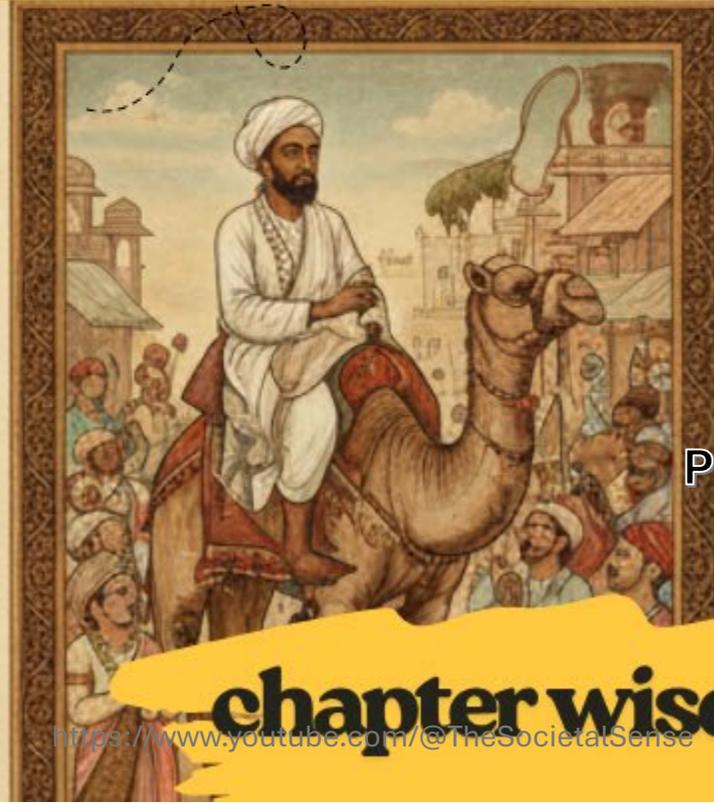


# THROUGH THE EYES OF TRAVELERS

**TOP 60**

**HISTORY QUESTIONS FOR THE CBSE EXAM 2025-26"**

**Part-7**



Prepared by: Mr. Bikrant  
PGT-Hist.  
PM SHRI KV DIPHU

**chapter wise previous year paper**

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheSocietalSense>

**Q.24 Explain the distinctive features of Al-Biruni's Kitab-UI-Hind. (3 Marks, 2023 Main - OR)**

**Ans.** The distinctive features of the *Kitab-ul-Hind* are:

**Structure:** It is a voluminous text written in **Arabic**, divided thematically into **80 chapters**. It covers **subjects like religion, philosophy, social customs, laws, and sciences**.

**Method:** Al-Biruni adopted a "geometric structure." Each **chapter begins with a question, followed by a description, and concludes with a comparison** to other cultures.

**Style:** The text is known for its **simple, lucid, and critical style**. As a mathematician, Al-Biruni brought analytical approach to his writing.





Simple version

## **Features of Kitab-ul-Hind (Al-Biruni). (3 Marks)**

Written in **Arabic** by Al-Biruni.

Divided into **80 chapters** on religion and science.

Used a **Question and Answer** format, **concludes with a comparison** .

**Q.25 Examine the views of Chinese travellers on the people considered outside the Varna system in ancient India. (3 Marks, 2023 Supp)**

**Ans.**

Chinese Buddhist pilgrims like **Fa-Xian** (5th century CE) and **Xuan Zang** (7th century CE) recorded their observations about people outside the varna system.

Fa-Xian noted that "**untouchables**" (**Chandalas**) **had to live outside the city and strike a piece of wood** upon entering public area to warn others to avoid their "polluting" contact.

Xuan Zang observed that **executioners and scavengers were forced to live in segregated dwellings** outside the main city.





Simple version

## **Views on "Untouchables" by Chinese travellers Fa-Xian and Xuan Zang . (3 Marks)**

- They had to live **outside the city**.
- They had to **sound a clapper** when entering streets.
- They worked as **scavengers and executioners**.

**Q. 26 "Travellers often compared what they saw in the subcontinent with practices with which they were familiar." Explain the observations of Al-Biruni in context of the above statement. (8 Marks, 2024 Supp)**

