



PHOTO: This sign, in Spanish, translates: "Baha'u'llah is the return of Viracocha." (Aug. 1975, Cusco, Peru.)

TOPIC

ON 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S PROPHECY: "THESE INDIANS ... WILL ... ENLIGHTEN THE WHOLE WORLD."

DATE

APRIL 26, 2020

BY

CHRISTOPHER BUCK & KEVIN LOCKE

The All-Wise Creator of earth and heaven has from the beginning which has no beginning sent to His peoples Divine Messengers to guide them to the Straight Path. These Wise Ones have come to establish the unity of the Kingdom in human hearts. This great evolutionary process of building the organic unity of the human race has entered a new stage with this mighty message of Bahá'u'lláh. His voice is the voice of the Great Spirit. His love for human kind is the force of the New Age.

He who sends the rain, who causes the sun and the stars to shine, the rivers to flow, the winds to blow and the earth to give forth her bounties has in this Great Day sent to all mankind Bahá'u'lláh. It is this Great One who has opened the door of divine knowledge to every soul. It is His teachings that will establish world unity and bring about universal peace.

The people of the world are the tools in His hand. They must strive to understand His message and to walk in the path of His divine guidance. Every human being is responsible in this day to seek the truth for himself and thereafter to live according to that wise counsel. The old ones have all longed for this sweet message. Praise God that you have found it. – The Universal House of Justice ([18 May 1972](#)).

This is a work-in-progress.

**“The views expressed in our content reflect individual perspectives
and do not represent the official views of the Bahá’í Faith.”**

(Photos are linked: Click on each photo to view source.)

Feedback invited.

– Christopher Buck & Kevin Locke (Dec. 1, 2019)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Indigenous Prophecy

- “Attach great importance to the Indigenous population of America. ... Likewise, these Indians, should they be educated and guided, there can be no doubt that they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world.”
 - * – ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 33.



Hastening Prophecy Fulfillment

- * We cherish the hope that at this final Conference the friends will arise with enthusiasm and determination not only to win the remaining goals of the Plan but to carry out Shoghi Effendi's injunction to win the allegiance of members of the various tribes of American Indians to the Cause, **thereby hastening the period prophesied by the Master when the Indian peoples of America would become a source of spiritual illumination to the world.**
- * Universal House of Justice (February 1977).
- * Whether in Alaska's southeastern islands and rugged mountains, or in Canada's huge Indian reserves from the west to the east, many Amerindian believers have arisen to serve the Cause, and through their joint efforts, their sacrificial endeavors and distinctive talents they bid fair **to accelerate the dawn of the day when they will be so "illumined as to enlighten the whole world."**
- * Universal House of Justice (July 1976).

This prophecy is not self-executing.



- * ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s remarkable prophecy is a true prophecy.
- * But the prophecy has yet to come true.
- * This prophecy is not self-authenticating.
- * The conditions must first be right — and “ripe” for fulfillment.
- * That’s where you and we come in!

This prophecy will come true — but how?

- * ‘Abdu’l-Bahá foresaw the future — when the Indigenous peoples of the Americas will enlighten the world!
- * This prophecy, Bahá’ís believe, will come true.
- * Not a matter of “if” — but of “how” and “when.”
- * But what about the “process” of its fulfillment?
- * That’s what the Bahá’í-inspired “Institute Process” is all about! (See next slide.)





LF PHOTO

BAHÁ'Í-INSPIRED CHILDREN'S CLASS (NEDRINI, PANAMA)

RT PHOTO

JUNIOR YOUTH SPIRITUAL EMPOWERMENT GROUP (TARABUCO, BOLIVIA)

TOP CTR

BAHÁ'Í STUDY CIRCLE (NEDRINI, PANAMA)

LOWER CTR

BAHÁ'Í DEVOTIONAL GATHERING (BOCA DE Balsa, PANAMA)

The will and wisdom to fulfill.



- * This prophecy requires the will and wisdom to fulfill and to be fulfilled.
- * Although this prophecy is certain to occur, when and how it will happen depends on time and circumstance.
- * In other words, the conditions first must be right, i.e. *ripe*.
- * As with the “Lesser Peace” (which has its own progressive stages), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophecy involves a “process” of fulfillment over time.
- * This process, ideally, is progressive in nature.

Synergy: Bahá'í & Indigenous Teachings

- * The first precondition for the fulfillment of this prophecy is a dynamic interaction, or interplay, between representatives of the sacred teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and sacred Indigenous traditions.
- * It is the dynamic and exemplary “synergy” between the collaborators that will probably become the greatest cause of the enlightenment foreseen and foretold by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
- * We see this process of the gradual and progressive fulfillment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophecy as a series of stages, or “steps,” as follows:



Step One: Spiritual Parity

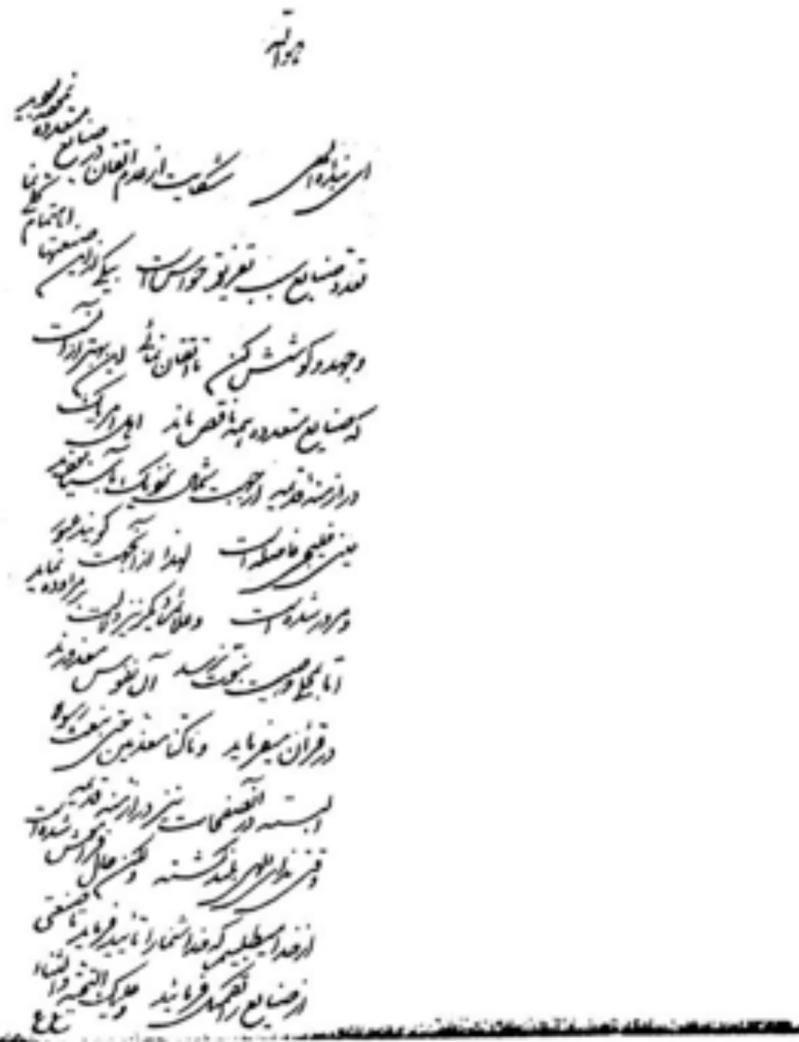
Bahá'í & Indigenous Sacred Traditions as Equal Partners



