

Chapter 3

Itzamna, Great Initiate of the Mayas

Researchers in Guatemala and Mexico are fast bringing to light convincing evidence that the same brilliant illumination of ancient truth which gave immortal glory to the reign of Akhenaten in Egypt, and which shown so resplendantly later that it enabled Posidonius markedly to influence the intellectual and spiritual trends of Europe, also blazed quite as powerfully, not for the period of one man's life or reign, but for a thousand years over the history of the whole Mayan empire.

No one as yet can prove definitely where this people came from. Their own traditions hold that they came from some region in the sea to the east; but why they came is not in evidence. Their ancestors, no doubt, had their origin in Atlantis or Mu; but these ancient lands had sunk thousands of years before the Mayas arrived in the last land of their adoption. Certainly they did not wander about on the open sea from 9000 B.C. until a hundred years before the commencement of the Christian era.

As yet we do not know from whence they came to Guatemala and the Yucatan; but their own account tells of their leader, who piloted them to safety, taught them writing, architecture, agriculture, astrology and the civilized arts and kept them faithful to The Religion of the Stars for a thousand years, until a foreigner, through military power, gained dominance over them. The name of the great Mayan initiate, whom they held to be a white man, was Itzamna.

The Spaniards, when they arrived, took great pains to destroy the Mayan libraries, so that the details of their history and of The Religion of the Stars as they observed it are lacking. Yet on their stone monuments, which the Spaniards could not destroy, we have the precise dates of the chief events and practices covering a period of about 1,500 years. During this time only two names stand out as of unusual and universal significance. One is that of Itzamna, the great initiate who led them to safety and gave them their arts and religion, and the other is that of the blackbearded Toltec military leader, Kukulcan, who, after intertribal wars had weakened them, imposed his will, crushed out the pure practices of The Religion of the Stars, and introduced barbaric Toltec religious customs, including the savage abomination of human sacrifice.

Here we have, on the American continent, an example of the contention of the two ancient forces which gave Atlantis and Mu their glory and which when the constructive element was defeated, ultimately sank them. A thousand years of light, of joy, of happiness and of constructive effort by the Mayan people; and then the forces of darkness, of cruelty and of greed gained the victory and there was quick intellectual and spiritual decay.

Fewer details are known about Mayan history than about the Aztecs for two distinct reasons. When the Spanish invaded Mexico and Central America, their priests sought out all the books and consigned them to the flames. They also attempted to destroy all monuments

and records which might shed any light upon the religion and customs of the people they had conquered.

In the case of the Aztecs, however, almost forty books or manuscripts were smuggled out of the country, were copied, or through other means escaped the vigilance of the Spanish priests and survive to this day. But Bishop Diego de Landa was more successful in suppressing the ancient wisdom of the Mayans.

The Mayas, at the time, had a national library of literature, of science and of history in the form of books written in their hieroglyphic characters, as de Landa records. The national library, and the books in various cities of the empire were not available to the public, but only to the Mayan priests and rulers, who were greatly esteemed for their wisdom.

The books were written and painted on a paper of fiber composition coated with stucco, which made exquisite art work possible. De Landa had a systematic search made of the entire Mayan nation for all such books, gathered them in a great pile in the public square of Mani, and burned them while the populace looked on, powerless to prevent this atrocious vandalism.

Thus of all the Mayan books, invaluable treatises on their beliefs and sciences, only three escaped, no one knows how, and persist to this day. They are: The Peresianus Codex now at the Biblioteque National, Paris; the Dresden Codex, now at the Royal Library at Dresden; and the TroCortesianus Codex, now at the Royal Academy of History, Madrid. Parts of the TroCortesianus appeared in two different countries, and each for a long time was believed to be a separate book. They are now considered as halves of the same book. Perhaps some soldier in pillage tore the book in two and gave one half to his buddy, both parts being smuggled to Europe as souvenirs.

Then again, the Aztecs, in addition to ideographs, used phonetic writing. Ninety per cent of their characters are known, so that such records as are still left in the Aztec language have largely been translated. But the Mayan people used only ideographs, such as we commonly refer to as symbolical pictographs, just a step removed from the simplest of all pictographs. There are 400 basic elements, and about half as many more compound characters; and up to the present time only enough work has been done on these hieroglyphics to make about fifty percent translations.

Yet even as the calendar stone of the Aztecs further north was too ponderous to be destroyed, and was buried by the Spaniards to get rid of it, so the vast cities of Yucatan and Guatemala, with their carvings in stone, were so extensive that their records could not be erased. Each year new cities are discovered, and new information gained, about the highly civilized people who dwelt after the beginning of the Christian era in Southern Mexico and Central America. If their history is ever fully recovered it will reveal, no doubt, much about the most remarkable of all initiates to set foot on American soil. Itzamna taught his people not only architecture the equal of any to be found in the Old World, a hieroglyphic written language, and an unshakable belief in astrology, but even taking into consideration the precision of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Greeks of that time, a knowledge of astronomy unrivaled anywhere in the whole world.