**Ans.** Al-Biruni adopted a distinctly comparative approach to explain Indian society:

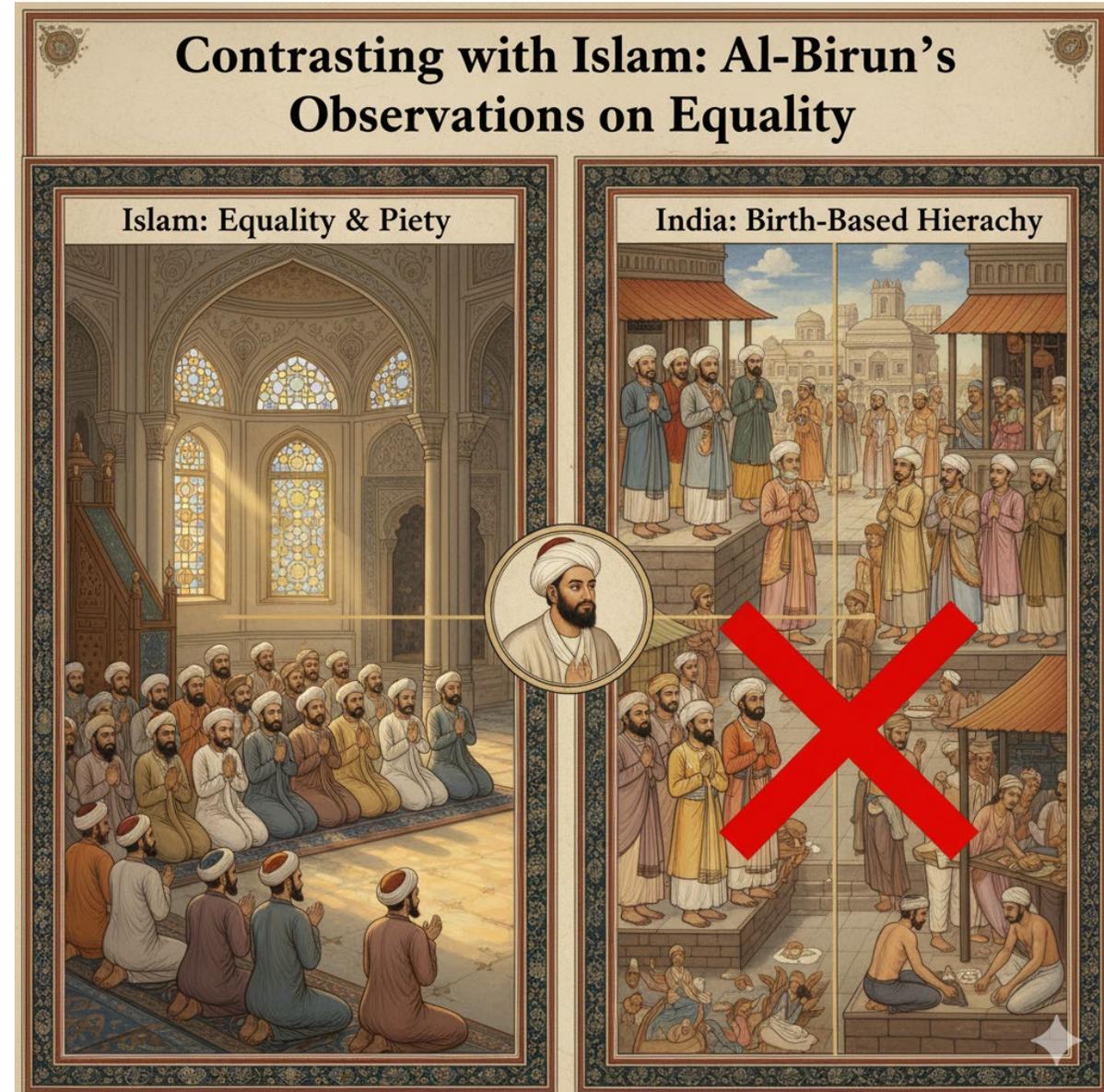
**1. Explaining the Caste System:** To make the varna system understandable to his readers, he sought **parallels in other societies**. He noted that ancient Persia had four similar social categories: knights, priests, physicians, and artisans



2. **Contrasting with Islam:** He stated that within Islam, all men were considered equal and differed only in their observance of piety.

3. **Disapproving 'Pollution':** he disapproved of the notion of "pollution."

- He argued it was contrary to the laws of nature, remarking that everything impure (like the sun cleansing the air) strives to regain purity.



**Q. 26 "Travellers often compared what they saw in the subcontinent with practices with which they were familiar." Explain the observations of Al-Biruni in context of the above statement. (8 Marks, 2024 Supp)**

**Ans.** Al-Biruni adopted a distinctly comparative approach to explain Indian society:

- 1. Explaining the Caste System:** To make the varna system understandable to his readers, he sought **parallels in other societies**. He noted that ancient Persia had four similar social categories: knights, priests, physicians, and artisans
- 2. Contrasting with Islam:** He highlighted a key difference by comparing India's varna system with Islam. He stated that within Islam, all men were considered equal and differed only in their observance of piety, which was a sharp contrast to the birth-based hierarchy of the caste system.
- 2. Disapproving 'Pollution':** he disapproved of the notion of "pollution." He argued it was contrary to the laws of nature, remarking that everything impure (like the sun cleansing the air) strives to regain purity.



Simple version

## Al-Biruni on Caste System (Comparison). (8 Marks)

- He tried to explain Caste by **comparing** it.
- Said ancient **Persia** also had four social classes.
- Argued social division is **not unique** to India.
- Accepted the **Brahmanical description** of four varnas.
- But he **disapproved** of the notion of "Pollution".
- Said nature always strives for **purity**.
- Example: Sun cleans the air.
- Caste rigidity was contrary to **laws of nature**.

