richardson documented several ethnic groups who have legends of a Lost Book in Southeast Asia. Crossing identifies these tribes as ancient Israelites. At our most recent symposium, Damir Eraliev presented a relational link between ethnic Kyrgyz and Southeast Asian tribes which is recorded in the Epic Manas. Professor Manasseh Pasupuleti, George Moore, Dr. Ha-Sung Chung, and others have documented Torah traditions within Eastern Religions. Arimasa Kubo and Dr. Kengo Nagami highlight an ancient Israelite presence shaping Japanese Shintoism. Dr. Ha-Sung Chung and Esther Chen trace Israelites in China. Evidence of a powerful Israelite presence in Asia is overwhelming. The Saka and Scythians seem to have been the "seeder" through which Israelites were sown into Asia.

As Assyria weakened, the Israelite-Sakas were free to move further east into the Indian subcontinent, China, and beyond to the Far East and Southeast Asia. Eastern ideologies and religions were either birthed or matured in Saka regions. Siddhartha Gotama (Gautama) Buddha was even from the Shakya clan, a name that could easily be derived from Saka/Shaka. That takes us to the primary question of this essay: were Siddhartha Gautama, Confucius, the authors of Hindu Vedas, Zoroaster, and other Eastern reformers descendants of Israel's northern tribes?

Era of Formation (1000 - 400 BCE)

All over the world, massive city-states, ethnic groups, national identities, religions, and philosophies formed from 800 BCE to 400 BCE. Were these new city-states and worldviews forming around the dispersion of Israel's tribes? One of the Script's prophets said,

... you will spread out to the right and the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities. (Isaiah 54:3)

David Diringer, author of *The Alphabet, A Key to the History of Mankind* (1968), wrote:

In the 6th century BCE, an amazing religious revolution took place in northern India. It was so powerful that it changed history. In many respects, it was a nationwide reaction to crude religious customs and blood sacrifices, which were exclusively carried out by members of the Veda priestly clan. India's two sons—Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen, and Gautama, the founder of Buddhism—were the agents of this revolution. (Volume 2, p. 260)

Indian states were falling and rising. Migrants, expanding to the left and right, were pouring onto the subcontinent from Saka regions like Bactria, Kashmir, and the Indus Valley. These migrants dispossessed Indian states and rulers and inhabited desolate cities that shaped modern India, China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and much more. It was nothing short of a revolution.

Babylon, Persian Achaemenids, and Jewish Captives (600s - 400s BCE)

The Scythians decimated Assyria (circa 678 BCE) in an apparent revenge attack, but Babylon dealt the final blow to Assyria's capital, Nineveh, and assumed authority over Assyria's kingdom in 612 BCE. Trade and movement between allies in the eastern border regions would have been fairly fluid, especially as the territory switched hands. Former Israelites would have been free to push east across modern-day India or northeast into China and beyond.

After Babylon took Assyria, King Nebuchadnezzar attacked the southern kingdom of Judah (597 BCE) and deported Jewish captives east. This second major diaspora did not end the era of biblical prophets. As a consequence, the Script (Bible) has pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic prophets. Ezekiel and Daniel are exilic prophets who continued to call God's people to return to God during Babylon and Persia's rule. Zechariah also started prophesying in Babylon/Persia, but eventually migrated back to Jerusalem and is now listed as one of the post-exilic prophets.

The prophet Jeremiah, a pre-exilic prophet, had foretold that Jews would be in Babylon for 70 years. When those 70 years were completed, Persia's Achaemenid Empire destroyed Babylon (539 BCE), allowing the Jewish return to Jerusalem. The Script follows the history of those who returned. Israelites, who were deported by Assyria over 200 years before, didn't return with the Jews. They eventually became "lost" among the nations. Post-exilic prophets prophesied in Judea during Achaemenid rule. The Achaemenids and the prophets ended after Alexander the Great annihilated Persia. Before finishing this section, let's remember that the Persian culture, sown with Israelite seed and watered with Jewish Prophets, provided a unique context for Israelite "seeds" to germinate and sprout. Now, many centuries later, Eastern worldviews stand like giant trees with long histories. This paper revisits the origin of these massive Eastern religions.

