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## SOME NOTES ON THE RELIGION OF THE INDIANS

ALBERT B. REAGAN<sup>1</sup>

To a great extent religion determines the advancement that any people makes, and the Indian was no exception in this connection. The writer wishes to explain that he is to deal only with our Indians as found by the Europeans following the discovery by Columbus, and hence is not called on to consider or discuss the claims of the higher systems of religion, and consequently all special questions, such as, the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, are entirely foreign to his purpose. He is here presenting the facts as found by him and other scientists, leaving the conclusions for the reader to draw as the facts indicate.

One author says, "Fear first made the Gods," this seems to be a very one sided statement. Baring the Biblical statements which the writer hopes all his readers believe, man conceived the notion of a great cause guided by his feelings by a process of selection, he conceived (still conceives) and ideal, and this ideal became to him an object of passionate devotion.<sup>2</sup> And again our Indians were

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<sup>2</sup> In this work the writer has, in part, followed E. A. Allen's "History of Civilization," volumes 1-4 which was published by the Central Publishing House in Cincinnati in 1889. The other references cited, (but usually not quoted), as given him by the Bureau of American Ethnology (and obtained from numerous other sources) here follow as far as they could find the complete references, that Bureau stating: "The works by Bastion, Muller, and Taylor have not been found in our library, and we have been unable to locate the complete references." The writer will further add that the references cited will be included in the text in parenthesis. If the author has only one volume to his credit, the citation will, for instance, be "Brinton, 241," meaning "Brinton, volume 1, P. 241;" if he has more than one volume of the same title to his credit, it will be written, for instance, as "Waitz 3:194," that is "Volume 3, page 194;" and so on. The list of these authors and their works here follow in alphabetical order.

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no exception, notwithstanding, of whatever origin we consider them. They, too, believe in a soul (sometimes soul and spirit and even "shadow") and all believed in a happy life in the world beyond the grave. But the writer will not go further with this exposition, but will give the Indian's reactions and sayings as to his dreams and religious beliefs as he has been able to obtain them from the Indians themselves or from others who have recorded notes along the same lines.

The Indians of North America generally hold that the dreamer's soul leaves the body and goes in search of attractive things (Waitz, 3:195). The ancient Peruvians asserted that the soul could not sleep, and that the things we dream are what the soul sees in the world while the body sleeps (Spencer, 151). Nor is it from dreams alone that the theory of "another-self" would arise. Shadows, reflections and refractions all seem to lead to the belief in "another-self" which is ordinarily invisible, but at times capable of being seen. To him his "other-self" is actually visible when his own image is reflected in a lake, and so on. Once when placing a mirror before an Indian who had never seen one before, he remarked, "Now I can see into the world of spirits." Often when talking with the medicine men at Quileute, Washington, while the writer had charge of them as government official from July 1, 1905 to October 15, 1909, they would tell him that when a person is sick his "other-self" had left that one's body and they would have to have a medicine ceremony to bring it back to its owner, and often they asked his permission to have such ceremony. And the ceremony of bringing back this "other-self" was quite an elaborate ceremony as will be given later in this paper. As mentioned, some of the Indians believe one has two souls; one goes out and sees dreams, the other remains behind (Taylor, 1:392). Others thought there were three souls — a good soul which went to a warm land, a bad soul which went to a cold land and a soul which remained with the body. (Waitz, 3:194); and finally the Dakotas believe in four souls, one which goes to the spirit world, one wanders in the air, one remains with the body, and one continues to reside in the village (Waitz, 3:195); and many western Indians have to have a special and elaborate ceremony for this latter spirit about a year after the death of its owner, so that its presence will not bring calamity to the village. At this time the names of the relatives are changed so the (now evil) spirit cannot find them, the writer having attended many such ceremonies. Sickness among Indians is usually believed to be caused by one or more of these

“other-self” spirits or souls leaving the body and most medicine ceremonies are had to induce the “other-self” to return to the body. In numerous cases, the writer and others have attended ceremonies in which this “other-self” was recalled by various means, in securing the patient’s recovery, while in other cases every effort of the medicine fraternity failed to induce the return of the “other-self,” the patient consequently dying.

The salish Indians of Oregon even think that the soul may wander away without the individual being conscious of it. The shaman (medicine man), however, informs him of the facts of the case, and to prevent unpleasant consequences kindly uses his power to restore it to him, putting it down through the top of his head, (Bastion, 2:320), while with other West Coast Indians he places it on him by a handplacing, imitation water-pouring process.

The Indians accounted for sickness, as we have seen, as the “shadow’s” being unsettled — that is, in general, the West Coast belief, and if the convalescent exposed himself unnecessarily, he was censured for so doing before his “shadow” was well settled (Taylor, 1:304). Some of the Indian tribes held that in cases of prolonged unconsciousness, but with final recovery, that the soul had turned back when on the boundary land of the spirit world, or after a visit thither (Waitz, 3:195). However, the West Coast Indians asserted to the writer that if the departing soul crossed a certain stream in the land of the dead they could not overtake it with their *tomanawis* (witch-hypnotic-trance-supernatural-power) and bring it back and restore it to its owner.

