



ANCIENT MYSTERIES

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ANCIENT MYSTERIES

by John Van Auken

* 75th * Anniversary * A.R.E. Celebrates!

The Association for Research and Enlightenment, the good old A.R.E., was founded in 1931. That makes 2006 its 75th Anniversary! Over these 75 years, A.R.E. has contrib-



The original hospital building, built in 1928.

uted so much to the world's understanding of ancient mysteries, adding unknown details and rare perspectives on Mu, Lemuria, Atlantis, Egypt, Mayan World, and so on.

I suppose this soul group's contributions actually began long ago in Atlantis with Amilius and Lilith, who became Jesus and Mary, and with Asapha and Affa, who reincarnated again in Atlantis as Aczine and Asule, who became Edgar Cayce and Gladys Davis Turner (see our new book *Edgar Cayce on Atlantis* for the whole story). Of course, Edgar Cayce's eventual incarnation as the Egyptian high priest Ra Ta and Gertrude Cayce's incar-

- Continued on Page 4, 75 Years!

Sacred Umbilical Cord of the Maya by Raymond Tarpey

There is a dark, still place in the northern sky. As our ancient ancestors looked upward, the other stars appeared to slowly move around this place, now occupied by Polaris, the North Star. The ancient Olmec and Mayan stargazers noticed it, and they wondered about its significance for their lives. The ancient Greeks noticed it too and named it *omphalus*, meaning the navel, the center. Greek is an Indo-European language. Greek, Latin, German, English, Italian, Spanish, French, and Farsi (Persian) are among the long list of modern languages with roots in ancient India. We can see how OM, the sacred-center concept of India, made its way into the Greek *Omphalus* concept. Om is the vibration of divine resonance. The Romans translated *omphalus* as *umbilicus*, and thus we have the word we use for the central, navel idea in present-day culture.

Edgar Cayce, the great psychic and seer, made sure to align his head toward this northern central place when giving most of his "readings." In this way, like many ancient seers, he enhanced his ability to resonate with the intelligent design. Such alignment helped him access the power of spiritual sight.

According to a Mayan story about the beginning of the Fourth Creation, which we are living in, called "The Age of Movement," God designed human beings to be the fruitful inhabitants of the "Middle Earthen Plane." As part of this grand design, a mist was placed in the eyes of the new humans so that they could not see everything

that God sees. But a promise went along with the obscuring mist: If we humans would study the intricate workings of the Middle Earthen Plane, if we would "keep the days" (meaning, keep the calendar) and align ourselves with it, then we could see as far as God sees and as far as we once saw long before this age. This is a sacred covenant made in the previous era of spirit beings, before the present human time.

One of the important signs given to us in this Fourth Creation is the umbilical place in the northern sky. It was placed there to represent the miracle of life on planet Earth. When we truly think about Earth — its exquisite, balanced perfection — then the intelligent design of God is noticed and the still center of the sky may be understood.

To gain this understanding, let's focus on the Olmec and Maya cultures because of their extraordinary clarity, consistency, and devotion to spiritual understanding. Edgar Cayce's readings identify the lands of the Olmec and Maya as spiritual places. Cayce reported that one of the three copies of the ancient Atlantean records would be found in the Mayan lands of the Yucatan. He also reminded us that one of our main tasks in this life is to *remember* who we once were and to fulfill our *spiritual* destiny. We take up this pursuit as we investigate how the Olmec and Maya have used the sacred umbilical cord, the *Kuxan Suum* (meaning "The Road to Sky"), to regain contact

- Continued on Page 2, Umbilicus

with the Spirit.

The spiritual umbilical cord of the ancient and modern Maya is rooted in the cosmology developed by the Olmec civilization. Actually, the Olmec may have referred to themselves as the *Xi* (pronounced *sbe*) people. The name Olmec was given to them by the Aztecs. The Aztecs imported rubber from the Olmecs, and in the Aztec language of *Nahuatl*, Olmec means “rubber people.”