Kings and their Decrees (600s - 400s BCE)

Babylonian and Persian kings used an additional vehicle to spread God's message in the East by making decrees that promoted Israel's God. Persia's Jewish captives had made a splash in their new home. Several Jews rose to prominence in the Babylonian and Achaemenid courts. Notable biblical figures like Daniel, Esther, Mordecai,

Nehemiah, and others served influential Persian kings. Other Jews made history by taking an unpopular stance against the prevailing culture. Booklets like Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Ezekiel were written or took place within Persia. Eastern kings living with these God-followers and their prophecies often honored Israel's God enthusiastically.

The royal decrees would have been read and studied by Jewish dignitaries, Israel's long-lost tribes, Eastern nobility, Eastern reformers, and Eastern scholars like the men who taught Siddhartha. Yes, Eastern sages would have been familiar with Babylonian and Achaemenid decrees that praised the biblical God in multiple languages to countless conquered nations during their mighty eras. If the famed Eastern sages were from the first Israelite diaspora, the God mentioned in these decrees may have tugged at an ancestral memory, recalling an era when earlier prophets had warned their forefathers. The Prophet Ezekiel, speaking on God's behalf, said:

I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you throughout the lands. I will purge your uncleanness from you. You will be defiled in the sight of the nations. Then you will know that I am the Lord. (Ezekiel 22:15,16)

If we believe the Script's God, we can assume he was fulfilling this prophecy.

Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (reigned from 605-562 BCE)

After a powerful showdown between Nebuchadnezzar and a few Jewish exiles who refused to bow to a new Babylonian god, Nebuchadnezzar conceded and exclaimed:

"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him! They defied the king's edict and gave up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their god. Therefore, I hereby decree that any people, nation, or language that says anything slanderous against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego will be torn limb from limb and their house made a pile of rubble, because there is no other god who can deliver in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the province of Babylon.

King Nebuchadnezzar: To all peoples, nations, and languages who dwell in all the earth: May your peace abound! It seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders that God Most High has done for me. How great are His signs, and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, his dominion from generation to generation. (Daniel 3)

Can you imagine Siddhartha reading that decree?

Persia's king followed suit (c. 500 BCE)

Later, King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language on all the earth:

May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom, people must fear and revere the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God, and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, and his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”

So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian (Daniel 6).

That is written in the Good Book... to all nations.

Artaxerxes (reigned 465–424 BCE)

The following section is cut & pasted from the Script:

This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest, a teacher of the law, a man learned in matters concerning the commands and decrees of the Lord for Israel:

Artaxerxes, king of kings,

To Ezra, the priest and teacher of the Law of the God of Heaven:

Greetings.

Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who volunteer to go to Jerusalem with you, may go. You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem concerning the Law of your God, which is in your hand.

Moreover, you are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. With this money, be sure to buy bulls, rams, and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.

You and your fellow Israelites may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, per the will of your God. Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God. And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you are responsible to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury.

Now I, King Artaxerxes, decree that all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates are to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law of the God of Heaven, may ask of you—up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and salt without limit. Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should his wrath fall on the realm of the king and his sons? You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute, or duty on any of the priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, temple servants, or other workers at this house of God. And you, Ezra, by the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them. Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.

Jews in the Achaemenid Courts

From the cut-and-paste section above, we can see that Eastern kings developed a reverence for God. Jews like Daniel, revered for his prophetic visions and wisdom, navigated the corridors of power in the courts of Achaemenid rulers, offering counsel and interpreting divine messages. Mordecai the Jew was the second-most powerful person in the Achaemenid Empire during his life.

“For Mordecai, the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by the multitude of his people.” (Esther 10).

Esther was King Ahasuerus’ Jewish Queen, chosen from the prettiest girls throughout the province. She boldly addressed the king and flipped the outcome of a decree throughout Persia’s many provinces. Earlier, Cyrus’ initial decree to rebuild God’s temple shaped Persia’s political climate for generations. Nehemiah was also in the courts of King Artaxerxes, inspiring the king to sponsor the rebuilding of Jerusalem with supplies, edicts, and a guard. We just read about Ezra, who played a pivotal role in the revitalization of Jewish religious practices in *Yehud Medinata*, the Achaemenidian province of Judah. The teachings, writings, and experiences of biblical characters not only shaped the destiny of their people but also resonated throughout Persia’s vast multiethnic empire and beyond. This all took place as many national identities, cultures, and faiths were solidifying in the 6th and 5th Centuries BCE.