When we pass in review the North American Indians, as well as the other savages of the world, we find that ignorance presents the only explanation for many of their beliefs — for many things of ordinary circumstances that are puzzling. Thus in a most natural manner is found to arise the belief in “another-self,” ordinarily invisible but not always so, which can exist apart from the body; and these examples should satisfy us once for all that the Indians do not come to their beliefs as a result of deep speculation (or by divine help through a previous period), if they were ever divinely taught, as many believe, they have wholly forgotten that teaching. At the present (when the Europeans first knew him) the Indian did not stand in wondering awe contemplating the mysterious forces of nature. He formed little or no hypothesis about them. To recapitulate: The Indians believed in a doctrine of “another-self.” The soul was considered as capable of existing apart from

the body, and, further, death itself is but an aggravated case of such absence, so long continued that the body suffers dissolution. If such a condition were true the question at once arises "How long can this 'other-self' remain away from the body?" Evidently a considerable time, asserts the medicine men, for in some cases days have passed and the unconscious one has survived. (Among all the Indians of which the writer had charge or came in contact with, any one being unconscious, whether as the result of a faint or what-not, was called "dead" by the Indians of the respective Indian tribe concerned). Therefore, in death the "other-self" is supposed to be still in existence. Here the savage theory of dreams strengthens this conclusion. He dreams that a comrade who died and was buried is with him once more. The only explanation he can give is that the "other-self" of his dead comrade appeared in his sleep. And with the West Coast Indians at least, such a dream means that the dreamer who dreamed of people now dead are themselves going to die and that soon. A case at hand: While playing shinny at Quileute, a school girl, a pupil of the writer, became too warm and fainted. And as she was coming to her hazy mind, she saw her sister who had died about a year previous. At once a medicine ceremony of four days' duration had to be held to keep this girl from dying as she had seen "dead people," though in ten minutes after she regained consciousness she had in every way recovered. She had seen "dead people," the medicine man said, and they had to have the four days' ceremony so that she would not die so she could go to them in the world beyond the grave.

About the life which this "other-self" lives apart from the body, now for days at a time, and now for an indefinite time, so long that the body decays, the Indians conceived of a life quite like their own. Hence, the first stages of their belief that the life led by this "other-self" after death is much like that before death. As we have seen, our Indians in some cases, held that at least one of the souls of the departed remained in the village; in fact, it was practically held that the soul of the dead remained at least for sometime near its old home. The Iroquois made a small hole in the grave so that the soul could go in and out; as did the Goshute Indians of Utah; and the writer was just recently told by an Indian of Oraibe that the Hopis of Arizona also have a similar custom. The Ojibwa place eatables and water on the graves of their departed for a considerable time after burial and the Apaches of Arizona place such things on the graves of their dead each morning for a period of thirty days after burial, giving the mourn-

ing yell each morning, as they do so. Other tribes prepare for the spirits of the departed one's wants for at least a year.

In general the home of the soul is some distance removed, though considerably near. Often mountains are set aside by popular superstition for this purpose. The tribes of Oregon placed the abode of spirits in the Rocky Mountains (Waitz, 3:3451). The ancient Mexicans supposed the land of the blessed to be among the Mountains of Mexico (Taylor, 2:54). The natives of Hayti pointed out to the Spainards lovely valleys in their island where the souls of the departed lived, and feasted on the tropical fruit there growing (*Ibid.*); while the Brazilians believed that the happy land was behind the Mountains. Others, especially the Pueblos, Hopis and some of the West Coast Indians, believe this happy land is in the heart of the earth or that it, at least, has to be reached through a hole in this earth's crust, the great canyon of the Colorado river being that hole (entrance-way) to the Hopi Indians, its counterpart to the Pueblos of the Rio Grande region being a lagoon to the northwest of their territory, and to the Sias it is a volcanic crater apparently somewhere in the Jemez mountains of New Mexico. On the other hand, tribes have been compelled to change their homes for divers reasons. As time passed on, and the knowledge of their earlier home faded away, there would still exist among them traditions of a far away place which is thought of as a better place than the present location; and after death the "other-self" would set off for that other land (Spencer, 220), and this accounts, too, for the happy world being a little distance off, especially of people who have no exact definite idea of where it is located; it is simply their former home country now turned a happy land in the hereafter.

The Tacullis believe that the soul continues to live in the interior of the earth (Waitz, 3:197). The Sioux believe that the cavern near the falls of St. Anthony (and Minnehaha) leads to the underground world (Taylor, 2:60). The Navajos believe in an "underground world of plenty, stocked with game and covered with corn." (Brinton, 211). This belief is also found among the South American Tribes (Taylor, 2:60).

The spirit world to most peoples of the ancient world and those in the savage state was and is some far off region, as previously cited. To many peoples, the sun, moon and the heavens were and are yet so chosen. Many people think of the blue firmament above as a material, solid substance and above this firmament many peoples have placed the spirit world. Turning to our Indians, Dr.

Brinton thinks that they universally held that the sun was the place of the happy land, (243), but he was not acquainted with the Southwestern Indians. As here heaven is below, at shipapulima (of the Zunis, Hopis, and other Pueblos) or some similar region. The Iroquois speak of the soul's going upward and westward, till it comes out on the beauteous plains of heaven with people and trees and things on earth (Taylor, 2:66).

On their trip to the departed land this journey is often supposed to be attended with many adventures and difficulties, sometimes in which the soul is even liable to suffer a second death which ends all life—the crossing of a stream on a bridge or log, and even the crossing of a river, lake or sea is a very frequent occurrence, with dire disaster to the crosser should he fall into the water. Some suggest that all tribes have crossed some body of water in their migrations; and, therefore, if death be regarded as a home-going of the “other-self” the soul must recross such water (Sociology, 224). Many believe that the Indians are of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, and consequently, they crossed the ocean to get to this continent; hence, the belief that their soul will cross a body of water in its home-journey after death.

And, again, lest we lose sight of the real lesson underlying these statements of Indian belief, we have seen how a belief in “another-self” would arise and gradually assume definite proportions, and how a very important part of this belief was that this “other-self” was generally invisible, but was capable of existence apart from the body, and that its absence generally caused unconsciousness of the body. Hence, there arises the natural conclusion that death is simply the permanent absence of this “other-self,” which was supposed to be still in existence elsewhere. We have now seen how this “other-self” or the “dead spirit” is supposed among many Indian tribes to still haunt its accustomed place. A Navajo, for instance, will not go into a house where anyone has previously died, though the corpse has been buried somewhere else even years before, calling such a house a chinde hogan (devil's or death's house).

