

Mystical 2012

Did the Maya Shamans Discover a Mystical View of Reality?

An essay by Thomas Razzeto
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One way to approach 2012 is to consider its three tightly related parts: the astronomy, the metaphor that is based on this astronomy, and finally, the core meaning of that metaphor. It will be very easy for us to quickly understand beyond a reasonable doubt how the first two aspects are connected. Don't worry about the astronomy being too hard to understand; the most important points are covered in a short section that simply describes what will be in the sky over the Maya. After you see how I present the astronomy of 2012, you might wonder how so many people can be completely unaware of this simple but important perspective.

While many people know about the transformation and rebirth metaphor, there is great disagreement about what it actually means. What I offer in this regard is, of course, just my opinion. But I have worked very hard full-time for several years to formulate an opinion that is based on facts that come from the Maya culture itself. My idea that the message of 2012 is mystical in nature comes from consideration of the often-overlooked psychedelic rituals of the Maya. This is what allowed them to see the greater reality that lies behind our ordinary reality. This is what turns "2012" into "mystical 2012!"

Introduction

Perhaps the truth about why the Maya picked the winter solstice of 2012 is simple. And perhaps the reason the truth is overlooked is because it is not as spectacular as a pole shift or a sudden upward shift in human consciousness or any other dramatic scenario you might have heard about. Since no one can prove that a pole shift or a consciousness shift will not happen, many people will hold on to these dramatic possibilities. But in my opinion, this focus on dramatic possibilities will blind people's eyes and prevent them from seeing the truth. In my opinion, the reason the Maya picked the exact date of December 21, 2012 to restart their calendar is because of the astronomy that will unfold *in the sky over the Maya during that day*. Almost all calendars are based on astronomy and it appears that this is also true for the Maya calendar, although in a rather spectacular way! And it is important to point out right up front that this astronomy presents no danger to us at all. We are not going to fall into a black hole or be inundated with a high level of cosmic rays. *In my view, this rare astronomical event will not cause anything unusual to happen to us at all. And yet, it is my opinion that the Maya's timeless message of rebirth potentially leads us onto an exceptionally rewarding path of self-discovery.*

I think it is very significant to note that the calendar points to one specific day, not to a longer period of time. If the Maya foresaw something important that was going to unfold over a year or a decade or more, then I think they would have made a calendar that would obviously point to a longer period of time. Yes, the calendar points to one specific day. When you understand the astronomy that unfolds on that day - and only on that day - and when you see that this astronomy is an excellent fit for the Maya folklore, then perhaps you will agree with me that the calendar restarts on that special day because of this remarkable astronomy.

Yet many people think that the calendar is based on a psychic prediction about something dramatic that will unfold in the time around 2012, and perhaps this event will be global in its scope. Some people think that doom and gloom is just around the corner while other people think that we are about to experience a sudden upward shift in human consciousness. But please consider the following when evaluating if 2012 is based on a psychic prediction.

Why would the Maya even try to look psychically 2,000 years into their future? What would have motivated them to do so? What could have attracted their attention? If the Maya were interested in long timelines, wouldn't their own conquest at the hands of the Spanish be a pretty big blip on their radar? Or their very steep decline due to war, drought and famine about 700 years before that? In some ways, this was almost as significant as what happened when the Spanish arrived. In any event, it is very rare for psychics to discuss such distant time periods. Almost all psychic predictions are basically concerned with the here and now and interest drops off rapidly as the timeline moves away from the present. How many people do you know who are concerned with what is going to happen thousands of years from now?

But on the other hand, we will soon see that there is an obvious and natural astronomical reason why the Maya were drawn to a single day that was over 2,000 years in their future.

It is my opinion that common, short-term psychic predictions are not very reliable and this leads me to believe that a prediction that has a timeline of over two thousand years would have little or no merit. It is just not our nature to know what the future will bring. I have heard it said that the world was made round so that we would not see too far down the road. While I do believe that psychics and shamans can get a feel for what might be coming our way, these predictions are usually focused on short timelines and rarely guaranteed.

Yet when it comes to astronomy, we can look well into the future and determine exactly what will happen on a particular day! Yes, within the boundaries of the precision of our knowledge, astronomy is guaranteed 100 percent!

Now, let's take a little time to get a better idea of what this essay will cover.

The first clue that astronomy is at the core of the calendar is the fact that the restart date is a winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, an astronomical event. This inspired me to dig deeper into the actual astronomy of 2012 and in the first part of this essay, you will learn how this winter solstice is part of an astronomical event that the Maya metaphorically saw as the sacred triple rebirth of the sun. This event is driven by the very slow wobble of the earth's axis of rotation and this astronomical cycle, which is about 26,000 years long, is why the Maya looked so far into the future. In addition to the sacred triple rebirth of the sun, we will also learn about an astronomical configuration that the Maya called "the sacred tree" and we will examine its unique configuration in the sky over the Maya on this special day.

Mainstream astronomers say that this event will not cause anything unusual to happen to us. I think the Maya also knew this. But if this astronomy is not going to cause anything unusual to happen, why did the Maya bother with all of this? I think that it is important to keep in mind the magnitude of the efforts the Maya put forth with regards to all of this. They were highly motivated. The work required to learn the astronomy, create the calendar, write the metaphorical stories, build the monuments, and create the artwork is absolutely immense. Why did they do all this work when the apparent focal point was something over two thousand years in their future that won't even cause anything unusual to happen? I think we will better understand their motivation when we better understand their message.

So this leads us to the biggest question: what are the Maya trying to tell us? It is this question that is the focus of the second part of this essay. For most people, this question is much more important than understanding the details of the astronomy. While I think that it is helpful to understand the astronomy since both the calendar and the Maya folklore are based on the astronomy, it is the metaphorical folklore that points to the deepest and most important layer of 2012.

According to John Major Jenkins, the purest meaning of 2012 is found by examining the stone monuments and carvings in Izapa, Mexico, the birthplace of the Long Count calendar. This is the most immediate and primary evidence left by the Maya. Here we find a message of transformation and rebirth, not doom and gloom.

It is my opinion that this is a timeless message for anyone who wants to listen to the Maya, and that at its core, this message of rebirth points to a mystical view of reality and a completely new understanding of the true fundamental self.

I want to emphasize that this transformation is much more than just mere spiritual growth. This is not simply becoming less selfish, for example. And it is my opinion that the message of 2012 operates completely outside of the boundaries of any rigid time structure. The message of 2012 does not just apply to the time of 2012, it applies to every moment and most importantly, it is not a psychic prediction of any kind.

You, of course, are free to create your own understanding of 2012 and you can even have more than one way of looking at it. Since the astronomy contains the triple rebirth of the sun and the folklore contains a strong emphasis on rebirth, I think that the closer we stay to the idea of transformation and rebirth, the closer we will be to the original message of the Maya.

One of the most significant experiences that we can personally have is our own awakening to the spiritual nature of reality and it is easy to understand why the rebirth metaphor is used by many spiritual traditions to point to this awakening. Is there any evidence that the Maya rebirth metaphor is pointing to something along these lines?

Maya shamans used various hallucinogenic substances including the psychoactive chemical excreted from the poison gland of the Bufo toad during their sacred rituals and in this way, each shaman had a direct, personal experience with what they called “the invisible world,” “the unseen world,” or “the underworld.” These experiences may have included what we call out-of-body experiences, communication with spirit entities and other paranormal experiences, and these experiences were not discounted as less real than our ordinary world; they were fully respected and held as sacred.

These paradigm-altering rituals in Mesoamerica date back over 3,000 years, perhaps even 4,000 years. If one of the primary intentions of these rituals was to fully explore the true nature of reality, it is quite possible that the Maya shamans discovered not just the spiritual world, but also the divine nature of all of reality. People all around the world throughout all of time have discovered that both God and creation are the same reality in different forms, just like water and ice are different forms of the



A Maya Bufo toad ceremonial drinking vessel. Photo by Keith Cleversley.

same essence. This is what I call “mysticism” and I believe that this mystical awakening is the deepest message of 2012.

The Bufo toad does more than just provide the Maya with a means to explore the spiritual world; it also physically demonstrates the principles of transformation and rebirth. Not only does it transform from a small aquatic tadpole with a long tail and gills into an air-breathing amphibious toad over six inches long that can live a few decades, it sheds and eats its skin in a remarkable way. Approximately four times a year, the adult toad sheds its skin in one piece and it devours the skin as it is being shed. It might be said that the toad actually eats itself! The older outer form ceases to exist and yet it is absorbed and born anew as part of the toad’s living body. Notice that this rebirth takes place without the death of the toad.

Once you start to think about the concept of transformation and rebirth, you notice that it occurs in many things and in many ways. And most importantly, we notice that certain shifts in our own attitude and actions can actually bring forth our own rebirth, both as individuals and as a group. Is this what the Maya are trying to inspire us to do? If so, what might some of these rebirths look like?

For example, one rebirth might be the shift from competition to cooperation, which is a shift onto the path of peace. This rebirth often leads to a shift from an approach where we try to build a peaceful world by forcefully manipulating the outer conditions of the world to an approach where we focus on creating peace within ourselves. We let this inner peace attract a more peaceful world around us while we gently continue our matching activities. This is basically the discovery of conscious creation, as compared to the reactive process of unconscious creation that we see all throughout society. So in this rebirth, we are transformed into conscious creators of peace.

Another rebirth might be the shift that takes us beyond the mundane mode of existence where we basically pursue what we like and we try to avoid what we don’t like. Typically, we deal with an ever-changing array of challenges day after day, week after week and year after year, and the burden of survival can become so heavy that it is difficult to find joy. But with this shift, we realize that we really can emotionally embrace all of life rather than simply embracing our preferences and emotionally “casting into hell” what we dislike. We discover a deep peace within us because we understand and use our power to embrace the whole of life exactly as it is. While we still work towards our preferences, we do not react negatively if they do not manifest in the way that we had hoped. This produces a fundamental transformation of our personal experience of life and we feel like we have become a completely new person. This rebirth ignites our passion for life and we become fully alive at every moment!

So my approach to unlocking the mystery of 2012 is to think like a Maya skywatcher and to understand our world and the mystery of life like a Maya shaman. While I do not claim that I have been able to do either of these things to a high degree, that is what I am striving for and this essay is the result of my best effort to do so.

Incidentally, just because an ancient culture had shamans does not mean that their worldview was perfect or that their entire society functioned at a high level of consciousness. In this regard, please let me quickly talk about one of the most gruesome aspects of the Maya culture: human sacrifice. I do not know when this practice started but it is clear that they had lost their moral compass by this point in time. Perhaps these rituals arose significantly after the Long Count calendar and the rebirth metaphors were put into place. In this essay, I am exploring the possibility that in the distant past, at least some of the Maya shamans were mystics and perhaps even fully enlightened beings. But even enlightened beings pass away and frequently those left behind do not fully understand the mystical view offered by these enlightened beings. As time passed, this

message might have become misunderstood or even ignored completely. This might be what happened with the Maya.