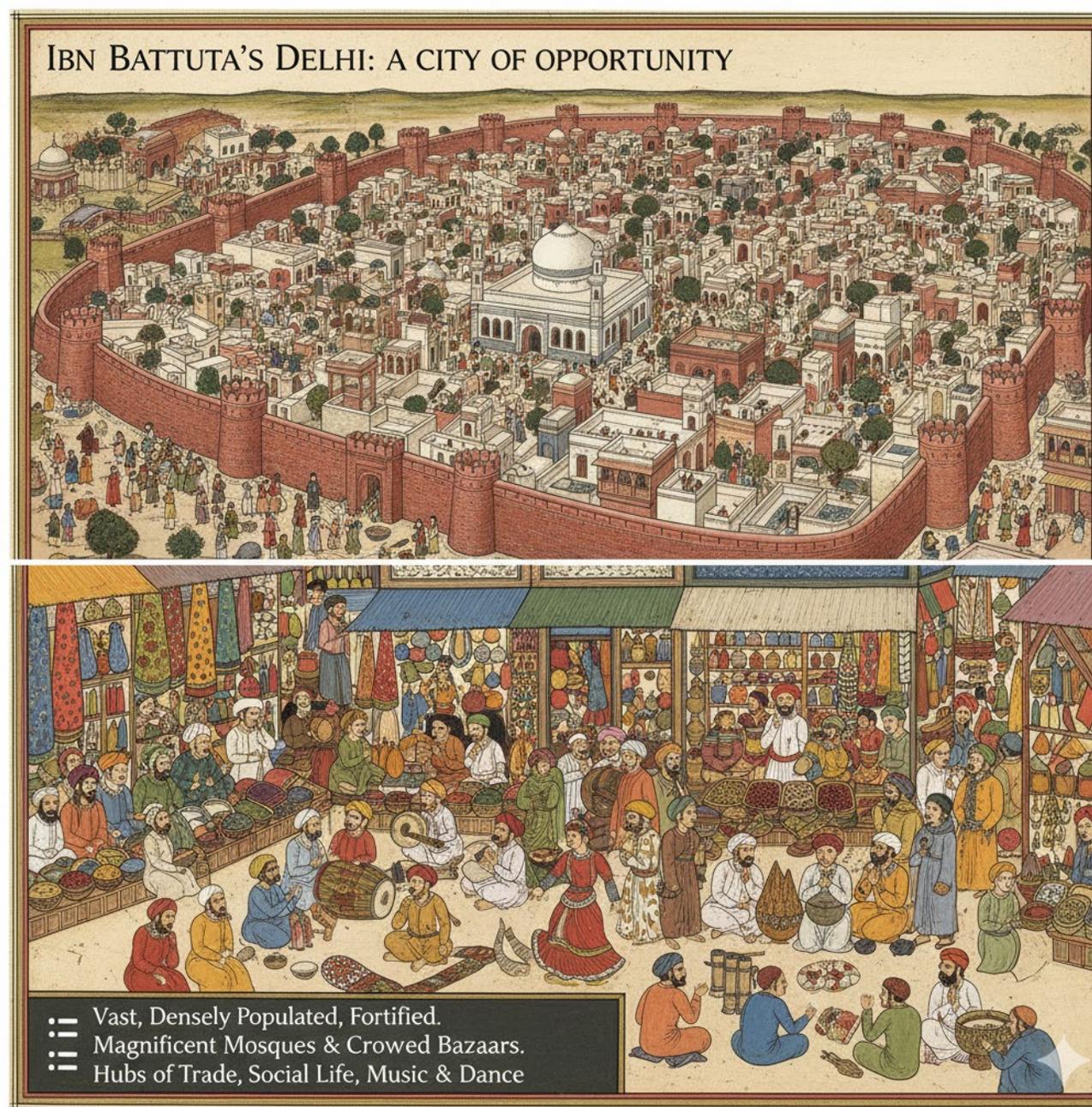
**Q. 27 "Ibn Battuta found cities in the subcontinent full of exciting opportunities for those who had the necessary drive, resources and skills." Explain this statement. (8 Marks, 2024 Supp - OR)**

**Ans.** Ibn Battuta's account portrays cities in the subcontinent as prosperous and full of opportunities:

**1. Prosperous and Populated Cities:**

- He described cities like Delhi as vast, densely populated, and magnificent.
- He noted its strong fortifications, grand mosques, and crowded bazaars.

**2. Hubs of Economic and Social Life:** The bazaars were not just places of trade but also hubs of social and cultural activity, featuring musicians, dancers, and public performances.



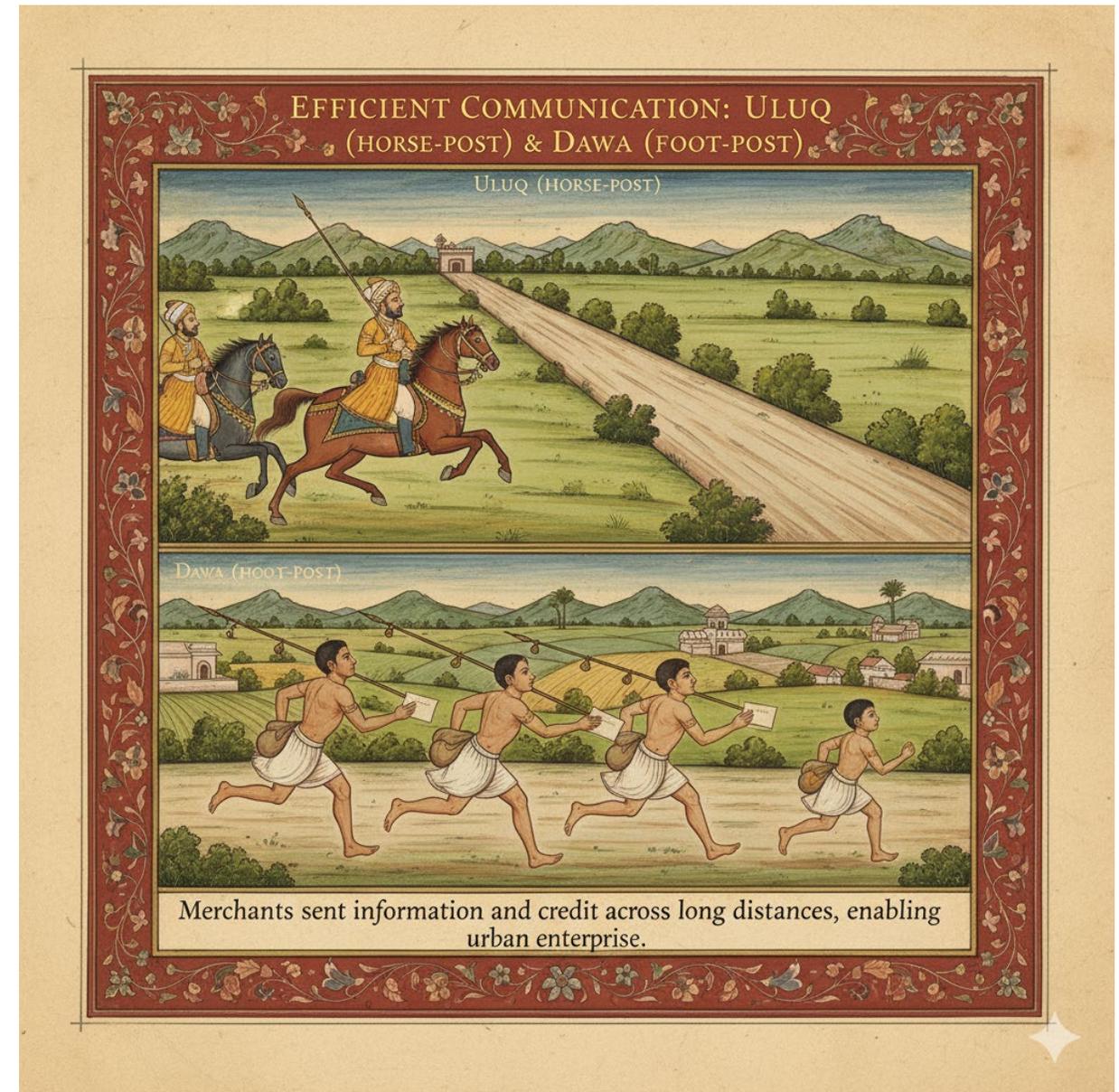
3. **Rich Agricultural Surplus:** Fertility of the soil allowed farmers to grow two crops a year, generating the surplus that fed the urban population.