- For “synergy” to occur, first there needs to be reciprocal recognition and respect by representatives of Indigenous and Bahá'í spirituality.
- Spiritual “parity” between representatives of Bahá'í and Indigenous sacred traditions, as equal partners, is a first step in the process of progress and “fulfillment” of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophecy.
- We believe that the “Tablet to Amir Khan” (cited below) is a key starting point for this process:

Tablet to Amir Khan

English & Persian



- * “Undoubtedly in those regions [the Americas] the Call of God must have been raised in ancient times, but it hath been forgotten now.”
- * Original Persian (transliterated):
- * al-battih dar án şafahát níz dar azmanih-yi-qadímih vaqtí nidá-yi-iláhí buland gashtih va-lákin hál farámush shudih ast.

Tablet to Amír Khán: Authorized Translation

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

In ancient times the people of America were, through their northern regions, close to Asia, that is, separated from Asia by a strait. For this reason, it hath been said that crossing had occurred. There are other signs which indicate communication.

As to places whose people were not informed of the appearance of Prophets, such people are excused. In the Qur'án it hath been revealed: "We will not chastise them if they had not been sent a Messenger." [1]

Undoubtedly in those regions the Call of God must have been raised in ancient times, but it hath been forgotten now.

[1] Qur'án 17:15 ↩

(Additional Tablets, Extracts and Talks), www.bahai.org/r/341827961

Brief Notes On the Tablet to Amir Khan

- * Here, “the people of America” who lived “in ancient times” must refer to those who dwelled in the Americas during the pre-contact period, i.e. prior to Columbus and the subsequent European colonization (to put it politely) of the Americas. The “people of America” who lived “in ancient times” are therefore the Indigenous peoples, i.e. the original inhabitants of the Americas.
- * And so the “places” where the Indigenous “people of America” lived refer not only to “their northern regions” (i.e. North America), but probably to all of the Americas as well — that is, to the entire length and breadth of the Western Hemisphere, the so-called “New World.” This is the likely meaning of “those regions,” since this phrase relates back to the “places” where “the people of America” lived.
- * ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, moreover, does not fully endorse the Bering Land Bridge theory, but simply mentions it (i.e. “it hath been said”) by way of acknowledging a contemporary scientific theory, perfectly in keeping with the Baha’i principle of the harmony of science and religion.
- * In the final sentence of this brief, yet significant Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has added the category of Indigenous “Messengers” of God to those already identified in the Writings of Baha’u’llah, to which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has also added the Buddha and Krishna, as mentioned. Here, the expression, the “Call of God,” relates back to the Quranic term, “a Messenger” (Arabic: rasūlan, accusative masculine indefinite noun), which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had just cited.

How ‘Abdu’l-Bahá “Added” Manifestations of God

- * Bahá’u’lláh made no mention of Buddha, and **if it had not been for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statement we would not have been in a position to state definitely that Buddha had been a Manifestation of God.**
- * There are a myriad traditions in the legends of peoples that point back to some sort of divine revelation but, as the beloved Guardian’s secretary pointed out on his behalf in a letter written to an individual believer on 13 March 1950:
 - * “We cannot possibly add names of people we (or anyone else) think might be Lesser Prophets to those found in the Qur’án, the Bible and our own Scriptures.”
 - * “For only these can we consider authentic Books.”
 - * **We must just accept that there are undoubtedly many prophetic figures of whom all authentic record has been lost.**
 - * (Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual.)
 - * https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/19861027_001/19861027_001.xhtml.
 - * **‘Abdu’l-Bahá “added” Krishna as well.**
 - * **In the Tablet to Amír Khán, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also “added” Indigenous Messengers of God sent to the Americas (as a class).**

Messengers of God to First Nations

- * Here, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá clearly establishes this “new” Bahá’í principle:
- * “Messengers of God to First Nations.”
- * Although the “names” of these Indigenous Messengers of God cannot be “added” to the official Bahá’í list of “Manifestations of God,” they can be recognized and respected by Bahá’ís — provisionally and popularly, i.e. informally.



“Bahá’ís encourage Indians in South America to ...”

- It is suggested that, instead, you present the Bahá’í concepts, as expressed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, namely that the fountain-head of all religions is to be found in God through the Teachings of His Prophets, and that all peoples have drunk at this ocean of divine Revelation. . . .
- The Bahá’í attitude to earlier religions, therefore, is not that they are false or “heathen”, but that, at root, they are all true and that these fundamental truths still persist within them.
- **Bahá’ís encourage Indians in South America, for example, to see and reverence the profound spiritual truths which are to be found in both their pre-Christian religions and in the Catholicism which, in later centuries, has to varying degrees supplanted or overlaid their archaic faiths.**
- Through the Bahá’í teachings, the inner conflict which many still feel between their ancient religions and Christianity is resolved
- An example of the Bahá’í attitude is to be found in the operation of such radio stations as Radio Bahá’í Ecuador, which has a policy of **encouraging Indian arts and music and fostering in the Indians pride in their heritage.**
- – Letter dated 22 March 1988, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly.
- https://bahai-library.com/compilation_cultural_diversity_maturity

“Bahá’ís ... have respect for ... these religions”

- Bahá’ís, believing in all revealed religious truth of past ages as an unfoldment of one divine plan, have **respect for the customs and traditions relating to these religions and cultures**. They desire to **preserve** the cultural elements that contribute to the well-being of man.
- An effort is made to acquaint people with their own history on earth. . . . Because of the a belief in the unity of mankind, all people are recognized as valued members of society and play an equally important part in building world order.
- From information submitted by the Baha’i International Community for a “Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations.”
- “Undertaken by the United Nations Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination And Protection of Minorities.”
- [U.S.] *Bahá’í News* (February, 1975), p. 19.
- https://bahai.works/index.php?title=File:Baha%27i_News_527.pdf&page=21.

Some Indigenous Messengers of God

(See Series: “**Indigenous Messengers of God**”)



- * 1. **Deganawida, the Peacemaker.** (See Parts 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 22 & 25.)
- * 2. **White Buffalo Calf Woman.** (See Parts 3, 16, 19, 23, 24, 25, 27 & 28 of series.)
- * 3. **Sweet Medicine.** (See Part 30 of series.)
- * 4. **Lone Man.** (See Parts 38 & 39 of series.)
- * 5. **Breathmaker.** (See Part 40 of series.)