Now that we have an overview, let's continue by taking a look at how the astronomy of a single day over two thousand years in their future attracted the attention of the ancient Maya.

The Driving Question Behind the Creation of the Long Count Calendar

Let's go way back in time and imagine being a Maya skywatcher two thousand years ago. With excellent viewing conditions, which the Maya certainly had, we would clearly see the spectacular section of the sky containing the center of our Milky Way galaxy. Here we see a massive ball of bright lights with a dark swath intruding into it and this swath is called the dark rift. There is nothing else in the night sky that looks even remotely like this section of the sky. It is quite stunning and very intriguing. We would be drawn to it and stories would be created about it. For the Maya, the massive ball of bright lights at the center of the galaxy was seen as the pregnant belly of the mother of creation and the dark rift was seen as the birth canal.



Here we are looking towards the bright center region of our Milky Way galaxy. The dark rift is easily visible with the naked eye.

After careful observation, we would learn that the sun traveled across the galactic birth canal in late November. It would do this once a year and each year it would do this a little bit closer to the day of the winter solstice. This would lead us to ask:

What year in the distant future will have the sun in the middle of the birth canal on the same day as the winter solstice?

By carefully measuring this shift, which is about 20 minutes per year, we could calculate that this special event would happen in the years around 2012. This is the obvious and natural way in which the Maya were attracted to a point in time over two thousand of years in their future. Later you will easily learn about the stunning precision that was required to make the Long Count calendar. And yes, I do mean stunning!

For those of you who want a better understanding of why the sun travels across the dark rift, let's take a closer look at the way it works.

The Earth's Orbit Creates the Galactic Rebirth of the Sun

Throughout the year, due to the orbit of the earth around the sun, from the viewpoint of earth, the sun appears to be continuously moving slowly against the background stars and it is this apparent motion that creates the visual illusion of the sun crossing the dark rift since the dark rift is part of the fixed background of the stars.

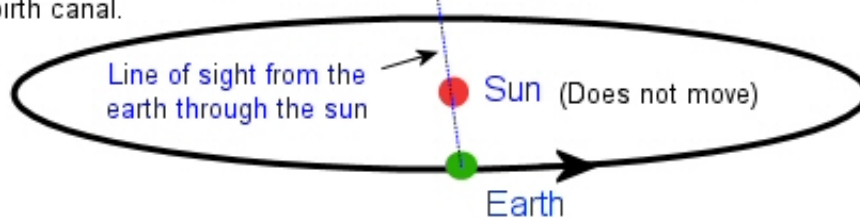
Here is a diagram that shows what's involved.

Earth's Orbit Causes Galactic Rebirth of the Sun

Imagine the sun in the middle of a big tabletop with the earth always on this tabletop as it orbits the sun.

Metaphorically, the Maya saw the dark rift as the galactic birth canal.

Imagine the dark rift to be very far away and fixed in its position.



When viewed from above, the earth's orbit is counterclockwise.

Once a year, the earth orbits into a position where you can draw a line from the earth through the sun and into the middle of the dark rift. This creates the visual image of the sun being in the middle of the "galactic birth canal."

And here is another diagram that helps explain it:

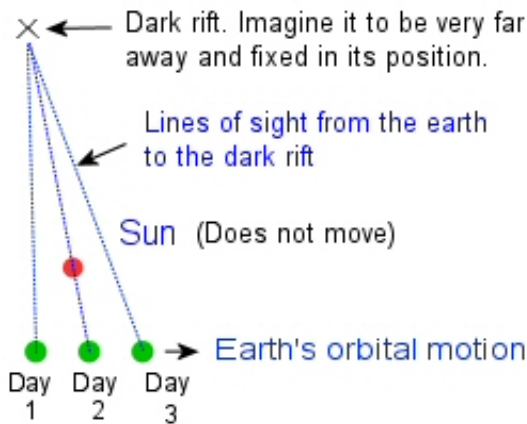
The Earth's Orbit Causes the Sun's Apparent Motion Across the Dark Rift

Day 1, Day 2 and Day 3 are the three days under consideration.

Day 1 - The sun is seen to the right of the dark rift.

Day 2 - The sun is seen in the middle of the dark rift.

Day 3 - The sun is seen to the left of the dark rift.



In this view, the earth moves to the right and this creates the visual illusion that the sun is moving to the left across the dark rift. But the sun is not moving; it is just a visual illusion. Only the earth is moving.

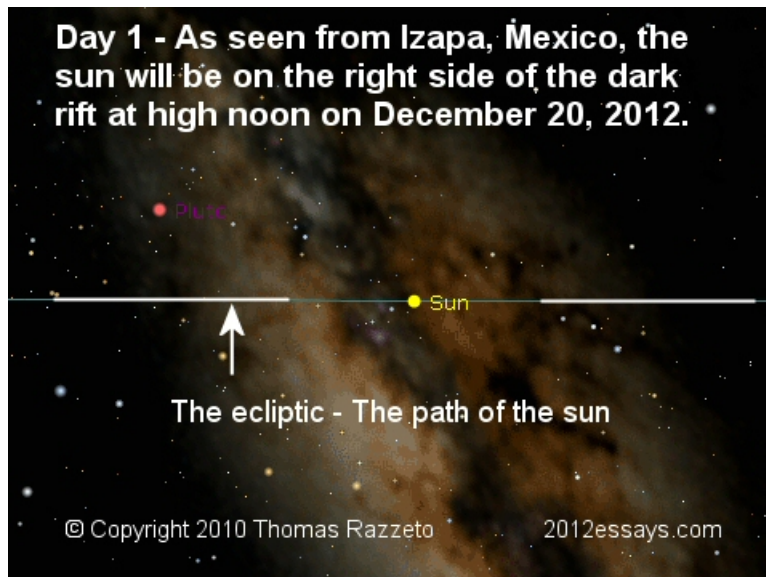
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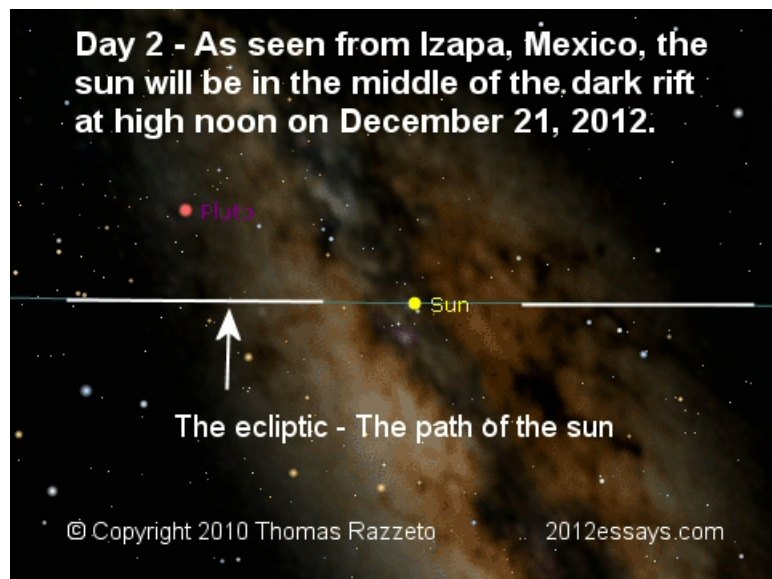
Not to scale

Here are the screenshots from my astronomy program that show the sun crossing the dark rift in 2012. Each day, the sun appears to move a bit more to the left against the background stars.

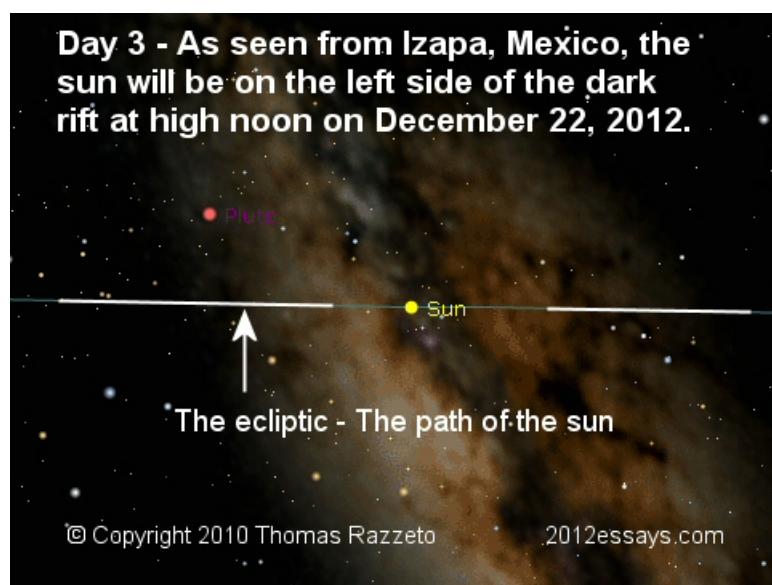
Here is the first day:



Here is the second day:



And finally, here is the third day:



See how precise this is? Just one day makes a difference in the perfect timing of the galactic rebirth of the sun!

The following simple exercise will help you correctly understand the “motion” of the sun across the dark rift. Hold your left arm straight out with your thumb straight up. Your thumb will be like the dark rift. Imagine it to be very far away. Now, close one eye and hold your right index finger straight up about halfway between your thumb and your open eye. Make it so that your finger appears just to the right of your thumb. The tip of your finger will be like the sun. Now, without moving either your thumb or your finger, move your eye from your left to your right. Your eye is like the earth orbiting the sun. You will see your finger appear to move from the right side of your thumb to the left side of your thumb.

This is just like the sun crossing the dark rift. At the middle of the crossing, your eye is perfectly lined up with your finger and your thumb. While the alignment is real, it is an illusion that your finger moves across your thumb; only your eye is moving, not your finger. So it is with the galactic rebirth of the sun; only the earth is moving, not the sun. Since this point is so important and so often misunderstood, I want to be perfectly clear: the sun does not actually cross the dark rift, it only appears to do so from our viewpoint on earth. But it is this viewpoint that gives us our experience and it is our experience that is so important to us!

While the rebirth of the sun is a very important metaphor for the Maya, they also have another metaphor for the sun crossing this region of the Milky Way. It is seen as father sun mating with the galactic mother. In 2012, this special lovemaking will result in the birth of what the Maya call “a new world age,” which is represented by a new cycle of the Long Count calendar. Yes indeed, lovemaking and creation are at the core of 2012, not death and destruction.

