

Chapter 6

Stellar Religion of the American Indian

As a prelude to a discussion of the stellar religion of the early inhabitants of America, mention should be made of the early appearance of man on this continent. Until 1937, the most early type was believed to have been the Folsom Man. If he arrived as early as it is held he did, it is difficult to see how, with an icesheet over much of America, he could have crossed the shallow strait, or possibly the low land bridge, that then connected Siberia and Alaska, to at last find his way to the grassy plains of the eastern slope of the Rockies, there to pursue vast herds of bison. It is supposed it took many generations to make the migration, but it was not until the icesheets melted back that forests again grew in the north, and until they did the difficulty of procuring food would make such movement hazardous. But whether he came by way of such a land bridge, or directly from Atlantis or Mu, the known facts about this Folsom Man are summed up in *The Literary Digest*, issue of August 17, 1935, thus:

Last week, Dr. John C. Merriam, President of the Carnegie Institute of Washington, summed up the recent evidence of the antiquity of man in America:

Typical stone points of the type known as Folsom have been found in a cave near Carlsbad, New Mexico, together with bones of extinct types of horse, bison, and a goatlike animal resembling the muskox.

At Clovis, New Mexico, Folsom points were found with the remains of elephants and ground sloths. At Folsom, New Mexico at Frederick, Oklahoma, and other locations in the Great Plains, they have been found with bones of an extinct type of bison.

In Minnesota, parts of human skeletons have been found in deposits laid down in or near glacial lakes, probably as old, or nearly as old, as the last glaciation in the region—approximately 20,000 years.

None of these occurrences, admitted Dr. Merriam, indicates that man is native to America."

At the same time, the American record 'appears to extend back into a period that either is an older extension of our recent epoch, or one representing the latter portion of the Pleistocene time.' The Pleistocene was the geological epoch which included the ice age.

Ten years after the discovery of the Folsom Man, through excavations in 1937, indisputable evidence of a still older man was unearthed in the Sandia Mountains, near Albuquerque, New Mexico. Quoting from the July, 1940, issue of *The Scientific American*:

A cave man of ancient America gradually took form. This, in itself, is not remarkable, for evidence of a very early type of American who had hunted now extinct mammals and who lived during the rainy period just after the last glaciation have been found before. Of these, one of the most famous is the so-called Folsom Man, named from the little town of Folsom, New Mexico. Folsom Man was a hunter who ranged up and down the foothills of the Rocky Mountains hunting a peculiar type of bison or buffalo now long extinct. This type of man left traces of his passing in a distinctive type of javelin point which looks like a short bayonet with a groove running up either side. These folsom points have been found from Saskatchewan to Texas, and for the last decade have been considered as indicating the earliest known human evidence in the New World. At first it was thought that the Sandia evidence was only another phase of the Folsom, a variation perhaps, or another tribe. Results of the latest digging, however, have given conclusive evidence of a group of men who hunted the green hills of New Mexico long before even the Folsom Man. These were contemporaries of the mammoth and the mastodon, and of the American horse and the camel and the savage predators who preyed upon them. Evidence of these earlier animals is not founded on guesswork or even on clues, but is based on the science of stratigraphy. Stratigraphic evidence is derived from the long known fact that he who is first gets in on the ground floor.

Above the layer of material in which the implements of the Sandia Man were found is a stratum of waterdeposited yellow ochre such as it is believed was deposited by the long rainy period at the end of the last glaciation. Above this yellow ochre stratum in the same cave were found evidence that after the rainy period following the retreat of the last ice sheet the cave had dried out and had been used over a long period by the Folsom Man. Still above this Folsom deposit was a crust which had sealed in all below it. Thus the stratigraphic positions of the artifacts of the Sandia Man are considered by archaeologists to constitute proof that he lived in America before the end of the ice age, that is, in the Pleistocene epoch.

We do not expect nomadic tribes which live by hunting either to develop a high degree of culture or to preserve in detail any complex system of knowledge. Their time and energy are too largely expended in following the game they hunt. Culture thrives only where there is considerable leisure and a fixed abode. These are made possible only through agriculture, which yields a food supply for a settled habitation. And in ancient America agriculture was chiefly practiced in the south.

