

The Religious Evolution Theory: The Parallel Religious Evolutions in the Middle East and India

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Abstract

This paper proposes the religious evolution by natural selection adapting to civilizational shifts from technological revolutions, and survival of the fittest. For an example, the parallel religious evolutions by natural selection in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and India (Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism) are through the adaptations to the civilizational shifts from technological revolutions in terms of the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Advanced Iron Age. The civilizational shift from tribal nations with national kings and polytheism during the Bronze Age to a mega empire with one centralized emperor and deity during the Iron Age produces the parallel religious evolutions from theocratic polytheistic Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism to theocratic monotheistic Judaism in the Middle East and from theocratic polytheistic Vedism to theocratic monotheistic Brahmanism in India. The civilizational shift for the rise of ordinary people during the Advanced Iron Age produces the parallel religious evolutions from theocratic monotheistic Judaism to spiritual monotheistic Christianity in the Middle East and from theocratic monotheistic Brahmanism to spiritual monotheistic Buddhism in India. The absorption of Christianity by modified Judaism resulted in Islam to dominate the Middle East, and in parallel, the absorption of Buddhism by Brahmanism resulted in Hinduism to dominate India. As a result, Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism-Judaism-Christianity-Islam in the Middle East is parallel to Vedism-Brahmanism-Buddhism-Hinduism in India. In conclusion, the parallel religious evolutions by natural selection in the Middle East and India are through the adaptations to the civilizational shifts from the technological revolutions. The religious evolution theory is the foundation of religious pluralism as the biological evolution theory is the foundation of biological multi-species. The religion in the coming Intelligence Age is the religious evolution theory which explains the relations among religions, and maintains the original religions and their texts.

Keywords

Religious Evolution Theory, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Religious Pluralism

1. Introduction

In *Beyond Toleration: The Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (Beneke, 2006). Chris Beneke demonstrates how the United States managed to overcome the religious violence and bigotry that characterized much of early modern Europe and America. At its founding, the United States was one of the most religiously diverse places in the world. It begins with the religious absolutism with an intolerant absolute belief in one truth in Colonial America. However, as the seventeenth century passed, an increasingly diverse population compelled changes in behavior and attitudes to religious toleration prior to the Revolution. After the Revolution, religious toleration was reinforced by a radical political ideology known as liberalism that asserted liberty of conscience as an individual right, resulting in creating the religious pluralism for which the United States has become renowned. Beneke conceives of the progression from the religious absolutism to religious toleration to full liberty of conscience within a Christian America. Beneke accepts Christian precepts and the authority of a church.

John Hick expands the religious pluralism to include all major religions in the world (Hick, 1989). At the center of religious pluralism is “the Real” corresponding to a neo-Kantian unknowable noumenon in contrast to knowable phenomenon. All great religions are in the phenomenal realms which lead people to escape from ignorance and suffering from self-centered regard to Reality-centeredness and sainthood. The perceptions of God are really about the phenomenal God and not the noumenal God, because the perceptions of God are culturally and historically influenced; and for that reason should not be considered absolute. According to Hick, the different religious traditions, with their complex internal differentiations, have developed to meet the needs of the range of mentalities expressed in the different human cultures. The result is religious pluralism where no culturally and historical influenced religion is absolute. One major criticism about the Hick’s religious pluralism is about the Real. If the unknowable Real is beyond good and evil, how can Hick consistently use the moral test to judge between presumed saints from within the various traditions? (Cook, 1993).

In this paper, the Real as unknowable noumenal realm in the Hick’s religious pluralism is replaced by the proposed religious evolution as a continuing process toward unknowable future. The proposed religious evolution corresponds to the Darwin’s biological evolution. The Darwin’s biological evolution theory involves natural selection and survival of the fittest, in the same way, in the proposed religious evolution theory involves natural selection and survival of the fittest. The Darwin’s biological evolution by natural selection is through the adaptations of

species to environmental shifts, and survival of the fittest. In the same way, the proposed religious evolution by natural selection is through the adaptations of religions to civilizational shifts from technological revolutions, and survival of the fittest (Chung, 2019).

The known species in biological multi-species are the products of the biological evolution, and in the same way, the known religions in religious pluralism are products of the religious evolution. As a result, the biological evolution theory is the foundation of biological multi-species, and in the same way, the religious evolution theory is the foundation of religious pluralism. The connections among species in biological pluralism can be explained only by the biological evolution theory, and in the same way, the connections among religions in religious pluralism can be explained only by the religious evolution theory. As in the Hick's religious pluralism, known religions are culturally and historically influenced, religions are justified by the adaptations to civilizational shifts, and absoluteness has no meaning in the religious revolution theory as a whole.