The two most ancient Olmec sites on the Gulf Coast of Mexico are San Lorenzo, which reached its high point between 1400 and 1100 BCE, and its successor site, La Venta, which peaked in the era between 900-600 BCE. One of the earliest signs of the sacred umbilical cord can be seen at the very bottom of Olmec Altar 4, found at La Venta, Veracruz (now on display in La Venta Park in Villahermosa, Tabasco).

In Illustration 1, we can see an Olmec ruler or high priest grasping a rope-like representation of the cosmic umbilical cord. In so doing, he displays his ability to access the powers of knowledge and eternal life from that central, spiritual place. The hollow niche is the sacred cave and place of self-sacrifice. Above him is the sacred jaguar design. The Jaguar is the sign of the life-giving Sun rising victoriously each morning after its passage through the night sky and the Underworld. The rebirth of the Sun each morning is one of the clearest signs on this Middle Plane of our ultimate destiny. This Olmec ruler-priest saw himself in the Middle Place of the Earthen Plane. He was following a contract made in the time before time, when our spirits promised to remember who we were and where we came from. The sacred umbilical cord is both the metaphor and the practical vehicle of *remembrance* and the power that comes through it.

All of the main Olmec structures are oriented toward the sacred center of this northern place. Among them are the key areas now referred to as “Complex C” and “Complex A.” In Illustration 2, we see the key elements of the structures, including their sunken mosaics.

If we examine this site carefully, we can see the cosmic scheme of the universe through the

eyes of the Olmecs. They drew some of their inspiration from the volcano of San Martin Pajapan

than jade and was thus used for these massive mosaics.



Illustration 1 – Olmec Altar 4

and the Lake of Catemaco, in the Tuxtla Mountains, located in their homeland in the present state of Veracruz. To the south stands the round, fluted volcano monument. It is a symbol of “First True Mountain,” the creative power on Earth, the center of creation in the sky, and the power of the Jaguar Sun reborn each day. On the north end, we can see a representation of the watery, primordial Underworld. We know this by recognizing the water lily symbols on the bottom fringes of the

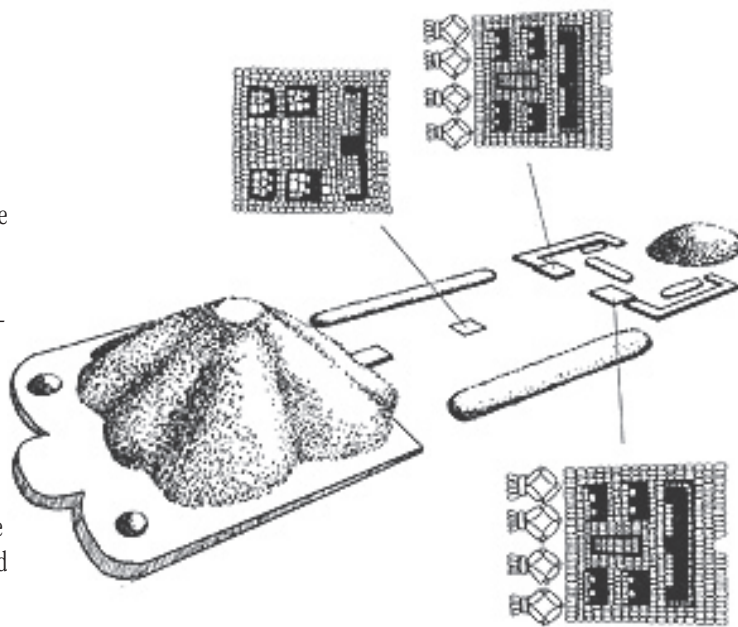
For the Olmecs and their spiritual inheritors, the Maya, the water lily symbolizes the creative life force coming from the waters of the Underworld below the Middle Earthen Plane. The water lily appears on the water, as if from nothing. It is a wondrous metaphor of the magic of creation on this Earth.

Notice the three linear mounds within the rectangle of the watery place; these represent the three hearthstones in every Mayan home. There is also a large circular mound, which probably represents the axis of the universe, which connects *Xibalba* (the terrifying Mayan Underworld) to its “Sky Entrance” at the center of the Milky Way.