More Indigenous Messengers of God

(See Series: “**Indigenous Messengers of God**”)

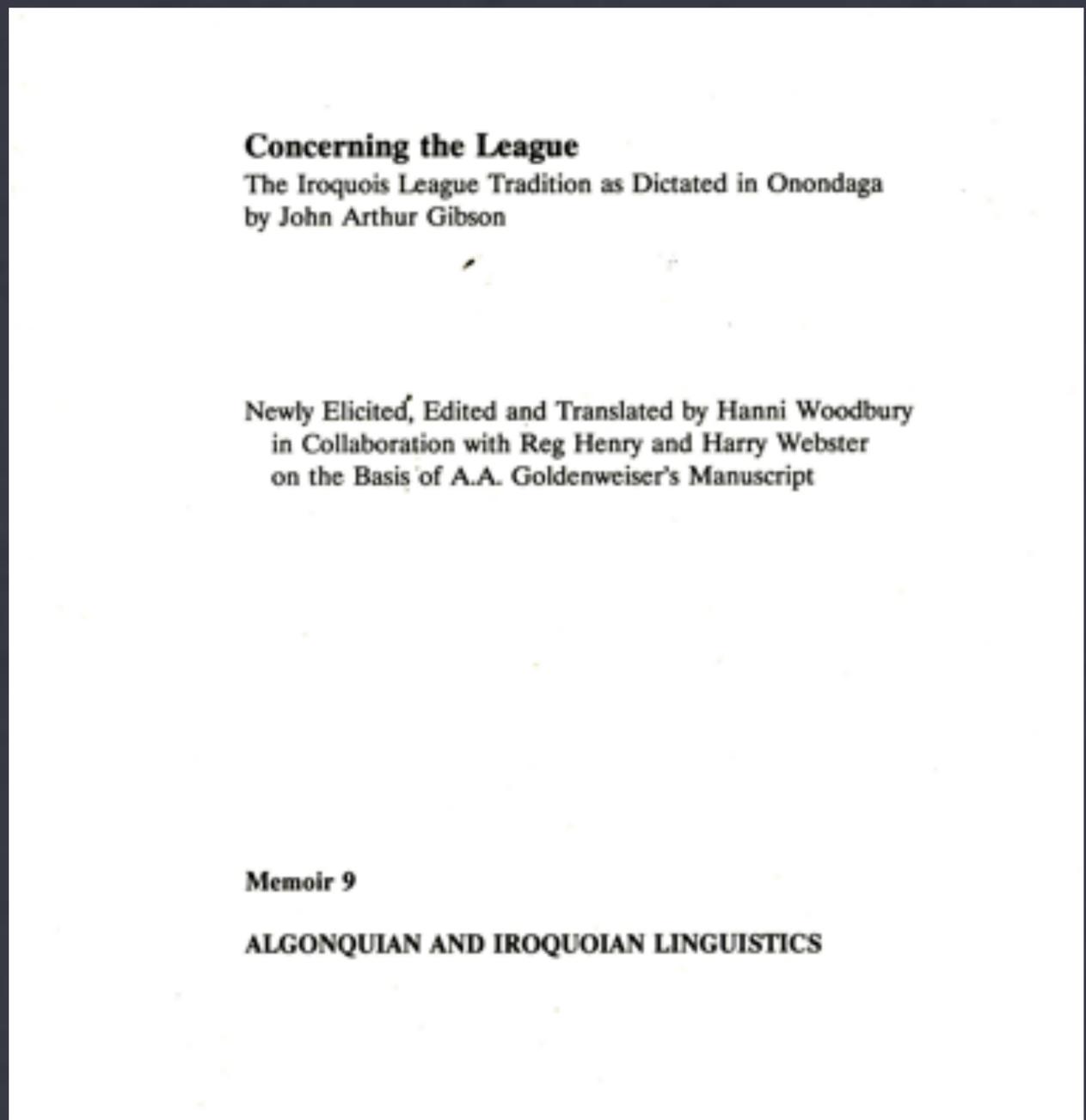
- * 6. **Quetzalcoatl**. (See Parts 2 & 32 of series.)
- * 7. **Viracocha**. (See Part 4 of series.)
- * 8. **Gluskap**. (See Parts 56, 57 & 58 of series.)
- * 9. **Talking God**. (See Part 54 of series.)
- * 10. **Bunjil**. (See Part 34 of series.)



Deganawida, the Peacemaker



- * Read about this Haudenosaunee Messenger of God in Parts 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 22 & 25 of the [“Indigenous Messengers of God”](#) series.



CAPTIONS

LEFT: SENECA CHIEF, JOHN ARTHUR GIBSON (D. 1912)

RIGHT: "CONCERNING THE LEAGUE," DICTATED BY CHIEF GIBSON (IN ONONDAGA)

CAPTIONS

LOWER CTR: LONGHOUSE

TOP CTR: "TREE OF PEACE" BY OREN LYON

From “Concerning the League”

- * “Thirdly, this is what ‘Peace’ means: now it will stop, the massacre of humans and the scalping and bloodletting among themselves, specifically, among the people of the various nations.”
- * “Now as to that, it will end, the human slaughter, because the Great Spirit never planned for humans to hurt one another nor to slaughter one another.
- * “So now it will end, the warpath, and everywhere it will become peaceful; **the different nations’ villages are as neighbours.**”
- * “And as to the localized families and their children, what will happen is that they all will be very close relatives.”
- * “**And it will come to pass that they will become just like one family which will encompass every nation and every language.**”
- * “And this: when everyone can travel from village to village, then it will end, the danger and the terror, and everything will be peaceful, and they will rejoice by day and by night as the family continues on, there being no end to peace.”
- * “That is what it means, the Great Law of Peace, and **everyone will be united.** Now I am finished.”
- * – Deganawida, the Peacemaker, as quoted by Chief John Arthur Gibson (1912), Concerning the League (translated by Hanni Woodbury), pp. 105–108.