This paper describes the specific religious evolutions in the Middle East and India as the examples of the religious evolution. This paper proposes that the parallel evolutions in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and India (Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism) are derived from the adaptations to the civilizational shifts from technological revolutions in terms of the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Advanced Iron Age. The paper proposes that in the Middle East, theocratic polytheistic Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism (the Bronze Age) evolved into theocratic monotheistic Judaism (the Iron Age) which evolved into spiritual monotheistic Christianity (the Advanced Iron Age). The absorption of Christianity by modified Judaism resulted in Islam to dominate the Middle East. In India in parallel, theocratic polytheistic Vedism (the Bronze Age) evolved into theocratic monotheistic Brahmanism (the Iron Age) which evolved into spiritual monotheistic Buddhism (the Advanced Iron Age). The absorption of Buddhism by Brahmanism resulted in Hinduism to dominate India as in **Figure 1**.

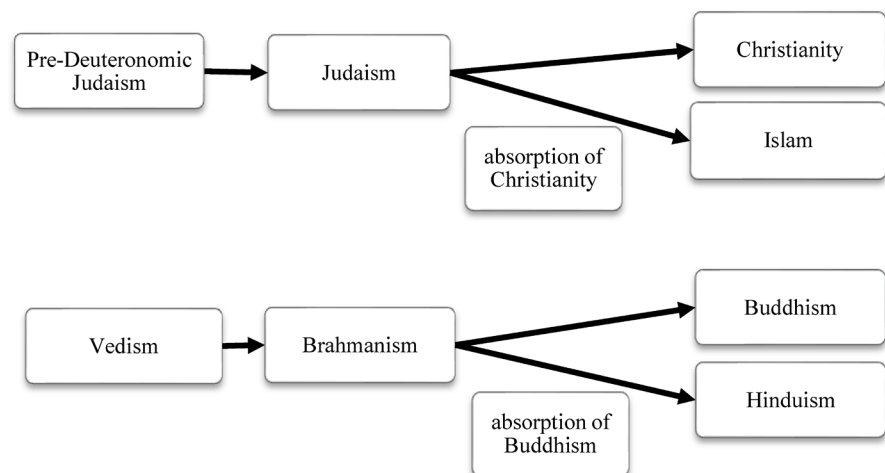


Figure 1. The parallel religious evolutions between Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism-Judaism-Christianity-Islam and Vedism-Brahmanism-Buddhism-Hinduism.

The DNA's of religions are the religious texts. In "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", Thomas Kuhn explained that as normal science operates is rendered incompatible with new phenomena, paradigm shifts arise for the adaptations with the new phenomena (Kuhn, 1970). Even though Kuhn restricted the use of paradigm shift to the natural sciences, paradigm shift and adaptation have been used in numerous non-scientific fields. This paper proposes the use of paradigm shift and adaptation in the religious texts of the Old-New Testaments and the Early-Late Upanishads. Basically, the paradigm shifts in these religious texts are due to the adaptations to the civilizational shifts in the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Advanced Iron Age as in **Figure 2**. In the paper, Section 2 discusses the civilizational shift from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, Section 3 describes the civilizational shift from the Iron Age to the Advanced Iron Age, and Section 4 discusses the Industrial Age, the Information Age, and the Intelligence Age.

2. The Civilizational Shift from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age

The Old Testament in Judaism and the Early Upanishads in Brahmanism represent the paradigm shift and the religious evolution from theocratic polytheism to theocratic monotheism to adapt to the civilizational shift from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

2.1. The Bronze Age

The Bronze Age started at different times at different parts of the world. The earliest started about 5500 years ago in the Southwestern Asia. The Bronze Age ended about 3000 years ago when the Iron Age started. The bronze technological revolution led to the invention of vehicles with spoked wheels for long-distance battle and chariots for effective weapon which effectively destroyed the boundary between the agrarian tribe and the pastoral tribe resulting in the transformation from tribes into nations consisting of both pastoral tribes and agrarian tribes (Anthony, 2010; Hetzron, 1997).

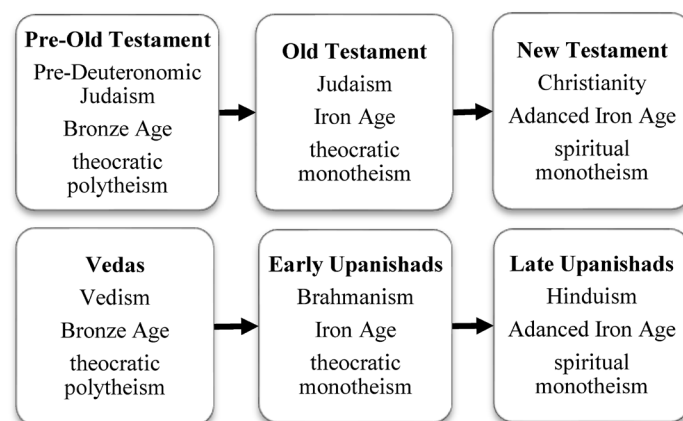


Figure 2. The parallel paradigm shifts between the Old-New Testaments and the Early-Late Upanishads.