The Sacred Triple Rebirth of the Sun

Now let's take a close look and see how the astronomy of 2012 provides an excellent foundation for the Maya triple rebirth metaphor.

Everyday when the sun sets, it goes below the horizon, seemingly under the ground of the earth, and we are left to endure a dark, cold night. Metaphorically, it can be said that the sun leaves our world and travels into the underworld, where it is said to be dead for the duration of the night. Yet at dawn, it rises above the ground and is reborn into our world bringing forth the light and heat we all need to stay alive. Obviously, if the sun were to no longer rise, all of life would perish and because of this, the sun has been used for thousands of years by cultures all around the world as a symbol of the Creator's sustaining love.

Since the sunrise is so frequent, it is often taken for granted, but all of us of course know that this rebirth is truly vital. In addition to that, sunrises are often quite beautiful. In fact, this astronomical shift can be one of nature's most dramatic display of beauty with its blaze of red and pink, yellow and gold. This is the shift that naturally awakens us from our slumber, which, by the way, can also be seen as our own daily rebirth since we, too, appear to be dead while we sleep through the night.

Next is the winter solstice, which can be seen as the rebirth of the sun in the time frame of the year since the length of the day will now start to grow longer. If the days were to continue to grow shorter, the cold winter would only tighten its grip and we would all perish. So this rebirth is also vital.

Our comfortable homes insulate us from the long, harsh winter nights but when you think of both the daily and yearly rebirths from the perspective of cultures with significantly less physical comfort, you can appreciate that these rebirths of the sun would be experienced in a very tactile way. Add to that the rhythm of the harvest and you can certainly understand the strong motivation to celebrate these turning points in the cycles of time.

The third rebirth occurs when the sun moves into the middle of the galactic birth canal, the dark rift, and this can be referred to as the galactic rebirth of the sun and again, this happens once a year. So the three rebirths of the sun can be referred to as the daily rebirth, the solstice rebirth and the galactic rebirth.

A triple rebirth of the sun occurs in the years around 2012 when the solstice rebirth and the galactic rebirth happen on the same calendar day.

By the way, the solstice rebirth happens once every tropical year and the galactic rebirth happens once every sidereal year. A sidereal year is about 20 minutes longer than a tropical year and this difference is caused by the slow wobble of the earth's axis. This is what causes these two rebirths to come together in the years around 2012. I go into this more in my other essays but for right now, let's just continue.

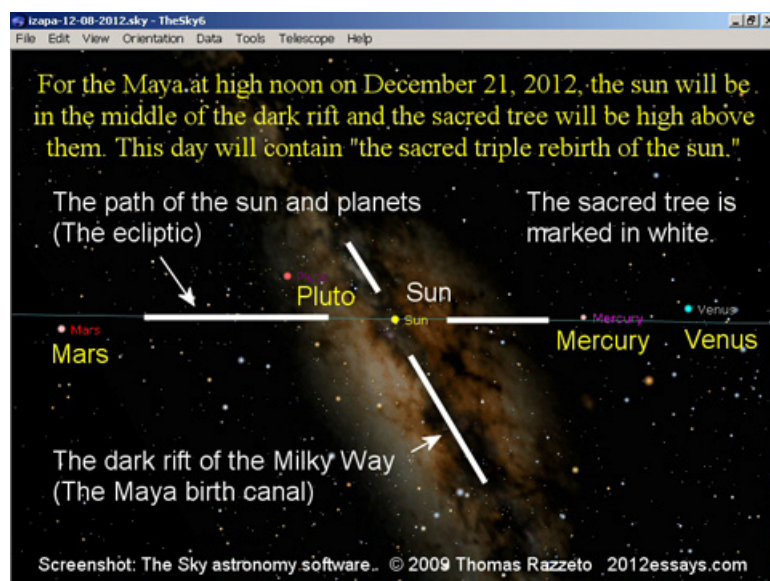
Now, let's add a little more to our desired triple rebirth scenario. The Maya would most certainly want to celebrate the sun's presence in the middle of the galactic birth canal at a time when this will actually be happening in the sky above them - in other words, during the day. Since the sun is thought to be dead at night, if this astronomical event happened at night, it would not be very useful for their metaphor or very interesting for the purpose of their festivities; they would want the sun to be alive during the rebirth celebration!

So the driving question now becomes: when will the sun be in the middle of the dark rift on the day of the winter solstice while in the sky over the Maya? If there is more than one year that fits these qualifications, what year will also include an interesting planetary configuration? This leads us to the sacred tree.

The Sacred Tree

The sacred tree is in the Maya folklore and other cultures around the world also concern themselves with it. It has several names such as "the sacred cross," "the tree of life," "the sacred tree of life," and "the world tree." The Maya sacred tree has been shown to be an astronomical reference to the cross in the sky made by the dark rift and the path of the sun, as seen from earth. So the tree of life is made out of two crossbars and it is part of the fixed background of the stars.

It just so happens that on December 21, 2012 at high noon, the sacred tree will be perfectly oriented in the sky over the Maya. Since the brightness of the sun will obscure the stars of the Milky Way, we need to push a magic button to let us see the Milky Way, the dark rift and the planets near the sun at this time. When I used my astronomy software program to see this, I was quite stunned. Here is what I saw:



The sacred tree will be above the Maya with the sun exactly between Mars and Venus while in the middle of the dark rift, the Maya birth canal.

At high noon, the sacred tree will contain a large planetary configuration centered around the sun, which will be in the middle of the dark rift. If we draw a horizontal line through the sun, we have one of the crossbars of the tree of life. On the left side of this crossbar, we will have the planet Mars. To the right of Mars will be Pluto and then the sun. To the right of the sun will be Mercury and then at the far right of this crossbar, we will have Venus. While Pluto is never visible to the naked eye, the Maya were very familiar with the other three planets and they were so interested in Venus that they had a calendar to track its motion.

Now, I call this crossbar the crossbar of light since all these objects either reflect or give off light. The sun will be virtually exactly in the middle of Mars and Venus so this crossbar will be very balanced around the sun. The dark rift makes what I call the crossbar of darkness. At midday, this crossbar is not exactly vertical but it is 30 degrees shy of vertical.

In this way, we see that the tree of life is made up of one crossbar of darkness and one crossbar of light and thus it represents the yin-yang quality of duality exhibited all throughout creation. And right on the crossing point of these two crossbars on this special day, we have the sun, which brings us the light and warmth of the day when it rises and the darkness and coolness of the night when it sets. Because of this, the sun can be seen as the most powerful creator of the duality that we witness in our world. It even bringing us life itself and invites us to inquire about the most mysterious duality we all face: our very own life and death.

Incidentally, we should also take note of the location of the center of the galaxy, the Maya womb of creation. On this day at high noon, it is near the bottom portion of the dark rift acting as the source, the root system, of the sacred tree of life. So everything comes forth from the non-dual source into our world of duality! What a beautiful metaphor! This makes much more sense than the false yet often repeated statement that the sun will be on top of the center of the galaxy on this special day.

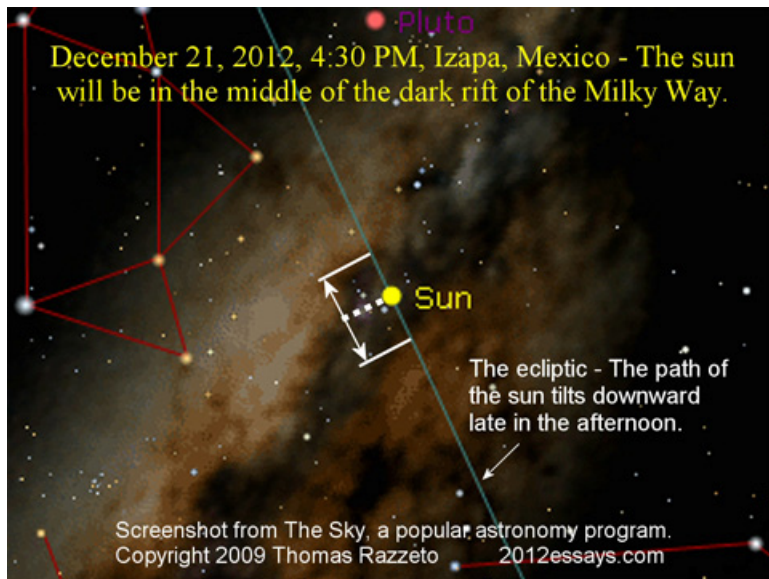
When we take all of this into consideration, we see that there is absolutely no doubt that December 21, 2012 offers an excellent solution to the driving question behind the creation of the Long Count calendar!

What Will Actually Happen on December 21, 2012

As seen from Izapa, Mexico, Venus will start things off by rising above the horizon at 4:46 AM. It will be extremely easy to see in the black predawn sky and it will lead the sacred tree on its journey across the sky throughout this special day. At 5:11 AM, the moment of the winter solstice will arrive and the sun will be reborn with the days now becoming longer. Next, Mercury will rise at 5:23 AM and it will be visible even with dawn's increasing light. It will be the second object on the sacred tree. A little more than an hour later, the sun will enter our world with a blaze of color at 6:29 AM to become the most important object on the sacred tree. Obviously, by this time, the sky will be so bright that both Mercury and Venus will be obscured from view but nonetheless, they will continue their journey across the sky. Pluto, which is never visible to the naked eye, will rise at 7:03 AM and finally Mars will rise at 8:24 AM, making it the last object on the sacred tree. Notice that the sun will rise 103 minutes after Venus and that Mars will rise 115 minutes after the sun. This means that the sun will be very close to the middle of these two planets.

As the morning progresses, the sacred tree will rise higher in the sky and move from the eastern horizon to its highest point in the southern sky. As I have already touched on, during the middle four hours of the day, the sacred tree will be in its most ideal orientation since it will be high in the sky and reasonably upright with the center of the galaxy - the root system - at the bottom. This is not some tiny constellation; it will take up a large part of the sky over the Maya.

For the rest of the afternoon, the sacred tree will sink slowly towards the western horizon. As it does so, the sun will continue to shift slowly against the background stars. It looks to my eye like the sun will be virtually exactly in the middle of the Maya birth canal at about 4:30 PM. Let's zoom in for a closer look.



This is it! The position of the sun in the middle of the dark rift, the Maya birth canal, on the same day as the winter solstice plus the unique configuration of the sacred tree are the reasons the Maya picked this exact day!