White Buffalo Calf Woman



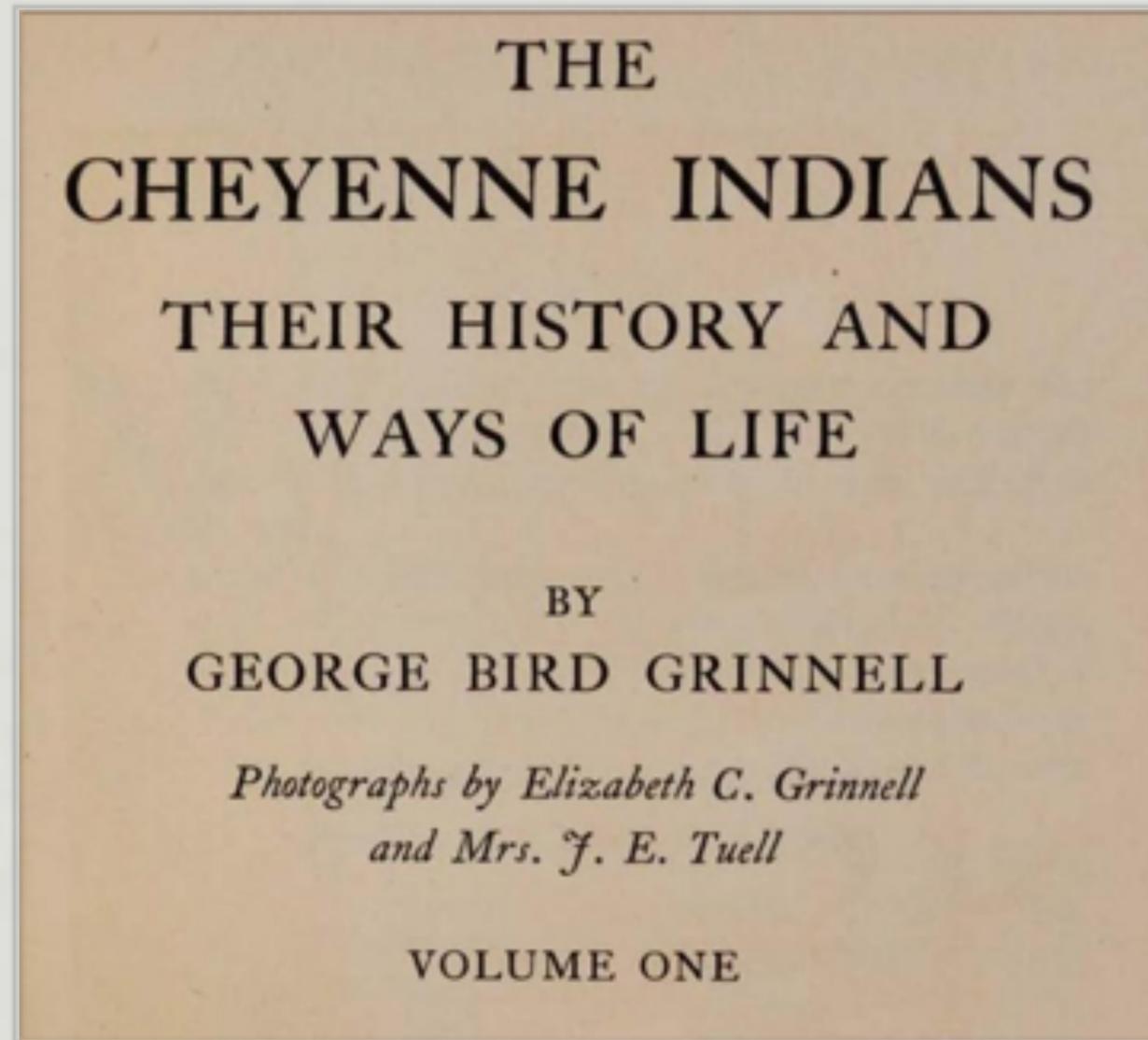
- * Read about this Lakota Messenger of God in Parts 3, 16, 19, 23, 24, 25, 27 & 28 of the “[Indigenous Messengers of God](#)” series.
- * See White Buffalo Calf Woman’s “Ten Ethical Teachings” (our term) on the next slide.

White Buffalo Calf Woman's Ten Ethical Teachings

1. Possess “great respect and reverence toward sacred things.”
2. Live as “belonging to one family.”
3. Be “always very faithful to promises.”
4. “Cease hostilities against other nations.”
5. “Administer help to the sick.”
6. “Comfort others in time of sorrow.”
7. Show “kindness toward every living creature on earth.”
8. “Remember the dead.”
9. “Love your children dearly.”
10. “Above all, lead pure lives.”

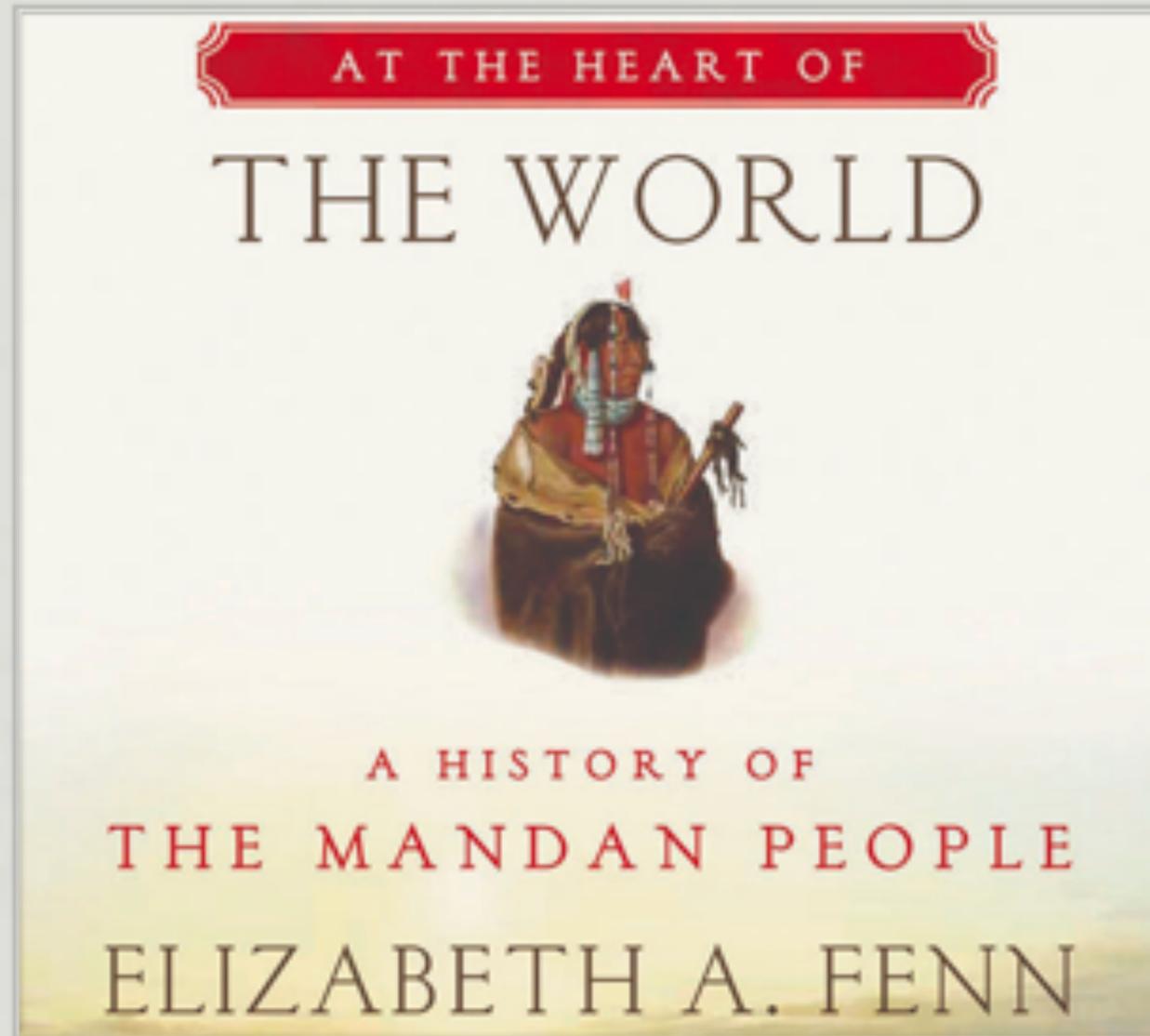
– Frances Densmore, “**Teton Sioux Music**,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, Vol. 61 (1918): 1–561 [see pp. 65–66].