4. **Integration in Trade Networks:**

- The subcontinent was part of a global trade network.
- Indian goods like cotton, muslin, and silk were in great demand, providing immense opportunities for merchants and artisans.



5. **Efficient Communication:** A unique and efficient postal system (the *uluq* or horse-post and *dawa* or foot-post) allowed merchants to send information and credit across long distances.



**Q. 27 "Ibn Battuta found cities in the subcontinent full of exciting opportunities for those who had the necessary drive, resources and skills." Explain this statement. (8 Marks, 2024 Supp - OR)**

**Ans.** Ibn Battuta's account portrays cities in the subcontinent as prosperous and full of opportunities:

- 1. Prosperous and Populated Cities:** He described cities like Delhi as vast, densely populated, and magnificent. He noted its strong fortifications, grand mosques, and crowded bazaars.
- 2. Hubs of Economic and Social Life:** The bazaars were not just places of trade but also hubs of social and cultural activity, featuring musicians, dancers, and public performances.
- 3. Rich Agricultural Surplus:** Fertility of the soil allowed farmers to grow two crops a year, generating the surplus that fed the urban population.
- 4. Integration in Trade Networks:** The subcontinent was part of a global trade network. Indian goods like cotton, muslin, and silk were in great demand, providing immense opportunities for merchants and artisans.
- 5. Efficient Communication:** A unique and efficient postal system (the *uluq* or horse-post and *dawa* or foot-post) allowed merchants to send information and credit across long distances.



Simple version

## **Ibn Battuta on Indian Cities. (8 Marks)**

- Cities were **densely populated** and prosperous.
- **Delhi** was the largest city with strong walls.
- Bazaars were hubs of **social and cultural** life.
- Cities had rich **agricultural surplus**.
- Indian goods like **cotton and silk** had high demand.
- Cities had efficient **Postal System** (Horse and Foot).
- The postal system helped **merchants** send credit.
- Cities offered opportunities for **skilled people**.

# Follow up Questions

**Q. How did Ibn Battuta explain the system of communication in India? (3 Marks)**

**Ans.** Ibn Battuta was impressed by the efficiency of the postal system:

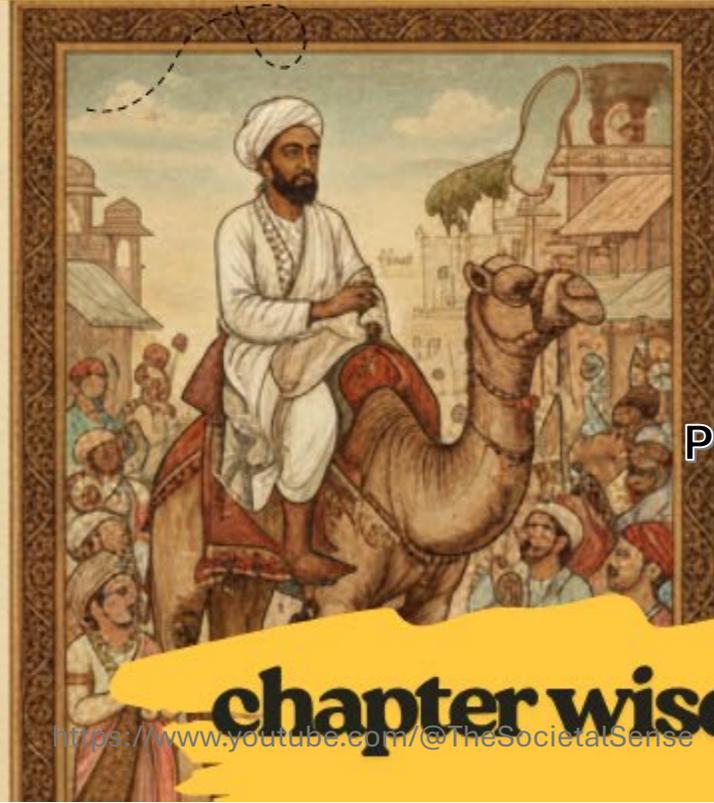
- 1. Two Types:** It consisted of two kinds: the horse-post (stationed at every 4 miles), called *uluq* (run by royal horses), and the foot-post (stationed at every  $1/3^{\text{rd}}$  miles), called *dawa* (run by runners).
- 2. Speed:** The *dawa* (foot-post) was surprisingly faster than the horse-post.
- 3. Efficiency:** The system was incredibly efficient. It was used to send news reports from spies (reaching the Sultan from Sind to Delhi in five days) and to allow merchants to send information and credit.