But let's continue since there is still a little bit more. At 5:44 PM, the sun will set and Mother Nature herself may provide another spectacular scene of glorious colors. Finally, at 7:37 PM, Mars will be visible against the night sky as it sinks below the horizon, marking the end of the sacred tree's journey across the sky on this fantastic day. I can only imagine that the Maya celebration will continue throughout most of the night! Notice how the Maya will be able to see Venus and Mercury before dawn and Mar after sunset. So even though they will not be able to see these planets on the sacred tree during the daytime, they will be able to see them at some point during this calendar day. *What the Maya can actually see is crucial in understanding 2012.*

The position of the sun in the middle of the dark rift on the same day as the winter solstice is the reason the Maya looked towards the years around 2012. But it is the special configuration of the sacred tree on the day of the winter solstice of 2012 that completes the story about why the Maya picked this exact day. Some 2012 researchers talk about a "zone" of years and this is because they ignore the sacred tree. It is the additional consideration of the sacred tree that "snaps" the date of interest from a zone of years *to this precise day!*

I like to think of it like this. If you are in a huge wilderness area and you find a road and you follow it and it suddenly comes to an end, you may wonder why it ended at that particular spot. If you look up and see a beautiful lake, you can speculate with reasonable certainty that the lake is the reason the road ends where it does. But if instead there is no lake and everything around you looks the same as the general area, it might remain a mystery as to why the road ends where it does. Yet the Maya calendar is not like that. On the exact day that the calendar restarts, this spectacular astronomy is found in the sky over the Maya. This is the beautiful lake! After several years of research, this for me is clearly why the Maya restart their calendar on this exact day; in my opinion, this is beyond a reasonable doubt.

The sun crossing this region of the Milky Way was seen by the Maya as father sun mating with the galactic mother. In 2012, this special lovemaking will result in the birth of what the Maya called “a new world age,” which is just another way of saying a new cycle of the Long Count calendar. So we see that lovemaking and creation is at the core of 2012, not death and destruction.

By pointing to the sacred triple rebirth of the sun, the Maya are pointing to cycles within cycles. Yes, these natural cycles are the rhythms of nature that bring us life itself and they will repeat forever. But by pointing to this beautiful and unique configuration of the sacred tree on this special day, the Maya are reminding us that each and every moment is unique and precious even though they arise within cycles. If you only consider the presence of the sun in the middle of the birth canal on the day of the winter solstice, you will see that this pattern of the triple rebirth of the sun will occur again 26,000 years from now. But when you consider the position of the sun and the planets on the sacred tree, you have an event that will never repeat; it is totally unique.

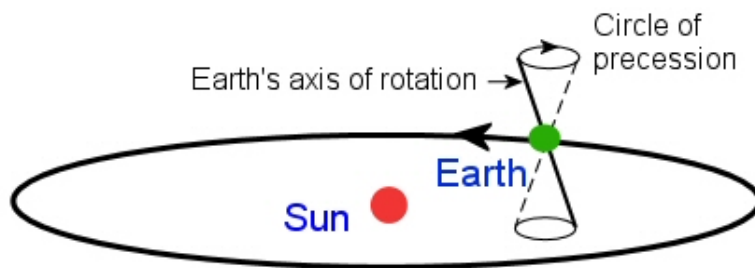
If you only focus on the repetitive patterns of nature, you might think that you are stuck like a cog on a wheel in a big machine that plays itself over and over again. But when you realize that within these vital cycles, each moment is unique, you will realize that you are alive and dynamically participating in a unique way in the mystery of life at every moment. Yes, every moment is sacred and the special configuration of the sacred tree on this exceptional day contains a beautiful built-in reminder to that effect.

Precession of the Earth

I want to take a minute to cover some additional evidence that the Long Count calendar is based on astronomy. As I mentioned earlier, the earth is slowly wobbling on its axis like a top that is not standing straight up. This is called “precession” and again, it takes about 26,000 years for the earth to complete one wobble. This period of time has several names and one of them is “the great year.”

Earth's Precession - It Wobbles Like a Top

The earth completes one wobble every 25,800 years.
The axis of rotation remains tilted by 23.5 degrees.



As the earth orbits the sun, it also slowly wobbles. When viewed from above, the earth's orbit is counterclockwise but the direction of precession is clockwise.

The Maya Long Count calendar is 5,125 years long and five cycles of the Long Count calendar add up to the length of the great year to within one half of one percent. Since the Maya frequently talk about all five cycles and some of their artwork reflects this awareness, I don't think that this is just a coincidence.



A five-pointed Maya star. Five cycles of the Maya calendar add up to the great year.

This precise correlation between the length of the great year and the length of the calendar plus the fact that the Maya exactly hit the winter solstice was what convinced me that the actual astronomy of 2012 was worth a thorough investigation. The more I dug into it, the more amazing it all became! And if the calendar is not intentionally related to precession, what on earth could it be for? Surely the Maya did not use it to grow their corn! Why would they need to track such a long cycle?

To correctly pinpoint a winter solstice from several thousand years away shows a precise understanding of the length of the year. And again, the length of the Long Count calendar clearly demonstrates knowledge of the great year. So it seems to me that the Maya are saying, *“Yes, we understand the year and yes, we understand the great year. We have extremely precise values for both.”* But it even goes beyond that. By picking the year 2012 as the year when the sun will be in the middle of the dark rift on the day of the winter solstice, they also show that they knew where they were in the precessional cycle.

A Bigger Idea: The Rebirth of the Great Year

I find the triple rebirth of the sun to be fascinating. But perhaps the Maya are actually using it to point to something even bigger: the rebirth of the great year. Without going into the details here, it turns out that we can metaphorically state that the great year also has four seasons, just like our regular year. In this way, we find that the great year will soon be reborn during its own winter solstice and that December 21, 2012 is an excellent choice as the time when this will happen. So on the day when the calendar itself is reborn, we have the sacred triple rebirth of the sun and the rebirth of the great year! How fantastic!

Now we see that from the viewpoint of the Maya, December 21, 2012 is more than just another winter solstice; it is the most important winter solstice of all the winter solstices throughout the entire great year. This therefore makes this day the single most important day in the entire great year! There are over 9.4 million days in the great year and the Maya have picked this day as the day when the great year is reborn!

The concept of precession is in the Maya mythology and also in their calendar. The calendar's restart date undeniably contains all this amazing astronomy that is keyed to precession and the position of the planets. The poetic beauty is breathtaking; the actual astronomy is profoundly precise! How can all this be just a coincidence? I find it to be completely mind-blowing!

To my knowledge, I am the only researcher who describes the special event of 2012 exactly like I do. Some researchers focus on 1998 and the years surrounding it. But I don't think that that is what the Maya were trying to pinpoint with their calendar, though missing it by 14 years. I think that they successfully hit exactly what they were aiming at: the sacred triple rebirth of the sun unfolding in the sky over the Maya!

An Extremely Precise Value for the Length of the Year

And now let's go further into the question of how difficult it was for the Maya to restart their calendar exactly on this particular winter solstice from over two thousand years away. By the way, we should note that although the calendar has a length of over five thousand years, it was put into use just over two thousand years ago. This in itself provides evidence that it was shifted on purpose to perfectly align its restart date to the winter solstice of 2012, while still showing knowledge of the length of the great year.

Now, imagine that it is the winter solstice and that you and I want to make a calendar that restarts precisely on the winter solstice ten years from now. We would just multiply the number of days in a year by ten to get the correct number of days that our calendar would need.

But if we think that the year is exactly 365 days long, rather than the more correct value of 365.2422 days long, then you can see that in just ten years, we would be off by more than two days. (3,650 days compared with 3,652.422 days.) And, if instead, we want the calendar to restart in one hundred years or one thousand years, you can see that we would need to know the length of the year with greater and greater precision.

To intentionally hit this particular winter solstice from over two thousand years away, it turns out that the Maya would have needed to know the length of the year to within 45 seconds! This is like measuring the width of the United States to within 20 feet or the distance from Los Angeles to Tokyo to within 40 feet! In terms of a percentage, this is 99.9999 percent correct! In my opinion, this is not merely remarkable; this is absolutely stunning!

But this is only one aspect of the astronomy that needed to be known to a very precise level! The Maya also needed to know the rate of precession and the amount of shift required to bring the galactic rebirth onto the same day as the solstice rebirth. In addition to that, they also needed extremely precise knowledge to accurately predict the positions of the planets on the sacred tree. In my opinion, all of this is simply not possible without sophisticated scientific instruments and this opens up the complicated questions of how the Maya knew this amazing astronomy and how they constructed their calendar, but I will leave those questions for another time. Here my focus is the actual astronomy of 2012 and what I think the Maya are trying to tell us. But before we move on to the Maya's message of rebirth, I have a few more points that I would like to discuss.

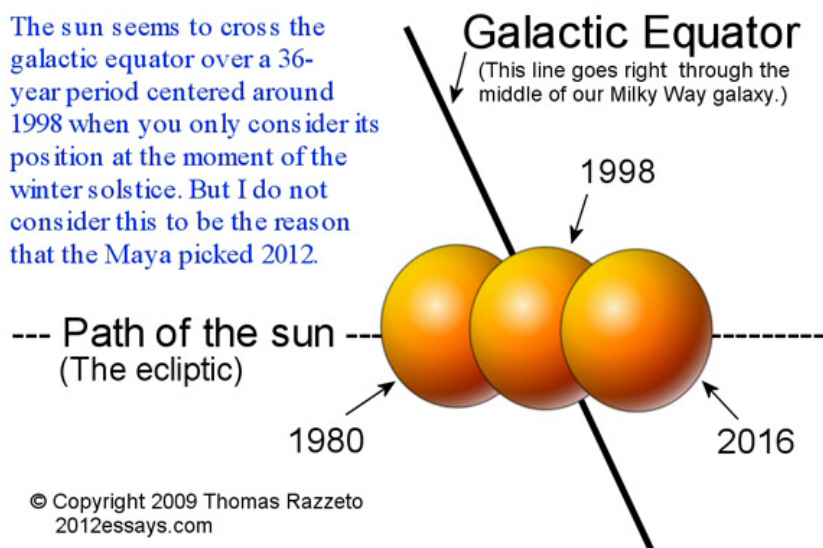
John Major Jenkins's "Alignment Zone" and "Era-2012"

It is very important for me to point out that John Major Jenkins was the first person to link the restart date of the Maya calendar to an astronomical event driven by precession and he refers to this event as a "galactic alignment." John presented his ideas in 1995 in his book *The Center of Mayan Time*. John is well aware of the Maya's metaphor of the dark rift as the birth canal and he clearly sees the sun's presence in the dark rift as a rebirth. But there is something astronomers call the galactic equator that is very near the middle of the dark rift and this is what John focused on, perhaps because its exact location is precisely defined by astronomers. Strictly speaking, the dark rift is not even an astronomical object and because of this, astronomers pay little attention to it. It is the result of dust blocking the light traveling to us from the center of the galaxy. This dust is not in our atmosphere; it is scattered throughout deep space between us and the center of the galaxy. This creates the irregularly shaped dark section of the sky and as such, it does not have a precisely defined midline.