The belief almost universally held among Indians when the white man arrived was that the future life was simply a continuation of the present. They could not conceive of a complete immaterial existence. True the “other-self” cannot generally be seen, and in their dream experiences they knew that it has mysterious powers. A shade of a comrade suffices to recall in a moment's time the wandering “other-self,” though it were miles away. But

they were quite incapable of reducing their conception to an orderly system, and the result is confused notions as to the existence and the life it is supposed to live. The easiest explanation that appeared to the Indians, the only life of which he could possibly conceive, in fact, was a simple life like the one he was then living. The "other-self" was imagined as a material body and had, of course, material appetites, passions and wants. Consequently, it would need all those articles conducing to his comfort while in the body. Hence, the custom of burying with the body the means of supplying these wants — the practice of thus burying food, clothing and utensils, is so well known that it is scarcely necessary to cite an example.

Furthermore, along with the idea of a future life like the present comes necessarily the idea of souls of animals and objects. Says the Indian, "Does not the 'other-self' see animals, trees, houses, and all manner of articles in dreams. Obviously, then, these objects so seen must be the 'other-self' of the real objects," he reasons. We have in the Indian Chief's vision of heaven, the spirits of birds and animals, and the long train of arriving spirits is thereby burdened with the spirits of the articles buried with them (Schoolcraft, 2:68); while the West Coast Indians see in their visions the real objects both when they thus visit the happy world and also the unhappy world; the plants in the latter world being dwarfed, the fish hard-wood knots and the whales, worthless logs that have been cast up along the beach line. The Navajos also believe that the reason why some seed germs fall on earth but do not sprout, is because their souls have gone to sprout and grow in the underground paradise (Brinton, 241).

The "other-self" instead of making use of the literal articles of food and drink, was supposed to use the souls of such articles instead, became the Indian's idea. They knew well enough that the kettles, jars, and weapons buried with their dead remained in the tomb, but they explained that the souls of such objects went to the dead who used them (Taylor, 1:434), and the objects were usually cracked, broken, or torn, in the case of cloth or skins, so that their respective souls could escape — this is done by the Apaches, Navajos, Pueblos, Hopis, and by a part of the Utes even to this day. Similarly, the "Shade" of the Algonquin hunter, hunts souls of beaver and elk, walking on the soul of the snow, and so on. And we can understand the feelings of the Indian mother, whose grief at the death of her little child was greatly relieved when its father died also, he would then provide for its wants. It might be



added here that Indians often killed others to accompany their dead on the journey to the future world. There are many instances where white people were killed by Indians for the sole reason of having them accompany their dead relatives on this journey. It was to accompany his child's spirit that the Sioux Indian crawled upon a load of hay a white man was hauling home in about 1905 and killed him, so stating it at his trial. From the burial mounds and burial grounds of the southern states it would seem that in former times hundreds of attendants (probably slaves?) were slain to serve the departed chief in the spirit land. On the West Coast of Washington a slave to many slaves were thus killed at the death of their lord; at the erecting of a "potlatch" hall (community, city hall, house) live slaves were also placed under each supporting post. The Utes practiced this killing of slaves and concubines at the death of their chief people, a case being *that of Chief Walker of Utah* where several slaves and slave wives were buried alive with him, forty of his best horses being ordered killed at his grave at the same time. It might here be added that a Ute graveyard of even today is strewn with the skeletons of their stock which have been killed on the graves of the respective owners to accompany them in spirit to the land of the hereafter. Navajos and Apaches also similarly kill the stock of the deceased.

Among some of the other confused notions of souls that have been noticed by the writer and others, it has been seen that among certain Indian tribes one was supposed to remain with the tribe and pass into the body of a new born child. In one tribe the medicine man places his hand upon the breast of the dying or just dead and then upon the head of a near relative. The child next born is supposed to have the soul of the dead relative and receive his name and rank (Waitz, 3:195). In order that the mother's spirit might pass to the child, the Seminole Indians held the new-born babe over the face of the dying mother (Brinton, 253). For a similar reason, the women among the Algonquin Indians generally flocked to the couch of the dying so that the soul of the departing one might enter some one and thus find a new home in the body of some unborn child (*Ibid.*).

It was the belief also, among many Indian tribes that the soul of the departed often returned (reappeared) in some animal form; that a place was at least found for one of their souls in some animal. In some cases we find the belief that after the funeral feast, one of the souls takes the form of a turtle dove (Muller, 56). The same conception, that is of doves being the residence

of human souls after death, re-appears in Brazil (Brinton, 102). A trace of this belief is seen to be a beautiful custom among the Iroquois Indians; they captured a bird and freed "It over the grave on the evening of the burial, to bear away the spirit to its heavenly rest" (Morgan, 174). The Powhattans of Virginia held that a certain small bird received the souls of their princes at death (Brinton, 102), but the souls could pass into other animals as well (Waitz, 2:419). One more observation on the belief of a Mexican tribe will bring this part of our subject to a close. We read "they worshipped every stone as a god, as they said that all men were converted into stones after death, and that a day was coming when all stones would be raised (in the resurrection?) as men," (Spencer, 194). While as to heaven (the land where the spirit went after death—the land of the life after death), the language of the Indian tribes was exhausted in picturing forth this happy hunting ground; plains dotted with lakes through which rolled great rivers, on which grazed herds of buffalo, elk, and all manner of game. The tree dwelling tribes of Brazil hoped to find a forest full of Calabash trees and game (Taylor, 2:70). Further south the Patagonians hoped to be "eternally drunk" (Spencer, 201).