Now if we are to judge from both the threearmed swastika, or Triskelion, and the fourarmed swastika, such as those at the right and left of the lower central figure in the illustration on page viii—which are common forms unearthed in Europe and Asia as well as in America—the essential factors of the stellar religion were once known and observed on various continents. And the inference is that, in each of widely separated areas, it was derived from a single still more ancient source; that it was, in fact, the religion of the more enlightened races of lands now submerged beneath the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific.

As a naturalist, and a student of the development and dispersal of new life forms on the earth, I find no evidence on which to base the popular conception that the inhabitants of these ancient lands were skilled in the construction or use of machinery. Nor do I believe they were the equal of presentday astronomers in making precise calculations.

They knew vastly more about the unseen world, about spiritual laws, and about the influence of astrological energies upon human life, than does the average scientist, because they had specialized in such research for innumerable generations. And they had been helped in their studies, as we often are helped, by those who no longer reside on the earth, but still continue their studies. The presentday scientist knows nothing about these things because

his prejudices, biased by orthodox religion even though he is a materialist, lead him to ignore them. We moderns owe a great debt to those who labored in the ancient past. But it is unnecessary to glorify them in achievements of which they felt no need and which they did not contemplate.

That which was their chief interest was human life and its possibilities, both here and hereafter. Not being restricted by narrow orthodox tradition, they were willing to believe the irrefutable evidence of experience that planetary energies have an influence over human life and destiny. And they studied this influence, not in the sense of helpless fatality, but for the same purpose moderns study the weather; to be able to take advantage of it. Yet if they were to classify such invisible influences, and thus be able to take advantage of those which were favorable, and to escape the destructive power of those inimical, they must possess themselves of some means of locating their positions in the sky on any given date. And it is to their everlasting credit, not possessing intricate mathematical apparatus, that they devised and used a method which was adequate to meet practical astrological requirements.

The Moundbuilders

The large central part of the illustration on page viii is such a device. It is a boulder, 15 inches long, 12 inches wide, and 3 inches thick. The middle of the stone bears a highly polished disc, representing the sun, in the middle of which—as we now represent the sun's symbol—a small hole is etched. The stone, photographs of which have been sent to the principal museums of the world, was presented to Colonel Fordyce. It was found a few years ago by a boat builder on the bank of Lake Hamilton, which is formed by damming the water of the Ouachita River near Hot Springs, Arkansas. Below the stone on the same page is pictured, between the fourarmed swastika and the threearmed swastika, a date stone found on an ancient tomb in Tennessee.

Even as in Europe and provincial America, where a churchyard was the choice of burial spots, the temples of the preColumbian Americans were commonly associated with the bones of the dead. Several thousand large mounds, and uncounted smaller ones, all manmade, are scattered over twothirds of the states. They rise above the plains from the Great Lakes to Louisiana, and from Georgia to Florida. From Florida they extend both west to Texas and north to the state of New York.

As we here are concerned with the religion of these people there will be no discussion of the copper breastplates and copper hatchets and magic ornaments, except to mention, in connection with the latter, that the evidence is conclusive that the builders of these earthworks believed in the efficacy of the power of thought. Implements and food buried with the dead reveal their conviction of the survival of the personality, and there is abundant evidence that they practiced spirit communion.

Two of these mounds, both of which are in Ohio, are in the form of a serpent. The one in Adams County winds along the edge of a cliff beside a river to the length of 1,254 feet. In front of its mouth is an oval mound, like an egg which it is about to swallow. This, of course, portrays the same conception as that of the Hopi Indian when in his dance he carries a snake in his mouth, as will be explained shortly. It relates to the eclipse period of the Triskelion Calendar, the tradition being—still expressed in the common name of the moon's nodes—that when an eclipse takes place the sun is being devoured by a dragon.

In addition to the more common hilllike mounds in Ohio and Wisconsin, there are embankment mounds representing squares, circles, and other geometric figures. Mr. Henry Lee Stoddard has given these earthworks careful study. In his book, *When It Was Light*, he points out, giving numerous calculations and diagrams by way of explanation, that they were built after the same astronomical ratios employed in the construction of the Pyramid of Gizah in Egypt. Since Mr. Stoddard's book appeared, steam shovel cuts through some of the hilllike mounds have revealed that the larger of these actually have within them a pyramidal structure. Excavation shows that these mounds were started as small burial heaps. Then

they were built into the form of a tall pointed pyramid. Only later were they covered with soil, and finally with a fine coat of gravel, into the form of a rounded hill.