At the same time that John was solidifying his galactic alignment thesis, independent astronomers verified that the center of the disk of the sun would be almost exactly on the galactic equator at the precise moment of the winter solstice in the year 1998. John noticed that this alignment would occur repeatedly in the years around 1998 with only slight variation from one year to the next. Because of this, John decided to pick a range of 36 years that he centered around 1998 as the intended target of the Long Count calendar and he refers to these years as the "alignment zone" or "era-2012." During these years, the disk of the sun, as seen from earth, will be touching the galactic equator at the moment of the winter solstice. Let's take a look:

John Major Jenkins's Alignment Zone

The sun seems to cross the galactic equator over a 36-year period centered around 1998 when you only consider its position at the moment of the winter solstice. But I do not consider this to be the reason that the Maya picked 2012.



Here is the way I like to explain it. At the moment of the winter solstice of each year, imagine that you take one picture of the sun and mark the position of the galactic equator. I call these pictures "time slices." If you play all these time slices like a movie, you will "see" the sun move across the galactic equator over this 36-year period. But notice that this collection of time slices is not something that you would actually see unfold in the sky above you. It is an unnatural way of "seeing" since you are only "watching" one moment per year. And what you are missing is the sun sweeping *to the left* for almost a complete circle throughout the year. So this is an artificially created scenario that has a solid foundation of truth but it can be easily misunderstood as the sun slowly crossing the galactic equator by moving *to the right*.

I have tremendous respect for John as a person, as a researcher and as a scholar. While his work linking the astronomy to the calendar was groundbreaking, I do not find this zone approach to be very satisfying. With so much precision being demonstrated by the creators of the calendar, I seriously doubted that they missed their intended target by 14 years, even though that is still a very small error. I felt there must be something special about the exact day of the winter solstice of 2012 as seen from the specific location of the Maya. This is why I went further with my own original research and thinking and I came to the conclusion that both the triple rebirth of the sun and the unique configuration of the sacred tree flying through the sky over the Maya on that special day was the target of the calendar.

Both the restart date and the place where the calendar was created are important. We cannot ignore that this is a Maya calendar, not an Egyptian calendar or a global calendar. While the sun will be exactly in the middle of the dark rift during the day for the Maya, this event will happen during the night for people on the other side of the world. So the triple rebirth metaphor will not play out very well for those locations. But this is not a problem since the Maya were only concerned with what will be over them during that day, not what will be over others elsewhere.

My view focuses on the center of the dark rift, not the galactic equator, although again, these two things are very close to each other. But more importantly, my view focuses on what will happen on that one day over the Maya, not what will happen over a long period of time as seen from the earth in general.

Please consider the fact that no one can ever look up into the sky and see the galactic equator for it is as invisible as the equator of the earth. Both equators are precisely located by scientists yet both are just imaginary reference lines. It is important to note that the Maya *could* look up into the sky at certain times and actually see the dark rift with their naked eye and this makes the astronomy useful for their metaphorical folklore. I think this is an essential point in understanding 2012.

The idea that the Maya restart their calendar because of the combination of the triple rebirth of the sun and the unique configuration of the sacred tree is to the best of my knowledge, original with me. While other people are aware of the solar rebirths and the sacred tree in general, to my knowledge no one has connected them to 2012 like I have.

I want to be very clear. John was the first person to show that the astronomy and the calendar are related via precession and all his astronomy is factually correct. He is not wrong in any way; it's just that he is emphasizing a different aspect of the astronomy than I am. My focus is much tighter in time and much more visual. His approach leads to the years around 1998; my approach leads to the exact day of the winter solstice of 2012.

As a side note, consider that in about 130 B.C., the same time frame as the creation of the Maya calendar, the Greek astronomer Hipparchus estimated precession to be 36,000 years or less. He was off by 10,000 years! Even so, Hipparchus is very famous for his work on precession and he wrote two books on the subject. He is considered by many people to be the greatest astronomer of antiquity. I can only add that it's a good thing he was not in charge of creating the Maya calendar!

Skit About Two Ancient Maya Talking About 2012

Next, I would like to share a very quick skit about two ancient Maya talking about 2012 and then I want to offer my opinion about a possible upward shift in human consciousness.

Okay, here's the skit:

"Hey, have you heard? There is gonna be a really fantastic thing up in the sky!"

"Fabulous! I love really cool things like that. When's it gonna be?"

"Oh, it won't be for a while yet. The guys are telling me it'll be in about ... oh ... two thousand years. But they know the exact day!"

"Wow! That's stunning! But ... that's a really long time from now."

"Well, yeah, ... but it's super important and I don't want you to miss it. So put it on your calendar!"

The point of the skit is again the very unusual focus on a point in time over two thousand years in the future. Why would anyone care? I think that they would only do this because of the *certainty* of actual astronomy of that day and because of the *timeless* nature of their metaphorical message. *It is the timeless nature of the message that makes it so profoundly relevant to the Maya so long ago.*

But as I have already mentioned, many people believe that a sudden upward shift in human consciousness in 2012 is the core meaning of the metaphor and they sometimes offer the example of the hundredth monkey as a demonstration of how this hopeful scenario can quickly become widespread. While I do think that we always have the opportunity to shift our consciousness, both as individuals and as a group, I do not know if this is going to happen in 2012. It reminds me of the harmonic convergence in the summer of 1987. Back then, there was plenty of talk in the New Age community about a global shift into harmony. Even though it doesn't seem to me that there was any such shift at that time, I am not discouraged and I continue to work towards personal and world peace. So I am hopeful about our future, even though I do not really know what is going to happen to us.

The Hundredth Monkey

And since it is mentioned so often, I want to comment on the story of the hundredth monkey as made popular by Ken Keyes Jr. and others. To be blunt, it did not happen as they reported it. Yes, scientist did study how wild monkeys on a group of islands reacted when people started to provide the monkeys with potatoes delivered to the beaches in wooden crates. Since the sand got on the potatoes, some of the young monkeys began to wash them in the sea. But there was no sudden shift to widespread potato washing once a certain number of monkeys did so or a psychic transfer of knowledge from one island to another. Upon closer inspection, the popular story is revealed as a gross distortion of the facts.

And to go even further, others have pointed out that the hypothesis that an idea will take hold of an entire group once it reaches a certain level of acceptance might be internally conflicted, depending upon the circumstances. After all, if the minority condition starts to grow, it will soon become the majority condition. At that point, wouldn't the other condition, which is now in the minority, start its growth? If so, the two conditions would just swing back and forth or reach equilibrium.

But people are not really concerned about potato washing or abstract opposing ideas; they are concerned about consciousness, kindness and peace. Is there something that we can say about these things having a threshold effect? I do not know but I will try my best no matter what. Why should it matter if there is a threshold effect? My motivation to be kind is just as strong either way. Kindness is shared in the moment in small settings without expectation of any particular future condition. The richness of that sharing is immense.

Now of course, your good cheer and kind actions can inspire others to do likewise so I wholeheartedly support this! And it is just as important to note that you yourself can immediately feel the uplifting effects of a positive attitude. So yes, freely express your values of kindness and caring at every opportunity. You never know what will unfold simply because you took a few seconds to smile at a stranger or one minute to share a few kind words.

With that thought in the back of our minds, let's move on to part two, the mystical nature of the Maya's timeless message of transformation and rebirth.

Part 2: Understanding the Mystical Aspects of 2012

In order to recognize the mystical aspects of 2012, we need to know a little bit about mysticism itself. The deepest mystical idea that I see in 2012 is the awakening to a new idea of what the fundamental self really is. When we re-identify with our true self, we are reborn in the most profound way. But there can be other rebirths along the path of self-discovery. In the very beginning of this essay, I mentioned one of the most important: our rebirth as conscious creators of peace. Since I would like to do my best to help both of these rebirths come forward for all of us, I have included some material that covers these topics. So please allow me to develop these ideas in a way that at times may not appear to be directly relevant to 2012. But once you have a better understanding of mysticism, it will be easier for you to see why 2012 can be said to be mystical in nature.

So let's continue.

The Wonder and Awe of the Miracle of Life Itself!

Did the Maya make the calendar simply because they could even though it was difficult? Was it a way of boasting or did they want to give us something, perhaps an invaluable treasure? The calendar clearly points to the rhythms of nature. What could they possibly want us to think or do in response to pondering the continuously reborn cycles of the day, the year and the great year? Their metaphor involves lovemaking and birth. Do they want us to contemplate the question of life itself? Do they want us to ponder the process of creation and the source of our very being? Do they want us to contemplate who we are at the deepest level?

We have all seen a newborn baby. While holding this new unique, precious person, many of us have been awestruck by the thought that this is indeed a miracle. And yet, how many of us have forgotten that all of us have never stopped being this miracle? When we look into the world around us, each person we see is a miracle and when we look into the mirror, we see a reflection of one of the most interesting examples of this miracle.

Perhaps the Maya are simply pointing to the rhythms of nature as a way of pointing to the miracle of life itself. The motion of nature is the motion of life! Without providing us with simple, obvious answers about what will happen to us in 2012, perhaps their intention is to inspire us into being in a state of wonder and awe about life as a profound mystery.

Life can be difficult. It takes hard work to maintain our existence on the physical plane. This daily burden can wear people down and even break their spirit. In addition to that, it seems that some people lose their sense of wonder when people explain things with science. Indeed, in today's world, many people believe that science has explained what life itself actually is. But has science really explained the mystery of life? Do you personally feel that you know what life really is? This not knowing is an essential aspect of the creation of this state of wonder and awe and this state is one of the treasures that is waiting for all those who dive deeply into this mystery.

2012 Is a Timeless Metaphor About Transformation and Rebirth

I think that the Maya are trying to inspire us into being fully alive and they want us to recognize the opportunities that we always have in every moment, not just in 2012. For me, the sacred triple rebirth of the sun is a timeless metaphor about spiritual awakening. It is about what can happen now, not what will happen then. For me, 2012 is about holding each and every new moment in wonder and awe as the eternal now is continually born anew. For me, 2012 is about awakening to our eternal awareness.

Earlier, I mentioned that according to John Major Jenkins, the purest meaning of 2012 is found by examining the stone monuments and carvings in Izapa, Mexico, the birthplace of the Long Count calendar. This is the most immediate and primary evidence left by the Maya. In order for us to tune into what the Maya are trying to tell us, let's look a bit more at what is found at this important site, which is located in the southernmost tip of Mexico in the state of Chiapas.