# THROUGH THE EYES OF TRAVELERS

**TOP 60**

**HISTORY QUESTIONS FOR THE CBSE EXAM 2025-26"**

**Part-8**



Prepared by: Mr. Bikrant  
PGT-Hist.  
PM SHRI KV DIPHU

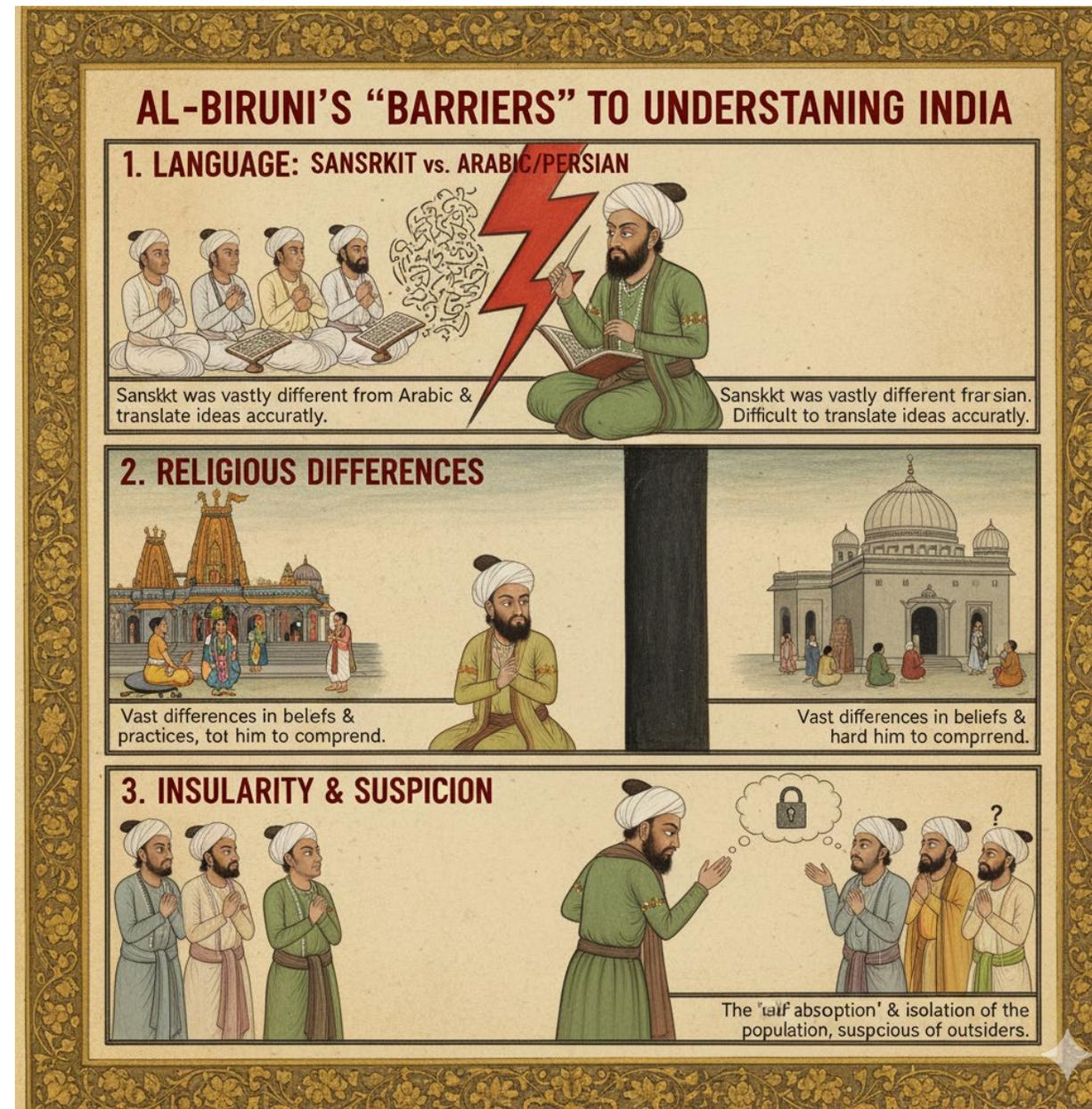
**chapter wise previous year paper**

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheSocietalSense>

## Q.28 What were the 'barriers' discussed by Al-Biruni that obstructed him in understanding India? (3 Marks)

Ans. Al-Biruni identified three main barriers:

- 1. Language:** He found Sanskrit to be a difficult language, very different from Arabic and Persian. He felt it was difficult to translate ideas and concepts accurately.
- 2. Religious Differences:** The second barrier was the vast difference in religious beliefs and practices, which he found hard to comprehend.
- 3. Insularity:** The third barrier was the "self-absorption" and insularity (isolation) of the local population and the Brahmanas, who were suspicious of outsiders.