We know the influence of these Jews because the Script’s narrative followed them to Babylon and Persia. Remember, they were exiled because they had disobeyed God,

and yet they were still able to make an amazing impact on all the nations under these two superpowers. The Script's narrative doesn't follow Israel's ten northern tribes, who were exiled and voluntarily dispersed in earlier centuries. Can we assume that the disobedient Israelites were as impactful in their new lands as disobedient Jews were in Babylon and Persia?

Israelites and the Birth of Eastern Religions

With the establishment of the Achaemenid Empire over multiple cultures and trade routes, some 8th-century BCE Israelite deportees found themselves within the Achaemenid Empire together with more recent 6th-century BCE Jewish prophets and their sacred texts. They all watched empire-wide events that honored their ancient God. But did the former Israelites recognize the prophets or the God who was proclaimed? Over a century after leaving Israel, who had the Israelites become? How would they have responded to the voices of Jewish prophets and priests? Would they have recognized the "voice" of their ancient God?

Had they "prepared the soil" for a spiritual revival all over Asia? Remarkably, the Bhagavad Gita, the sacred Hindu Vedas, the Dhammapada and the Sutta Pitaka of Buddhism, the Avesta of Zoroastrianism, the Analects of Confucius, and the Tao Te Ching of Taoism were all written around the time the biblical stage had moved east. And they were written in places we should expect to find Israel's mysterious lost tribes. The Eastern sages (many of whom were nobility) would have had special access to the kings' decrees and the prophets' writings.

Korean scholar Ha-Sung Chung writes that a tablet was found in the Keifang Synagogue, suggesting Confucius had access to the Script/Bible (2023, p. 8). If these Eastern scholars were descended from the northern kingdom, their ancestors would have been under David and Solomon's advanced philosophy, theology, and moral law. Families who had retained a monotheistic belief and moral culture would be open to spiritual concepts from the powerful God who had earned the attention of kings. Many Easterners would have been reawakened by what they were hearing from Babylon and Persia.

Additionally, Margot Crossing (2019) arguing on behalf of peoples of the Lost Book claims these Lost Book peoples are scattered from Central Asia to Southeast Asia. She analyzes several cases and defends why the lost book must be the Torah or Hebrew Bible (Tenakh). She believes the nations of the East centered their beliefs and practices on the Script until the Chinese emperor Shih Huang Ti burned all books except agricultural and medical books in 213 BCE. Interestingly, this purge happened as Jews were canonizing their holy books in Jerusalem. Those canonized texts quote God saying,

“This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at My word.” (Isaiah 66:2)

Those canonized writings became foundational for Jews and Christians and eventually for Western civilization.

A Few Eastern Religions from the Achaemenid Era

The following is a list of Eastern religions and a shallow snippet of their overlap with biblical values:

Zoroastrianism (628 BCE–551 BCE, Pahlavi sources)

Zarathustra’s era is debated, but Zoroastrianism, one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions, was born in the 6th century BCE, during the Achaemenid period. The religion's central tenets, such as the belief in a single God, heaven, hell, and a day of judgment, parallel the Script’s teachings.

Hinduism (c. 1000–500 BCE)

Hinduism, an ancient religion, coalesced during the later Vedic period (c. 1000–500 BCE). The possibility of Israelite migrations to the Indian subcontinent presents intriguing parallels with certain elements of Hinduism. For instance, the monotheism in the Vedas is no different from what the Lost Tribes would have known. Both Hinduism and ancient Israelites mixed polytheism with their monotheistic foundation.

Buddhism (500s BCE)

Siddhartha Gautama Buddha was born in 563 BCE, at the midpoint of the Jewish captivity in Babylon. The religion he started was not what it is today. Like some of his cohorts, the biblical prophets, Siddhartha Gautama was a wandering religious teacher who lived in northern India or Nepal during the 6th or 5th century BCE. Siddhartha didn’t want to be worshiped. He wanted people to reform their ways and taught the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

1. The Four Noble Truths:
 - Life is characterized by suffering, pain, and dissatisfaction.
 - The cause of suffering is craving or attachment to desires.
 - It is possible to end suffering by ceasing attachment to desires.
 - The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to achieve liberation from suffering.
2. The Noble Eightfold Path:
 - Understanding the Four Noble Truths and seeing things as they are.
 - Developing thoughts free from attachment, ill will, and harm.
 - Abstaining from lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter.