On the sacred ceremonial grounds, we find an important ball court that points to the location on the horizon where the sun rises on the day of the winter solstice. Many of you already know that the sun does not rise from the same place everyday. On the summer solstice, it rises from the northernmost point and on the winter solstice, it rises from the southernmost point. During the year, it moves back and forth between these two points. And for thousands of years, this ball court has pointed to the rising sun on the day of its yearly rebirth. Yes, once a year, this ball court simultaneously marks the daily rebirth and the solstice rebirth - a double rebirth of the sun.

The game that is played on this court adds even more to our understanding. John Major Jenkins explains that the long, narrow ball court is a symbol for the Milky Way. Halfway down the ball court is a stone ring, which serves as the goal. Notice that we have gone halfway down the court; in other words, we are in the center region of the Milky Way. So the goal ring represents the dark rift near the center of the Milky Way. The ball is the sun. The game is over when one team puts the ball through the center of the ring, the galactic rebirth of the sun. When we add the fact that the court is oriented towards the rising winter solstice sun, we see that the game is a metaphor for the triple rebirth of the sun in 2012. This is remarkably simple yet very rich in meaning. And let's continue just a little bit more. At one end of the ball court, there is a throne, which gives the king the best view of this special sunrise. On the front of this throne is a carving of a large round ball, symbolic of the sun in the birth canal coming forth into our world.



Stela 11 in Izapa - A sun god showing the beginning of a new world age.

While there are other references to the astronomical triple rebirth metaphor in Izapa, I would like to give just one more example: the stone carving on Stela 11. Here we have the solar god emerging from the mouth of the Bufo toad with his arms and hands fully outstretched as if he is showing the full length of something. John Major Jenkins discusses this stela on page 67 of his 2009 book, *The 2012 Story*. John explains that the mouth of the toad is simultaneously the symbolic portal to the underworld and also the physical dark rift of the Milky Way. All things come into our physical world - "the world of the seen" - from "the unseen world" or the

underworld. The sun emerging from the underworld is a birth or a rebirth and this happens, as we of course know, when the sun is in the middle of the dark rift, the metaphorical birth canal, the portal between the physical and the spiritual. But there is one more crucial point. The stela is facing the location on the horizon where the sun will rise on the day of the winter solstice, which again is a double rebirth of the sun. So this stela's image and position taken together clearly point to the triple rebirth of the sun in 2012. Again, this is so simple yet its full implications are profound.

The deity's outstretched arms show the beginning of a new period of time - a new world age. John and I differ slightly on this point. He states that it is an ending of an age while I hold it as a new beginning. In my view, December 20, 2012 is the last day of the current Long Count calendar cycle and this of course means that December 21, 2012 is the first day of the new cycle. The calendar is reborn on the same day that the sun is reborn three times and this is the start of the new world age, another cycle of the Long Count calendar.

So in Izapa, we see that astronomy and the theme of rebirth is repeatedly woven together. Yet we also find other non-astronomical symbols of rebirth. There are stone altars carved in the shape of the Bufo toad in the distinct posture that it takes when it sheds and devours its skin - the moment of its own rebirth. There is also a stone carving that shows a shaman in a small canoe above the large open mouth of a Bufo toad. The canoe tells us that the shaman is on a journey and the open mouth, like a cave, is a metaphor for the entrance into the underworld. The gland of the Bufo toad that produces the psychoactive chemical used by the shaman is highlighted and in this way we clearly understand that this carving is a reference to the mind-altering trips that can lead to communication with spirit entities, out-of-body experiences and other paranormal experiences. *Are these experiences the key to understanding the Maya rebirth metaphors? This is one of the most important questions in this essay.*

The Maya and their ancestors, the Olmec, were very interested in the Bufo toad. The shamans kept them captive and since the toads live to be over thirty years old, some of them would outlive their owners. Thousands of skeletal remains of these toads have been found and it almost seems as if the Maya and the Olmec created special burial sites specifically for these toads. One possible example of this is located in San Lorenzo and it dates back over 3,000 years. While the subject of hallucinatory shamanic rituals is often completely overlooked by the academic community, it is hard to dismiss the dual role these toads played for the Maya. Yes, of course they were symbols of transformation and rebirth because of their own physiological shift from tadpoles to toads and their frequent shedding of their skin. But the use of their mind-altering, paradigm-shifting chemical cannot be ignored. I think that the presence of the Bufo toad in the sacred ceremonial site of Izapa speaks volumes.

When you take into account that the Maya folklore also contains many references to transformation and rebirth, it starts to seem as if this concept is the Maya's favorite subject! Some of the scenes from this folklore are depicted in the stone carvings in Izapa. In my opinion, the evidence is very strong that this sacred site is primarily dedicated to the idea of transformation and rebirth.

When I first started researching 2012, I was tightly focused on the astronomy of the calendar and I'd like to take just a minute to examine a key point regarding that astronomy. In order to understand the astronomy of 2012, you only need to understand the motion of the earth. To produce the triple rebirth of the sun, the earth goes through three different motions: it spins on its axis once a day, it travels around the sun once a year, and it wobbles on its axis once every 26,000 years. The triple rebirth of the sun does not come about due to anything happening to the sun itself; it comes about due to the shifts in our relationship with the sun.

These three motions have been repeating for billions of years and there is no reason to expect that the astronomy will suddenly cause something unusual to happen to us in 2012.

I think that the Maya also knew this, and this is why it made perfect sense for them to use the astronomy as a timeless rebirth metaphor rather than as an alarm for danger or a time marker for world peace. In my opinion, this is an extremely important point that is completely misunderstood by many people.

While I have known for years that Izapa was designated by Maya expert Michael Coe and others as the birthplace of the Long Count calendar, I was recently quite surprised to read on page 63 of *The 2012 Story* that there are no Long Count dates recorded anywhere within the boundaries of Izapa itself! So while the calendar was developed in the general region of Izapa, the Maya never put any Long Count calendar dates on or near any of the monuments of Izapa. Why? If December 21, 2012 were so important, it would seem simple enough to at least put it on a stela that depicts the triple rebirth of the sun in 2012. With all the hype that 2012 is receiving today, you would think that this Long Count date was found carved in stone 100 feet high at the very center of this important site.

But it is nowhere to be found! Think about that for a while!

Instead, throughout Izapa we see symbols pointing to the general concept of rebirth and specifically to the triple rebirth of the sun. This supports what I am saying: the time of 2012 is not the focus. It is the concept of rebirth that is the focus. But what is the core meaning of this rebirth metaphor? Here are my thoughts on that.

It appears that thousands of years ago, Maya shamans began to explore the full nature of reality via psychedelic rituals. Some people will point out that the use of mind-altering chemicals will not help you find out anything at all about reality; it will only help you find out about hallucinations. This point is worthy of much discussion but for our purposes now, I will simply offer one point for contemplation. One experience that the shamans had was direct, personal interaction with spirit entities, often repeatedly with the same entities. If you were a shaman, could you imagine an entity from the other world greeting you with the following words: “*So you have decided yet again to visit me and still you wonder if I am really real. But I have a question for you. How do you know if your own world is not just happening in your head? How do you know if even you yourself are not just an illusion?*”

While I do find those questions interesting, let’s get back to our subject. The shamans could have also experienced astral projection. While this subject is fairly complex, it is very clear that in the opinion of those who do this, these experiences leave no doubt that a materialist worldview is woefully incomplete. Just this realization would be worthy of the rebirth metaphor yet I believe that the Maya shamans went much further than this.

In his book *Tryptamine Palace*, James Oroc describes the effects of the psychedelic chemical from the Bufo toad. By the way, this chemical is called 5-MeO-DMT and it has different effects from other types of DMT from different sources. Now, it is important that I clearly point out that this chemical is both illegal and risky. Remember, it comes from the poison gland of a large toad. Because of this, I strongly recommend meditation rather than psychedelics as a tool for self-discovery. But again, let’s get back to our subject. Oroc states that he had the experience of being “consciousness without identity.” Since this is commonly reported by others who have used this drug, it is extremely likely that the Maya shamans also had this experience and it is my opinion that this experience can lead to a very deep awakening: the direct, personal discovery of the true, fundamental self - the one awareness - which is much deeper than your personal consciousness, which is what Oroc calls “identity.”

I think that this profound spiritual awakening was so important to the Maya that they pointed to it with their numerous astronomical and non-astronomical rebirth metaphors. Again, all things considered, it seems to me that the emphasis of Izapa is spiritual rebirth, not the specific time of 2012. That is just the time when the astronomical metaphor will unfold. The time merely points to the metaphor. The goal is to figure out what the metaphor points to.

If I write a poem about *enlightenment* and spiritual *awakening* and use the sunrise as a metaphor since that is the event that fills our dark world with *light* and we are all *awakened* from our physical slumber, the poem should be taken as a reminder that spiritual awakening is possible in a general sense. It certainly should not be understood to say that we are all going to become enlightened during the next sunrise, although that may happen. If people focus on the *event of the sunrise* because they think enlightenment will happen *because of that event*, they will have missed the point of the poem. The same thing is true for the sacred triple rebirth of the sun in 2012. It is a reminder that we can all awaken to a new spiritual level at any moment. Focus on the *concept* of spiritual rebirth, not the *time of the event* that was used as the basis of the rebirth metaphor.

The distinctions that I am making are subtle and often overlooked, and since I want to be clear, here's a recap. The calendar points to one specific day. On that day, an astronomical event will unfold that will not cause anything unusual to happen to us. Yet that astronomical event is being used for the metaphor of the triple rebirth of the sun. But the metaphor is only a symbol. Our reward comes when we discover what the rebirth metaphor is pointing to: a spiritual rebirth that can happen at any time.

By the way, I have heard some people say that in order to awaken spiritually, you need to have your heart win its battle with your mind. But please consider this. Your mind holds ideas; your heart holds emotions. Your mind can hold true ideas or false ideas. Your heart can hold hatred and fear or love and peace. At the deepest level, only false ideas can prevent you from being at peace. There is no battle where your heart must triumph over your mind. Instead of a battle, think of it as the pursuit of truth and peace. Work towards tuning your mind into the truth and your heart into love and peace.

We all have magnificent opportunities before us. One of the most fruitful shifts awaiting us now, both as individuals and as a group, is the shift from competition to cooperation. When we all sing out in unison, "*One for all and all for one!*" we will all live in peace.

The Path of Peace: The Shift from Competition to Cooperation

Selfishness springs from unhealthy fears. When selfishness spreads throughout society, we end up creating a fear-based society. When I first heard that phrase several decades ago, I did not fully understand its depth. Now I believe that I see things more clearly. Every aspect of the very foundation of our society is literally built upon beliefs that are permeated with fear. This fearful focus on the personal self results in competition aimed at achieving "my way" rather than "our way." This competition is not harmonious and when expanded to the scale of nations, this disharmony comes forth in war.

Competition can only lead to war because each step along the path is a little war.