Simple version

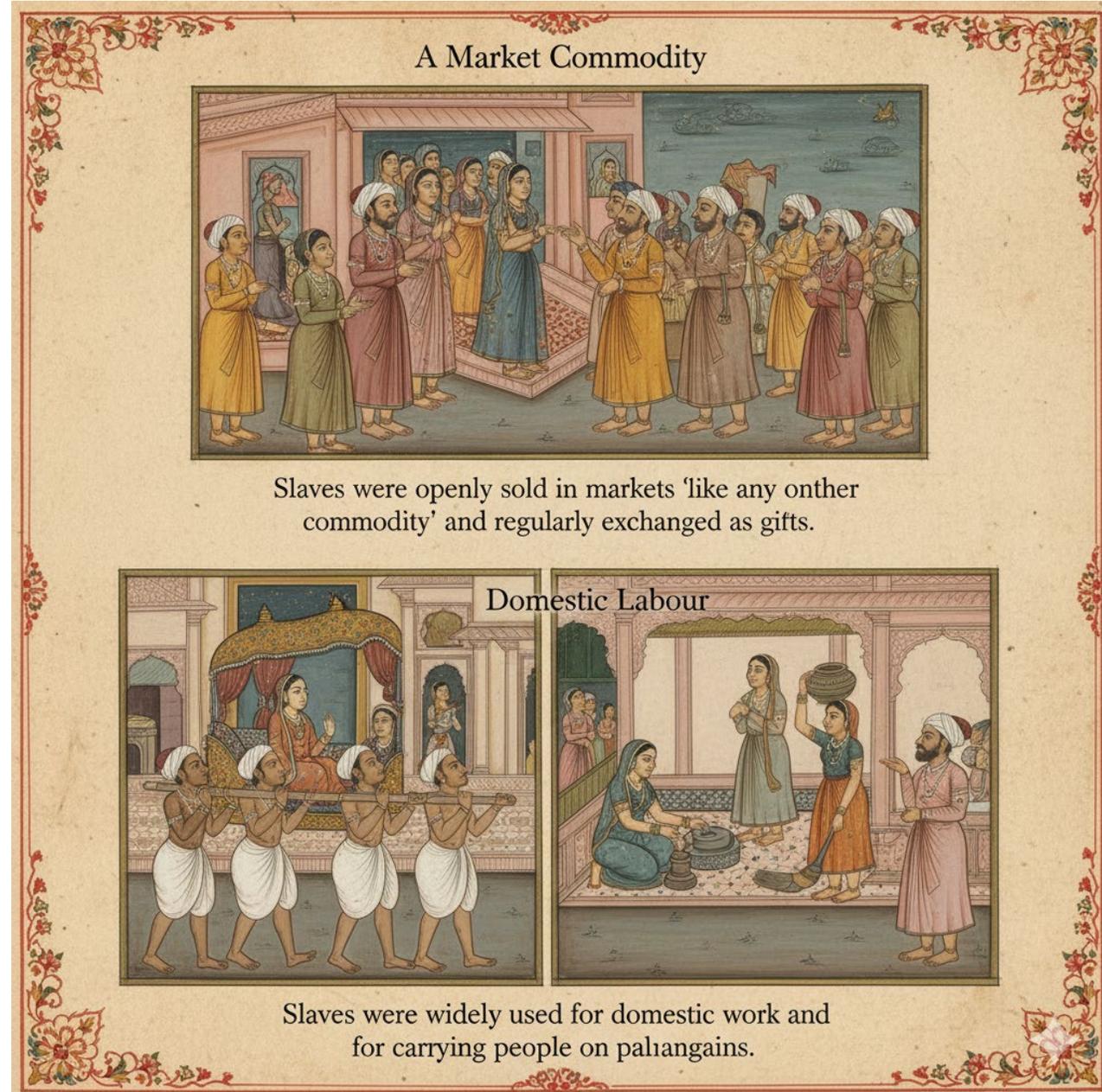
Al-Biruni's Barriers to understanding India. (3 Marks)

- **Language:** Sanskrit was very difficult to learn.
- **Religion:** Beliefs were very different from Islam.
- **Insularity:** Local people were suspicious of foreigners.

**Q.29 Analyze the evidence for slavery provided by Ibn Battuta. (3 Marks)**

**Ans.** Ibn Battuta's account provides clear evidence of slavery:

- 1. A Market Commodity:** Slaves were openly sold in markets and were regularly exchanged as gifts.
- 2. Use by the Sultan:** The Sultan employed female slaves in his service as musicians and dancers, and also used them to keep a watch on his nobles.
- 3. Domestic Labour:** Slaves were widely used for domestic work and for carrying people on palanquins (*dola*), though they were often given low wages.



Slaves were openly sold in markets 'like any onther commodity' and regularly exchanged as gifts.

Slaves were widely used for domestic work and for carrying people on palhangains.