- Acting in ways that are not harmful to oneself or others, such as refraining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct.
- Earning a living in a way that does not harm others or oneself.
- Cultivating positive states of mind and preventing negative states from arising.
- Being fully aware of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions in the present moment.
- Developing deep concentration and mental stability through meditation.

Those familiar with Yeshua's teachings about God's love, denying self, forgiving others, blessing one's enemies, seeking truth, etc. will notice the overlap with Buddha's values. Jay G. Williams (2004) even suggests that Yeshua is Buddhism's "Way" to ultimate enlightenment.

Dr. Ha-Sung Chung (2021) argues that Buddhism spread quickly through the lost Israelite communities. Israelite groups may have changed their ethnic names for a variety of reasons, including fear of anti-Semitism. The Script reminds us that many Jews from the southern kingdom of Judah hid their identity when they lived in exile (Esther 2:10). Israel's diaspora likely did the same. They may have disguised their biblical faith in Buddhism.

The Tibetan Buddhist Encyclopedia has an article titled "Siddhartha Gautama Buddha Prophecies Jesus" (March, 2022) with fascinating references to Gautama's predictions of the "Lord of Mercies" coming with pierced side. Such prophecies in Eastern religions are controversial but make sense because Zechariah and Ezekiel disseminated similar prophecies about the coming king. Zechariah, like Siddhartha, also prophesied that the coming king would be pierced. Hinduism's Vedas also contain verses about Isha Masiha (Yeshua Messiah) and the white-robed "Lord of Nations," most likely written at the same time as Zechariah.

One sore verse written in the Great Script over a hundred years before Siddhartha's birth seems to shed an odd light on Buddhism. Isaiah says:

"Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the grove, following one who is among those who eat the flesh of pigs, rats, and other unclean things—they will meet their end together with the one they follow," declares the Lord."

Oddly, legend tells us that Siddhartha met his end after eating swine in a grove. I can't judge, but I also can't ignore the odd parallel of this obscure verse and Siddhartha's enigmatic death. This verse seems to be directed to those who "follow" Siddhartha Gautama who didn't want to be worshiped. A true Buddhist reformation will not worship

the man, but follow truth to Buddhism's prophetic roots and refresh the doctrines in light of a Buddhist interpretation and application of the writings that initially inspired Buddha.

Jainism (c. 700 BCE)

The twenty-fourth *tirthankara* Mahavira (c. 600 BCE), a noble by birth, like Siddhartha, formalized the religion's central tenets, such as nonviolence, karma, and the concept of inner liberation - all tenants with strong biblical ties.

Confucius (c. 551 – 479 BCE)

Confucius emerged as a preeminent philosopher whose teachings emphasized ethical conduct, piety, social harmony, and humane governance. The Analects, a compilation of Confucius's sayings and teachings, have obvious parallels to the Script.

Taoism (400s BCE)

The core of Taoist thought crystallized during the 5th century BCE around the *Tao Te Ching* and the *Zhuangzi* Texts written in that era.

Each of these major Eastern faiths developed while Israelites were being propelled across the globe and while the Achaemenids' famous kings reiterated the biblical events they witnessed. And while Jewish prophets spread their message to Jewish communities across the Achaemenid Empire and its trade routes.

Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far. (Esther 9:20)

All sorts of religious writings were being penned, translated, and distributed in accordance with events from the Achaemenid era. Each text appears to overlap with the next. Of course, later religions, like Bahai, Sikhs, Christianity, and Islam, developed well after the First-Millennium BCE, but even these younger faiths all branch off of the earlier faiths. All faiths are not the same, but perhaps they are all rooted in one Script.

Conclusion

The historic, geographic, cultural, and religious context suggests that Siddhartha Gautama and other Eastern reformers were ancient Israelites from the famed Lost Tribes of Israel who had been deported east from Israel in the 8th Century BCE. From the 6th-4th Centuries BCE those Eastern tribes were inspired by a wave of exiled Jews in Babylon and Persia. Royal decrees in multiple languages sent by messengers to over 100 conquered nations within Babylonia and Persia. Generation after generation, the nations heard royal decrees from powerful messengers honoring the biblical God. Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism formed in this context.

Part II will dive deeper into the personalities, specifics, and Eastern teachings of the biblical prophets and the messianic culmination of their foretellings. We'll examine the Magi's interpretation of the prophets, legends of Yeshua in the East, and Yeshua's dictate to his disciples to go to "the lost sheep of Israel".

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