The middle portion of this complex is our place in the cosmos. We humans live atop the waters of the Underworld, where death is life and life is death. The Olmec/Mayan metaphor for our role here on Earth and the forces of Death that humans face is the Cosmic Ball Game. We see the court enclosed by two long mounds. At the center is another massive block mosaic made of serpentine.

We know it is the place of the ball game because the blocks of stone are worn from the foot traffic of hundreds of games played here. Here is the place where we use our wits against the seemingly insurmountable forces of Death. For the Maya, death is the symbol of our fears. When we face our fears, we see clearly and reclaim our eternal, spiritual birthright. According to the covenant, if we use our divine wit and resonate with the intelligent design of Earth, we are reborn and we remember who we truly are.

Let’s take this one more step in our pursuit of the full spiritual message of these ancient peoples. Imagine that this entire three-second



Illust. 2 – Olmec Site, Complex “C” and “A” with tile floors enlarged

massive, serpentine stone mosaics at its entrance. Serpentine is a type of stone: magnesium iron silicate hydroxide. It has a greenish-white translucence similar to jade. For the Olmec and Maya, jade is the ultimate symbol of spirituality and the creative life force, but serpentine is more plentiful

tioned complex at La Venta is standing upright, with the volcano toward Earth and the north end toward the sky. This is the sacred umbilical cord, the silvery cord of remembrance and power at the center of our world. This “Road to Sky” goes beyond our Earth through the center of the Milky Way and even beyond. It also goes below us

through the waters of the Underworld, past the monuments and remnants of our buried, ancient civilizations, and through the giant resonating crystal, thought to be at the center of the Earth.

For the Olmec and later generations of the Maya, this Road to Sky (which is also the Sacred Umbilical Cord) came to be represented as a serpent. (It was also represented by the Sacred World Tree.) The serpent is the metaphor for knowledge

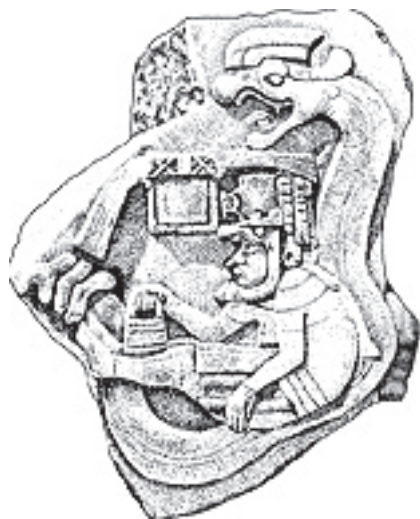


Illustration 3 – The Great Serpent

of all things in the Earth and in the Underworld (the Knowledge of Good and Evil). It also symbolizes rebirth because of the way it sheds its old skin and emerges new and fresh. Upon death, we humans enter Sacred Serpent's jaws to be picked clean and enter another phase of our spiritual journey anew.

The great Road to the Sky/Sacred Umbilical Cord is also accessible to us in this life. We are all connected to it through our own luminous silvery cord, which emanates from our navel. The luminous, silvery cord connection is part of the unique spiritual imagery of Mesoamerica. Those of you who have read the books about the teachings of Don Juan, written by Carlos Castaneda and presented in Shirley MacLaine's movie "Out on a Limb," are familiar with this symbolism.

In Illustration 3 we see an Olmec Shaman riding the great Serpent Umbilical Cord. He carries with him his bag of sacred objects and herbs, the symbolic sum of the ritual knowledge he has gained through careful study in this life. He is accessing the spiritual power that is his legacy. This image is so reminiscent of the ancient Hindu concept of the kundalini pathway within each of us, that serpent energy that rises as we raise our consciousness.