When we cooperate with one another by putting into action the values of caring and sharing, we also enhance the well-being of all the individuals in the group. This has the power to bring us something that humankind has seldom seen. This has the power to bring us peace. The gift of peace is a gift we give both to ourselves as individuals and to ourselves as a group.

To understand how we can bring forth our rebirth as conscious creators of peace, we need to understand how the process of creation actually works. It is helpful to note that we don't need to completely understand the true nature of reality or become fully enlightened; we only need to see the relationship between cooperation and peace on both the personal level and on a larger scale. So in the next few sections, I will talk about inner creation, outer creation and the circle of unconscious creation. This may not sound like it has much to do with 2012, but again, it ties into our rebirth as conscious creators of peace. I hope I have inspired you enough for you to give it careful consideration.

The Process of Creation - Inner Creation and Outer Creation

Perhaps you have noticed that the thoughts and attitude that you bring to each and every moment determines your emotional experience of that moment. If you bring the thoughts and attitude of acceptance, you will experience the emotions of wholeness, peace and joy. If you bring the thoughts and attitude of rejection, you will experience the emotions of separation, frustration, fear and pain.

I call this inner creation. Inner creation instantly creates any human emotion from pure agony to total ecstasy. Each and every human being can experience all of these emotions. And, while we all can create these emotions consciously by choosing our thoughts and attitude, most people unconsciously create them with habitual thoughts and reactions.

You have probably heard people say, "I can't help it. That is just the way I feel." But when we dig deeper into why we feel an emotion, we notice that emotions arise from the dynamic interaction of perception, ideas and beliefs. If we change an idea, we may experience a completely different emotion. This may inspire us to reconsider an underlying belief. In this way, we can tune our worldview by weeding out false beliefs. I won't go into this any more right now but you can see that we are not really helpless victims of our emotions. We can take conscious responsibility for the emotions that we experience and this will help us be reborn as conscious creators of peace.

While the emotions of inner creation come forth instantly, outer creation is a process that unfolds through time. It is the attraction of people, things and events into your life. These are all outer conditions. I don't believe that all outer conditions are available to everyone. In other words, we all have different menus, so to speak. One person may be able to become world famous and yet another person, seemingly similar in every respect, may achieve only minor success, as measured by society, even though she or he works wisely and diligently with a positive attitude.

Nonetheless, we all have numerous choices and certainly many of them will be in harmony with our personal growth. It is somewhat like a farmer. He may choose to plant several crops and put forth all the appropriate effort but the farmer has no guarantee that anything will grow at all. Normally, most of his crops do grow but on rare occasion, a severe drought may stifle the crops completely leaving nothing but dirt.

Your thoughts, attitude, perceptions and beliefs, some of which are just habitual thoughts, instantly create your emotions; and all of those things attract the conditions of the outer world as time unfolds. The outer reflects the inner and it all begins with a thought. When you are aware of the process, you can consciously choose. When you are unaware of the process, you just react habitually, usually following the dictates of society.

So I encourage people to consciously work toward a better future. Yes, plant new seeds! But don't harshly blame yourself if it does not turn out the way you had envisioned. Just accept it as "what is" and move forward. *Seek what you love; love what you find!*

And this brings up a very interesting question: to what degree do we control our own life? How much do we do and how much just happens to us? Is it wise for us to work with the understanding that we have some control but not total control? Many of you know the simple but profound Serenity Prayer:

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Within the common understanding of our personal self, I think that this is an excellent posture to hold. No one can know exactly what the future will bring. Many situations are like a baseball batter trying to hit the ball. Just do your best and accept what happens. I know that other teachers say, "Don't try; do!" but this doesn't seem to hold up in my experience. Yes, not knowing what is going to happen to us is an essential aspect of what makes us feel alive and I think that it is one of the most beautiful things about being alive because it creates a sense of adventure. And when it comes to our unknown future, remember, God may have a wonderful surprise for you at any moment! If we always knew what was coming, there would never be any surprises. *What would life be like without surprises?*

The Circle of Unconscious Creation

More than anything else, I would like to bring forth more caring, kindness and peace. With every new moment, I have the opportunity to place peace and love into my heart and then nurture these seeds through time.

Yet if I hold emotional judgment in my heart in the form of frustration, anger or hatred regarding the current conditions of the world, those emotional seeds will, in time, bring forth new disharmonious outer expressions such as tension between other people and perhaps even violence or war.

Since I may also emotionally reject the new outer conditions that arise, I may find myself stuck in a circle of unconscious creation, a circle of disharmony. This is basically what is happening all throughout the world today in every aspect of society.

Consider the social tension about war. Often, some people support a particular war while other people speak out against it. If you could look into the hearts of all these people, what would you find? I suspect that you might find plenty of judgment and anger, and perhaps even hatred and fear in both groups. The military generals may hate the enemy and be angry at the peace demonstrators while the demonstrators may hate the war and be angry at the generals. And both groups may fear a terrible outcome if they don't get their way. But all this judgment, anger, hatred and fear will not bring us peace; it just attracts dramatic outer conditions that match the turmoil felt within.

In order to reap a peaceful future, seeds of peace need to be planted in the present. A world without war is built by people with peace in their hearts.

It is important to note that the process of creation is a private, personal experience under the direct control of each individual. Yes, there are also dynamic energetic connections between people but the important point is

that each individual has control over their own thoughts, or so it appears to a certain extent. These thoughts are the origin of their emotional experience, which in turn, attracts the outer conditions as time unfolds.

Yes, we reap what we sow and we can shift into personal peace by letting go of judgment and by practicing kindness. This, in time, will bring forth new peaceful outer conditions. Try it yourself and see what arises!

Handling Challenging Emotions - Be Fully Alive!

And yet, sometimes very difficult situations arise, such as the passing of a loved one. The idea is to respond to what arises in a natural and genuine way as free from judgmental thought as possible. In other words, I don't necessarily think that the goal is to be happy all the time; I think that the goal is to be fully alive in the moment!

Animals experience fear in a natural and genuine way but only at the appropriate time. They also experience joy and sadness. Similarly, we can experience these emotions as part of the natural flow of life without being chained to the pains of the past or in constant fear of what the future may bring.

When you find yourself feeling deep sorrow, don't be afraid of it or judge it; dive into it head first! Be fully alive! You may surprise yourself by discovering that while it can be a very uncomfortable emotion, after it passes, your true essence, your awareness, is not damaged at all.

Life is a package deal. Birth eventually leads to death.

Be alive with such fullness that even if the emotion is deep sorrow, as this emotion courses through your being resonating with every cell, there is still an underlying healthy sense of tremendous vitality that comes from your fearless thrusting of yourself into the moment with the thought, *"I am fully alive!! I have the power to feel all human emotions and these emotions will never harm my true self!"*

And what is this thing we call "badness?" It is just part of the subjective experience that we create when we add harsh, judgmental thoughts to our perceptions. But is it really bad to be sad? Is the *quality* of badness in the *essence* of sadness? It is the constant running around in such a way so as to avoid what we normally call "bad" and seek out what we call "good" that brings us an unnatural life. Unawakened people focus on getting everything they want. Mystics know that they can safely experience and embrace whatever shows up!

Embrace the whole of life and you will embrace the whole of God!

Conditional Happiness

Now of course, many of us do experience periods of time when we are pretty happy and perhaps even ecstatic. Life is certainly not all suffering, even if we're not enlightened. When we have things the way we want, we give ourselves permission and we choose to "push the happiness button," which is on the inside. I call this "conditional happiness" since we choose it only when our worldly conditions are acceptable.

Yet these moments of joy may also present a problem: how can we make them last? How can we hold on to them? If we don't make the conditions last, our happiness also disappears. Yet we all know that everything will change - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly but nevertheless all things do change.

Parents see their little children, whom they want to hold in their arms forever, grow up and fly away into the world. How much courage does it take to love them fully while they are home knowing that one day they'll be gone? What does it mean to fully love something and yet be perfectly okay emotionally when it goes away? Is this even possible? Well, for many people, this can present quite a challenge.

A Deep Divine Bliss Can Hold All Human Emotions

The present moment is like a gift, a “present.” And it's a magical gift that becomes what you make it. The attitude that you hold as you unwrap the present determines whether your experience is joyful or sorrowful. This may seem like an oversimplification so I think that it is important for us to dig deeper into this subject.

I've heard Buddhist teachers speak about the end of suffering but perhaps the phrase “the end of dissatisfaction” will be more helpful to you. In other words, physical and emotional pain will always be a part of the human experience. That's just the way that it is. Yet your attitude still holds tremendous power. With it, you create your experience of the moment and attract the conditions of the future. As you know, if you bring an attitude of rejection, you will experience dissatisfaction, to be sure!

And to add to what I said earlier, if you bring an attitude of acceptance, you may even experience a fundamental divine bliss that can comfortably hold human sadness within it. In other words, you may experience human sadness in its purest form without judgment. In this way, you are sad but you are not suffering. Think about that for a while. Ponder it deeply.

It is like a divine mother who knows how to stay centered in her divine bliss while holding her crying child in her loving arms. She would never push away her dear child or judge it as undesirable in any way. You can be like the combination of the two of them with your divine bliss holding your human sadness.

With this understanding, you awaken to the fact that while you may indeed be able to accept more and more of the world in a way that brings genuine human happiness, it is not necessary for you to be happy all the time since all human emotions can be held by the larger framework of this deep divine bliss. You will be able to experience human sadness from a point of view that allows you to remain free from suffering any dissatisfaction.

Now let's consider an example where the shift away from dissatisfaction might be readily available. This is not a very profound example at all and yet it often leads to strong emotions. Here it is. If someone cuts you off in traffic, our society almost demands angry thoughts, a hateful attitude and even a rude hand gesture. With these choices, negative emotions often surge through every cell of your body. Similarly, our society forbids you to emotionally embrace moments that are connected with injury, sickness, death or tragedy and requires you to judge these things as “bad” and unacceptable.

Do you really want to follow society's dictates when they only lead to suffering?

You do not need to be happy *that* the person cut you off in traffic but you can still be happy *in spite of it*. Are there examples in your life where something used to bother you a lot but now when they happen, it's no big deal? Can you learn to joyfully accept more and more of the world exactly as it is? But much more significantly, to return to our previous example, if you genuinely have a broken heart, can you step back into your deep divine bliss and simply hold that broken heart? The first time I did this was an interesting and powerful experience.

By the way, if you will, ponder this: if something really should be different, wouldn't it actually be different? If God did not want something to exist, it would not exist. If God were truly against something happening, it would not happen. For whatever reason, God allows everything that comes forth.