Even in the beliefs of the Indian tribes not all the dead were able to reach the spirit world (the happy land of the dead). It might be well to state here that in general with the savages, in which state our Indians could generally be classed when Columbus reached our shores, the question of morality did not enter into their religious beliefs. In fact, with savages generally, morality and religion were more or less strangers to each other. This statement, however, does not apply in the full to the most advanced tribes of the Indian races as found in America in the 15th century. The general belief of the Indians was that the "good" were in some way assisted by the good spirit, while the bad were left to shift for themselves (Brinton, 242); but to understand what the Indians meant by "good," we must notice the Pawnee Chief's definition that "The good are good warriors and hunters" (*Ibid.*, 300). The assistance they are supposed to receive is largely in overcoming the dangers incurred in the passage to the spirit world. One idea that constantly reappears in the Indian belief as has been previously noted, is that of a stream to be crossed in some portion of the journey, the only passage of which is over a slippery log with the bark peeled off; or sometimes a writhing, twisting snake takes the place of the log (Waitz, 3:197) but the good are

assisted in these passages (Allen, 2:289). It was only after long stretches of savagery, leading into barbarism and civilization, that the conception grew up that the future life, in any important sense, was a place where the individual would answer for the deeds done in the body, gradually through which was united morality and religion, the "retribution" theory of future life, now held by all the great systems of religion of the present time.

Belief in immortality to the Indian, as well as to the other peoples of the world, has exercised a tremendous influence on his culture, notwithstanding, though there have been cases where this influence has not been "healthy." When the belief prevails, as it did among many of the Indian tribes, that the future life is simply a continuation of this life, it can exercise little influence for good. Such people, like the Indians of Yucatan, look on death almost with indifference. With them, it is only an "accident of life." On the other hand, indirectly it has had an enormous and disastrous influence on many of the tribes. Among certain tribes, especially in the south where chiefs have been buried with their servants, etc., and even among the Utes and on the West Coast, as previously cited, it led to the slaughter of slaves, wives and possibly companions, and has led to the universal destruction of property by practically all of the Indian tribes—even in some cases the old and sick people were put out of the way so that they might not enter the spirit world burdened by infirmities.

We will next consider the belief in witchcraft and its effects among the Indians. The Indians, like many other savage peoples, have experiences which conduce them to the belief that the "other-self" has mysterious powers, and that some people have more of such powers than others, called *orendo* by the eastern Indians and *tomanawis* by the Chinook-Jargon speaking Indians of the West Coast, terms which are somewhat covered by our words witch-hypnotic supernatural powers. In the course of a few hours or minutes sleep this "other-self" goes a distance of many miles, has most exciting adventures and returns in an inappreciably short time when called by name or at the shake of a companion. Conceptions of the Indian brain are doubtless more grotesque than those of civilized man. Now this "other-self" is flying through the air, now, armed with superhuman strength, it easily defends itself against most formidable enemies. Clearly, then, this "other-self" has powers greatly superior to those possessed by the real self in the body.

Death is the abandoning of the body by this mysterious "other-

self" which is still conceived of as existing in the near neighborhood—some West Coast Indians believe that their respective *tomanawis* spirit similarly remains "loose" in the vicinity where its owner resides. Is there not danger of it exercising its mysterious power in favor of, or adversely to, its old, or present neighbors and associates; the West Coast Indians believe that the spirit of a "bad *tomanawis*" medicine man who is yet living can harm them with said *tomanawis*' spirit if he so wishes and the writer is not so sure that most Indians have more or less such a belief. Even when he had charge of certain Minnesota Chippewas, Indians would come to his office in the dead hour of the night and beg him to prevent the Jackeskeed fraternity from harming them with their witch spirits. Many Indian customs are very foolish, the above being one of them. The "other-self" of an enemy or of a bad witch doctor may exercise adverse powers against any one he wishes. That "other-self" of the bad *tomanawis* man now becomes a being to be propitiated, its anger is to be dreaded, its favor sought. It is herein that the medicine man possesses his power; he can kill or cure or cause bad luck to his patients or enemies as he wishes. A great host of collected data clearly show that this is the prevailing idea among many Indian tribes. Conceiving the "other-self" as absent from the body yet lingering near it, let us notice the treatment of the body in some instances.

The Tupis, among our Indian tribes, tried in several ways to prevent the dead from bothering them. In some cases they tied all the limbs fast so that they would not be able to use them and trouble their friends (Spencer, 168). Another tribe hurried the scarcely dead body to the nearest pool of water and tossed it in (Brinton, 238). But, in general, the dead are not thought of as being gotten rid of in any such a way as this. Instead, the place of death is simply abandoned along with the body. The Arkansas burned the lodge with its contents, while after interment the Navajos and Apaches and many Utes burn the house of the deceased with all his personal effects and also kill all his stock. Furthermore, they usually never visit the burial place of their loved ones thereafter; if there are any whites in the vicinity, the Apaches and Navajos usually get them to bury their dead for them, none of them attending the burial. It should be added here, that among the West Coast Indians a corpse is carried out through a window, or a side of the house is removed for its exit so as to confuse the "other-self" so that it cannot find its way back into the house and annoy the living. In several funerals among the

Apaches which the writer attended, the north wall of the wickiup was removed so the corpse could be taken out on that side, though the edifice was later burned with its contents, this, however, was not the procedure always followed. For the same reason, the Algonquin Indians generally carried the corpse forth by a hole cut opposite the door, beating the walls with sticks to frighten away the lingering ghost (Brinton, 238).

Next we will consider ancestor worship. It is the key which explains many superstitions the world over and is often found to be the starting point from which other systems (and beliefs) diverge. The belief in this worship was prevalent among many of our Indian tribes (Muller, 173). The Natches went so far as to erect temples to the honor of their noted chiefs (*Ibid.*). One form in which their anxiety to show honor to the dead also found expression by means of feasts to the dead (*Ibid.*). Schoolcraft relates that among the Dakotas the natives sometimes refrained from murder for fear of the departed spirit (Indian Tribes, 2:195). Similar conceptions exist in South America (Muller, *op. cit.*, 261). The Patagonians greatly fear the souls of their magicians, who, after death, are supposed to be transformed into evil demons, and all misfortune is charged to them (Bastion, 3:406). It should also be added here that the West Coast Indians fear the *tomanawis* power of their medicine men, even while they are alive, and many eastern tribes similarly fear the *orenda* power of their medicine fraternity. And again, too often, and usually on the West Coast, when an Indian becomes ill, he believes that some medicine man has made him sick with his *tomanawis* (sorcery witch-hypnotic supernatural power) and he presents to (pays) the medicine man to make him well.