2.1.1. Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism with the Pre-Old Testament

During the Bronze Age, the religion was polytheism. In polytheism, the chief deity in a region was typically remote, and people in different nations in the region worshiped their local deities. One typical example of polytheism is the polytheism in Canaan. Canaan, an ancient region between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean, located in the Levant region of present-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. The chief deity was El in the same way as Zeus in the Greek pantheon (Day, 2000). During the Bronze Age and the early Iron Age, each nation had its own local deity under El as el in the word of Israel (Davies, 2010). Israel and Judah shared Yahweh as their tribal god. According to Martin Noth, during the First Temple period the people of Israel believed that each nation had its own god, but that their god was superior to other gods (Noth, 1958). According to archeological evidence (Stern, 2001), during this time, idols represented other religions were found commonly in Jewish homes. On the whole, Mark S. Smith shows how Israelite polytheism was a feature of Israelite religion until the seventh and sixth centuries when Deuteronomic Judaism appeared (Smith, 2001). Pre-Deuteronomic theocratic polytheism is villainized in Deuteronomic Judaism, so the religious text for theocratic polytheism before the Old Testament did not continue, and does not exist.

2.1.2. Vedism with the Vedas

During the second millennium BCE, with the multiple waves, pastoral Indo-Aryans entered into the valley of the Indus River of agrarian Harappan civilization. The composite of pastoral Indo-Aryan and agrarian Harappan formed Vedism in the early Vedic Period (1500 - 1100 BCE) during the Bronze Age (Heesterman, 2005). The religious text of Vedism was the Vedas consisting of the four chief collections of the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda. The Rig Veda contains hymns about their mythology; the Sama Veda consists mainly of hymns about religious rituals; the Yajur Veda contains instructions for religious rituals; and the Atharva Veda consists of spells against enemies, sorcerers, and diseases. Each Veda consists of four parts: the Mantra-Samhitas or hymns, the Brahmanas or explanations of Mantras or rituals, the Aranyakas or mystical and philosophical material and explications of esoteric rites, and the Upanishads or the mind of an earnest disciple learning from his teacher. The division of the Vedas into four parts is to suit the four stages in a man's life.

Vedism is theocratic polytheism. According to the hymns of the Rig Veda for mythology, the most important deities were Agni, the god of Fire, intermediary between the gods and humans; Indra, the god of Heavens and War, protector of the Aryans against their enemies; Surya, the Sun god; Vayu, the god of Wind; and Prthivi, the goddess of Earth. The hymns of the Rigveda, praises the gods successively as the "one ultimate, supreme God", alternatively as "one supreme Goddess", thereby asserting that the deities were nothing but pluralistic manifestations of the same concept of the divine God (Graham, 1993; Taliaferro, Harrison, & Goetz, 2012). However, the Rig Veda does not have the underlying prin-

ciple to connect all these polytheistic deities and the clear and detailed description of the ultimate divine God, so Vedism is still considered to be polytheism.

2.2. The Iron Age

The Iron Age started between 1200 BCE and 600 BCE, depending on the region. Iron is tougher and lighter than bronze and was used to make much better sharp objects like spears, swords, and sharp tools than bronze. The source for iron was much more abundant than bronze. The state with iron technology was strong enough with enough destructive power of iron weapons to form mega nations such as mega empires. The earliest proto-mega centralized empire is the Hittite Empire based on the advantages entailed by its high advancement on ironworking at the time (Muhly, 2003). The Hittite Empire was not very large, and did not last long. The earliest mega centralized empires were the neo-Assyrian empire (934 - 609 BCE) and neo-Babylonian empire (612 - 539 BCE).

A mega empire conquered many small national kings and national deities as polytheism to form one centralized emperor and one centralized deity as monotheism. In religion, the civilization shift from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age produces the religious shift from polytheism to monotheism. The earliest mega centralized empire with theocratic monotheism is the Persian Empire (550 - 330 BC) with monotheistic Zoroastrianism (Hintze, 2013). Zoroastrianism was found by the prophet Zoroaster traditionally dated to the 6th century BC in the Iron Age after and during the time of the mega centralized neo-Assyrian and neo-Babylonian empires. Polytheism did not work well in mega centralized empire, resulting in the rise of personal monotheism. Zoroastrians believe in one God, called Ahura Mazda (meaning "Wise Lord"). He is compassionate, just, and is the creator of the universe. Zoroaster placed less emphasis on ritual worship, instead focusing on the central ethics of Good Words, Good Thoughts and Good Deeds.