On the summit of some of these mounds, high and flattopped, were temples. Both the Mayas and the Aztecs used the flat tops of their pyramids as stellar observatories and for religious purposes. The largest of the Indian mounds is the Cahoka mound near East St. Louis, Illinois. It covers 16 acres and is 104 feet high.

Instead of making surmise regarding the rituals of stellar import conducted on these mounds, or of further indicating their significance as places where the living communed with the dead, the evidence will be more positive if we examine the Arkansas Astrological Stone and the Date Stone from the Tennessee tomb. Neither the Date Stone from the Tennessee tomb, which is reproduced at the center bottom of the illustration on page viii, nor the Arkansas Astrological Stone which forms the main picture on page viii, can be comprehended apart from some knowledge of the Triskelion and Swastika calendars explained in Chapter Five. These, at one time, were probably used in many parts of the world, as well as by the Aztecs.

The Aztec Triskelion Calendar, reproduction of which after Clavigero is pictured at the upper righthand corner of the illustration on page viii, enabled those familiar with its use, as I explained in Chapter 5, to determine any distance in the future or in the past when an eclipse would occur and where it would be visible; also when New Moons would occur, and which house of a birthchart they would occupy. This Triskelion Calendar, together with the Swastika Calendar, was sufficient to enable those familiar with them to set a New Moon chart and to determine the exact days on which the Sun and Moon made every aspect to the planets throughout the month; for the Swastika Calendar gave the position of both Sun and Moon in the zodiac for every day. Not only so, but these positions of the Sun and Moon could thus be determined ten, twenty, fifty, or any number of years in advance.

I wonder how many modern astrological students can ascertain the zodiacal positions of the Sun and Moon, and their house positions, just fifty years from the time they read this!

By the Swastika System there are four equal seasons embracing 364 days. As the year employed had 365¼ days, to account for this discrepancy each year had at its end a festival day, and each fourth year contained two festival days, by The Aztecs called "enmontemi" or useless days, because on these days no work was done.

The year commenced at the winter solstice, about December 22, and each of the four seasons following contained exactly 91 days, composed of 7 weeks of 13 days each. The name of each of the four seasons and the name of each of the 13 days are given in Chapter 5, where also will be found a picture of the famous Aztec Calendar Stone together with a more detailed picture of the single season scheme as preserved by Veytia. Like the Arkansas Astrological Stone, the Aztec Calendar Stone covers but one season. Around this Aztec stone there are 20 pictographs. Thirteen of them are the names of the days of the week, as are those immediately around the circumference of the Sun in the Arkansas Stone. The other 7 are the names of the weeks in a season.

Let us compare the names of the weeks used by the Aztecs with those used by the people who employed the Arkansas Stone. The pictures thus designating the weeks on the Aztec Stone follow each other thus: 1. Jaguar. 2. Eagle. 3. Bird. 4. Sun. 5. Flint. 6. Rain. 7. Flower. On the Arkansas Stone pictured on page viii, starting to the left of the top after the Aztec precedent they run thus: 1. Turtle. 2. Bear. 3. Fish Duck. 4. Alligator. 5. Antelope. 6. Fish. 7. Whale. On the Arkansas Astrological Stone, in addition, just above the whale there is a phallic emblem which is being energized by the lightning which descends from a scorpion.

As presently to be explained, the Hopi Indians of today believe the creative function only manifests through the sexinfluence of the zodiacal sign Scorpio, which in its higher function they picture as an eagle, or Thunderbird, and in its destructive action by the lightning.

Among the people who used this Arkansas Astrological Stone, the scorpion is used to depict the constellation in the manner most familiar to us. And as this desert denizen depicts the destructive action of sex, the lightning to them probably indicated all the creative energy ruled over by the eighth zodiacal sign. At least, the lightning coming down from the stellar

Scorpion to the lingham below, with a germ already developed, as they had seen it develop when beans or corn were placed in the warm moist earth, indicates that they exalted sex to a position of unusual importance. It suggests that—as did the Ancient Masons, as explained in detail in Brotherhood of Light Course IV, *Ancient Masonry*—they believed the creative energy could be employed not merely for grosser ends, but also to raise their vibratory rates to more spiritual planes of endeavor.