The Indians believed in fetishes. It was mentioned some pages back that certain Oregon Indians believed that the souls of men might leave the body without the owner's knowing it (Bastion, 2:320). In such cases, the medicine man entices them back in the shape of little stones, bones and splinters. In some cases, objects are taken to the grave for the express purpose of becoming the receptacle of the soul, which can be carried around as an object of worship. It should be mentioned that formerly nearly all Indians carried strings of fetishes suspended over their breasts, or somewhere about their clothing. These might be animal teeth, pieces of carved wood from trees that had been struck by lightning, skins of animals, and so on, these serving as protection of the life of the wearer from harm, as having charm-value, to use

the general term applied to such "*trinkets*" by civilized peoples, though all charms are not fetishes. Some have even concluded that fetishism is a low form of idolatry. We must here understand, too, that worship (?) is paid, not simply to the uncouth image itself, but to the spirit supposed to reside in it. Others seem to think it is only an outcome of ancestor worship. This we know, a medicine man armed with what his tribe considers a powerful fetish, imagines he can compel the services of the spirit which is supposed to be contained in it; and a fetish may be any strange object which strikes the individuals fancy. Thus, the Dakotas pick up most any round boulder and, after painting it red, addresses it as grandfather and asks it for aid (Taylor, 2:147).

Indians often believed that they descended from some animal which became their totem, this totem animal they would not kill, unless pressed by hunger, and then always apologize for the violence done, evidently another form of ancestor worship. Among the "beasts" thus venerated was the serpent, which was also worshipped because of its power to kill. Many of the tribes of the South West will not kill a snake even to this day. They know nothing about poison; but believe that some powerful spirit is working through the serpent.

We noticed, previously, that Indians suppose some mysterious connection to exist between an individual and parts of his body, or the clothes he wears. To them a picture or an image of a man was supposed to be a part of the individual. Consequently, they object, or formerly did object, to having pictures made of them, since the possessor of the picture thus has a mysterious power over them. (There is a case of the early days on the Rosebud Reservation, in South Dakota, where an Indian trader succeeded in getting a picture of a Sioux that owed him a considerable account and he scared this Indian into paying up by showing his picture to him and his relatives). And as for images, Indians generally believed that an image of a person, no matter of what material made, had so intimate a connection with the individual himself, that anything happening to the image, the like fate would befall the individual (Taylor, *Early History of Man*, 119); the writer thinks, however, that the last statement above should be considered with a grain of caution, especially when considering our Indian races. Among Indians generally it was believed that most if not all ills were caused by some unfriendly spirit that had taken up its abode in the body or by one's "other-self" temporarily leaving the body, often supposed to be caused to leave because of the presence of

an unfriendly spirit, as previously mentioned. The means of a cure to them, since sickness is primarily believed to be caused by the intrusion of some evil spirit, is either to drive away, or coax this spirit to depart. The medicine men were the ones generally sent for in case of sickness. They proceeded to scare (drive) the evil spirit away. They even now sit down opposite the patient and bark like a dog or represent the sound of some other animal or bird or mumble over some rude chant for hours at a time; while "musicians" and singers drown the groans of the sick one with the beating of drum or other rude instruments. They recite charms and incantations over him. They manufacture little images to represent the spirit of sickness and then destroy them. They blow upon the parts afflicted, rub, and suck on them, and then generally show some hard substance which they claim to have extracted from the body, and is the cause of the sickness; it is then taken some distance off and thrown away with the exclamation, "go away, 'sick'." (Also see Brinton, 225; Spencer, 259). Sometimes an image to represent the medicinal powers of some anti-sickness spirit is also used. While at least on the West Coast there are trance ceremonies which are conducted by the medicine men to bring back the patients fleeing soul (his "other-self") which has been caused to leave the patient's body on account of the intrusion of the evil spirit "sick." It should be added here that many Indians, especially those of the West Coast, believe that a bad witch (*tomanawis*) medicine man can take one's soul ("other-self") out of the body and destroy it or take it to the land of the dead, thus causing the death of that individual, and much of the medicine doctoring in these regions is performed by another medicine doctor to overcome that bad *tomanawis* man's witch power so he can go in the trance-state to the world of spirits and recapture (overtake) the imprisoned, fleeing soul before it crosses a certain stream in the land of the dead. Should he overtake it before it crosses that stream (the dead line) in that land he can bring it back and place it on his patient and he will get well. Should he fail to overtake it in time (that is should the bad *tomanawis* man's witch power prove stronger than his good *tomanawis* power) the patient would surely die, they believe. Such ceremonies are costly. The writer has known the savings of a whole lifetime to be the charge of one night's "powow," and one Navajo Indian is reported to have given a medicine man 2000 sheep to doctor him, the man dying before the ceremonies were completed. This should also be brought out. Among Indians,

especially the tribes the writer has worked among, they have good medicine men and bad medicine men, some of the latter, no doubt, getting such a name because they really are bad, unscrupulous men, others possibly because of their uncontrollable temper, others through being unlucky in their medicinal practice, their patients mostly all dying while or soon after they were treated, and so on. We call all such people medicine men, shamans, witches, magicians or sorcerers, though we do not distinguish between the good and bad type of these "professional" people, as do the Indians. They have the "good" and the "bad" type and so call them. But one may employ a bad medicine man to cure him, believing that this same medicine man or some other bad medicine man who is an associate of his has caused his sickness intentionally, on account of some dislike to him or some of his relatives, or simply to get "pay" from him for doctoring him. So he employs him to appease him so he will restore him to health again. The magician, sorcerer, or witch (the bad *tomanawis* man of the West Coast Indians) is considered powerful, because it is believed that some evil spirit is helping him. Sometimes this bad *tomanawis* man so incurs the enmity of his people, usually wholly unjustly, that short work is made of him. Mrs. Richard Wetheril describes in the Atlantic Monthly the killing of such a medicine man by the Navajos some years back, a horse was hitched to each arm and each leg and the man was quartered. The Indians of Sia Pueblo, New Mexico, stoned a man and his wife to death in about 1867 because they were witches, they had owl feathers in their possession. Just before the coming of the whites to the Strait of Fuca, the whole Chemacum-Quileute tribe assembled where Port Townsend, Washington, is now to burn a witch woman in a devils dance, supposing that she was the cause of the breaking out of an epidemic, and while thus assembled the Clallum Indians from Whidly Island to the northward fell upon them from ambush and slaughtered nearly the whole tribe. And while the writer had charge of these same Indians it was with difficulty that he prevented them from murdering, burning at the stake, one of their medicine men, they stating that he had killed their chief man with his bad-*tomanawis*, had simply wished him to die and he died. The man died from a mastoid infection. The dividing line between a magician (witch) and a good medicine man, in the Indian conception, is certainly very narrow. He has become familiar with the idea of spirits swarming everywhere. He stands in fear of them and believes that they can enter his body and produce sick-