2.2.1. Judaism with the Old Testament

The failure of polytheism as the alliance of deities for the alliance of states led to the development of monotheism in Israel and Judah. In 722 BCE, Israel was defeated by the mega Assyria Empire which was strong enough to defeat various states with enormously destructive army and iron weapons. Israelites witnessed the failure of polytheism with the alliance of deities for the alliance of states. No alliance could defeat the mega Assyria Empire who looked down at all local deities. To some Israelites, the only salvation was to convert the local deity of Yahweh into the mega universal deity of Yahweh who had the power over all earthly empires. The mega universal deity of Yahweh was the only answer to oppose the mega emperor of the mega Assyrian Empire (Nikiprowetzky, 1975). The mega universal deity was monotheism. Some of the refugees who fled from Israel to Judah brought with them the Yahweh only monotheism to Judah, and convinced some very influential people to believe in monotheism replacing polytheism. Several kings in Judah became the strong supporters of monotheism. To the be-

lievers of monotheism, the practice of polytheism by Israelites was the reason for the defeat and suffering of Israelites as the punishment by monotheistic Yahweh. However, Yahweh, the universal deity, would not abandon Israel-Judah, and one day Israel-Judah would rise again under monotheistic Yahweh.

According to Martin Noth (Polzin, 1976), the clear and systematic expression of theocratic monotheism appears first in the book of Deuteronomy during King Josiah of Judah about a hundred years after the destruction of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) by Assyria in 722 BCE. Judah at this time was a vassal of Assyria, but Assyria now began a rapid decline in power, leading to a resurgence of nationalism in Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, 2 Kings 22 - 23 tells how a “book of the law” (Deuteronomy) was found in the Temple during the reign of Josiah. According to the story in Kings, the reading of the book caused Josiah in 622 BCE to embark on a series of religious reforms based on Deuteronomy framed as a covenant (treaty) between Judah and Yahweh in which Yahweh replaced the Assyrian king. Deuteronomy is cast in the literary mold of a sovereign-vassal treaty text which involves the covenant between the Israelites and Yahweh (God), who has chosen the Israelites as his people, and requires Israel to live according to his law (Brueggemann, 2002). As a result, the paradigm shift in the Old Testament is from theocratic polytheism in Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism during the Bronze Age to theocratic monotheism in Judaism during the Iron Age. The Old Testament adapted to the civilizational shift from tribal nations with national kings and polytheism to a mega empire with one centralized emperor and deity during the Iron Age. According to the vast majority of theologians, the final version of Judaism sacred texts, such as the Pentateuch, was written after the fall of Judah in 587 BCE (Ska, 2006).

2.2.2. Brahmanism with the Early Upanishads

The Vedic religion changed when Indo-Aryan-Harappan people migrated into the Ganges Plain after about 1100 BCE and became settled farmers to merge with the native cultures of northern India (Heesterman, 2005). The region of northern India is bounded on the west by the upper Indus valley, on the east by lower Ganges region, on the north by the Himalayan foothills, and on the south by the Vindhya mountain range (Olivelle, 2014). The religion is Brahmanism, because of the religious and legal importance it places on the brahmana (priestly) class of society. Gradually, northern India became unified.

The religious text for Brahmanism is the Early Upanishads which was composed in northern India. According to K. N. Jayatilleke (Jayatilleke, 1963), the thinkers of Upanishadic texts can be grouped into two categories. The first group which includes early Upanishads was composed by metaphysicians who used rational arguments and empirical experience to formulate their speculations and philosophical premises. The second group includes many middle and later Upanishads, where their authors professed theories based on yoga and personal experiences influenced by Jain and Buddhist tradition. As a result, in this paper, these two groups are named as the Early Upanishads and the Late Upanishads.

The Early Upanishads involve with ritualistic Brahmanism, while the Late Upanishads involves with Hinduism influenced by the Sramaṇa tradition including the Jain and Buddhist tradition (Flood & Olivelle 2003).

