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THE MYSTERIES OF XIBALBA.

Hunahpu and Xbalanque, the heroes of the second book of the Popol Vuh, are here depicted undergoing the ordeal of the Bat House in the Mysteries of Xibalba. Camazotz, the Lord of the Bats, emerging suddenly from the gloom, strikes with his great sword at the intrepid invaders of his domain. The animal soul of man is sometimes pictured as a bat because, like this creature, it is blinded and deprived of its power by the light of the spiritual, or philosophic, sun. That part of humanity which exists in the night of materiality and ignorance lives by the law of physical survival. Like great vampire bats, the depraved and the avaricious swoop down upon the unwary and, after gorging themselves upon the life substances of their prey, soar lazily back to the gloomy caverns where they hide themselves from the light of day. Those who live in the sphere of the senses, who permit themselves to become hopelessly involved in worldliness—these dwell in continuous night, and are either intentional or unintentional doers of evil. When the light fades and gloom descends upon the face of the earth, the creatures of the night come forth. Darkness was feared by the primitive mind; every eerie sound or shadow inspired the terror of the unknown. It was believed that at night demons, ghosts, and ghouls were given power to torment men. Man is courageous in the daytime because he can see; at night he is afraid because he cannot see. The same is true in the story of earthly existence. The dark world of materiality is ruled by fear, hate, greed, and lust. In it wander the ghosts of human beings—shades of men and women floating listlessly to and fro upon the sea of sensation. Only when the soul comes into a realization of the spiritual verities of life does it escape from this underworld—this house of demons over which Camazotz holds sway. The sun of Truth rises in man and illumines his world when he lifts his mind from the darkness of selfishness and ignorance into the light of selflessness and wisdom.