

THE ESSENCE OF THE AMERICAN MYSTERIES: PART II: THE ONSET OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS SOUL EPOCH

The Modern Age began in the 15th – 16th centuries. We know that this meant, among other things, the awakening of the scientific frame of mind so well represented in Europe by the achievements of the Renaissance. This was also the time that opened up the “discovery” and colonization of America.

In America, the native consciousness carried a remnant of primeval consciousness—the knowledge of the Tao, the Great Spirit, resonating at once in the feeling of self and in the spiritual/physical perception of nature. America did not experience the great change of consciousness in the way it occurred in Europe. Nevertheless important transformations took place, two of which concern us here. They have left historical traces and we can measure their consequences first and foremost in the realm of political and social organization.

In the following myths and historical precedents, American genius prefigures the deeper essence of progressive and decadent modern political regimes. The two social alternatives here outlined rest on new social forms and “social rituals.” However, their nature differs diametrically.

In 1428 the Aztecs consolidated their political power and inaugurated their empire. In South America the time of the Aztecs closely corresponded with the consolidation of the Inca Empire. In North America the Aztec revolution was preceded by a few centuries by the Iroquois social transformation. The Iroquois formed a confederacy that loosely extended over a considerable territory. However, Aztecs and Iroquois formed two political and social entities at polar opposites from each other.

Historical cultures are mirrored in their worldviews, in this particular case in what we have received as myths and legends. The Iroquois trace their league to the “Legend of the White Roots of Peace,” the epic of their league’s founders, Hiawatha and Deganawidah. The Aztecs have left us the myths of their origin; we will particularly look at the myth of the birth of their man-god, Huitzilopochtli. Only the main events of the stories will be outlined and contrasted here.

From the beginning, these two sets of stories have an unusual element in common: the virgin birth of the main hero. Both central heroes of these myths—Deganawidah and Huitzilopochtli—are born of a virgin, echoing the manner of birth of the Twins in the Popol Vuh, an element that appears further repeated in many American myths, and confirmed by Steiner in the case of Vitzliputzli, the American initiate of the time of Christ. In the case of Huitzilopochtli such birth denotes the traits of a man-god. Deganawidah (Peacemaker) remains strictly human, even imperfect—he stutters, at least in many versions of the legend. His virgin birth points rather to the qualities of an initiate. These qualities appear in various forms in different versions of the legend: Deganawidah travels in a white canoe made of stone; at his death he sails into the sunset never to reappear again; his name, unlike all other Iroquois names, cannot be passed down the line of generations, because none can do what he has done.

In the Aztec myth, the birth of Huitzilopochtli brings about an act of vengeance: the killing of the mother’s sister and of the “Four Hundred Gods of the South” who

wanted to put the mother to death, believing she had been dishonored at the birth of Huitzilopochtli. The tone is set from the very beginning for a dualistic worldview of good and evil, attack and revenge. Huitzilopochtli has both friends and enemies; the first he rewards, the others he punishes and sacrifices brutally.

The Iroquois legend of the White Roots of Peace is a legend of education, the education of evil through good. It is a threefold approach, in all its aspects. There are three main protagonists: Deganawidah, Hiawatha, and Thahodado (alternatively Atotarho). Deganawidah is the initiate who holds the vision of a new world ruled by higher ideals, overcoming warfare, revenge, and cannibalism through the threefold message of righteousness, health and law. He is the one who converts Hiawatha, of whom many versions of the legend say that he is a revered chief, but also a cannibal. Hiawatha stands for the quintessential human being struggling between his higher ideals and his lower nature. The joint efforts of Deganawidah and Hiawatha bring about the conversion and redemption of Thahodado, whose hair is a mass of tangled serpents and whose mind is twisted and body crooked. His cry “Hwe-do-ne-e-e-eh?” (When will this be?) is “the mocking cry of the doubter who killed men by destroying their faith.” Most prominently he is a black magician.

The Aztec empire, originally a nominal confederacy, was inaugurated together with a complete rewriting of history and mythology; some have called it a “creative mythography.” In 1428, the high priest Tlaclael called for the burning of all ancient religious and spiritual documents. Mythology and history had to be rewritten for human sacrifice to appear as the highest good. The reversal of the Twins’ role in the figure of Huitzilopochtli, from initiate fighting against human sacrifice to chief black magician promoting human sacrifice, is the best illustration of the process.

The unity of the Iroquois League comes about in a first step through Hiawatha’s repentance of his deeds, mediated by Deganawidah. In this experience he beholds the reflection of Deganawidah’s face in the water, believing it is his own. Struck by the beauty of its features, he realizes his shortcomings, particularly his cannibalistic habits, and consciously decides to repair all evil done. He will later embark on the odyssey of taking on the destiny of his people. This will require of him a great willingness for renunciation. Sacrifice is in fact the theme that links the two worldviews, although in diametrically opposed ways. Central to this stage of evolution is the performance of a Ritual of Condolence from Deganawidah upon Hiawatha. Through the power of the Christ, Hiawatha’s grief can be lifted up and become the ability to forgive and carry other people’s karma. The Ritual of Condolence and other forms of social sacramentalism, such as the ritual of adoption or the ritual of atonement, are central to the Iroquois worldview. These rituals are the cornerstone of the new social form of the Longhouse, a sort of federal integration of the five nations of the Iroquois. The Longhouse was a new form of government based on diverse systems of checks and balances that allowed the tribes to work together as equals.

It is well known that the Aztecs’ main ritual was human sacrifice with the removal of the heart from a live victim, a resurgence of the old Taotl and Quetzalcoatl Mysteries of the time of Christ. It was the spiritual cornerstone, the occult principle without which we cannot really understand the Aztec worldview. For their social system to be able to extract such a price from the individual, the hand of the state had to be present everywhere. Indeed the Aztecs concentrated civil and religious education, and

political, military, and economic functions under a centralized system that rested on the figure of the emperor, and even more so on the high priest. The first high priest, Tlaclael, survived until the reign of the third emperor. In this way the Ahrimanic School inaugurated at the onset of the Consciousness Soul epoch found a major representative in the Aztecs. This tendency was countered in the north by the Iroquois and in the South by the Incas, if not by others as well.

The first stage of the American Mysteries hinged on the deed of the initiate in the confrontation with evil that took the form of the human sacrifices with removal of the stomach. The second confrontation with evil was now the concern of a whole group of people and finds itself manifested among the Iroquois on one hand with the new social form of the Longhouse, and on the other with the forms of social sacramentalism such as the Ritual of Condolence. These are Mysteries of the education of the will that link individual to collective destiny, and they are eminently “social Mysteries.” These Mysteries underwent other metamorphoses in American history, most particularly since the time of Christ’s reappearance in the etheric.