The Early Upanishad stress that all the Hindu gods and goddesses are the same, all an aspect and manifestation of Brahman as the metaphysical ultimate reality before and after the creation of the Universe. Metaphysically, Brahman is the ultimate eternal and constant reality, while the observed universe is Maya to represent temporary and changing reality (Gough, 2001). The ultimate reality also includes Atman (soul or self). In the various schools of Hinduism, the dual schools consider Atman different from Brahman, while the non-dual schools consider Atman same as Brahman. In terms of ethics and aesthetics, Brahman and Atman are central to Hindu theory of values to represent the compassion for others, including other beings and nature at large (Sharma, 1999). Atman is the same reality and the same aesthetics as the Brahman (Nikam, 1952).

Moksha involves the liberation from saṃsāra (birth-rebirth cycle) (Tomer, 2002). During human life, Moksha can be attained through four paths, including Karma (the path of action and good deeds), Bhakti (the path of devotion to God), and Jnana (the path of knowledge and wisdom), and Raja (the path of mental discipline and meditation). After attaining moksha, the soul merges with Brahman. Ashrama as the four age-based life stages consists of Brahmacharya (student), Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (retired), and Sannyasa (renunciation) (Sharma, 2004). Moksha can be attained during the last two stages of Ashrama.

In the Early Upanishads, Brahman is the divine force underlying all reality. In contrast to God representing personal monotheism in the Old Testament, Brahman represents impersonal monotheism as an all-pervasive universal consciousness in the Early Upanishads. As a result, the paradigm shift in the Early Upanishads is from theocratic polytheism in the Vedas in Vedism during the Bronze Age to theocratic monotheism in Brahmanism during the Iron Age to adapt to the gradual unification of north India.

3. The Civilizational Shift from the Iron Age to the Advanced Iron Age

The Advanced Iron Age started about 700 BCE (Nijboer et al., 2015). The widespread use of improved iron tools and weapons helped the formation large territorial states. The towns became good markets, and both artisans and merchants were organized into guilds under their respective headmen. In India, it started the period of second urbanization (6th century BCE to 3rd century BCE) with large-scale town life in the middle Gangetic basin (Nain, 2018). The increase in wealth and education for ordinary people in the Advanced Iron Age and the second urbanization produced the rise of ordinary people. Ordinary people demanded more direct access to Brahmanism without excessive hierarchy and ritualism maintained by hierarchical and ritualistic priests. As a result, the rise of ordinary people was accompanied by the rise of new ascetic movements

in Greater Magadha, including Jainism and Buddhism maintained by ordinary people instead of priests who maintained ritualistic Brahmanism (Flood, 1996). The new religions were spiritual religions where spirit (inner mental state) replacing external hierarchy and ritualism, so they opposed hierarchy and ritualism in Brahmanism in such way that all ordinary people could be priests. Other than hierarchy and ritualism, the spiritual religions inherited most of the religious traditions from the original ritualistic religions. The rise of ordinary people for spiritual production in spiritual religions in the Advanced Iron Age corresponds to the rise of proletariats for material production in Marxism in the Industrial Age (Chung, 2020a).

The most important founders of the anti-hierarchy and anti-ritualism spiritual religions are Buddha in India for Buddhism and Jesus in the Middle East for Christianity. Both of them are for ordinary people, and oppose hierarchy and ritualism maintained by priests.

3.1. Christianity with the New Testament

Jesus, the founder of Christianity is known from the four New Testament Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) which were written in the late first century CE. Jesus was born sometime about 4 BCE and crucified sometime between 26 - 36 CE during the rule of Judea by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

Jesus was born as an ordinary person in Nazareth, a city in Jewish Galilee far away from the Jewish center of Jerusalem, and according to theologian Frederick Bruner, Galilee was not just geographically far from Jerusalem; it was considered spiritually and politically far, too. Galilee was the most pagan (such as Aramaean, Iturean, Phoenician, and Greek) of the Jewish provinces, located as it was at the northernmost tier of Palestine. This distance from Zion was not only geographic; Galileans were considered by Judaeans to sit rather loosely to the law and to be less biblically pure than those in or near Jerusalem (Bruner, 2004). Therefore, Judeans, particularly Judean Pharisees who followed strict Jewish traditions in Jerusalem, regarded the Galileans with a certain proud contempt.

Jesus preached mostly in Galilee, and selected his disciples mostly from ordinary people such as fishermen from Galilee. In Matthew 4:18, "As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed Him." As a result, it is not surprising that Jesus became a leader for the rise of ordinary people against hierarchy and ritualism in Judaism maintained by priests, teachers of the law, and Pharisees in Jerusalem.

In terms of anti-hierarchy, Jesus said, "The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You

yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.” (Matthew 23: 11-13) In terms of anti-ritualism, “But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal. Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you. “Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.” (Luke 11: 38-42) Jesus’ anti-hierarchy and anti-ritualism appealed to ordinary people.

