

## Chapter 2

### Paleolithic

Paleolithic Age refers to the Stone Age.

The term "Paleolithic" is derived from the combination of two Latin words: "Palaeos" denoting "old" and "Lith" signifying "stone". Likewise, the term "Neolithic" is formed by amalgamating the words "Neo" denoting "new" and "Lith" signifying "stone".

Roughly a century ago, scholars recognized that human history started millennia prior to the advent of written communication by humans. They initiated an investigation to uncover evidence about this undocumented historical account, which traces its origins to antiquity. In order to structure and analyse this extensive history, several eras were appointed with designations. Upon careful consideration, experts designated these eras according to the materials used in tool production throughout those periods. The Stone Age, and subsequently the Bronze Age, were characterized by the predominant use of stone as the primary tool material.

Although these times occurred on a consistent pattern worldwide, they did not coincide simultaneously. Studies on the ancient world have indicated that it was common (and continues to be occurring) for one civilization to be in the Stone Age while another had advanced to the Bronze Age.

When chronicling the history of human existence, it is customary to start with the Stone Age, as it is empirically established that people first used stone implements. While it is likely that humans also employed wooden weapons, stone implements have endured the harsh test of time and environmental conditions.

In order to facilitate the study of the Stone Age, scholars have partitioned it into three distinct sections:

Ancient Stone Age or prehistoric **Palaeolithic** era

Middle Stone Age, also known as the **Mesolithic** Period

New Stone Age, also known as **Neolithic** Period

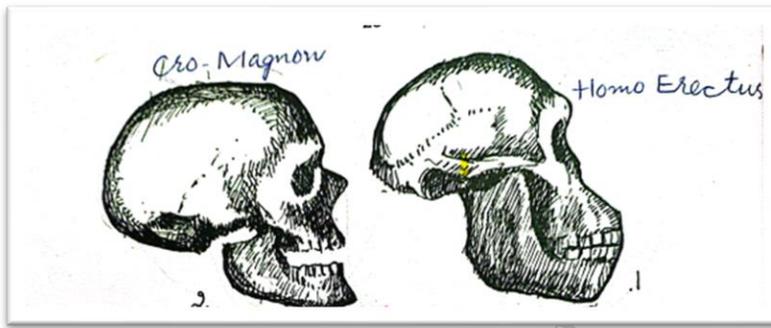
**Lord Avebury**, in 1865, conducted a comprehensive analysis of the ancient tools and subsequently classified the whole Stone Age into two distinct periods: Old Stone Age and New Stone Age. Subsequently, **Alan Brown**, an archaeologist, introduced the Mesolithic time as a transitional time between the two mentioned.

The communities throughout all the epochs of the ancient Stone Age were dispersed across various regions of the globe and thus designated by the names of distinct locations. The Grevetian civilisation was present in ancient Europe specifically during the Stone Age. The Palaeolithic Era is a time period in human history that began around 2.6 million years ago and

ended approximately 10,000 years from the beginning of human history. There are three distinct time eras that are often distinguished from one another:

- The Lower Palaeolithic
- The Middle Palaeolithic
- The Upper Palaeolithic

The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Eras were a period of time that saw great advancements in human nature. During this time period, early humans learnt how to utilize stone tools, which was a significant step forward in their capacity to interact with the world around them. Additionally, they saw the development of bigger brains, which enabled them to think in a more complicated manner.



### Comparative analysis of the skulls of Homo erectus and Cro-Magnon

**Skull No 1:** An antique skull comes in first place. Whereas its jaw is rather huge, its brain is quite little.

**Skull No 2:** A contemporary human skull is the second item on the list.

As a result of this, it is evident that the human body has seen significant transformations over the course of thousands of years, with the brain expanding in size and the jaw contracting.

The first humans, also known as Homo erectus and Neanderthals, lived throughout this period of time in the history of human evolution. The size of their brains increased, and they invented tools that were more sophisticated.

During this time period, one of the most distinguishing features was the prevalence of the usage of stone tools. It was possible to hunt, collect, and do other jobs with the help of these implements.

One of the numerous obstacles that early humans had to overcome in order to survive was the presence of deadly creatures and terrible weather conditions. In order for them to live, they had to acquire the ability to adjust to their surroundings.