Between the phallic symbol and the disc of the Sun in the center of the stone are five portrayals of the Moon. These are not those of the modern almanac, but represent the actual appearance of the Moon when it makes aspects to the Sun as follows, reading from left to right: First sextile after New Moon, First square after New Moon, opposition aspect or Full Moon, Last square before New Moon, Last sextile before New Moon.

We have no way of ascertaining whether the astrology practiced by the Americans who designed this stone was a crude, clumsy approximate science, or if it can be compared favorably in its precision with our own. We do know, however, that they recognized the major aspects of the Moon to the Sun, as these are pictured. And we know that they were able to ascertain in advance the aspects of the Moon to the Sun, and the house position of each, as the Arkansas Stone was designed for that purpose.

Both Mayas and Aztecs, who used similar devices, were familiar with the planets also, and used them in their astrological practice. We may infer with some assurance, therefore, that this people also recognized the planets and had a knowledge of the quality of energy radiated by each.

I believe there has now been set forth conclusive evidence in reference to the Stellar Religion of the Mound Builders that they:

1. Believed in the power of thought to alter circumstances (directed thinking).
2. Paid homage to the spiritualizing influence of love (induced emotion).
3. Were aware of the afterlife through mediumship or other forms of ESP, probably both, and held communion with those who had passed to the afterlife.
4. Recognized that the heavenly bodies exercise an influence over human life and destiny (astrology).

The Pueblo Dwellers

In Egypt, Assyria, Peru, Mexico and Brittany there are numerous menhirs; single stones placed upright. They were erected as symbols of the sun, vertical positions symbolizing the direction from which the sun's hottest rays fall upon the earth. An elaboration of the simple menhir is the round tower. Such towers are found throughout the world, and everywhere are similar in character and construction, usually being built with but a single entrance some distance above the ground. There are some one hundred and fifty of these round towers in Ireland, running from eight to fifteen feet in diameter and from seventy to one hundred thirty feet high, with an opening around twenty feet from the ground.

A similar round tower, so ancient that science can but speculate as to the period when it was built, is located in Rhode Island, another in the Marcos Valley in Colorado, and still a third in Yucatan. Some of these stone towers are to be found in England, one on the Isle of Man, three in Scotland, and others in Corsica. They are found throughout the East, and it is said that the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa, Italy, is of the same construction as the round towers of India, Arabia and Sicily.

These round towers generally were circular in form and in their general construction elaborated the creative symbolism of the sun. In addition they were also often observatories. From the bottom of such a tower stars on the zenith may be seen in daylight. Those built in preColumbus days in Southwest United States were dubbed Indian Watchtowers. An exact and impressive reproduction of one of these ancient so-called watchtowers has been built with the labor of Hopi Indians on the edge of the Grand Canyon of Arizona.

Adjacent to the temple observatories now called watchtowers were the Kivas, which

were underground ceremonial chambers where Indian initiates could go to converse with their departed friends or commune with the Great Spirit. On the walls of the watchtowers were strangely beautiful symbols associated with the Stellar Religion of these Indians. Even as Akhenaten developed a beautiful and distinctive Stellar Art in Egypt, so did the Southwest Indians in connection with their religion develop a beautiful Stellar Art of their own. Both were developed about the ideas inherited from the colonists of Atlantis and Mu, and each according to its own technique was associated with healing. The method of Akhenaten is indicated in Chapter 1. And here it should be mentioned that the Sand Paintings of the American Indians were an essential part of the technique by which they tuned in on, and directed to the accomplishment of a definite purpose, such as healing, planetary and other invisible energies.

Stellar Art, as painted on the walls of temples and tombs, may yet be seen in Egypt after a lapse of 3,300 years. And while reproductions would be necessary to give an idea of the beauty of the Stellar Art of the Southwest Indians, it may be said also that the wonders performed by the initiates of the sand paintings were the equal of any produced in India.

