

By: Safaara 2008 Science Editor

[The Five Suns and Aztec Human Sacrifices](#)

The legend of the horror

The Aztec Empire was conquered by Spaniards at the beginning of the 16th century, but the Nahuatl tradition still speaks about the Aztec tradition of the 5 Suns. The current Sun was preceded by 4 Suns, each one meaning a distinct temporal cycle. Thus, we are now in the fifth cycle. The First Sun, named Four Jaguars, shone on the sky during an epoch when the Earth was ruled by giants. It was buried by the collapse of the sky, and, under the cover of the night, jaguars devoured all the people. The Second Sun, called Four Winds, was destroyed by a giant hurricane, which turned people into monkeys. The Third Sun, called Four Rains, was destroyed by a rain of fire that turned people into turkeys. The Fourth Sun, named Four Waters, ended in a flooding that covered the mountains and turned people into fishes. A sole couple escaped, protected by the god of the nocturnal sky, Tezcatlipoca, but this enraged the other gods, and to keep them alive, Tezcatlipoca cut their heads sticking them on their bottoms. This is how dogs appeared. The Fifth Sun, called Four Movements, is destined to be destroyed by a large earthquake. It was the task of the people to delay that moment, fueling the energy of the Sun through human sacrifices. But the Aztecs could not kill other Aztecs, as the Aztecs were considered the chosen people. That's why they had to make campaigns for subjugating other people, in order to sacrifice war prisoners. They did this even with the Spaniards they captured during the first campaign of Hernando Cortes, in July 1520. Prisoners were put in cages, fattened and later sacrificed. [img=2]The Aztecs' reputation of using the war prisoners this way spread dread into their opponents. Warriors always fought in formations of two, so that they could capture, not kill, their enemies. In the end, the prisoners were brought to the roof terraces of the temples, where a priest opened their abdomen with an obsidian knife and with his hand pulled out the still beating heart from the chest of the victim. The heart was burned for glorifying and relighting the Fifth Sun. Often this practice would turn into monstrous hecatombs, when hundreds of victims were sacrificed.