The way that Jesus taught the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) was different from other teachers. “They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.” (Mark 1:21-22) To Jesus, the deepest truth and love in the kingdom of God is in your heart, not through Torah. “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:20-21) Jesus did not ignore the Torah, but to him the kingdom of God within you was more important. The kingdom of God unlike the Torah is accessible to all ordinary people.

Jesus promised his disciples the coming of the Holy Spirit within them. “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:26-27)

Jesus lived at a restive time when displeasure with Roman policies and with the corrupt Temple high priests resulted in hopes for a messianic redeemer who would throw off the foreign occupiers and restore Jewish sovereignty and the proper Temple high priests in the Land of Israel. Some Jews considered Jesus as a messianic redeemer to throw off the Roman Empire. Romans viewed Jesus as a threat to the peace and crucified him because he was gaining adherents who saw him as a messianic redeemer. However, the rise of ordinary people continued. Eventually, the kingdom of God is manifested as Christian church which practices Jesus’ teaching for ordinary people including both Jews and non-Jews without excessive hierarchy and ritualism.

3.2. Islam with the Quran from the Absorption of Christianity by Modified Judaism

Other than hierarchy and ritualism, Christianity inherits most of the religious traditions from Judaism. As a result, Christianity was absorbed by modified Ju-

daism to form Islam at the start of the 7th century CE by Muhammad (570 - 632 CE) born in the Arabian city of Mecca. Polytheistic, monotheistic, Jewish, and Christian communities existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. In 610 CE, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad and commanded him to recite verses that would be included in the Quran (Brown, 2003). In the Quran, all Arabs are the descendants of Abraham as in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is ruh al-qudus as in the New Testament, and Jesus is one of the prophets. Muhammad is the last prophet. Islam in the Quran is open to ordinary people including Arabs and non-Arabs. Islam has mostly been indigenized in local societies. Judaism itself is not open to ordinary people, so it remains as a small religion comparing with Christianity and Islam which are open to ordinary people. Many other polytheistic religions and monotheistic religions that failed to adapt to the civilizational shifts became extinct.

3.3. Buddhism with the Tripiṭaka

Buddha whose name was Siddhartha Gautama in India lived sometime between 566 - 410 BCE (exact years are unknown) (Cousins, 1996). He was also commonly called Sakyamuni ("Sage of the Shakyas") which suggests that that he was born into the Shakya clan, a community that was on the periphery, both geographically and culturally, of the eastern Indian subcontinent in the 5th century BCE (Gombrich, 1988). The Shakya clan was recognized as being non-Vedic (Bronkhorst, 2007). The Sakyans are said to be "rough-spoken", and criticized because they do not honor, respect, esteem, revere or pay homage to Brahmins (Levman, 2013). At the same time, the Shakya clan was influenced by Śramaṇa schools as the new ascetic movements for ordinary people who opposed the growing influence of Brahmanism and the primacy of rituals, presided by the Brahmin priests (Flood, 1996). The Shakya republic was not a hereditary monarchy, and was more egalitarian than the Vedic monarchies (Gethin, 1998). As a result, it is not surprising that Buddha in the remote Shakya community became a leader for the rise of ordinary people against hierarchy and ritualism in Brahmanism maintained by the Brahmin priests in the Vedic communities, in the similar way as that Jesus in remote Galilee became a leader for the rise of ordinary people against hierarchy and ritualism in Judaism maintained by priests, teachers of the law, and Pharisees in Jerusalem.

Buddha's father was an elected chieftain. Buddha lived a very spoiled life in the palace. At the age of 29, Buddha left the palace, leaving behind his son and wife to devote himself to meditation, seeking enlightenment among the ascetics of the forest. Buddha could not reach enlightenment by the extreme methods. He resolved to follow a "middle path" between excessive extremes. He reached enlightenment under a Bodhi tree (Harvey, 2013). For many years, Buddha travelled around India, teaching his philosophy and method of liberation.

Buddha was anti-hierarchy in Brahmanism by rejecting the hierarchical caste system and anti-ritualism in Brahmanism by rejecting the necessity of deities for