These American initiates, few of whom are now left, however, considered occult powers sacred. They never brought them into play to satisfy curiosity, or merely to create wonder; but only to heal the sick, to cause rain for the crops, or to bring about some other condition of benefit to their people.

Even as in ancient Egypt, initiation and secret ceremonies were conducted underground. These underground chambers, as already mentioned, were called kivas. Only initiates were admitted to the kivas, or took part in the ceremonies conducted there, and they guarded their knowledge jealously.

Through the sensational columns of the Sunday supplements most people know of the snake dance, in which live snakes are handled. But this is only the short public part of a long ritual, mostly carried out in the underground kiva by initiates. Among the other ceremonies held in the kiva is one at the winter solstice, one at the vernal equinox, and one at the summer solstice. The initiates, even among presentday Indians, possess sufficient astrological knowledge to be able to determine these dates. Should you wish a detailed account of these ceremonies, it is to be found in The Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institute for the year 1918, in an article on Sun Worship of the Hopi Indians, by J. Walter Fewkes, Chief, Bureau of American Ethnology.

But before describing either the Hopi snake dance ceremony or their rite of "Calling back the Sun," as both the influence of the Planet Pluto and the significance of the Moon's Nodes are included as important elements of these ceremonies, to make them understandable we should first discuss these two astrological factors. As to Pluto, let me call attention to the four things which Greek mythology asserts about him:

1. He was the god of the underworld, that is, of the afterlife. This conforms to the rulership of the eighth house of a birthchart and to the zodiacal sign Scorpio.
2. He was a kidnapper. He kidnapped Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, goddess of the harvest, and took her to the underworld to be his bride. And in our mundane and natal astrological research we find kidnapping, whenever present, to be coincident with outstanding influences from the planet Pluto.
3. Pluto has a violently destructive side; for after the kidnapping of Persephone the earth no longer yielded its harvest. There was then a depression; even as the greatest financial depression known, and widespread droughts which made a "dustbowl" of previously fertile regions in the U.S., were coincident with the discovery of the planet Pluto.
4. Pluto has a spiritual and constructive side. He was persuaded to restore Persephone to her mother for two-thirds of the year, and as a result there were again abundant harvests.

All our research concerning this inner plane planet tends to strengthen the conviction that

Pluto has two opposite natures, and that he is coruler of Scorpio. Demeter, goddess of the fruitful soil and agriculture, is one aspect of the Moon. The kidnaping of her daughter, the capturing of the Moon's own flesh and blood, seems to fit well with the present conception of astrologers that Pluto, while also possessing the drastic force of Mars, is the upper octave of the moon.

Scorpio, with Mars as its ruler, is never milkandwater. It is either the Scorpio of the desert, the female of which, as soon as her lust is gratified, devours her mate. Or it is the Eagle, soaring on the wings of spirit, even into the face of the sun.

Now anyone who has visited an Indian curio store, or who has dropped off the train for a few minutes at Albuquerque or Gallup, New Mexico, will have been struck by the fact that the two popular emblems of Indian jewelry are the Swastika and the Thunderbird.

The Swastika is an Aztec calendar by which, as previously explained, on any day of the year the relation of the moon to the sun can be determined. It also indicates in an unmistakable manner the derivation of our modern playing cards. Each of the four arms contains compartments numbered from 1 to 13, bearing, like a suit of playing cards, the emblem of one season. And there is a 53rd emblem in the center, corresponding to the joker.

The creative function of sun and moon, according to the Indians, can only manifest through sex, the zodiacal sign Scorpio which they pictured as an Eagle, or Thunderbird. And instead of using the scorpion to picture the destructive side of sex, or Pluto, they used an even more expressive universal symbol, the lightning bolt. Lightning, although now developed in atom smashing laboratories, has not yet been harnessed. We have witnessed lightning at no constructive work. But we have seen trees or houses which have been destroyed by it. And because of these associations it becomes a fitting symbol of a violently destructive force; and has so been used on the 16th Major Arcanum of the Egyptian Tarot.