The oldest evidence of Paleolithic tools and human bones has been discovered in Africa, China, Pakistan, and other regions of Asia. This evidence has been found in a geographically widespread manner. The migration of people to Europe and other parts of the globe occurred throughout the course of time.

**Neanderthals:** Neanderthals were a kind of human that existed throughout the Middle Paleolithic period in both Europe and Asia. They had certain physical characteristics with contemporary humans, but their anatomy was distinct from that of current humans. Caves in the foothills of steep mountains were the major locations of residence for humans throughout the Middle Paleolithic period because they were able to reap the advantages of living in these environments.

**Food:**

In the same way that their ancestors did, these people gathered their food via food hunting. They were quite effective hunters during this time period, and they hunted on foot. It was common for them to be more strong, despite the fact that they were unable to run as quickly as animals and did not have teeth. Despite this, they were able to hunt even these huge creatures by using their brains and cunning, which was necessary for their survival. Not only did hunting satisfy their need for food, but it also provided animal skins that they could use for clothes.

As shown by the plethora of stone scrapers discovered with Neanderthal bones, these individuals wore garments that were crafted from animal skins. In order to thoroughly remove fat from the skins, these instruments were very necessary. Reed baskets were also used to transport water, and these were manufactured out of animal skins. Water pouches were also created out of animal hides.

The degree of the brutality and danger that they suffered on a daily basis is shown by the human remains that were found in this dark and deadly environment. It seems that these people were victims of violence since the majority of the skeletal remains that were discovered have injuries to the skull that were inflicted by sharp objects or stones. Cannibalistic behaviour, including the consumption of human brains and marrow, is also supported by the evidence found at archaeological sites. Cannibalism was often considered to be a ritual, in which one participated in the practice of eating the flesh of a dead person in the goal of acquiring the power and magic of that person.

Many different kinds of animals were hunted for sustenance by people in various parts of the world. In locations with a lower average temperature, people hunted reindeer, while those in areas with a higher average temperature hunted bison, deer, sheep, goats, or fish. Hunting was accomplished using stone implements, and they sometimes used fire to encircle and capture their game. However, the evidence for these traps is not well preserved in the geological record, despite the fact that it is thought that they also utilized pit traps to catch animals.

During the time when the men went hunting, the ladies remained where they were with the children. Gathering goods from the surrounding environment, picking fruits, and paying close attention to their surroundings were all activities that they used throughout this period. Through these observations, vital information was gained, which in turn contributed to the advancement of humankind.

## **Fire:**

By this time, mankind had achieved mastery over the element of fire. Many lightning strikes are said to have triggered a large number of forest fires, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of animals. It is believed that early people must have watched these flames. In the process of discovering the flavour of cooked flesh, people were led to find the scorched and half cooked survivors. Because of this practice, people have undergone physical modifications over the course of thousands of years. When chewing cooked meat, the powerful jaws and keen teeth that were essential for consuming raw meat became less necessary since chewing prepared flesh took less effort. As a direct result of this, human jaws and teeth shrunk somewhat and became less pointed. Over the course of millennia, this eloquently illustrates how the human body has adapted to meet its own requirements.

During this chilly time in human history, fire served as a tremendous source of strength. In addition to warming people, it also lighted tunnels that were previously dark. The use of fire by humans as a weapon against animals was strategic. Due to the fact that animals were afraid of fire, they used it for both protection and hunting purposes. There is a widespread belief that these individuals would use fire to terrify animal herds, therefore compelling them to run in a certain direction. By leading the animals in the direction of cliffs, they might increase the likelihood that they would fall and become handicapped, which would make it simpler to capture them. By using this tactic, a very small number of people were able to exert control over a big herd of animals.

## **Beliefs or Religion:**

It is possible that humans had formed some beliefs and superstitions throughout the Middle Palaeolithic era, since there is evidence to show that they had done so. As was noted previously, the act of cannibalism is indicative of a desire to own the power of other people via the use of violence and consuming. The results of archaeological excavations also lead to a ritual that is often referred to as the "Bear Cult." A hostile connection between people and bears was established as a result of an unintentional contact that took place in the bears' winter hibernation caves during periods of severe weather. It became a rite for humans to defeat and dominate this terrible adversary, since they felt that doing so would transfer the adversary's potential power to them.