As to a still earlier occurrence, thousands of years before Itzamna brought his followers to the land that became theirs, the TroCortesianus Manuscripts record:

In the year 6 Kan, on the 11 Muluc, in the month of Zac, there occurred terrific earthquakes which continued until the 13 Chuen without interruption. The country of the hills of earth--the land of Mu (some translate it as Atlantis)--was sacrificed. Twice upheaved, it disappeared during the night, having been constantly shaken by the fires of the underneath. Being confined, these caused the land to rise and sink several times in various places. At last the surface gave way and the ten countries were torn asunder and scattered. They sank with their 64,000,000 inhabitants 8,060 years before the writing of this book.

Although details are lacking, as I said, every stone and monument covering a period of a thousand years in which the hieroglyphics of the Maya are yet to be seen evinces a high knowledge of, and devotion to, The Religion of the Stars. Nearly every such inscription relates to some phenomenon in the sky and the corresponding event which took place on earth. They had worked out a mathematical system which enabled them to predict eclipses and other astronomical phenomena with precision. Much of their chronological data is as yet undeciphered; but their calendar had been adjusted with such nicety that it was superior in accuracy to the Julian Calendar, which was in use in Europe at the same time. The dates of the monuments on which they are engraved are precise enough that no confusion exists between any two days within a period of 370,000 years.

This does not mean, of course, that their dated events go back any such vast period of time. But it does mean that from some source they had obtained a superior knowledge of astronomy. Their oldest date, in which this people gave each consecutive day its own number so that the subsequent records are complete, as worked out by Dr. Spinden of Harvard, is August 6, 613 B.C. The oldest object actually dated is a little jadite figurine known as the Tuxtla statuette, after the place where it was found, bearing the inscription in Mayan chronology, May 16, 98 B.C. However, still older dates are implied.

One of their most inviolate sacred customs was to set up in the various cities, amid a pompous ceremony, a date stone every 1,800 days. When we moderns shall have discovered the exact significance of their Venus calendar, we shall have learned important facts at present unrecognized in reference to mundane astrology. A "tun" is the Mayan year of 360 days. Five "tuns" make up a "hotun" of 1,800 days, and marks the time on which a stone monument was erected bearing the date and recording the most important event of the past period. So prevalent was this custom of setting up date stones at the end of each "hotun" that in their search when archaeologists have been unable to find a certain date stone in any important city, they have felt certain in predicting its existence, and in searching for it until found.

The oldest of these date stones was discovered in 1928 in Uaxactun, and bears the date 97 A.D. The Maya also had a cycle of about 400 years which appeared on the date stones. This oldest date stone bears the record that it is the 8th cycle of the Maya. Dr. Martinez concludes that somewhere in their history, before coming to this place, they had seven previous cycles, commencing with 3113 B.C. At present, however, any date earlier than May 16, 98 B.C. is inferential.

Itzamna, who led them from the region of the rising sun, was not only a benevolent ruler and wise legislator, but so skilled was he in Stellar Healing, even reviving the so-called dead, that he was called *Kabul*, meaning 'the skillful hand.'

Not always were the followers of Itzamna who lived after his death free from militant aggression which sought to displace both their temporal power and their religion. It was the custom of conquerors not to destroy the older pyramid temples, but to fill their interiors with rubble and then, using the older structures as so much work already done, to build a new pyramid around and over it, leaving no outward trace of the older edifice whose memory and religious implications they wished to efface. A mound near Guatemala City excavated by Dr. A. V. Kidder has disclosed that it contains a series of no less than four superimposed pyramids, indicating a succession of political changes and religious conflicts there. But as a rule there is only one superimposed pyramid, that used by the conquerors of the New Empire established by Kukulcan to conceal the more spiritual doctrines of Itzamna's followers.

Thus at Uaxactun, in Guatemala, by digging into a pyramid a smaller and older pyramid was found inside, that was already an edifice before the Mayan date stone of 97 A. D. was erected. This Itzamna pyramid, some 25 feet high, had been sheathed by a later people to make a pyramid 50 feet high, with a platform on top painted red where the priests stood during sacred ceremonies. This new pyramid served admirably as an astronomical observatory. Three temples were built near it in such a manner that the days of the solstices and equinoxes could be determined from them. When the sun rose behind the northern front

corner of the first temple, the observer on top of the pyramid knew it was the summer solstice, June 22. When the sun rose exactly behind the middle of the second temple the equinoxes were at hand, March 21 or September 23. And when the sun rose from the southern front of the third temple it was the day of the winter solstice, December 22.

