

INDIGENOUS & ANCESTRAL TRADITIONS

Rig Veda Americanus

Twenty sacred hymns of the Aztec/Nahua religion, addressed to Huitzilopochtli, Tlaloc, and other deities, preserved in Nahuatl by Bernardino de Sahagún's informants and here given in English for the first time. Presents Daniel G. Brinton's 1890 translation.

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Hymn of Huitzilopochtli

- ¹ Huitzilopochtli is first in rank, no one, no one is like unto him: not vainly do I sing (his praises) coming forth in the garb of our ancestors; I shine; I glitter.
- ² He is a terror to the Mixteca; he alone destroyed the Picha-Huasteca, he conquered them.
- ³ The Dart-Hurler is an example to the city, as he sets to work. He who commands in battle is called the representative of my God.
- ⁴ When he shouts aloud he inspires great terror, the divine hurler, the god turning himself in the combat, the divine hurler, the god turning himself in the combat.
- ⁵ Amanteca, gather yourselves together with me in the house of war against your enemies, gather yourselves together with me.
- ⁶ Pipiteca, gather yourselves together with me in the house of war against your enemies, gather yourselves together with me.

War Song of the Huitznahuac

- ¹ What ho! my work is in the hall of arms, I listen to no mortal, nor can any put me to shame, I know none such, I am the Terror, I know none other, I am where war is, my work is said to be in the hall of arms, let no one curse my children.
- ² Our adornment comes from out the south, it is varied in color as the clothing of the eagle.
- ³ Ho! ho! abundance of youths doubly clothed, arrayed in feathers, are my captives, I deliver them up, I deliver them up, my captives arrayed in feathers.
- ⁴ Ho! youths for the Huitznahuac, arrayed in feathers, these are my captives, I deliver them up, I deliver them up, arrayed in feathers, my captives.
- ⁵ Youths from the south, arrayed in feathers, my captives, I deliver them up, I deliver them up, arrayed in feathers, my captives.
- ⁶ The god enters, the Huitznahuac, he descends as an example, he shines forth, he shines forth, descending as an example.
- ⁷ Adorned like us he enters as a god, he descends as an example, he shines forth, he shines forth, descending as an example.

Hymn of Tlaloc

- ¹ In Mexico the god appears; thy banner is unfolded in all directions, and no one weeps.
- ² I, the god, have returned again, I have turned again to the place of abundance of blood-sacrifices; there when the day grows old, I am beheld as a god.

- ³ Thy work is that of a noble magician; truly thou hast made thyself to be of our flesh; thou hast made thyself, and who dare affront thee?
- ⁴ Truly he who affronts me does not find himself well with me; my fathers took by the head the tigers and the serpents.
- ⁵ In Tlalocan, in the verdant house, they play at ball, they cast the reeds.
- ⁶ Go forth, go forth to where the clouds are spread abundantly, where the thick mist makes the cloudy house of Tlaloc.
- ⁷ There with strong voice I rise up and cry aloud.
- ⁸ Go ye forth to seek me, seek for the words which I have said, as I rise, a terrible one, and cry aloud.
- ⁹ After four years they shall go forth, not to be known, not to be numbered, they shall descend to the beautiful house, to unite together and know the doctrine.
- ¹⁰ Go forth, go forth to where the clouds are spread abundantly, where the thick mist makes the cloudy house of Tlaloc.

Hymn to the All-Mother

- ¹ Hail to our mother, who caused the yellow flowers to blossom, who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- ² Hail to our mother, who poured forth flowers in abundance, who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- ³ Hail to our mother, who caused the yellow flowers to blossom, she who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- ⁴ Hail to our mother, who poured forth white flowers in abundance, who scattered the seeds of the maguey, as she came forth from Paradise.
- ⁵ Hail to the goddess who shines in the thorn bush like a bright butterfly.
- ⁶ Ho! she is our mother, goddess of the earth, she supplies food in the desert to the wild beasts, and causes them to live.
- ⁷ Thus, thus, you see her to be an ever-fresh model of liberality toward all flesh.
- ⁸ And as you see the goddess of the earth do to the wild beasts, so also does she toward the green herbs and the fishes.

Hymn to the Virgin Mother

- ¹ Chimalipan was a virgin when she brought forth the adviser of battles; Chimalipan was a virgin when she brought forth the adviser of battles.
- ² On the Coatepec was her labor; on the mountain he ripened into age; as he became a man truly the earth was shaken, even as he became a man.

