

Good essay about
contributions of
gilgamesh,
utnapishtim, sargon,
hammurabi, nebu...

[Religion](#)



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Introduction

The modern practices and belief systems are traceable to ancient societies. These modern societies are a product of the evolution of the ancient civilizations through a period spanning many centuries. The modern society has not replicated the ancient civilization; it has modified the ancient practices to fit the current needs and geographical conditions. The modern social systems in art, fashion, religion, language, science, economy and political administration have their foundation in the ancient ideologies. One of the ancient civilizations that have a profound effect to the modern society is the ancient Mesopotamia. Through its successive insightful and visionary leaders, it emerged as the pinnacle of civilization and it influenced the territories beyond its borders during its time. These leaders include

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Gilgamesh, Utnapishtim, Sargon, Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus. These leaders have greatly contributed to the molding of the modern society and the modern society is a mirror of their ideologies.

Gilgamesh

Gilgamesh is an epic figure in the ancient Mesopotamian society who was two thirds a god and a third human. Due to his nature, part human part god, he was a split personality who was not sure whether he was a god or a human. This made him an irresponsible king who treated his subjects with arrogance prompting them to call upon the sky god Anu to free them from him. Anu ordered the creation of a human Enkidu who initially lived among the animals but started to live in the city with humans after he fell in love with a human female. Enkidu and Gilgamesh are great friends and they went out of the kingdom on an adventure for Gilgamesh to escape from the busy city life. Later, the gods sentenced Enkidu to death for making sexual advances to a goddess leaving Gilgamesh alone, which made him discover life purpose and eternity.

Many modern day perceptions about mortality and hierarchy of beings stem from this epic character. From this epic, humans are mortal while the gods are immortal. This is the dominant perception about eternity for major religions in the World. Islam, Christianity and Hinduism among other hold the idea that human death for human beings is inevitable. These religions also treat the Gods as immortal beings. In so doing, the religions require the followers to make the best of their life on earth.

In addition to this, the epic propagates a rational theme that men are under the guidance of a higher power. The humans should treat this higher power

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with respect. In the epic, the gods sentenced Enkidu to death for disrespecting them through sexual advances to a goddess. This shows that the gods have the right to take life: to decide who live and who does not. The contemporary modern day religion also shares the same idea about the respect for the higher power.

The epic also popularizes the concept of sexual immorality being responsible for the fall of humans while at the same time responsible sexual behavior is responsible for forging strong bonds of love between humans. Enkidu was enlightened when he had sex with the female that he fell in love with.

However, sexual immorality was the cause of his death. The modern society views sex in the same way. Love and sex between two people is the most beautiful form of human relationships. However, the modern legal systems treat irresponsible sexual behavior such as rape and adultery as deeds with consequences such as divorce and even death. This shows that the ancient concept has retained relevance in the modern society through replication to deal with the modern sexual crimes.

The epic places the humans higher than the animals in the hierarchy of beings. Enkidu found his purpose by living with other humans in civilized dwellings rather than in the forest. However, the gods dwelled in the skies showing that they were superior to the rest of the creation, and the modern religion shares this teaching. Ancient drawings depict Gilgamesh as a connection between humanity and divinity and as a superior power to all his subjects by virtue of being a king. In the modern political systems, the ruler of the land is superior over the dwellers of the land. This is the modern

system of governance. In conclusion, many modern principles in religion, social systems and politics trace back to the epic of Gilgamesh.

Utnapishtim

The story of Utnapishtim is a continuation of the epic of Gilgamesh in his quest for immortality. It is a story about a man who the gods asked to abandon his earthly possessions and embark on a mission of building a boat that could save him and his family from a flood that was coming to destroy the earth. The gods asked him to bring in baby animals for conservation of the creation. When the flood came, only the occupants of the boat were preserved. After the flood was over he sent out birds to find out whether the land had dried and when the birds did not come back he knew that they had found a place to perch thus he released the animals. He made a sacrifice to the gods. The gods granted him immortality for his obedience.

The story brings out the importance of respect to a higher power. The gods grant immortality to Utnapishtim for his obedience and righteousness. The central doctrine of major world religions is righteousness in order to acquire eternity. Both Christianity and Islam require their followers to obey Gods commands and they will get a life after death in return. Most history scholars liken the story of Utnapishtim to the biblical account of Noah's ark. The storyline is almost identical for the two accounts of the great flood that wiped out the humanity that had angered the gods.

The Utnapishtim epic also depicts natural calamities (a flood in this case) to be an act of a higher deity. The major religions of the modern society still share this concept. They regard major natural disasters in the world such as earthquakes and droughts as an act of God to punish the humanity due to

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the increased immorality in the world. Modern science has not done much to change this perception. Even with glaring scientific facts that attribute these natural disasters to factors other than punishment for immorality, majority of the modern society remains obstinate regarding the cause of natural disasters.