The most impressive of all the pyramid temples is the great structure of El Castillo, at Chichen Itza, Yucatan. In 1926, Earl Morris, in charge of uncovering this edifice, had almost completed his work when a sculptured column block projecting from a corner of the supporting pyramid suggested to him that some exploratory excavations of this pyramid should be undertaken. And he found that a still older temple had been incorporated in its entirety in the base of the Warrior Temple he had been excavating. Driving tunnels in the Warrior Temple disclosed the stairway and chambers of the older temple, and at the foot of the newly discovered stairway was a skeleton and a rectangular limestone box approximately two and a half feet long, two feet wide, and two feet deep, covered with a stone lid. When the lid was raised the delighted archaeologists found in the box two turquoise mosaic plaques; three necklaces, one of coral, one of turquoise, and one of jade; seven heads of jade; other articles and five jade pendants, one of which was an exquisitely carved iridescent piece representing the figure of Itzamna. The Warrior Cult who paid veneration to Kukulcan, when they hid the temple of Itzamna under an edifice of their own, buried this box containing an image of Itzamna and other articles of the older worship at the foot of the more ancient stairway they covered. Yet, through the diligence of the Mexican government, the interior of this older temple now is open to public inspection.

During the time of Itzamna the people all looked to him for instructions. Their records clearly show that the religion was monotheistic, strictly the worship of a single allpervading benevolent intelligence who, because he was immaterial was never portrayed by picture or symbol. He was called HunalKu, the One and Only God. The priests of this benevolent Deity looked to the positions of the heavenly bodies to give them information which should guide their affairs. They taught purity of thought and action, exalted deeds of kindness and helpfulness, were averse to war and bloodshed, and urged their people to cultivate the arts. They believed in the power of divination and, according to their own belief, were expert astrologers. At least we know from the Spaniards that Chilam, Balam, and others, foretold the coming of the Whites and the downfall of their empire.

Wherever he gained his knowledge, it seems that Itzamna was fully conversant with The Religion of the Stars in all its branches, and was successful in getting the people whom he led to live according to its precepts. When a new city was established, therefore, in the fifth century by the tribe which called itself Itza, after this initiate, it was named Chichen Itza in his honor.

But after hundreds of years of the religion taught by Itzamna there came Indian tribes from the west, driven by scarcity of food, seeking relief from starvation. The Mayas gave them aid and permitted them to till the land close to Chichen Itza, their greatest city. Later these TutulXius, whom the Mayas had befriended, combined with other Indians and some disgruntled Mayan groups in a war which, about 642 A.D., drove the inhabitants of Chichen Itza from their city into the desert. They were not allowed to return until about 987 A.D.

Although they recovered their city, other Mayan groups and Indian tribes were still hostile. Thus arose, through internal strife, the opportunity for a statesman of sagacity and power, who came from the west across the Mexican Gulf, to gain complete dominance over their thoughts and customs. The blackbearded Toltec, Kukulcan, called a meeting of the various kings, elected one of the old Itzas emperor, and formed in 1027, the League of Mayapan. This league was successful for a time in suppressing intertribal warfare, but the temporary peace it brought was purchased at an enormous price. The soldiers of Kukulcan thrust to one side the incorporeal God of Itzamna and substituted the many Toltec gods; and there came into vogue, instead of the harmless and devout ceremonies of the old Mayan priests, the vicious rites and gruesome practices of Toltec religion. Even as Itzamna, coming with his followers

from the East, betokened the rise of Mayan spirituality, so the establishment of the New Empire by Kukulcan, coming from the West, and the superimposing of the Warrior Temples over the older ones, heralded the setting of the spiritual sun.

When Kukulcan grew old and his powers began to fail, he yearned for leisure, and about the year 1087 he again embarked to sail across the Mexican Gulf, leaving the port by which he entered, never to return. The confederation of states due to his genius persisted until about 1200 A.D., and then, as was sure to happen sooner or later, again broke up into warring tribes and kingdoms. It was this bloody strife, continuing over a period of more than three hundred years, which reduced the Mayas to a state of helplessness that made their conquest by the Spaniards an easy matter. The last of their 1,800 day date stones was erected in 1541, and the following year they were conquered by the Spanish and such knowledge as their priests yet possessed was destroyed.

Although, like other things of earth, the knowledge and spirituality of the Maya proved impermanent, and although only an outline rather than the details of their practices are available, a thousand years of The Religion of the Stars seems to be an honor which excavations now under progress will accord to the influence of Itzamna, Great Initiate of the Mayas.