Later generations of the Maya people

developed and refined this great Olmec spiritual legacy. They built magnificent pyramids and sacred ball courts to enrich the symbolism of the sacred spiritual truths of this Fourth Creation. When they needed spiritual guidance, they followed the natural pattern of ritual encoded in the processes of this exquisitely designed and magical world. All around them, they observed how life was designed as a sacrifice for the nourishment of others. The plants were sacrificed to the myriad of insects and animals of the rainforests. And each animal, in its turn, sacrificed itself to others. Physical death was seen as the ultimate sacrifice to provide the organic matter for the renewal of the plants and the whole cycle of life.

The Maya remembered that the insensitivity of the "Wooden People" of the Third Creation had caused the great floods and cataclysms that preceded this era.

They saw the challenge of the Fourth Creation in these terms: humans must resonate with the truths of the natural environment. To properly do this, the ego and its pride have to be restrained. The natural vehicle to achieve that state of sensitivity is "sacrifice."

The true meaning of the English word *sacrifice* can be seen from its two Latin root words: *sacer* (sacred) and *facere* (to make, or do). If we sacrifice the needs of our physical senses, the illusory need for self-gratification, this world is restored to its original alignment to God's Will. We make it sacred again.

The Maya believe that humans have great power in this Fourth Creation. Our appropriate action continues the bounty of creation; our inappropriate action brings devastating change. If we would act appropriately, we must become sensitive to and respectful of all things on this Earth, for all contain the spirit of the One God. When we restrain our egos and greed, we clear our sight.

In Illustration 4, we see Lady Xoc (pronounced *shoke*) of the Mayan state of Yaxchilan (a powerful Mayan city-state located in Chiapas, Mexico). She is performing the traditional bloodletting sacrifice to access the spiritual power of the Sacred Umbilical Cord in the form of the Vision Serpent. She was the wife of "Shield Jaguar the Great," ruler of Yaxchilan. In her hand and at her feet are the implements and blood-soaked



Illustration 4 – Umbilicus as Serpent

materials of her sacrifice performed on October 23, 681 CE. This was the date of Shield Jaguar's accession to the throne as Itzamna Balam II. Lady Xoc has called forth the founder of the dynasty for guidance and sanction for her husband's rise to the throne. We see him rising out of the world of spirit through the jaws of the great Sacred Serpent (representative of Umbilicus at the center of this Middle Earthen

Plane). He rises with spear and shield as a powerful warrior to aid his descendants. At the bottom head of the serpent, we can see the image of Tlaloc, the powerful spirit of rain, fertility, and war. If you're thinking that this whole scene seems to be about military power and the propaganda of royal sanction for one claimant to the throne, you are right. And if images of war and barbaric human sacrifice come to mind, you're correct there too.

But it's precisely here that we must view human history *in perspective*. We need to train our eyes to see the true and valuable lessons of our past. Each culture is a unique development on the Earth. Each culture took long centuries of experiment and agreement to develop a unique oral language and view of the world which fit its environment. Each is like a species of plant or animal with a definite purpose here. As the Maya teach, nothing is wasted on the Middle Earthen Plane. All things fit the original intention of

the Creator, called "First Father/First Mother." A culture is the gift of a unique testimony and way of looking at the world. Like individual people, all cultures can become corrupt. They lose their way. Elites and royalty many times manage to squeeze

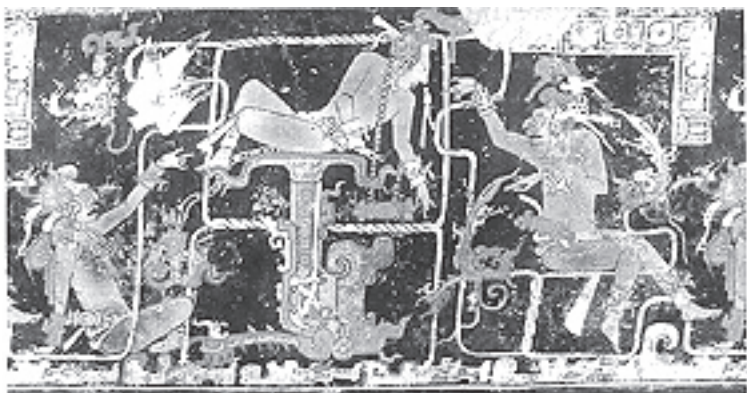


Illustration 5 – Umbilical Cord on Vase

their way into the sacred place between each individual and the God Spirit of One.