Simple version

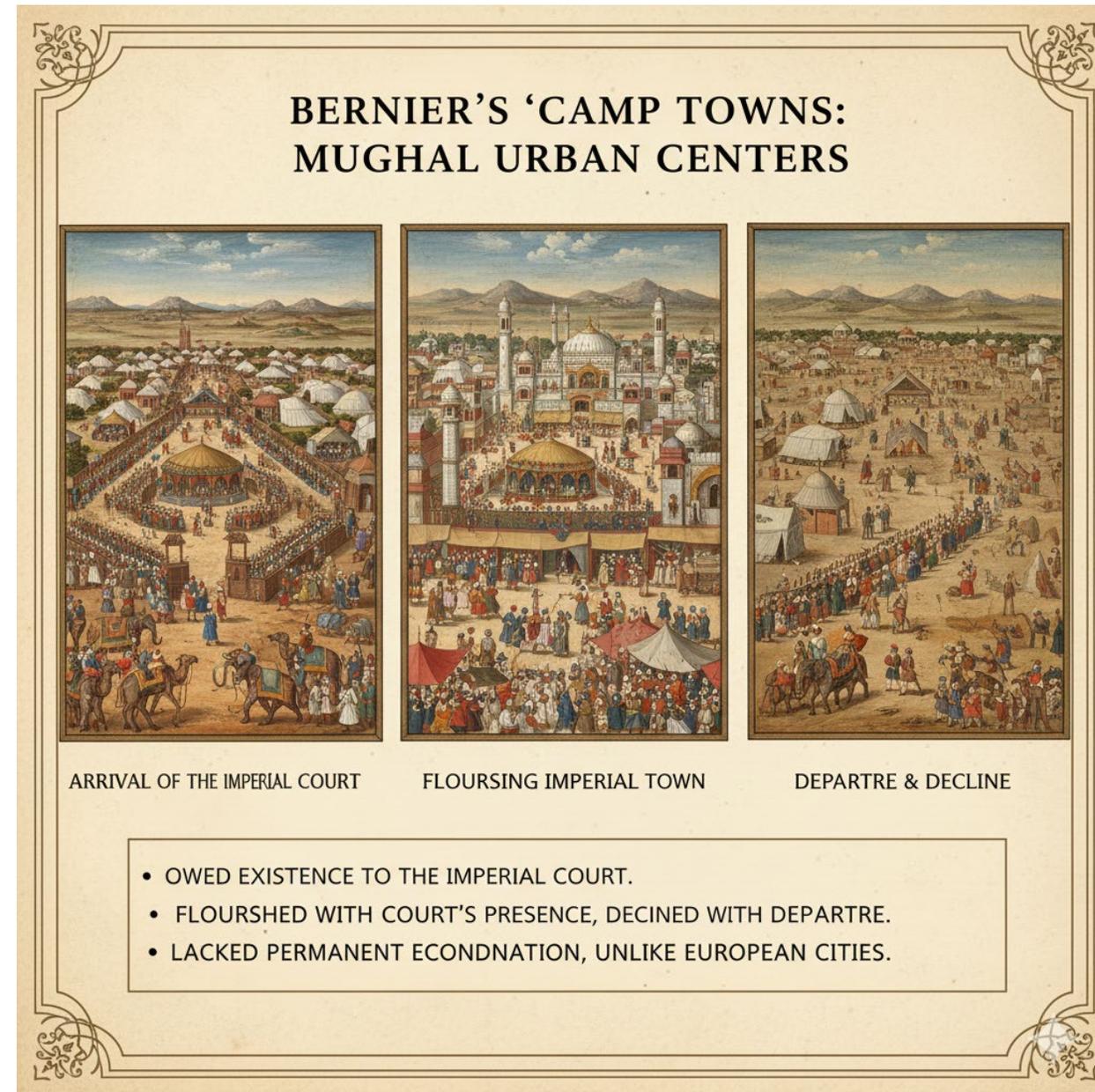
## Evidence of Slavery (Ibn Battuta). (3 Marks)

- Slaves were sold in **markets** like commodities.
- Sultan used **female slaves** to spy on nobles.
- Slaves were used for **domestic labour** and carrying palanquins.

**Q.30 Examine why Bernier described the Mughal towns as the “camp towns”. (3 Marks)**

**Ans.**

1. Bernier described Mughal cities as "camp towns" because he believed, their existence and **survival depend upon the imperial court.**
2. He argued that these towns came into existence when the imperial court moved in and would **"rapidly decline" when it moved out.**
3. He suggested they **lacked a viable social and economic foundation**, unlike the permanent, self-sustaining cities of Europe.





Simple version

## **Camp Towns (Bernier). (3 Marks)**

- Cities depended on the **Imperial Court**.
- They grew when the **King was present**.
- They **lacked a viable social and economic foundation**.
- They **declined** rapidly when the King moved out.

**Q. 31 Describe Bernier's description of land ownership in India and its influence on Western theorists. (8 Marks)**

**Ans.**

**Description of Land Ownership:**

1. Bernier's central, and incorrect, observation was that the **Mughal state lacked the concept of private property** in land.
2. He claimed **the king was the owner of all land** and distributed it among his nobles (jagirdars).
3. He argued this "**crown ownership**" was harmful, as nobles could not pass the land to their children.
4. Therefore, they had **no incentive for long-term investment**, leading to the "ruin" of agriculture and the oppression of the peasantry.



## Influence on Western Theorists:

1. The philosopher **Montesquieu** used Bernier's account to develop the idea of "oriental despotism," where Asian rulers had absolute, tyrannical authority over their subjects.
2. This idea was later developed in the 19th century by **Karl Marx** as the "Asiatic mode of production."
3. Marx argued that in Asia, the state (not private individuals) appropriated the surplus, leading to a stagnant, unchanging society.



**Q. 31 Describe Bernier's description of land ownership in India and its influence on Western theorists. (8 Marks)**

**Ans. Description of Land Ownership:**

1. Bernier's central, and incorrect, observation was that the Mughal state lacked the concept of private property in land.
2. He claimed the king was the owner of all land and distributed it among his nobles (jagirdars).
3. He argued this "crown ownership" was harmful, as nobles could not pass the land to their children.
4. Therefore, they had no incentive for long-term investment, leading to the "ruin" of agriculture and the oppression of the peasantry.

**Influence on Western Theorists:**

1. The philosopher **Montesquieu** used Bernier's account to develop the idea of "oriental despotism," where Asian rulers had absolute, tyrannical authority over their subjects.
2. This idea was later developed in the 19th century by **Karl Marx** as the "Asiatic mode of production."
3. Marx argued that in Asia, the state (not private individuals) appropriated the surplus, leading to a stagnant, unchanging society.



Simple version

### Bernier on Land Ownership. (8 Marks)

- He said there was **no private land** in India.
- The **King owned all the land**.
- Nobles could not pass land to their **children**.
- Farmers were **oppressed** and poor.
- Agriculture was **ruined** due to lack of care.
- He called this system "**Oriental Despotism**".
- He compared India **negatively** to Europe.
- His views influenced **Western thinkers** like Marx.