Sweet Medicine



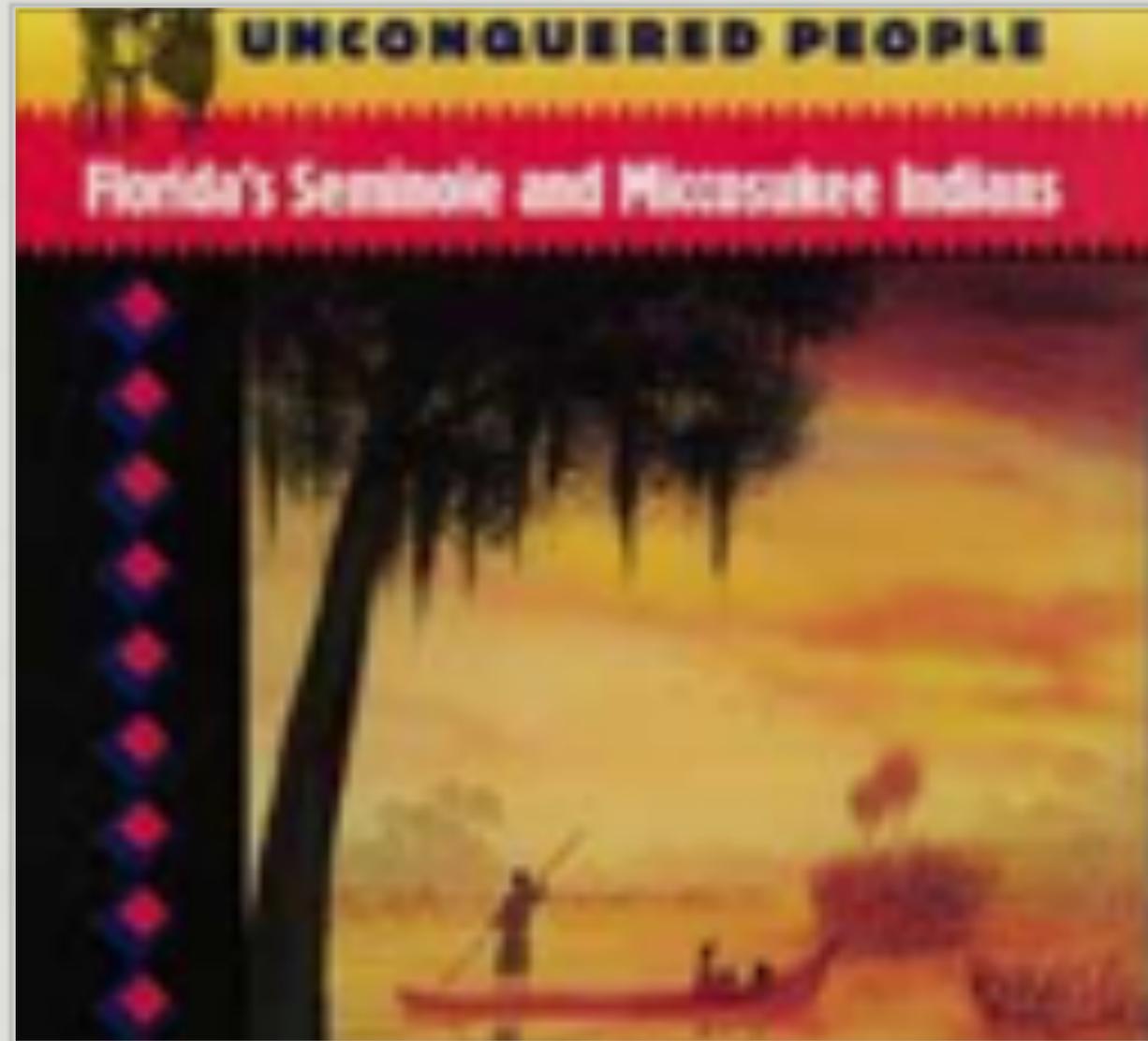
- * For more information on this Cheyenne Messenger of God, see Part 30 of the “[Indigenous Messengers of God](#)” series.

Lone Man



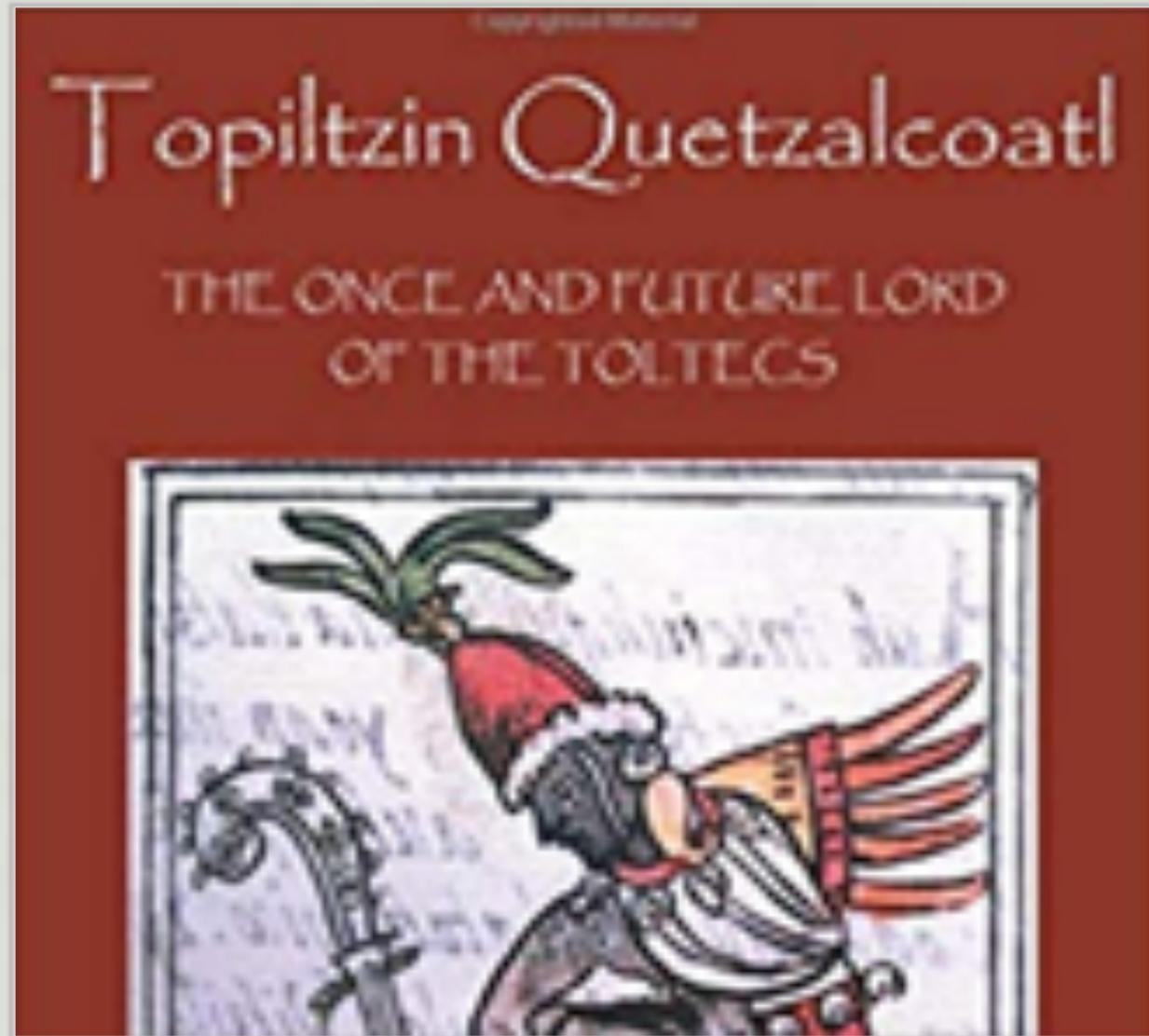
- * Read about this Mandan and Hidatsa Messenger of God in Parts 38 & 39 of the “[Indigenous Messengers of God](#)” series.