It was revealed that bear skulls were contained inside stone receptacles that were found in an old cave. Bear bones were discovered placed along the walls of another cave discovered in Switzerland and given the name Dracheloch. It is quite possible that these bones were used for a ceremonial reason, with the intention of attaining the power of the bear. Due to the fact that bears are able to hibernate for a period of six months in caverns, the quest of strength that people engaged in was particularly significant. A wandering human being who is looking for refuge may face severe repercussions if they were to enter a cave without being aware of it and wake a bear.

### **Beliefs and Burials:**

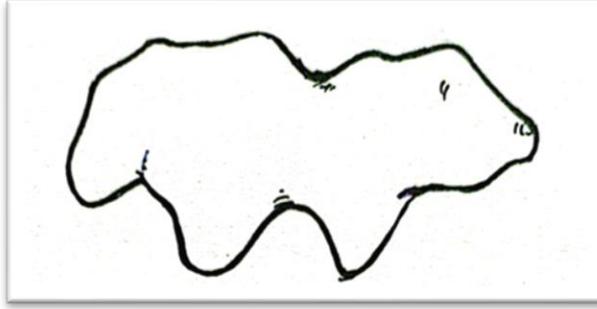
From the fact that these people started burying their dead, it is possible to deduce the religious beliefs that were prevalent throughout that time period. The method in which they buried their deceased gives the impression that they had faith in the existence of a life beyond death. This may be deduced from the fact that tools and food items going back to 50,000 BC were discovered buried alongside the deceased at a number of different locations. These artefacts provide evidence that the idea of a hereafter had already established itself as a fundamental part of the human consciousness at that point in time. It was for this reason that they buried their comrades with provisions and weapons, as if they were making preparations to deal with the challenges that they would encounter in the future world. Stones were used to cover the bodies of the deceased; they were lay down in a sleeping posture.

In some locations, the deceased were laid to rest by themselves, while in others, 10 or more remains were interred together with one another. It was discovered that a cave near Shanidar, Iraq, had a large number of buried bodies. It was determined via the process of examining the soil in this location that one of the deceased had been wrapped in pine branches and covered with wildflowers upon their death. This particular incident denotes the very first case in the history of humanity in which sensations such as love and feelings were expressed.

### **Early Stone Tools:**

Stone tools were the only ones that mankind utilized throughout the ancient age. People have been in a position of supremacy over animals ever since they discovered how to utilize cutting tools. Many different types of tools were developed by the inhabitants of this period for the purpose of protecting themselves and making use of them.

**EOLITH:** In the beginning, people would utilize whatever stones they discovered with the intention of either protecting themselves or breaking other stones. After some time, after they had gained a grasp of the characteristics of stones, they started looking for stones that met their requirements. The stones that were accessible during that time period exhibit marks of usage; nevertheless, there are no indicators or indications that these stones were shaped in accordance with the prerequisites. In their unprocessed state, these stones were used by people living during the Lower Palaeolithic period whenever they were required. These stones were discovered in close proximity to heaps of ash, food, and dirt (refuse) that were discovered in China as well as in many other locations. Rock crystal and fragments of shells were also present in these stones, which suggests that in addition to their practical use, people also gathered these stones for their aesthetic value and decorative potential. "EOLITH" is the name given to these stones.



EOLITH is a kind of stone that was not formed by people but was kept because of its resemblance to certain animals, such as a bull or a bear.

There are a lot of EOLITHs that seem like animals in their natural state, and it's possible that the people who lived during that time period gathered them because of this likeness.

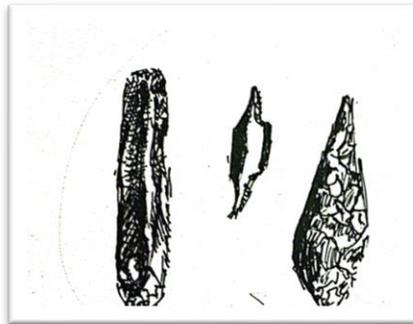
### **Tools of Paleolithic Era:**

Simple stone tools were first used by the earliest humans, Homo erectus. This practice dates back millions of years. The majority of the time, these implements consisted of huge, rough stones that were used for activities such as breaking nuts and breaking bones.