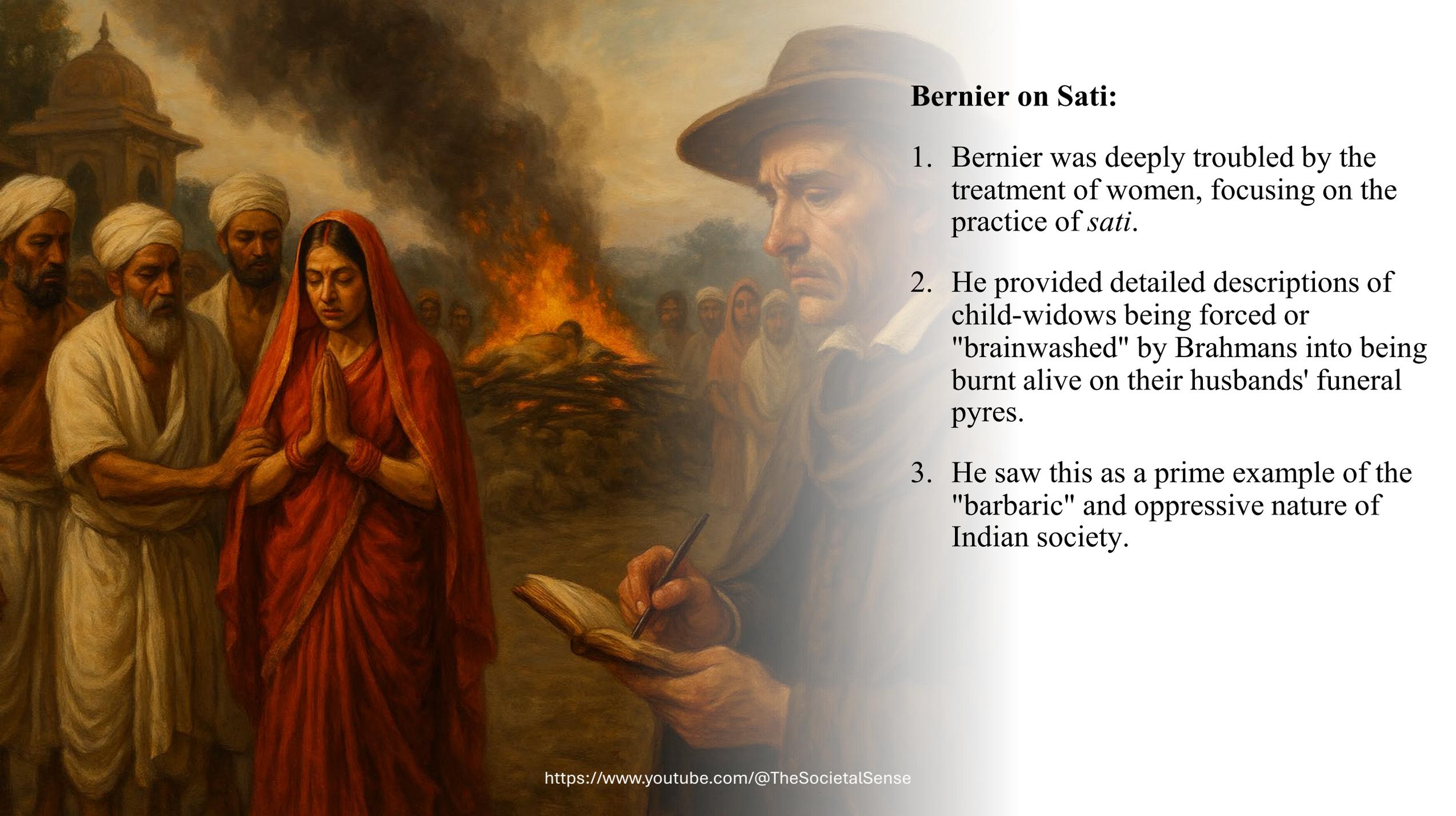
**Q.32 Describe the perspective of Ibn Battuta and Francois Bernier on the condition of women in the Indian subcontinent. (8 Marks)**

**Ans.** Ibn Battuta and Bernier both commented on the condition of women, but their focus was very different.

**Ibn Battuta on Slavery:**

1. Ibn Battuta's *Rihla* provides glimpses of women, primarily in the context of slavery.
2. He notes that female slaves were openly sold in markets and given as gifts.
3. He describes their role in the Sultan's service, where they worked as musicians, dancers, and domestic servants.
4. He also notes that the Sultan employed female slaves to keep a watch on his nobles.





## **Bernier on Sati:**

1. Bernier was deeply troubled by the treatment of women, focusing on the practice of *sati*.
2. He provided detailed descriptions of child-widows being forced or "brainwashed" by Brahmans into being burnt alive on their husbands' funeral pyres.
3. He saw this as a prime example of the "barbaric" and oppressive nature of Indian society.

**Q.32 Describe the perspective of Ibn Battuta and Francois Bernier on the condition of women in the Indian subcontinent. (8 Marks)**

**Ans.** Ibn Battuta and Bernier both commented on the condition of women, but their focus was very different.

**Ibn Battuta on Slavery:**

1. Ibn Battuta's *Rihla* provides glimpses of women, primarily in the context of slavery.
2. He notes that female slaves were openly sold in markets and given as gifts.
3. He describes their role in the Sultan's service, where they worked as musicians, dancers, and domestic servants.
4. He also notes that the Sultan employed female slaves to keep a watch on his nobles.

**Bernier on Sati:**

1. Bernier, in contrast, was deeply troubled by the treatment of women, focusing on the practice of *sati*.
2. He provided detailed descriptions of child-widows being forced or "brainwashed" by Brahmans into being burnt alive on their husbands' funeral pyres.
3. He saw this as a prime example of the "barbaric" and oppressive nature of Indian society.



Simple version

## Condition of Women (Bernier & Ibn Battuta). (8 Marks)

- **Ibn Battuta:** Focused on female slaves.
- Slaves were used for **singing and dancing**.
- Slaves were given as **gifts**.
- **Bernier:** Focused on the practice of **Sati**.
- Saw widows being **burnt alive**.
- Said women were **forced** by Brahmanas.
- Called it a **barbaric** practice.
- Used it to show India was **inferior** to Europe.