ness, destroy his reason or take away his life. He believes that they can be coerced to do his bidding or the bidding of some medicine man for his good or for his destruction, depending on whether this shaman is his friend or enemy, or is in either case solely actuated by gain in money or property value, or as some other party wishes him to act. To prevent the dire things happening he uses some powerful charm or he gets into his possession some relic of the deceased person whose spirit he imagines is bothering him, so he can control this spirit with this relic, but not all of the disembodied spirits are enemies. Some come to him in dreams, warn him of danger, teach him magic charms. These he calls to his services or has a medicine man call them; and if it so develops, that he can call up these helpful spirits himself he then soon becomes a man of healing powers. He simply becomes a great magician, of course, through practice of his art.

Being thought to be favored with direct communication with the spirits, he, of course, becomes an object of veneration to his tribesmen, his power is feared, his influence sought. It is true that everyone cannot get this power, but some can and the fortunate individual does become a man of influence and is treated with great respect. He knows such powerful charms and songs, or has such wonderful "medicine" that he can put himself into communication with spirits generally, or with some higher or more powerful spirit. He can foretell future events and perform many wonderful things. As a material consequence, he is able to perform many cures, for by his superior strength he can exercise the evil spirits producing sickness. It probably should be mentioned that the would-be medicine man usually learns his art from some medicine man, studies the art under this man paying him for his services. Furthermore, he usually goes through a cruel navitate state, he forsakes the society of his fellow men, subjects himself to prolonged and repeated fastings and must fix his mind constantly on what he desires often for months and sometimes for years he is condemned to entire seclusion, receiving no visitors but peoples of the medicine fraternity. Sometimes he fasts in his solitary lodge until in a vision he is taken to the Indian heaven, there to be taught the unutterable things. Medicine men, one being Daybwaywaidung of the Nett lake Indians of Minnesota, told the writer that it took him many years to learn his medicine art, and different Apache medicine men stated to him that they paid medicine man Brigham Young four horses each for his training them in the medicinal practices, as known to him.

The performances of the medicine men in some of the West Coast ceremonies which the writer attended, and he attended hundreds of them, were about as follows: The sick one was carried into the "pollatch" hall. Then while drums and clapboards were beaten and songs were sung, the noise being such that one could not hear any recognizable sound, the din sounding like the roar of a boisterious storm beating against a rocky coast-line, the medicine man "pow wowed" over the patient and worked himself up to a pitched degree of excitement. The pounding and the singing grew louder and louder if that were possible, as the medicine man worked himself up to a frenzy. If his familiar spirit, his spirit-helper from the unseen world, did not appear, return with the patient's "other-self," he then fell into a trance state and his soul left his body to search for it (so he said). He then soon came out of the trance, stating that his ("other-self"-or familiar) spirit had overtaken the fleeing soul of the patient and he there and then proceeded to put it back on the patient by an inverted-hand, pouring process, placing the hands on the patient's head first and then sliding a hand flat-ways downward on each side of the body, with palms against the body from head to foot. Or, if he thought the patient would die, he would most always state to his auditors that he saw the fleeing spirit but it was in the hands of the spirit of a bad *tomanawis* man who fled across that river in the land of the dead from which no soul of an ordinary man has ever returned, sometimes designating by name the medicine man whose spirit he claimed was going to cause the death of his patient; he had to make up some excuse for his patient's dying, he had to do something to keep up his reputation as a "good medicine man." The general title of these medicinal practitioners among Indians is "medicine man"; but they have and use various other titles, such as, "dreamers of the gods," "masters or guardians of the divine thought," "*medawin* (medewin)," "*jesukawin*," "*jessakeed*," "*wabeno*-medicine man," etc. However, these different kinds of medicine men and their practices will not be discussed in this paper, because of a lack of space. We might add here that the practices of our Indian medicine men lead toward a form of a belief in spiritualism, whether of fact or without fact—that is, wholly imaginative. However, a discussion of that subject is not a part of this paper, each reader must decide as best he can whether the facts and beliefs set forth are for or against it. Among the Indians, as with many other primitive people, the great and successful war-chief would most surely be raised to the ranks of the

gods. Perhaps this was the origin of the Aztec god of war, and likewise such personages as Pestyasode of the jemez and Pashiankai of most of the other Pueblos, these now mythical personages being confounded with Montezuma, and even with Jesus Christ. Tales (myths) are told of these peoples' early life. As might be expected, the war god is the spirit of some famous warrior. And in the Pueblo country, even to this day, a watch is kept looking eastward to see if this hero is coming on the wings of the morning with his father, the sun, to expel the savages of the plains and the pale face hordes and restore them their ancient possessions. The Iroquois prayed to Garonhea, their hero, which is simply their word for sky (Brinton, 48), but a more advanced stage of thought is implied in the name, sometimes used by them of Garonhiawagan, literally meaning the sky comer. This illustrates the separation of the in-dwelling spirit from the fetish itself. But this leads us away from the earthly fetishes to fetishes of the sky and also ushers in a new line of thought. This idea of a heaven-god, which we find thus rising from a conception of heaven or some of the heavenly bodies, as a fetish, presents different forms amongst different people. Much the same can be said in regard to earth worship — worship of the mother-earth, etc. The Incas worshipped the earth as a goddess (Muller, 369). The Algonquin Indians in the north would sing medicine songs to the earth, whom they styled the "great-grandmother of all" (Taylor, 2:244).