Breathmaker



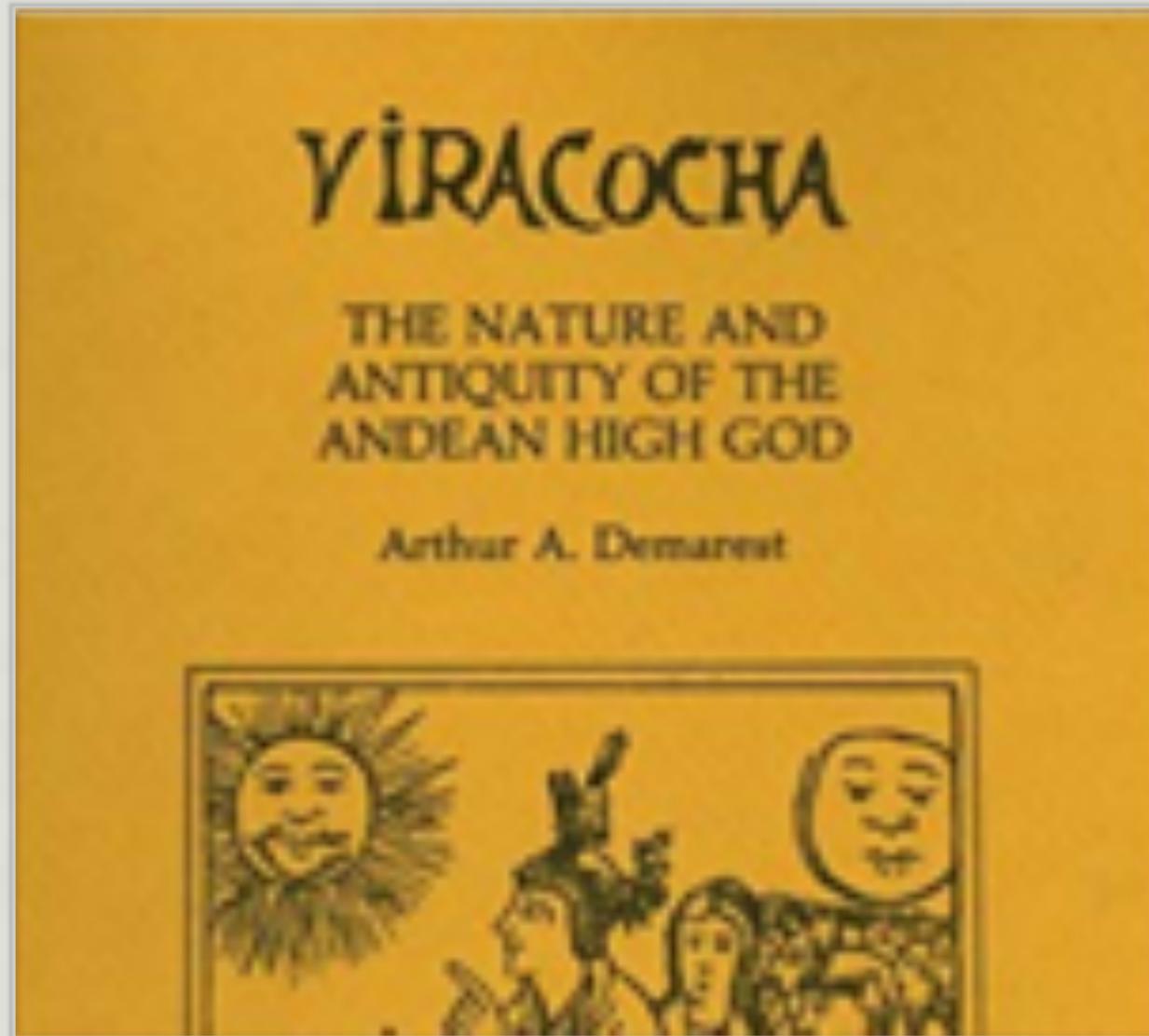
- * For more information on this Seminole and Miccosukee Messenger of God, see Part 40 of the “[Indigenous Messengers of God](#)” series.

Quetzalcoatl



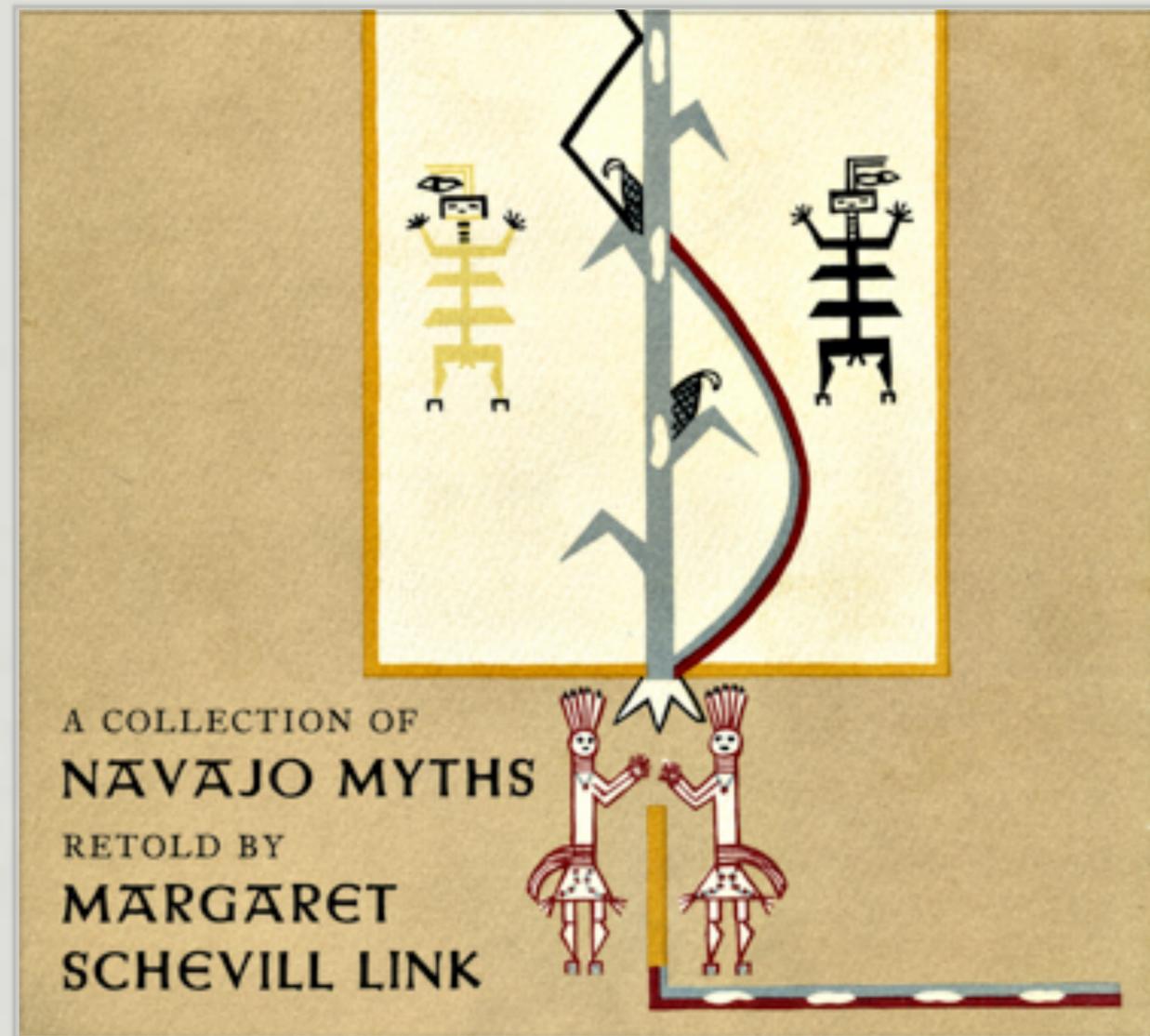
- * Read about this Toltec Messenger of God in Parts 2 & 32 of the “[Indigenous Messengers of God](#)” series.