As for the Olmec/Maya culture, one of their main gifts to us is their memory of the ancient covenant between God and Humanity, and the practical metaphor of the Sacred Umbilical Cord for the remembrance of who we really are.

Perhaps the most clear and eloquent depiction of the Mayan Sacred Umbilicus concept is on a vase painting from Guatemala, dated around the eighth century. See Illustration 5.

Royal families and lineages began to manipulate the economic and spiritual powers of their civilization for their own personal gain. The principle of "sacrifice" was twisted from the idea of individual conquest of self into brutal warfare, torture, and human sacrifice. The sacred messages and signs in the skies were now used to mark the optimum times for military attack and war. The result was incessant war and destruction. The Classic civilization of the Maya collapsed. Fortunately, as in the Atlantis scenario, some of the Mayan "Followers of the One," the "Keepers of the Covenant," managed to flee and carry the spiritual message to the Yucatan. The great Mayan Post-Classic (900-1530 CE) civilization flourished in the Yucatan. The spirit and knowledge of the Sacred Serpent Umbilical Cord flourished. Many of the great temples and monuments of the Yucatan bear the sacred serpent symbols.

The Mayan "Followers of the One" also survived the wars and devastation brought to their lands by the later Spanish invasions. A Mayan proverb reads: "As it is in heaven, so it is below." The Followers of the One are the Sacred Umbilical Cord of Remembrance woven through the cloth

of human history. They managed to preserve their ancient spiritual testimony in the form of oral tradition and the sacred books of the *Popol Vuh* (Book of Council of the Q' uiche Maya) and the many editions of the *Chilam Balam*. (Also called

"Spokesman of the Jaguar." These are Sacred Mayan books of prophecy written after the Spanish invasions.) The Mayan Shamans, called "Daykeepers," still follow the ancient *Tzolk'in* (Sacred 260 Day Calendar of the Maya) and perform the tradi-

tional rituals for opening the center place. Here is a version of one of their prayers:

"Dear Lord, wipe away my guilt. Oh Heart of Earth and Heart of Sky, please hear my prayer. Please give me courage and strength. You are my mountain and my land. Help me to clear away all falsehood. May my reading this day be as clear as the morning sky. Grant that the history of my people be clear in my mind and in my heart. Dear Grandparents and ancestors and all souls who have left this Middle Earthen Plane, intercede for me. Please guide me now in my reading of the Sacred Calendar."

The Sacred Umbilicus of the Maya is still being accessed for the benefit of humanity. And to this day, the umbilical cord of traditional Mayans is buried beneath the three-stone hearth. When one is asked, "Where are you from?" in Yucatec Mayan, the question is formed by the words *Where is your umbilical cord buried?*

The sacred cosmos of the Maya is totally involved with the central place where the "Sacred Umbilical Cord," the "Cord of Spiritual Remembrance," passes through the dark, still place in the northern sky. It is mystically reflected in the umbilicus place within each of us and the silvery cord which connects us all. ✓

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nation as Isris, who the readings say "awoke to the Isis within her," where the origins of much of the A.R.E.'s contemporary work and founding souls really started this mission that carries on today.

A.R.E. continues to carry on research and exploration for the three "Hall of Records" hidden by the Atlanteans – searching in the Bahamas, the Mayan lands of Yucatan and Guatemala, and Egypt.

A.R.E. also conducts annual tours to sacred lands of the past, including Egypt, Peru, China, Cambodia, Greece, Asia Minor, India, and more. This year, the Egypt tour has three levels of pricing in an effort to help more members afford the wonders of Egypt, including meditation time in the Great Pyramid, close-up examination of the Sphinx, prayers and quiet time in the ancient temples, and a tour of the magnificent Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Call Toll Free in U.S. 888-273-3339 or 757-428-3588 Extension 7289, or email: tours@edgarcayce.org for details on any of the A.R.E. tours.

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