In 1933, when the first political administration of the U.S. following the discovery of Pluto went into office, there was passed a National Recovery Act which theoretically embraced both sides of Pluto. It asked for cooperation for the common good—Upper Pluto—to limit hours and increase wages and thus restrict production. It also gave to the Administration coercive powers which, as well as the curtailment of production of things wanted by people, is typically a LowerPluto expression. This NRA adopted as its symbol the Blue Eagle, cards on which the eagle was pictured being displayed in the shop windows and homes of those observing the NRA code. This Blue Eagle was none other than the Indian Thunderbird, their symbol of Pluto, holding in its left, or adverse foot, the lightning of destruction. In its right, or constructive foot, it held the cogwheel, a universal symbol of construction through cooperation. Thus it symbolized that unless cooperative effort were made, violent destruction would follow.

The Indians were unfamiliar with the cogwheel. But they knew about the beneficence of the planet Jupiter, and had a gem ruled by the sign Sagittarius, on which they greatly relied to attract the Jupiterian power. Therefore, as witnessed in all their better Thunderbird jewelry, to call out only the constructive side of Pluto, they placed within the bird's breast a setting of blue turquoise, and made of him a Blue Eagle.

The Dragon In the Sky

While it is a common thing to note the position of the Moon's Nodes in a birthchart, the symbol used, and what it represents, and why it always moves backward through the zodiac, are most mysterious to many astrological students. The points where the orbital paths of two heavenly bodies intersect are called their Nodes. As none of the other planets moves in the same plane as the orbit of the earth, each of their orbits must cut the orbit of the earth at two points. Therefore, not only the moon, but each of the planets also, has both an Ascending Node and a Descending Node. That is, each of these orbital paths is in the plane which cuts the plane of the earth's orbit at an angle. The plane of the moon's orbit inclines thus to the plane of the earth's orbit at an angle of a little over five degrees.

When the moon or a planet is close to its nodes, there commonly is a rightangled gravi-

tational pull which tends temporarily to increase the inclination of the plane of its orbit to that of the earth. In the case of the moon, except twice a year when the sun is at the moon's nodes, and twice a month when the moon is square to the sun, its crossing a node is thus influenced by a rightangled pull.

After it moves away from the earth's orbit the rightangled pull diminishes and it again assumes the same inclination it previously had. But the new plane of its orbit, and consequently the nodes where the orbits intersect, have shifted back due to the mentioned rightangled pull. Thus the moon's nodes move in a continuous retrograde manner around the zodiac. In a somewhat similar manner the nodes of all the planets, without exception, retrograde through the zodiac. But the Ascending Node of the moon, where it crosses the path of the sun in coming north, is the only one given in the common ephemeris. Because the moon's nodes do thus retrograde through the zodiac, the time for the sun to pass around from a node to the same node again is less than a year. It is 346.62 days; a period which, as eclipses are dependent upon the sun's proximity to a node, as explained in Chapter Five, is called an "eclipse year." The nodes thus move westward completely around the zodiac in about 19 years.

These nodes are written by using a conventional serpent. If the arch of the serpent's back is up—as it is shown in the common ephemeris—it is called the Dragon's Head, and signifies the ascending node. If the arch of the serpent's back is down, it is called the Dragon's Tail, and indicates the descending node. Thus are they associated with the dragon, still pictured in the sky as the constellation Draco, because when an eclipse takes place the sun or moon symbolically is then devoured by a dragon or, in the case of a partial eclipse is gnawed upon; a symbolism that is taken literally by the more ignorant Eastern peoples.

An eclipse of the sun, which can take place only when the sun is close to the Dragon's Head or Dragon's Tail, indicates that disaster will befall some section of the region touched by the eclipse shadow. It is, consequently, regarded with terror by primitive people with inherited stellar traditions. It was probably the observation that calamities were coincident with, or shortly followed, solar eclipses in the region touched by the shadow that led many ancient people to associate the dragon with the source of evil. Such clearly seems to be the import of Revelation, Chap. 20:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, and having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, and that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

The legends of India relate that Krishna met and slew this noisome dragon, whose poisonous breath withered the crops, bred famine, and whose movement through the countryside left death and destruction in its wake. In legendary Christendom it was St. George who played the valiant hero, and after a long and violent battle succeeded in leaping on the back of the scaly monster and driving his great twohanded sword straight through its wicked heart.