Viracocha



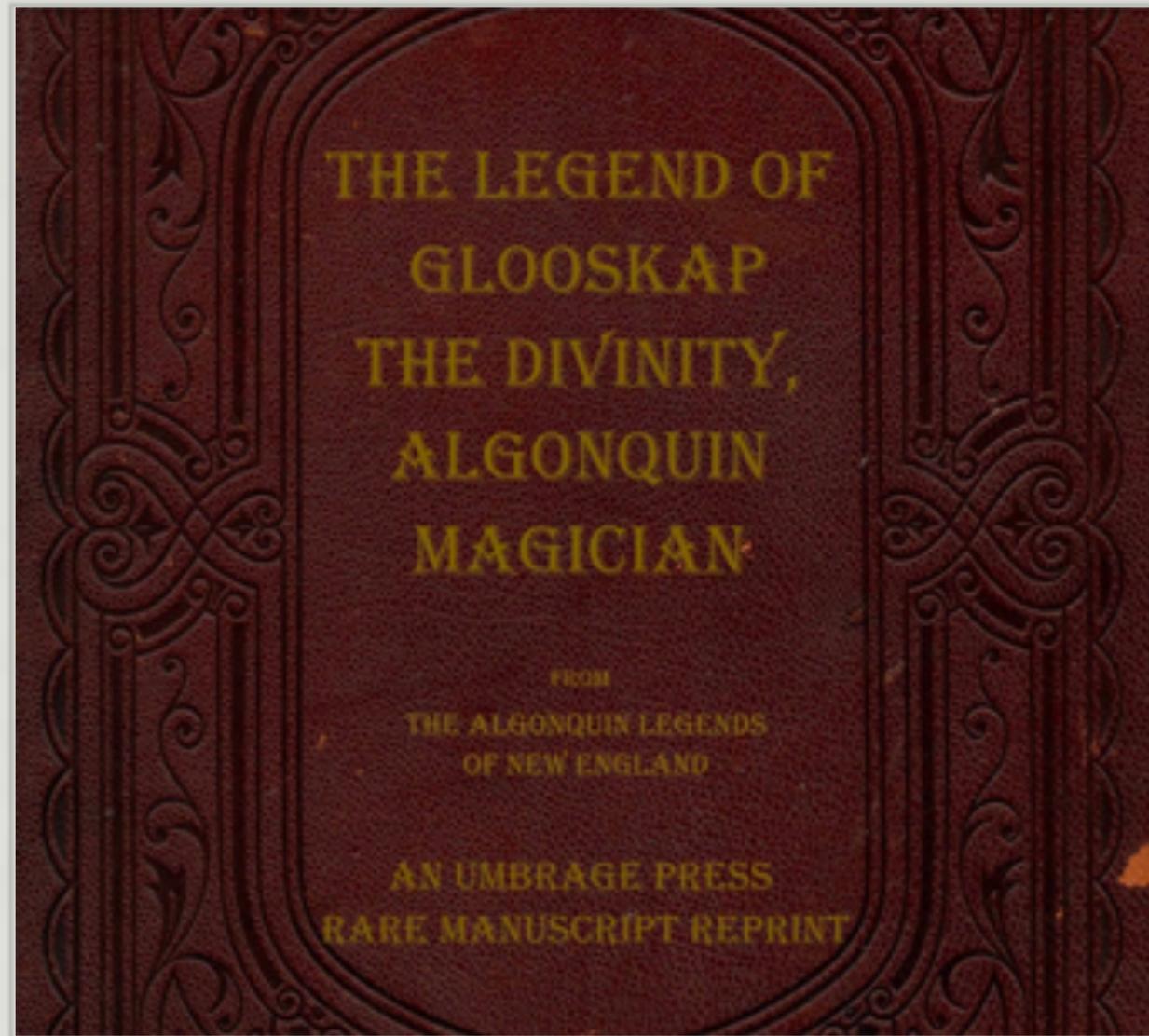
- * Read about this Incan/Quechua Messenger of God in Part 4 of the [“Indigenous Messengers of God”](#) series.