the enlightenment. Buddha appealed to ordinary people by anti-hierarchy and anti-ritualism. Furthermore, Buddha appealed to ordinary people by solving the fundamental problem of ordinary people. The fundamental problem is “dukkha” as the fundamental problem of life. Dukkha refers to all kinds of suffering, unease, frustration, and dissatisfaction that ordinary people experience. Dukkha is the starting point for the Buddha’s Four Noble Truths (Anderson, 2013), including 1) the suffering, 2) the cause of suffering (greed, aversion, and delusion), 3) the end of suffering (Nirvana), and 4) the path (the Eightfold Path) to the end of suffering (Gethin, 1998). The Eightfold Path consists of right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness meditation, and right concentration meditation. Mindfulness meditation treatment has been proven to heal various mental sufferings across a wide range of psychiatric disorders, including major depressive disorder (Teasdale et al., 2000), PTSD (Boyd, Lanius, & McKinnon, 2018), and anxiety disorders (Hölzel et al., 2013). In the brain, mindfulness meditation increases cortical thickness related to working memory (Lazar et al., 2005). As a result, Buddhism appeals to both religious and non-religious ordinary people for healthy living and healthy mind. The sangha (Buddhist community) practices Buddhism without excessive hierarchy and ritualism. Other than hierarchy and ritualism, Buddhism inherits most of religious traditions from Brahmanism. The religious text is the Tripiṭaka consisting of Vinaya Pitaka (Basket of Discipline), Sutta Pitaka (Basket of Discourse), and Abhidhamma Piṭaka (Basket of Special Doctrine).

3.4. Hinduism with the Late Upanishads from the Absorption of Buddhism by Brahmanism

Buddhism spread slowly throughout India until the time of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka (304 - 232 BCE), who was a public supporter of the religion. During and after the Mauryan period (322 - 180 BCE), Buddhism spread widely, but started to decline after the Gupta era after the late 3rd century CE and virtually disappeared from India in the 11th century CE. The “Hindu synthesis” to absorb Buddhism started to develop between 500 BCE and 300 CE (Hiltebeitel, 2007) following the Vedic period (1500 BCE to 500 BCE). Over time, the Buddha came to be identified by Hindus as one of the ten incarnations (reappearances on earth) of the god Vishnu. Hindus, therefore, felt no need to convert to Buddhism. The Late Upanishads were composed during and after the Hindu synthesis, resulting in Hinduism.

The Late Upanishads include the Mukhya Upanishads. In the Mukhya Upanishads also known as Principal Upanishads (Hume, 1921), the Aitareya, Kauṣītaki and Taittirīya Upanishads may date to as early as the mid-1st millennium BCE, while the remnant date from between roughly the 4th to 1st centuries BCE. One chronology assumes that the Aitareya, Taittirīya, Kausitaki, Mundaka, Prasna, and Katha Upanishads has Buddha’s influence, and is consequently placed after the 5th century BCE. The Late Upanishads contain the theories based on

yoga and personal experiences influenced by the Jain and Buddhist tradition (Jaya-tilleke, 1963).

In the Late Upanishads, the paradigm shift is from theocratic monotheism in Brahmanism to spiritual monotheism in Hinduism for ordinary people to adapt to the rise of ordinary people. The parallel religious evolutions in the Middle East and India are described **Table 1**.

The parallel religious evolutions in China and Greece are different from the parallel religious evolutions in the Middle East and India. In China by Confucius (Confucianism) and Laozi (Daoism) and Greece by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the religions were much more humanistic than supernatural. The religions initiated from Greece and China are humanistic religions (Møllgaard, 2010; Chung, 2020b).

According to R. E. Nisbett et al., most subsistence research has compared herders and farmers, arguing that the independence and mobility of herding make herding cultures individualistic and that the stability and high labor demands of farming make farming cultures collectivistic (Nisbett et al., 2001). Traders with high mobility, like herders, are also individualistic. Without food self-sufficiency, people in ancient Israel, Arab, and Greece were more pastoral-trade than agrarian, while with food self-sufficiency, people in ancient India and China were more agrarian than pastoral-trade. Therefore, Greece developed individualistic humanistic religion, as China developed collectivistic humanistic religions. The supernatural religions in the Middle East are individualistic, while the supernatural religions in India are collectivistic. The individualistic religions that started from Greece and the Middle East establish the individualistic civilization in the West, while the collectivistic religions that started from China and India establish the collectivistic civilization in the East (Chung, 2020b) as described in **Table 2**.

Table 1. The parallel religious evolutions in the Middle East and India.

Religion/Age	religion/text in the Middle East	Historical transition	religion/text in India	Historical transition
theocratic polytheism/Bronze Age	Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism/pre-Old Testament	formation of Israel in Canaan	Vedism/Vedas	migration of pastoral Indo-Aryan to agrarian Indus Valley
theocratic monotheism/Iron Age	Judaism/Old Testament	start of mega empires	Brahmanism/Early Upanishads	gradual unification in north India
spiritual monotheism/Advanced Iron Age	Christianity/New Testament	the rise of ordinary people	Buddhism/Tripitaka	the rise of ordinary people
Absorption of Christianity or Buddhism/Advanced Iron Age	Islam/Quran	dominating the Middle East	Hinduism /Late Upanishads	Dominating India

Table 2. The parallel civilizational evolutions in the West and the East.