But it is in China that more attention is paid to the malefic dragon than elsewhere. There the populace habitually spends far more energy in ceremonies to prevent misfortune than in observances to attract the good. And the most drastic of such observances is the pageant each year, which is described in Brotherhood of Light Chapter 8, Course VII, *Spiritual Astrology*, in which the dragon is met and after great struggle vanquished.

The Hopi Snake Dance

The Hopi snake dance always commences when the sun is in the Sagittarius decanate of the

sun's sign Leo. There are four snake hunts, commencing at sunrise of four consecutive days; one to the north, one to the west, one to the south and one to the east. These represent the four seasons represented by the four arms of the swastika and the four suits of our playing cards. The active days of the ceremony are just 13, the number of cards in each suit and the number of compartments in each swastika arm.

In the public part of the snake dance also, even as our face cards are grouped as King, Queen and Jack of each suit, so the initiates always come forward and dance in groups of three. Furthermore, as the swastika is a SolarLunar calendar, so this is a SolarLunar dance. But it embraces more than the swastika, as it also relates to the triskelion calendar of three arms instead of four, by which eclipses were predicted.

The "carrier" in the dance represents the King of face cards and the sun in the sky. He carries the snake in his mouth because of the ancient tradition that when an eclipse takes place the sun is being devoured by a dragon. The snake in his mouth is the original design of the dragon's head and dragon's tail of astrology, where alone eclipses take place. It also is the original symbol used for the sign Leo.

The snake, from its phallic significance, was sacred to the sun and was the emblem of masculine creative energy on every plane of endeavor. Thus, to indicate enlightenment the Egyptians pictured the serpent at the brow of their greatest characters. But Typhon, who created only evil, was pictured with the serpent emerging from his belly.

Accompanying the "carrier" in the dance is his consort, corresponding to the Queen of face cards and the moon in the sky. His left hand throughout the dance remains on the left shoulder of the "carrier," and still further to indicate his feminine attributes he soothes and pacifies with a feather the snake carried in the mouth of his dancing partner. He is called the "hugger."

The third member of the dancing trio, called the "gatherer," looks after the snakes as they are dropped to see that none are stepped on. But here, instead of being concerned with him, we are interested in the circumstance that the snake dance ritual—through which the Indians contact their friends on the inner plane, and procure help, among other things, in warding off drought which frequently accompanies an eclipse of the sun where visible—always ends after the sun has passed into the first, or harvest, decanate of the harvest sign Virgo.

Hopi Indian girls, from puberty until marriage, wear their hair in a carefully prepared representation of the squash blossom. But the Virgin Mother pictured in the sky is represented among our face cards by the Queen of Spades who bears, not merely the blossom of virginity in her hand, as do the other queens, but also the flaming torch which indicates the virgin conception.

The Egyptians in their pageants to the Motherhood of Isis carried a musical instrument called the sistrum, which they jingled. It was a thin metal frame in the form of the uterus, through which rods were passed to represent the SolarLunar forces in union. And it was keyed, according to tradition, to the creative vibratory rate of Nature which, according to their ideas, procured not merely the material harvest, but mental genius and spiritual immortality as well.

The Indians did not have horses until the Spaniards brought them to America, and thus indicated the Sagittarius decanate of Leo not by the Centaur, but by their fleetest fourfooted animal, the antelope. And during the public part of the snake dance antelope initiates on the sidelines shake white gourds filled with seeds, not tuned to any particular key, but identical in shape and symbolism with the Egyptian sistrum.

Now the snake, representing the fifth house influence of Leo, indicated creative energy, which was given its particular constructive or destructive trend only through its association with Pluto, their Thunderbird, the ruler of Scorpio. Both the deadly rattle-snake and the lightning painted on the bodies of the antelope initiates were meant to indicate the violence of its destructive trends. The Egyptians, to express this, commonly used

the T with the point down, and this is one significance of the 22nd Major Arcanum of their tarot. Birds, because they fly above the sordid earth, were symbols of higher influences, and their feathers represented spiritual trends. Thus we perceive that the feather used in the snake dance to soothe the snakes and render them harmless was the emblem of the spiritualizing influence of woman over man. And this indicates the true significance of the feathered serpent, which was used by the Indians and was of paramount importance to the religion of the Mayas. The feathers on the serpent revealed that the creative energy was directed to constructive and spiritual ends.