### **Core and Flake:**

The human race eventually developed the ability to fashion stones into more specialized tools. They constructed two primary kinds throughout the Lower Paleolithic era, which are as follows:

**Flake:** These were thin, sharp shards of stone that had been chipped off from a bigger stone. Flakes were also known as fragments. For the purposes of searching, scraping, and cutting, flakes might be used. Neanderthal man made flake-style tools very skillfully. It is not yet known how these people made their tools flake.



Flake kind of Tools

**Cores:** Cores were bigger stones that had various sections chipped away to form a sharp edge. Cores were also known as cores. Pounding and chopping were two common uses for cores in the past.



Core Tool

### **An Important Development in Tool making During the Middle Paleolithic Period**

A tremendous amount of progress was made in the art of toolmaking throughout the Middle Palaeolithic epoch. When humans first started making tools, they were more symmetrical and efficient than ever before. The handaxe, which was a bifacial instrument that was formed on both sides, was one of the most significant breakthroughs that ever occurred. Many other activities, including as hunting, butchering, and woodworking, were carried out with the assistance of handaxes.

#### **Role of Stone Tools Play in Society:**

A significant contribution to the evolution of human civilization was made by the use of stone tools. They made it possible for people to hunt more successfully, collect food more efficiently, and construct dwellings more effectively. Humans continued to improve their abilities, and as a result, they developed increasingly more complex instruments that assisted them in thriving in their environment.

#### **Flint:**

Flint is a rock that is dense, grey in colour, and is mostly composed of silica. It is a substance that is highly beneficial for the production of tools. When people were making tools out of flint, they would strike it with a hammer or another stone throughout the process. As a result, flakes of flint would be broken off as a result of this. These flakes have the potential to be molded into a variety of implements, including as knives or arrowheads.

Handaxes were among the most essential tools that could be made out of flint. A sharp edge was present on both sides of the enormous, flat stone that was in question. In addition to a variety of other jobs, people used handaxes to chop meat and scrape skins.

#### **The Tools of the Mousterian:**

The ancient group of people were very skilled in the art of flint toolmaking. Mousterian tools are the name given to their implements. A wide variety of tools, such as scrapers and handaxes, were among the numerous that they manufactured. These people made tools from flint stone. These

tools from that time are called Mousterian because the best collection of such tools has been found in a cave called Moustier in the Dordogne region of France.

### **The Tools of Middle Paleolithic Era:**

The early paleolithic era is characterized by tools of heavy and crude shape but the Middle Palaeolithic era was characterized by the development of tools that were more sophisticated, lighter, and smaller in size compared to preceding periods. It was possible to connect them to wooden spears and arrows in order to make them even more pointed since they were of a smaller size and had sharp edges.

Tools of the past: The tools of the past were cumbersome and unrefined. They eventually grew lighter and more polished as time went on. Following the process of breaking a huge chunk of stone into a flake, the flake was then made into tools by being further shaped and sharpened. Over time, people developed the ability to identify and choose flake stones that were ideal for use in the production of tools. It was also possible for them to fashion spearheads and blades that could be attached to wooden spears.

During this time period, the majority of the tools that people used were made of stone since they had not yet reached the point where they were acquainted with metals. The age of things that date back to this time period might range anywhere from five thousand to six thousand years. In addition to these materials, it is thought that timber and clay that had not been baked were also used extensively during this time period. It is possible that humans participated in activities like as carving and sculpting, therefore producing items out of these materials. The passage of time and the effects of the weather have, however, rendered these things extinct.

As far as personal decoration is concerned, it is believed that the only thing that people wore throughout this time period was the application of the colour red to their bodies.

### **Suggested Short Questions:**

1. What is Paleolithic?
2. What is Mesolithic?
3. What is Neolithic?
4. What are stage of Paleolithic?
5. Who was Lord Avebury?
6. Who was Alan Brown ?
7. How you differentiate the Facial Features of Homo Erectus and Cro Magnon?
8. What is Eolith?
9. What were Mousterian kind of Tools?
10. Who were Neanderthal?

### **Long Questions:**

1. What do you know about Tools of Paleolithic Era? Explain in detail with sketches of tools.
2. How will you describe the Development of Paleolithic Period?

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