It is evident when we go over the subject carefully, that as religion passes out of the stage of fetishism to nature worship and, subsequently, Polytheism, that myths will, at once, make their appearance and more or less that was the state of the Indian religion (s) when Columbus appeared on the scene. The Caribs, when there was an earthquake, said it was their mother-earth dancing and signifying to them to dance and make merry likewise, which accordingly they did (Taylor, "Culture," 1:290, *et. seq.*). Our Indians were observed to make prayers to the deities of rivers and lakes. Furthermore, in times of sickness or drought, sacrifices were made to them.

The worship of fire and sun are one of the most important primitive worships. The Indians were extensively given to fire worship (or their chief manitou through such worship). The Pueblo woman throws meal and flour into her oven to be consumed so they will have luck. From fire worship the transition is easy and natural to sun worship (or worship of the chief deity through

the sun or a symbol of it).<sup>3</sup> Sun worship was certainly extensive among the Indians of America, though there may be some uncertainty as to the rank of this worship. One writer concludes that all Indian tribes were sun worshippers (Carr, 56) but Dr. Brinton (142) tells us, that the Natchez alone, among the North American Indians,<sup>4</sup> were true worshippers of the sun. It, however, certainly

<sup>3</sup> Even the ancient Fremont Peoples of Utah worshipped the sun (in about 900 A.D.). On the north wall of a canyon, high up above the valley floor, in the San Rafael Swell, Southeast of Price and Cleveland, Utah, a sluffing off of the rock surface was such that a rayed circle some sixteen feet in diameter is thus exposed to view; and immediately under this freak-of-nature sun-disk is a pictographic drawing, of a length of 162 feet and a height of twelve feet, that was made by these Fremont Peoples in that far-off time, while at the foot of the wall beneath the drawings, the ashes of their camp fires are yet several feet in depth. The drawings are mostly of humans, drawn in almost life size, in beautiful reds, yellows and browns. Some are represented with huge banners floating downward and outward from their arms, shoulders, and heads. Some are shown as dancing on top of a rainbow or at the ends of this bow. Some are shown in a dance almost like the Yavachi medicine dance of the Navajos of the present day, yet forming an integral part of that ancient drawing. Others are dancing with snakes, while others are dancing with sidewise, outstretched hands, floating clouds being represented as being suspended from the thus outstretched arms. And the attitude of all the actors shows that they are doing obeisance to the freak sun disk on the canyon wall above them.

<sup>4</sup> The following notes concerning the Natchez Indians are taken from E. A. Allen's, *History of Civilization*, vol. 1, above, as follows: "We are not sure but that the dim uncertain light of history falls on the origin of a certain group of mounds, situated in Catahoula County, La. as of being of Natchez origin. When the French first commenced their settlement in the lower Mississippi Valley, the Natchez Indians was the most powerful tribe in all that section. In the course of time, wars ensued between them and the French, and in the year 1730 they fled into Upper Louisiana, and settled at the place where these mounds are now found. But the French followed them a year or so afterwards, and nearly exterminated them. Some of our scholars think that they erected these mounds. The historian of that epoch simply says they had "built a fort there." It is however questioned whether they had time to build works of such magnitude. But they were both a mound-building and a mound-using people, and we are not prepared to say how long it would take them to do the work, until we know the number engaged, methods employed, and other considerations. If they did not build these works, they doubtless cleared them of trees and utilized them; and this place was therefore the scene of the final downfall of the Natchez — a people we have every reason to regard as intimately connected with the prehistoric mound-building tribes (333-335)."

Allen again says in speaking of the Natchez Indians "Amongst the Natchez the chief was considered as descended from the sun. Nor was this belief confined to the Natchez, as the tribes of the Floridian Peninsula asserted the same thing of their chiefs. Among all these latter tribes the chief held absolute and unquestioned power over the persons, property, and time of their subjects.

"Amongst the Natchez the power of the Great Sun (their title for chief) seems to have been very great. This nation had a regularly organized system of priesthood, of which the chief was also the head. On the death of the chief a number of his subjects were put to death to keep him company. But we must notice that the subjects considered it an honor to die with the chief, and made application beforehand for the privilege. Bearing these facts in mind, it does not seem improbable that in more distant days, when the Natchez or some kindred tribe were in the height of their power, the death of some great chief might well be memorialized by the erection of a mound as grand in proportion as that of Grave Creek.

"In fact, the more we study the subject, the more firmly we become convinced that there is no hard and fast line separating the works of the Mound Builders from those of the later Indians. We therefore think that we may safely assert that the best authorities in the United States now consider that the mound building tribes were Indians, in much the same state of culture as the Indian tribes in the Gulf States at the time of the discovery of America, and we shall not probably be far out of the way if we assert, that when driven from the valley of the Ohio by more warlike people they became absorbed by the southern tribes, and, indeed the opinion is quite freely advanced that the Natchez themselves were a remnant of the "Mysterious Mound Builders" (503-4).

"A number of interesting statements in regard to them (the Natchez) at once arrest attention. Most of the tribes in the southern region of the United States spoke dialects of a common stock language (Chata-muskoki), showing a derivation from a common source. The Natchez spoke a different language. Sunworship seems to have been carried to a greater extent than among any other tribes we are acquainted with. As late as 1730 they still had their temples, where the eternal fire was kept burning, carefully watched; for they believed that should it become extinguished, it would surely bring great trouble on the tribe. Among the Natchez, if anywhere among Indian tribes, the power of the chief was absolute, and there seems to have been something like

remains that great honor was shown the sun, by a great number of tribes (Waitz, 3:180; Muller, 116; Taylor, "Culture," 2:261). While in Mexico, Central America and Peru, the worship of the sun was well established; especially is this true of the Incas, where it was, what might be called, the state religion (Brinton, 142).<sup>5</sup>

Moon worship too follows almost as naturally as sun-worship. In America the worship of the moon was spread over a large extent of country, and usually she was generally regarded as the goddess of water. Many are the myths relating to the sun and moon and eclipses of these bodies, of which there is not space here to relate.

privileged classes amongst them. We have already referred to them as Mound Builders.