Talking God



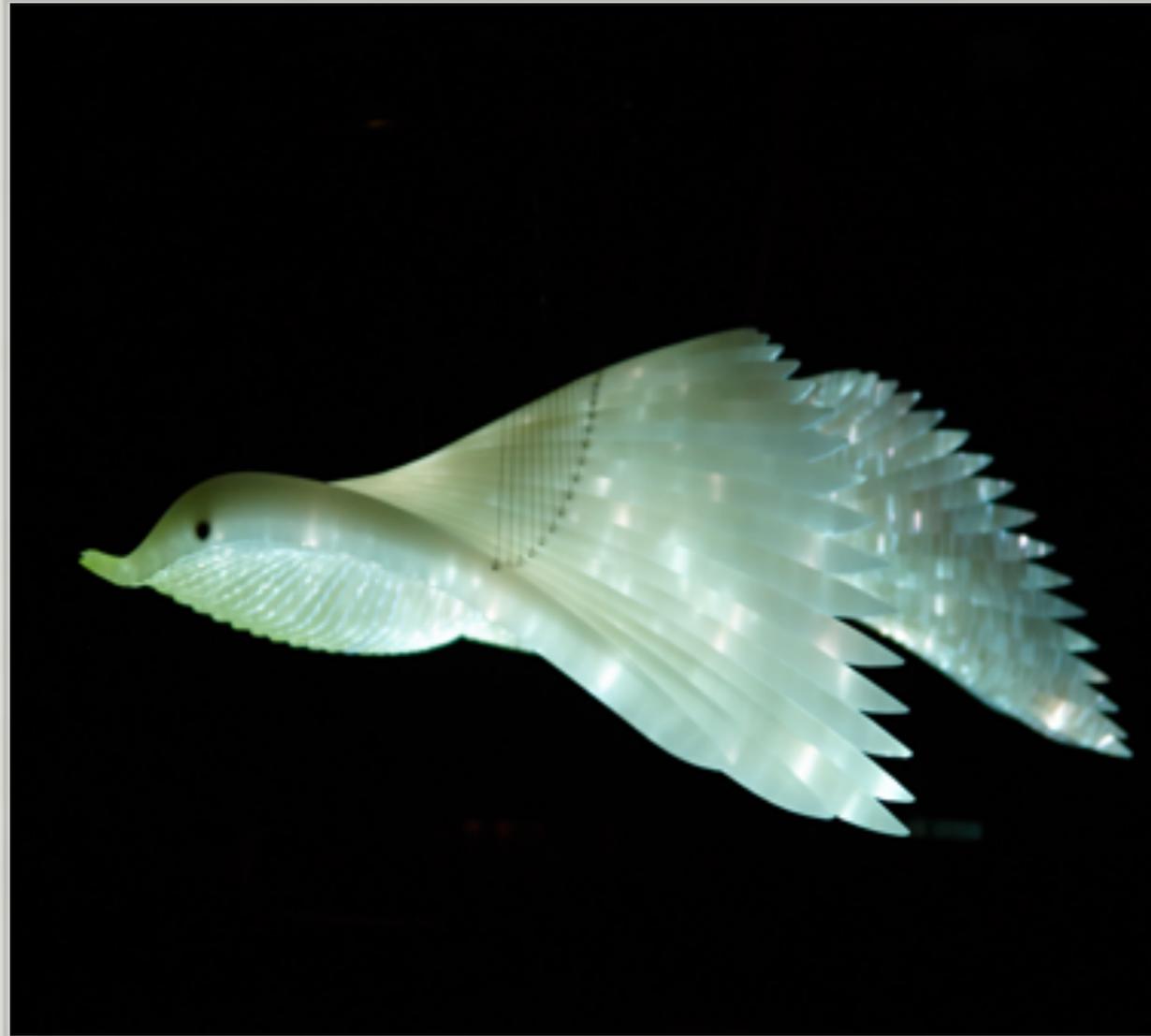
- * Read about this Navajo/Diné Messenger of God in Part 54 of the “[Indigenous Messengers of God](#)” series.

Gluskap



- * For more information on this Wabanaki Messenger of God, please read Parts 56, 57 & 58 of the [“Indigenous Messengers of God”](#) series.

Bunjil



- * Read about this Aboriginal Messenger of God in Part 34 of the “[Indigenous Messengers of God](#)” series.

Step Two: Parity in Consultation

Bahá'í & Indigenous Views should be Equal & Agree



- There are now many Indigenous Bahá'ís!
- So when we say “Bahá'í” and “Indigenous,” understand that these two groups overlap, since many Indigenous people belong to both groups.
- Consultation can and should occur.
- Opinions offered by Bahá'í and Indigenous groups should be equal and, ideally, reach agreement by consensus.
- Social action can then take place. (See next slide.)



PHOTO LF

PHOTO RT

**A CLASS AT BAHÁ'Í-INSPIRED "RUHI ARBAB SCHOOL" (JAMUNDI-ROBLES, COLOMBIA)
RADIO ANNOUNCER IN THE STUDIO AT "RADIO BAHÁ'I" (CARACOLLO, BOLIVIA)**

TOP CTR

CLASS, RUHI ARBAB SCHOOL (COLOMBIA)

LOWER CTR

CLASS AT BAHÁ'Í-INSPIRED SIMMONS SCHOOL (COLOMBIA)

Step Three: Parity in Social Action

Bahá'í & Indigenous Peoples as Equal Partners



- Bahá'ís have a mission — to unify the world and to make this world a better place.
- This mission does not make Bahá'ís “missionaries,” but “collaborators.”
- Bahá'ís are ambassadors of Bahá'í universal teachings.
- Bahá'í and Indigenous groups should consult together, so that they can plan how best to collaborate and work together.
- If there is agreement to go forward with any initiative, then Bahá'í and Indigenous groups can work together as equal partners.

Step Four: Parity in Education

Bahá'í & Indigenous Models to Enlighten the World



- To enlighten the world, “social experiments” in community-building and social action initiatives must be tried and tested.
- Social action would be the ideal interaction between Bahá'í & Indigenous communities of interest.
- Again, there are many Indigenous Bahá'ís!
- When successful, then these joint Bahá'í and Indigenous group initiatives may become social models for others to consider, replicate, adapt and improve within their own social settings.

FURTHER READING

- Buck, Christopher & Kevin Locke, et al. "Indigenous Messengers of God" (64 articles, as of March 19, 2020, with more articles to follow).
- Locke, Kevin. *Arising* [Autobiography]. Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing, 2018.
- Buck, Christopher & Don Addison (Choctaw Elder). "Messengers of God in North America Revisited: An Exegesis of 'Abdu'l-Baha's Tablet to Amir Khan." *Online Journal of Bahá'í Studies* Vol. 1 (2007): 180–270.
- Buck, Christopher. "Deganawida, the Peacemaker." *American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*. Supplement XXVI. Edited by Jay Parini. Farmington Hills, MI: Scribner's Reference/The Gale Group, 2016. Pp. 81–100.
- . "Native American Myths and Visions of America." *God & Apple Pie: Religious Myths and Visions of America*. (Introduction by J. Gordon Melton, Distinguished Professor of American Religious History, Institute for Studies in Religion, Baylor University.) Kingston, NY: Educator's International Press, 2015.
- . "'Never Again': Kevin Gover's Apology for the Bureau of Indian Affairs." *Wicazo Sa Review: A Journal of Native American Studies* 21.1 (2006): 97–126. (Article based on the historic apology to Native Americans by Kevin Gover, Head of Bureau of Indian Affairs (September 8, 2000). Video obtained (on special request by Christopher Buck) from U.S. Department of the Interior, Telecommunications Service Office (Requisition DI-4-00479, 12-16-2003). Digital video converted from VHS cassette by one of Dr. Buck's MSU students. See video online: <https://vimeo.com/404428918>.)
- . "Native Messengers of God in Canada?: A Test Case for Baha'i Universalism." *Baha'i Studies Review* 6 (1996): 97–133. [Award for Excellence in Baha'i Studies. Association for Bahá'í Studies, 1994.]
- Concerning the League: The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson (newly elicited, edited and translated by Hanni Woodbury in collaboration with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, on the Basis of A. A. Goldenweiser's manuscript. *Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics Memoirs*, Vol. 9. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1992.



REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

NOTE: THIS IS A WORK-IN-PROGRESS. CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK WELCOME. THANKS FOR READING.