To contact a spiritual plane the mind must be held on a spiritual vibratory level, and this can be done by acquiring and maintaining an appropriate emotion or mood. Such an emotion or mood is felt only when the thought or environmental stimulation produces a definite electrical condition in some portion of the nervous system. An individual may think a thing in a coldly intellectual manner without much feeling. In that case the electrical energies generated by the thought mostly are used up in imparting vibrations to the brain cells. On the other hand, the same individual may think of some emergency situation and immediately feel a profound shock over his whole body. The nervous excitement, which means the intensity of the electrical currents flowing over his nerves, may be so great that his knees knock together, his teeth chatter, and his hands shake in spite of all his efforts to appear unconcerned.

If the nervous system does not generate powerful electrical energies, no matter what image is in his mind, he does not feel strongly. But those who used the feathered serpent, or a feather to soothe a serpent in their ceremonies, believed that the creative energies of Pluto could be used both to induce a spiritual mood, and to generate the electrical energy to sustain it.

Calling Back the Sun

At the winter solstice, three days before Christmas, the sun passes from Sagittarius, the Archer, to its lowest position in the tomb of winter, at the commencement of Capricorn. The nights are longest then, and the earth is captive, bound by frost in the hands of the evil forces of the underworld, where she can bring forth no fruit. To indicate this the Hopi Indians kidnap, after the manner of Pluto in Greek mythology, a maiden and take her beneath the earth where initiates are assembled in the kiva.

She is seated back of a mound of earth to the right of an altar erected to the feathered serpent. Near the mound are some arrows. The front of the altar has a disclike aperture through which the effigy of a feathered serpent sticks its head and moves about. The sun is always represented in association with this altar, and at the village of Orabi is painted on a movable screen.

Even as we at Christmas adorn a tree with presents to indicate the fruits of the branch held in the hand of Hercules, picturing the middle decanate of the harvest sign Virgo, in anticipation of the harvest which will follow this turning back of the sun, so before the feathered serpent altar are ears of corn and seeds of such other things as the Indian hopes to harvest.

The pipe is smoked, which signifies to the Indians who pass it from one to another, that all are of one mind, that is, in rapport, and seek guidance from the spirit world. Ceremonially smoking the pipe is their ritual of "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men."

One of the initiates then starts blowing on a bone whistle, in imitation of an eagle's scream, and immediately on the roof of the kiva overhead something starts tramping about, and shortly, even as Santa Claus comes down the chimney, so an Indian dressed like a Thunderbird throws down a ball of sacred meal and descends the ladder. He sits in front of the kidnapped maiden for a time, then leaps to his feet with a cry, grabs up the arrows and throws them into the mound of earth. These arrows, symbol of the zodiacal sign from which the sun is passing, represent the beneficent influence of its ruler, Jupiter. Speeches, addressed to the feathered serpent also indicate that the constructive side of Pluto, the Thunderbird, is being brought

into action. The ball of sacred meal which he threw down the hatch into the kiva indicates his willingness to help procure a harvest.

The turning back of the sun, and its correspondence in the electromagnetic energies of man, are pictured by the emblem held in the hand of the Jack of Spades, which is the card of Capricorn. The victory, however, is not granted without a struggle, and the initiates, as in the Degree of the Cross of Ancient Masonry, divide into two contending ranks and stage a mock fight, to indicate the struggle between the forces of Light and the forces of the Shadow. But after a time the Brethren of the Light gain supremacy. The violent and destructive side of Pluto has been overcome, and its constructive powers have been utilized to free the kidnapped maiden, and to restore fertility to the mound which symbolizes the earth.

The harvest gained by those who espouse the cause of the feathered serpent as against the lightning, however, is not merely of this plane. To those who adopt the religion of the constructive side of Pluto—as signified by the religious sign Sagittarius, in the use of the arrows by the Thunderbird—physical existence becomes impregnated with the determination TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR UTMOST TO UNIVERSAL WELFARE, and this makes certain, both here and hereafter, a bounteous spiritual harvest.