"But most interesting is it to learn of their former wide extension and ancient power. Du Pratz says, 'According to their traditions, they were the most powerful nation of all North America, and were looked upon by other nations as their superiors, and on that account were respected by them. To give an idea of their power, I shall only mention that formerly they extended from the River Manchac, or Iberville, which is about fifty leagues from the sea, to the river Wabash, which is a distance from the sea about four hundred and sixty leagues: and that they had about eight hundred suns, or princes.' (It is scarcely necessary to caution the reader as to the value of this statement of ancient greatness. The chroniclers of DeSoto's expedition had nothing to say about it). It is at least a reasonable supposition that the Natchez were a remnant of the Mound Builders.

"So far we have dwelt chiefly on the relations between the Indians and the Mound Builders. Let us now see if we can not detect some connection between the Pueblo tribes of the south-western origin and the Mound Builders. All the tribes of the Gulf States had traditions of a western and South-western origin. In regard to the Creek Indians, this tradition is very distinct. They relate, with many details, their journey from the west, their fight with the Alabamas, etc. In the Natchez tradition, as given by Du Pratz they are seen, not only to come from the same western source, but distinctly preserve recollections of pueblo houses.

"The substance of their traditions is that they came from a pleasant country and mild climate, 'under the sun,' and in the south-west, where the nation had lived for many ages, and had spread over an extensive country of mountains, hills, and plains, in which the houses were built of stone, and were several stories high. They further relate how, owing to increase of enemies, the great sun sent some one over to examine and report on the country to be found to the east. The country being found extremely pleasant, a large part of their nation removed thither; and, after many generations, the great sun himself came also. Speaking of the ancient inhabitants of the country they came from, the tradition states that 'they had a great number of large and small villages, which were all built of stone, and in which were houses large enough to lodge a whole tribe (507-9).' (We would offer the same suggestion on these traditions as on the others, that they should be considered with a grain of caution).

<sup>5</sup> Among the Nahuas, this conception of creative power was that of a pair—a man and wife. These were not the active agents, however—they engendered four sons, who were the creators, they (the people) had a great many idols besides—but four were their principal deities. This seems to be widely extended from a tradition. While two authors, writing about fifty years after the conquest, speak of the four principal deities and statues. . . . Bandelier concludes that these four principal gods were deified men, whose lives and actions became mixed up with the vague ideas of natural forces and phenomena (188). Some of the other gods toward the Southland, were Quetzalcohuatl (the bright or shiny one, according to Bandelier, 188, and by others as the Feathered Snake, Feathered Serpent, etc., the tutelary deity of Cholula); Tezcathpoca, the tutelary deity of Tuzcuco; Huitzilopochtli, the tutelary deity of Mexico; Camaxtli, the tutelary deity of Tlaxcala (1:713); Gucumatz, one of the four principal gods who created the world, according to Quinches' traditions—meaning, also, shining or brilliant snake; the Pueblos of New Mexico confound Montezuma with their own deities (Jemez; Pestyasode; Keresean; Pashshaniankai, etc.) and with Jesus Christ. Quetzalcohuatl, as a deity, is worshipped as god of air and wind—in some sense, a nature god, while one of the Northwest Coast gods was Kwawtee (a word that is variously spelled and pronounced). (The general words met within, referring to the Indian shamans, are medicine-man, dreamer of the gods, men of the dawn (Wabeno), masters or guardians of divine thought, medawin (medewin), essentially a magician, Jesukawin the later being the prophet, who foretells events, tomanawis man, etc., while words to express the power of the medicine man—that unknown power of man? are clairvoyance, mesmerism, animal magnetism, odylie force, etc.; the Indian words being: *tomanawis*, unseen, mysterious, as we have seen; Iroquois word, *oki*, *othon*, supernatural power; medicine-men, meaning priests, conjurers, as previously noted; Aztec word, *toctli*; maya word, *kuaca*; Peruvian word, *kuaca*; Algonquin word, *orenda*, all meaning an ill-defined sense of supernatural, mysterious powers.)

It is also suggestive at least that most Indians had some sort of an idea of a supreme being, apart from their other conceptions of deities, nature fetishes, such as sky, earth, moon, sun, water, fire, storm gods, the lightning, thunder, winds, rain, and so on. Among such were the (culture) hero deities of kwattee (k'waiettie) of the West Coast, Manabush (variously spelled and pronounced) among the Chippewa-Algonquin tribes, Pashshaniankai (variously pronounced and spelled among the Keresean Indians, and Pestyasode (confounded with Montezuma and Jesus Christ) among the Jemez Pueblos. This belief, however, finds vent in two directions. One is to conceive of a spiritual entity, far removed from all affairs of men, too mighty and benevolent to care for the praise and adoration of men, knowing little about their affairs and caring less. The Indians in Texas believed in such a one "Who does not concern himself about things here below (Brinton, 54). (The writer, however, believes that the above statement should be taken with a grain of caution.) The heaven-god worship also appears among the South American Indians (Taylor, *Culture*, 2:306; but also see Brinton, 54).

From the belief in a number of gods each ruling his own department — water, mountains, rivers, lakes, vegetation, animal life, winds, thunder, lightning, etc., and the belief, possibly, in an over ruling world of invisible, of both good and bad spirits, the Indian was taking a large step toward the conception of a one-force back of all when the white man arrived on the scene in the rosy days of Ferdinand and Isabella.

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