Hymn to the God of Fire

- ¹ In the Hall of Flames let me not put to shame my ancestors; descending there, let me not put you to shame.
- ² I fasten a rope to the sacred tree, I twist it in eight folds, that by it I, a magician, may descend to the magical house.
- ³ Begin your song in the Hall of Flames; begin your song in the Hall of Flames; why does the magician not come forth? Why does he not rise up?
- ⁴ Let his subjects assist in the Hall of Flames; he appears, he appears, let his subjects assist.
- ⁵ Let the servants never cease the song in the Hall of Flames; let them rejoice greatly, let them dance wonderfully.
- ⁶ Call ye for the woman with abundant hair, whose care is the mist and the rain, call ye for her.

Hymn of Mixcoatl

- ¹ I come forth from Chicomoztoc, only to you, my friends, to you, honored ones.
- ² I come forth from Tziuactitlan, only to you my friends, only to you honored ones.
- ³ I sought, I sought, in all directions I sought with my pack; in all directions I sought with my pack.
- ⁴ I sought, I sought, in all directions I sought with my traveling net.
- ⁵ I took them in hand, I took them in hand; yes, I took them in hand; yes, I took them in hand.
- ⁶ In the ball ground I sang well and strong, like to the quetzal bird; I answered back to the god.

Hymn to the God of Flowers

- ¹ O friends, the quetzal bird sings, it sings its song at midnight to Cinteotl.
- ² The god will surely hear my song by night, he will hear my song as the day begins to break.
- ³ I send forth the priests to the house of Tlaloc.
- ⁴ The priests to the house of Tlaloc do I send forth.
- ⁵ I shall go forth, I shall join myself unto them, I shall go where is Cinteotl, I shall follow the path to him.
- ⁶ The priests go forth to the house of Tlaloc, to the home of the gods of the plain.

Hymn to the Goddess of Artists

- ¹ I, Xochiquetzal, go forth willingly to the dancing place by the water, going forth to the houses in Tamoanchan.
- ² Ye noble youths, ye priests who wept, seeking Xochiquetzal, go forth there where I am going.

Hymn to the God of Fishing

¹ Join together your hands in the house, take hands in the sequent course, let them spread forth, spread forth in the hall of arrows. Join hands, join hands in the house, for this, for this have I come, have I come.

² Yes, I have come, bringing four with me, yes I have come, four being with me.

³ Four noble ones, carefully selected, four noble ones, carefully selected, yes, four noble ones.

⁴ They personally appear before his face, they personally appear before his face, they personally appear before his face.

Hymn of the Otomi Leader

¹ At Nonoalco he rules, at Nonoalco, Oho! Oho!

² In the pine woods he prepares your destruction at Nonoalco, in the tuna woods, in the cacao woods he prepares your destruction.

³ I, dweller in the palace, shook them; I, Quetzalcoatl, shook them.

⁴ There was a splendor of spears, a splendor of spears.

⁵ With my captain, with my courage, with my skill, the Mexicans were put to flight; even the Mexicans, with my courage, with my skill.

⁶ Go forth, ye shield bearers, put the Mexicans to flight with my courage, with my skill.

Hymn to the Goddess of Childbirth

¹ Truly in whatever house there is a lying-in, Ayopechcatl takes charge of the child.

² Truly in whatever house there is a lying-in, Ayopechcatl takes charge of the child, there where it is weeping in the house.

³ Come along and cry out, cry out, cry out, you new comer, come along and cry out.

⁴ Come along and cry out, cry out, cry out, you little jewel, cry out.

Hymn to the Mother of Mortals

¹ Quilaztli, plumed with eagle feathers, with the crest of eagles, painted with serpents' blood, comes with her hoe, beating her drum, from Colhuacan.

² She alone, who is our flesh, goddess of the fields and shrubs, is strong to support us.

³ With the hoe, with the hoe, with hands full, with the hoe, with hands full, the goddess of the fields is strong to support us.

⁴ With a broom in her hands the goddess of the fields strongly supports us.

⁵ Our mother is as twelve eagles, goddess of drum-beating, filling the fields of tzioac and maguey like our lord Mixcoatl.

⁶ She is our mother, a goddess of war, our mother, a goddess of war, an example and a companion from the home of our ancestors (Colhuacan).

⁷ She comes forth, she appears when war is waged, she protects us in war that we shall not be destroyed, an example and companion from the home of our ancestors.

⁸ She comes adorned in the ancient manner with the eagle crest, in the ancient manner with the eagle crest.

Hymn Sung at a Fast every Eight Years

¹ The flower in my heart blossoms and spreads abroad in the middle of the night.

