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History of Mexico and Central America Essay: Disease and Conquest

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History of Mexico and Central America Essay: Disease and Conquest

The perspective I have taken is an Aztec ruler. Plagues were nothing new to the Aztecs. Warnings to incoming rulers about their divinely destined duty in the case of infection among the words preserved in their rhetoric and moral ideology were standard. When confronted with a plague, the king needed to respond with humility. Thus, if a king ignored this instruction, if his reign caused more pain than it alleviated, the people prayed to Tezcatlipoca for a variety of outcomes, including his death. The Aztec ruler was not immune to any plague. They would equally be infected. However, the Aztecs took their leadership responsibilities very seriously. A king's primary duty in times of contagion was to utilize his subjects to "their proper place" so that the empire could continue functioning. This included mobilizing the *titicih*, or doctor-healers, with extensive herbal knowledge, most of whom were women sworn to the primordial mother goddess *Teteoh Innan* (Høiby, 2021).

Many people were rendered motionless by the illness, either since they were unwell, nursing for sickening friends and family, or just neglected the need to oppose the Spaniards as they observed disease consume individuals around them. Lastly, people were incapable of tending to their produces, resulting in extensive hunger and relentlessly compromising the immune structures of epidemic survivors. Consequently, I think that the Aztec ruler's experience about the plague would have been different because they probably held higher status in the empire. However, the people were unable to tend to their crops, which resulted in great hunger, would have affected the ruler because the shortage would also jeopardize the ruler.

Of course, the Aztecs were not the first indigenous population to suffer the consequences of the

European plague introduction. The plague nearly wiped out the Mayan and Aztec civilizations, in addition to the Native American people of North America.

Therefore, the Aztec ruler was no exception. Like measles and mumps, other European illnesses also took significant tolls, decreasing certain native peoples by 90% or more in the new globe. Recent research suggests that other infectious organisms, such as Salmonella, which is known to cause current outbreaks amongst pet owners, may have caused further epidemics.

On the contrary, epidemics would cause the Aztec rulers to consider their spiritual or religious beliefs. The feeling of condemnation by God or enraged at a higher being might arise due to a plague occurring. Trauma and catastrophe can call into question God's image as all-loving and protective. As a result, some people suffer in connection with God, feeling angry, abandoned, or chastised by a greater authority. In addition, getting caught up in moral battles might make them consider their spiritual and religious beliefs. People may struggle to reconcile their actions with their moral and spiritual ideals.

For example, the individuals on the front lines managing the plague might describe their pain as they are forced to determine how to distribute scarce life-sustaining resources. These judgments put people in the awkward position of playing God. Similarly, rulers who participate in spiritual deferral think God is in control of their well-being and may fail to take the required precautions to safeguard themselves. Rulers who believe God will protect their followers while holding sermons in contravention of physical distance standards to prevent the spread of plagues are one example of this procrastination.

It could be challenging to draw apparent similarities across pandemics since they always emerge under unique conditions, ranging from the varying nature of the illness to the unstable social and political situations in which the pandemic occurs. However, there have been several

parallels drawn between the COVID-19 epidemic and earlier pandemics. In the past, the ways used in managing pandemics were traditional in that traditional healers mainly used herbs to treat such plagues. On the contrary, medical and scientific advancements from previous epidemics have helped in understanding and managing COVID-19. For instance, scientists are now much more readily able to discover new illnesses, and as a result, epidemics may be contained more rapidly.

References

- Høiby, N. (2021). *Pandemics: Past, Present, And Future: That Is Like Choosing Between Cholera And Plague*. *Apmis*, 129(7), 352-371.

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