

AZTECS AND IROQUOIS: TWO WORLDVIEWS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

(From *Spiritual Turning Points of North American History* to be published in 2008)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The book *Spiritual Turning Points of North American History* is written upon the foundation of a spiritual-scientific view of history. It does not contradict historical research, but adds to it an understanding that is usually missing from a mostly materialistic view of history. This enables us to reconcile Native American and Western consciousness—the record of North and Mesoamerican mythology (i.e.: Popol Vuh, Aztec and Iroquois legends) with the discoveries of archaeology, ethnology, linguistics, etc. A previous knowledge of key concepts of spiritual science, or an openness to explore them, is essential to the reading and understanding of the book.

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 sustained social practices and “social rituals.” However, their nature differs diametrically.

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 occurred here too; two of them concern us here. They have left historical traces and we can measure their consequences first and foremost in the realm of social and political organization.

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 too 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. The worldviews that emerged from the two societies had far-reaching consequences for later times and affected individual destiny and freedom in very different ways.

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 its founders, Hiawatha and Deganawidah, called the “Legend of the White Roots of Peace.” The Aztecs have left us the myths of their origin; here we will particularly look at the myth of the birth of their man-god, Huitzilopochtli. Only the main events 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. In the case of Huitzilopochtli such birth

denotes the traits of a man-god. Deganawidah (Peacemaker) remains strictly human, although imperfect—he stutters, at least in many versions of the legend. (See also Hiawatha and the Peacemaker document). His virgin birth points rather to his 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 Indian names, cannot be passed down the line of generations, because none can do what he has done. 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, (See Dawning and Ixbalamque document) an element that appears further repeated in many American myths. Many other elements of the Popol Vuh are also present in the Aztec version.

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 (disbelieving the virgin birth). 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.

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. 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 effect, in 1428, the high priest Tlaclael called for the burning of all ancient religious and spiritual documents. It was the beginning of the writing of a new history. Mythology had to be rewritten for human sacrifice to appear as the highest good. The reversal of the Twins' role, from white magician fighting human sacrifice to chief black magician promoting human sacrifice, is the best illustration of the process. So seductive is this mythology that it still finds today countless apologists, ready to forgive, if not exalt, a civilization that would send more than 10,000 captives to human sacrifice within four days, during the inauguration of the Temple of the Sun in Tenochtitlan (modern-day Mexico City).

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.

It is well known that the Aztecs' main spiritual ritual was human sacrifice. It was the 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 political figure of the ruler, and even more so on the high priest. We know in fact that the high priest Tlaclael outlived the first three rulers.