Parallel supernatural religious evolutions		Parallel humanistic religious evolutions	Parallel civilizational evolutions
Individualism	The Middle East	Greece	The individualistic West
collectivism	India	China	The collectivistic East

4. The Industrial Age, the Information Age, and the Intelligence Age

The Ages after the Advanced Iron Age are the Industrial Age, the Information Age, and the Intelligence Age. During the Industrial Age, the civilizational shift was the rise of ordinary people in material production, resulting in people power in terms of democracy. In individualistic culture, the democracy is individual liberal democracy for individual liberty, whereas in collectivistic culture, the democracy is common professional (socialism) democracy for common wellbeing (Chung, 2020b). At the same time, secularism to abandon religion was on the rise due to the rise of material living standard. The religion in the Industrial Age is spiritual monotheism/secularism.

The current postmodern civilizational shift in the Information Age (Orton, 2009) is persistent pluralism (Lukas, 2013). Persistent pluralism in terms of political pluralism, economic pluralism, and religious pluralism prevents the formations of one politics, one economy, and one religion in the world. The religious evolution by natural selection adapting the postmodern civilizational shift of persistent pluralism is to accept and work with persistent pluralism without becoming secularism (Beneke, 2006; Beam, 1978). Because of persistent pluralism, religious pluralism has become de facto, but has not been de jure to be sufficiently consistent, meaningful, and acceptable. The religion in the Information Age is religious pluralism.

The coming civilizational shift in the coming Intelligence Age (Makridakis, 2017) is ubiquitous intelligence in terms of ubiquitous knowledge, science, and artificial intelligence which can or can potentially explain everything with few exceptions. Based on knowledge and science, the religious evolution theory by natural selection adapting to civilizational shifts from technological revolution is the foundation of de facto and de jure religious pluralism in the Intelligence Age. The religious evolution theory explains the relations among religions. Since religions are justified by their adaptations to civilizational shifts, the religious evolution theory without absoluteness maintains the original religions and their texts. The religion in the coming Intelligence Age is the religious evolution theory which explains the relations among religions, and maintains the original religions and their texts. The religious evolution is listed in Table 3.

Table 3. The religious evolution.

Religion	Age	Civilizational Shift
Theocratic polytheism	Bronze Age	Tribal nation
Theocratic monotheism	Iron Age	Mega empire
Spiritual monotheism	Advanced Iron Age	Spiritual rise of ordinary people
Spiritual monotheism/secularism	Industrial Age	Material rise of ordinary people
Religious pluralism	Information Age	Permanent pluralism
The religious evolution theory	Intelligence Age	Ubiquitous intelligence

5. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this paper proposes the religious evolution by natural selection adapting to civilizational shifts from technological revolutions, and survival of the fittest. For an example, the parallel religious evolutions by natural selection in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and India (Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism) are through the adaptations to the civilizational shifts from technological revolutions in terms of the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Advanced Iron Age. The civilizational shift from tribal nations with national kings and polytheism during the Bronze Age to a mega empire with one centralized emperor and deity during the Iron Age produces the parallel religious evolutions from theocratic polytheistic Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism to theocratic monotheistic Judaism in the Middle East and from theocratic polytheistic Vedism to theocratic monotheistic Brahmanism in India. The civilizational shift for the rise of ordinary people during the Advanced Iron Age produces the parallel religious evolutions from theocratic monotheistic Judaism to spiritual monotheistic Christianity in the Middle East and from theocratic monotheistic Brahmanism to spiritual monotheistic Buddhism in India. The absorption of Christianity by modified Judaism resulted in Islam to dominate the Middle East, and in parallel, the absorption of Buddhism by Brahmanism resulted in Hinduism to dominate India. As a result, Pre-Deuteronomic Judaism-Judaism-Christianity-Islam in the Middle East is parallel to Vedism-Brahmanism-Buddhism-Hinduism in India.

The civilizational shift of the rise of ordinary people in material production in the Industrial Age produces the religion of spiritual monotheism/secularism. The civilizational shift of permanent pluralism in the Information Age produces the religion of religious pluralism. The civilizational shift of ubiquitous intelligence in the Intelligence Age produces the religion of the religious evolution theory.

In conclusion, the parallel religious evolutions by natural selection in the Middle East and India are through the adaptations to the civilizational shifts from the technological revolutions in terms of the Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Advanced Age. The religious evolution theory is the foundation of religious pluralism as the biological evolution theory is the foundation of biological multi-species. The religion in the coming Intelligence Age is the religious evolution theory which explains the relations among religions, and maintains the original religions and their texts.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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