

RELIGIOUS IDEAS CONNECTED WITH THE FORM AND POSITION OF THE PLEIADES.

When the Pleiades are on the meridian i. e. directly south from us, a line drawn from the ship Argo (or the ark) on the southern horizon to a point overhead (or "the zenith,") passes through, or near, almost all the stars most noted by the ancients and by savages—near Sirius or the Dog Star, (the brightest in the heavens,) thence through the three stars in the Belt of Orion, which seem to point upward to the Pleiades, thence through the five stars in the head of the bull, (the Hyades, one of which is the brilliant Aldebaran, the eye of the bull) and thence through "the seven stars," the Pleiades, to the Zenith.

The stars in the head of the bull (Hyades,) form an angle or a triangle, and when they are three hours above the horizon, seem five in number. When they are on the Meridian we can distinguish a larger number of stars composing it.

The mystic numbers 3, 5 and 7, which are so prominent in all ancient religions (that of the Hebrews includes) and among modern savages, are probably derived from these stars.

We still believe that "there is luck in odd numbers."

10.—Have you found these numbers to be venerated, and are they associated with these stars?

11.—Is the triangle a sacred symbol, and is it connected with the triangle formed by the stars in the head of Taurus, and what are its name and meaning? Are all the stars I have named observed by the Indians, and what are they called.

The form of the Pleiades seems to have (in a very rude and imperfect way) suggested many symbols, in primitive ages, the idea of a man with arms extended, a cross, a bird with wings extended, a tree or bough; and as they are setting they resemble a tree lying prostrate, and also suggest the shape of the "fire stick," with which fire was kindled.

13.—Do your Indians attach any such ideas to those stars?

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Some tribes believe that their great Father ("their grandfather," who is their Creator), resides in the Pleiades, and that his form can be seen in the shape of these and of some adjoining stars. Among some Californian tribes it is sacrilege to even look at the Pleiades.

14.—Have you any trace of this belief among your Indians.

When those stars disappear, many tribes believe that their "grand father" is sick, and has died, and they lament his departure; and when these stars re-appear, they rejoice that he has risen again to light and life.

15.—Have you found any traces of this?

Some tribes believe that their Grand father in the Pleiades made men out of the trunk of a tree, which he found in the West. At first they had their limbs misplaced, one member being placed in the centre of the forehead. This Great Medicine man remedied their defects, and placed them in the tree again, and they came forth well formed men and women.

16.—Is there any trace of this "tree of Life," or of this story of an imperfect creation?

The Great father then taught the men and the women the rude arts of savage life adapted to their sexes, and gave them all that they now knew or possess, and returned to the Pleiades where he may still be seen in the sky.

17.—Has this tradition been found by you?

PARADISE IN THE PLEIADES.

The Indians of N. A. generally believe that the Pleiades are "the seven dancers," seven youths caught up to the stars, while holding a sacred dance, which they now keep up forever in the skies. Among some tribes, such as the Blackfeet, each of these "seven dancers" is called by the name of a bird, the crow, the partridge, &c.

18.—Are there traces of this, and what are the names given to the dancers, and is this celestial dance imitated in the sacred dances of the Indians, and *when*, and in what manner? If so please be very minute as to number of dancers, and all the smallest details of time and place of observance of any such dance.

The Greeks called the Pleiades "the dancers;" hence Milton says "and the Pleiades before him danced, shedding sweet influences."

The Australians believe that the three stars in the Belt of Orion are three medicine men holding a corroborree or sacred dance, and that the Pleiades are seven women in the skies beating time for the dancers by clapping their hands.

19.—Are there any such ideas connected with the three stars in question among your Indians?

ISLANDS OF THE BLESSED.

Among some races the upper sky is supposed to be an ocean, in which the stars are floating. The Pleiades are by some regarded as an island to which the spirits of the dead go; and this Paradise is where the Pleiades set, in the North West—Sometimes this island is seven islands, and sometimes ten. (7 & 3)

20.—Have you found any trace of this, and if so, is their paradise in the North West.

CLIMBING UP TO HEAVEN.

Among some races there is a tradition of an ancestor climbing up by a tree to "the Land of the Pleiades," and being instructed on the arts of savage life, which he taught mankind on his return; sometimes it is from a high mountain that their ancestor reached Paradise.

21.—Have you found any traces of this?

THE GIVER OF RAIN AND OF THUNDER, AND HIS COMPANIONS.

Among some races it is believed that their grandfather in the Pleiades is the giver of rain and causes thunder, and makes the earth fruitful.

There are also three damsels, the spirits of the squash, the bean, and the maize, who are called "our life" "our supporters." They gave these gifts to men; and are clad in the leaves and