Sargon

Sargon is a ruler in the ancient Mesopotamia who was on the throne in the period between 2334-2279 BC. He established one of the greatest empires of the time known as Akkad, which covered the whole of southern Mesopotamia, part of the modern day Iran, Syria and Anatolia. The archeologically recovered Mesopotamia cuneiform literature narrates the story of the great conquests of Sargon that helped him to build his empire. According to the existing literature, Sargon was good at organizing people and formulating military strategies to facilitate successful military conquests. Many modern historian scholars regard Sargon as the father of military practice in the ancient civilizations.

The story of Sargon is of great significance to the evaluation of the modern day military practice. Sargon is the founder of the military practice, as we know it today. He influenced the modern day military practice through careful and planned execution of military strategy. Through military conquests, he was able to expand the borders of his territory. Military practice as envisioned by Sargon involved the organization of people into units sharing the same motivation to acquire numbers that would assure victory in the battle.

In modern day military practice, military conquests are the main tools used

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in taking over power through the overthrowing of an existing system of governance. The Middle East especially Syria and Iraq are victims of long-term territorial conflicts. These regions inherited the use of military force to acquire power from the foundation of their civilization. Therefore, there is glaring resistance to the modern democratic governance systems. This constant political heat is the result of the persistence of the ideologies that Sargon based his empire on: those of military conquest for power and for enriching the empires.

Hammurabi

Hammurabi is one of the greatest figures in the legal landscape of the ancient Mesopotamia. He was born in the present day Iraq in the year 1750 BC. Hammurabi was the first king of the Babylonian empire and he came up with the code of Hammurabi, which was a set of rules that governed the people of Babylon. The code of Hammurabi is one of the oldest recorded laws in the history of civilization. Some of the Mosaic laws known as commandments written 450 years after Hammurabi died were already part of the Hammurabi code. The code of Hammurabi consisted of 282 rules that had a common underlying theme of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The modern legal system traces its origins to the code of Hammurabi. However, the modern law is not a mirror copy of the code of Hammurabi. Instead, the modern law is a product of years of evolution of law systems based on the Hammurabi code. The current legal system portrays the preservation of the original mode of retribution found in the code of Hammurabi. The ancient roman law of public judgment and punishment had its basis on the code of Hammurabi. Murderers were stoned to death at the

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public square. Later, Napoleon through his French Civil Code established a legal system to unify the French. While it was an evolved law, undertones of the original Hammurabi code were glaring. For instance, there was a law stating, " The husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband" . This law is based on the eye for an eye theme prevalent in the code of Hammurabi. The modern legal system traces its roots to the Civil Code. Therefore, while the current law is different from the code of Hammurabi in terms of wording, the idea of offering a punishment depending on the gravity of the crime committed is proof of the relationship of the modern law to the code of Hammurabi.

Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar is the paramount Babylonian king of all times. He ruled the Babylon Empire from 605BC to 562BC until King Cyrus dethroned him.

Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt the demolished religious statues and built new cities. One of his most notable projects was the hanging gardens of Babylon, which is one of the wonders of the world. During the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, Egypt was under the rule of a Babylon king for the first time. King Nebuchadnezzar also captured Jerusalem and expatriated many Jewish families. He then placed Zedekiah on the throne. Zedekiah later started a revolution against King Nebuchadnezzar leading to recapturing of Jerusalem and the capturing of the Jews and their imprisonment in the Babylon Empire.

The biblical and the mythical versions of the rule of Nebuchadnezzar are parallel in many aspects especially the capturing of Jerusalem and the revolt led by Zedekiah. One of the greatest influences of Nebuchadnezzar to the

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modern day society is that he led to the birth of the modern day Judaism. Nebuchadnezzar exiled and captured the religious and forced them to live in an alien land, Babylon, after destroying their temple. The religious class had to restructure their religion in a foreign land and this led to the birth of the modern day Judaism.

Cyrus

Cyrus the great was born in 590 BC. He was the founder of the Persian Empire that has the reputation of being the first ethical empire in the history of the world politics. During his reign, Cyrus established a reign of democracy and the respect for human life. He ordered that first crime offenders would not face persecution. He also abolished slavery in the land. In addition to this, regardless of his intellectual prowess, he usually consulted with other people from different backgrounds to obtain their opinion on matters of governance.

The relevance of King Cyrus the great to modern governance is invaluable. He is the father of the modern day ethical social order and tolerance. Due to his clever philosophies of leadership, he influenced other great thinkers like Aristotle whose philosophies are the guiding principles for many world governance systems. In addition to this, he pioneered in recognizing human rights by passing the Human Rights Charter in 537BC. Today, the whole world remembers him as the father of the human rights every year on October 29, a day recognized by the United Nations. Therefore, King Cyrus is the founder of modern democracy and social order through the recognition of human rights during his reign.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the modern society is a product of the evolution of the ancient civilizations of the world. Mesopotamia being one of the oldest civilizations in the world has sculpted the modern day society in many aspects. The social systems, the political systems, religions, economic practices and other facets of the society today have a foundation on the principles and ideologies infused to the first civilizations by their great leaders. The modern society lives during a different historical time compared to the ancient civilization. However, the challenges faced are of the same nature. Therefore, the society deals with the challenges of the new times by applying the refined ancient principles to the present context. It is undisputable that the leaders of the ancient Mesopotamia have greatly contributed to the modern day society.

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