² Tonan has satisfied her passion, the goddess Tlazolteotl has satisfied her passion.

³ I, Cinteotl, was born in Paradise, I come from the place of flowers. I am the only flower, the new, the glorious one.

⁴ Cinteotl was born from the water; he came born as a mortal, as a youth, from the cerulean home of the fishes, a new, a glorious god.

⁵ He shone forth as the sun; his mother dwelt in the house of the dawn, varied in hue as the quechol bird, a new, a glorious flower.

⁶ I came forth on the earth, even to the market place like a mortal, even I, Quetzalcoatl, great and glorious.

⁷ Be ye happy under the flower-bush varied in hue as the quetzal bird; listen to the quechol singing to the gods; listen to the singing of the quechol along the river; hear its flute along the river in the house of the reeds.

⁸ Alas! would that my flowers would cease from dying; our flesh is as flowers, even as flowers in the place of flowers.

⁹ He plays at ball, he plays at ball, the servant of marvellous skill; he plays at ball, the precious servant; look at him; even the ruler of the nobles follows him to his house.

¹⁰ O youths! O youths! follow the example of your ancestors; make yourselves equal to them in the ball count; establish yourselves in your houses.

¹¹ She goes to the mart, they carry Xochiquetzal to the mart; she speaks at Cholula; she startles my heart; she startles my heart; she has not finished, the priest knows her; where the merchants sell green jade earrings she is to be seen, in the place of wonders she is to be seen.

¹² Sleep, sleep, sleep, I fold my hands to sleep, I, O woman, sleep.

Hymn to a Night God

¹ The nightly drinking, why should I oppose it? Go forth and array yourselves in the golden garments, clothe yourselves in the glittering vestments.

² My god descended upon the water, into the beautiful glistening surface; he was as a lovely water cypress, as a beauteous green serpent; now I have left behind me my suffering.

³ I go forth, I go forth about to destroy, I, Yoatzin; my soul is in the cerulean water; I am seen in the golden water; I shall appear unto mortals; I shall strengthen them for the words of war!

⁴ My god appears as a mortal; O Yoatzin, thou art seen upon the mountains; I shall appear unto mortals; I shall strengthen them for the words of war.

Hymn to the Goddess of Food

¹ O noble Chicomolotl, arise, awake, leave us not unprotected on the way, conduct us to the home of Tlaloc.

² Arise, awake, leave us not unprotected on the way, conduct us to the home of Tlaloc.

Hymn to the Gods of Wine

¹ Alas! alas! alas! alas! alas! alas!

² In the home of our ancestors this creature was a fearful thing.

³ In the temple of Tezcatzoncatl he aids those who cry to him, he gives them to drink; the god gives to drink to those who cry to him.

⁴ In the temple by the water-reeds the god aids those who call upon him, he gives them to drink; the god aids those who cry unto him.

Hymn to the Master of Waters

¹ I Chalmecat, I Chalmecat, I leave behind my sandals, I leave my sandals and my helmet.

² Go ye forth and follow the goddess Quilaztli, follow her

³ I shall call upon thee to arise when among the shields, I shall call upon thee to arise.

⁴ I boast of my arrows, even my reed arrows, I boast of my arrows, not to be broken.

⁵ Arrayed in priestly garb, take the arrow in thy hand, for even now I shall arise and come forth like the quetzal bird.

⁶ Mighty is my god Atlaua; truly I shall arise and come forth like the quetzal bird.

Hymn to the God of Flowers (II)

¹ Yes, I shall go there to-night, to the house of flowers; I shall exercise the priestly office to-night.

² We labor in thy house, our mother, from dawn unto night, fulfilling the priestly office, laboring in the night.

³ A dreadful god is our god Tezcatlipoca, he is the only god, he will answer us.

⁴ His heart is in the Tezcatzontli; my god is not timid like a hare nor is he peaceable; I shall overturn, I shall penetrate the Mixcoatepec in Colhuacan.

⁵ I sing, I play on an instrument, I am the noble instrument, the mirror; I am he who lifts the mirror; I cry aloud, intoxicated with the wine of the tuna.

Hymn to the God of Merchants

¹ I know not what is said, I know not what is said, what is said about Tzocotzontlan, I know not what is said about Tzocotzontlan.

² I know not what is said of Pipitlan, what is said of Pipitlan, nor what is said of Cholollan, what of Pipitlan, of Pipitlan.

³ Now I seek our food, proceeding to eat it and to drink of the water, going to where the sand begins.

⁴ Now I go to my beautiful house, there to eat my food, and to drink of the water, going to where the sand begins.