The Mystic's View: God and Creation Are the Same Reality in Different Forms

Becoming fully alive by completely embracing the world exactly as it is and awakening to the process of conscious creation are two important rebirths but our deepest and most fundamental rebirth occurs when we awaken to the divine nature of all of reality and discover our true identity.

Remember, the Maya metaphor involves lovemaking and birth. I think that this is because they want us to contemplate who we are at the deepest level. And I think that the Maya want us to do more than just contemplate; they want us to actually find answers. Yet answers to questions this deep are not appreciated as much when they are simply given to you. Furthermore, these answers are often resisted or even rejected if they are pushed upon you from an apparent authority. Answers to questions this deep really begin to mean something only if you find them for yourself. Yet it can be very significant if someone points you in a fruitful direction and perhaps even helps trigger your own mystical experience for the core of this wisdom is not available through logic alone.

In order to explain this fundamental rebirth, which is an awakening to what you have always been, I like to start with a simple metaphor about water and ice. As we all know, water and ice are both made out of the same thing: hydrogen and oxygen, H₂O. Yet even though water and ice have the same essence, they are very different in their form. Scientists call this different states and these states give rise to a completely different set of properties, a completely different set of qualities. As we all know, one is cold and solid; the other is warm and fluid. Let's expand the water analogy to include water vapor, an invisible, formless gas. That might be like God the Source. We cannot see God the Source since the Source has no form.

And yet, if the Source wanted to create a spiritual world, a world of angels, for example, the Source could choose to lower the temperature, the vibration, of the H₂O that is the divine essence of all things and part of the Source would change from an invisible, formless gas into liquid water that now has some form to it. This spiritual world could include spiritual beings with a sense of self and freewill. They would not appear to be the same as the Creator and yet they would be made out of the same divine essence. Beings in this world would have their senses tuned to that realm so they would be able to perceive and experience everything in it.

And if the Source wanted to create a physical world, to create our universe, the Source could choose to lower the temperature even more and part of the Source would then take on many magnificent new forms. Similar to before, this physical realm could include physical beings with a sense of self and freewill. And again, they would not appear to be the same as the Creator and yet they would be made out of the same divine essence.

These beings would, of course, have their senses tuned to the physical world, which would allow them to perceive and experience everything in it but they would generally be blind to everything in the spiritual world.

Now, most analogies fall short in some respect and the water analogy is no exception, yet I like it in many ways. But is it true? Is everything we see actually the eternal divine essence in physical form? Does God intentionally hide from us in order to invigorate the play we are all in and charge it with emotion? Can we see God hiding in the world just like we might see a secret assistant to the magician? Is this divine essence the core of the wonder and awe that we feel when we admire the beauty of nature and each other?

In this mystical view, it's important to note that while we are all made out of the same essence, we are not all the same. From the viewpoint of our common daily life, we each have our own unique "personal self," precious and special but not in an egotistical sense. We each have our own body, we each have our own personality and we each have our own thoughts and feelings.

Imagine for a moment that the eternal divine essence was wood. You can make a chair out of wood, you can make a house out of wood and you can make a boat out of wood. While all these things are made out of the same thing, they are each very different in their form. If you are out on the ocean, the boat will serve you best and if a storm is coming, the shelter of the house will benefit you the most.

So don't make the mistake of saying, "Well, since everything is divine in its essence, everything is the same in its form and I will not make any distinctions between people or things." Some people and things may mix with you in a more harmonious way so choose wisely and enrich your life!

And yet, with this mystical understanding, you will perceive every act as a divine act, every thought as a divine thought and every emotion as a divine emotion. Indeed, every thing will be seen as the divine in physical form.

You are not simply connected to God; every aspect of your being is divine! God is not just deep within you at a special place; you are divine at every level!

In the formless state of the eternal divine essence as source, there is only oneness, wholeness, and yet in that extraordinary state, nothing is manifest. It is here where we all dissolve into oneness. Yet in our physical world, the wholeness of the divine essence is presented to us in a magical way that makes it appear as separate, non-divine pieces. This is the illusion of the world. But just because the world is an illusion does not make it not real. Remember, an illusion is something that tricks you into believing a false idea. *Throw away the false idea but don't throw away the reality of the world for it is the divine essence wearing a disguise!*

Here we see the importance of always looking for the essence while appreciating the significance of the form. In this way, we can understand the paradox of duality. The two sides of the same coin have different shapes yet they literally share the same essence. So it is with all examples of duality. The same essence is expressed in ways that appear to be opposite in form.

We have all heard it said, "We are all one." While I think that that is true, many people find it to be a bit confusing. So instead, I like to say:

"In form we are many; in essence we are one." Or: "In form we are human; in essence we are divine."

Your True Self: Your Awareness

Paradoxically, when the formless divine essence becomes manifest, it presents itself with form, with an appearance. It is this physical appearance that our scientists focus on and in many ways they do an excellent job. Yet few of them have any interest in the awareness that actually sees the world. Of course, some of them study the personality or the physiology of perception but that is not the awareness. This wondrous awareness is what you actually are.

Your awareness is the buried treasure hidden within the personal self; it is the kingdom of heaven within you.

Your “personal self” may be your body, your mind, your personality and even your soul but your true self, your fundamental, unconstructed self, is the awareness that perceives everything that you experience. Yes, it seems like you are a separate, mortal, sentient being but you are not a being of any kind; you are sentience itself! This is the formless divine essence! This is what the gnostics focus on when they say, “Know yourself and you shall know God!”

Many of us have heard it said, “You are not a human being having a spiritual experience, you are a spiritual being having a human experience.” Of course it is wise not to put the cart before the horse but perhaps you now see why I say that you are neither the cart nor the horse! You are the awareness that holds both the human being and the spiritual being!

Honest scientific research into subjects such as out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences and past lives all point to a nature of reality that is profoundly different from what is commonly believed. Our amazing awareness itself is not even visible to us and yet we know it exists because we experience the world through it!

Mainstream science holds that the material qualities and chemical processes of the body and the brain give rise to our awareness. In other words, in this view, the material world is the foundation of reality and awareness is an aspect that comes forth from it in order for all sentient beings to be alive and aware. In this view, our awareness depends upon the body.

But what if it’s the other way around? What if awareness is the foundation, the building block, of everything?

Our common daily experience shows us that there is a link between our body and our awareness. In addition to that, past-life research shows us that while there is a relationship between our awareness and our body, the body is not the source of our awareness. The true nature of the self is beyond the body. Out-of-body experiences also support this understanding. And the same thing holds true for our soul. We are not our soul and that is not where we find our eternal self. We are our awareness, which exists before our soul and holds our soul.

Some people think that the giant pyramid in Egypt is a monument dedicated to an intentionally empty tomb. After all, no pharaoh was ever found in it. This pyramid covers 13 acres and is about 450 feet tall, as tall as a 45-story building. Why would anyone put forth such a massive effort in honor of an empty tomb? One viewpoint holds that it is a timeless symbol to remind us that we never die, that we live eternally as our awareness. *Our true self will never need a tomb.*

Of course we all see that our bodies were born into the world; this is beyond dispute. But isn't it also true that both our bodies and the entire world are born into our awareness? Our awareness is primordial; it comes before everything and it plays host to all the phenomena that we experience. And a mystic intuitively understands that the divine awareness that looks out of your eyes is the same awareness that looks out of his or her eyes. What is seen is different but the awareness is the same. There is only one awareness, that of the eternal divine essence.

Imagine you are the one awareness and that you are in a room with many windows. When you look into the world through one of these windows, you see a certain view. In this way, you have all the experiences of one particular person. You see what they see, feel what they feel, think what they think, remember what they remember, dream what they dream and so forth. When you look through another window, you have all the experiences of another person. But you are still the same awareness. If you experienced all of these experiences all at once, it would be just a mass of color and noise. Our individuated personal consciousness is what allows the one awareness to experience the world without it being a jumbled mess. This is why I like to distinguish between the one awareness and the many personal consciousnesses, which are unique viewpoints, God's windows into our world.

Another way to look at it is to imagine that there are billions of hand puppets on earth, all apparently different people and animals. But when we see beyond the illusion of separate sentient beings and correctly perceive the full picture of what is really taking place, we see that there is only one sentient puppet master with billions of hands animating all of life and, most importantly, experiencing all of life through all those different viewpoints. What a miracle! What a mystery!

I think that the Maya personified the sun because you are like the sun. From our perspective on earth, the sun is born when it rises and it dies when it sets. But from a perspective out in space, we see that the sun is never born and it never dies; it is essentially eternal. Similarly, from the perspective of our ordinary reality, it appears as if we are born and then later, we die. Is there a different perspective, a larger framework, that reveals that our true self, our fundamental unconstructed self, is indeed also without birth or death? Are we also eternal? At birth, you get an apparent identity. When you re-identify with your true self, you are reborn in the most profound way.

I think that the Maya used a timeless metaphor on purpose to help you understand that you, too, exist beyond the boundaries of time itself. You exist as pure awareness, and time, space, energy and matter are all created within you. This re-identification as pure awareness is the deepest and most fundamental rebirth that the Maya are talking about.

This does not mean that you should cast off all concern for the personal self. Your personal self provides tremendous functionality. While it is not you in the most fundamental way, your kind and caring stewardship of your personal self will offer the one divine Self a very rich human experience. In a more complete sense, referring back to the water and ice analogy, as the ice, you are the entire physical world; as the water, you are everything in the spiritual world and as the invisible formless water vapor, you are the source of all creation, which is your unconstructed fundamental self.

In the fullest sense, you are the totality of reality and you are where it all comes from!

Once the mystic sees the whole world as the eternal divine essence in physical form, everything becomes precious and sacred. Deep compassion for all people, animals and even plants springs forth automatically. Yet before we realize the mystic's view, while we are still tricked by the illusion of separateness, we really can see that we are at least all connected to one another like a big family. If we turn that connection into a genuine embrace, we will create lasting peace!

Don't Overlook the Changes That Are Happening to You

It does not matter if the Maya foresaw the trying times that we now find ourselves in. That is not important at all. What is important now is that we correctly assess our situation and do our best to solve these challenging problems. No matter what the Maya were thinking, it seems to me that humankind is indeed dealing with tremendous challenges on a global scale. Many of our activities are not only fundamentally unsustainable, they appear to be at or close to the breaking point right now. In fact, some people argue that in certain areas, we are already past the breaking point and dominoes are now falling into other dominoes and a collapse is already unfolding.

Yes indeed, there are many serious problems facing all of humanity. In some ways, things may look completely dire. But consider the circumstances of an unhatched chick. Imagine that it is you who is trapped in the tiny space of the egg. Obviously, since you are the only one in the egg, it is perfectly natural for you to focus on the self. Each day, some of the food is eaten and no new food is ever delivered. As the supply of food is about to be exhausted, you think that you are surely doomed.

But you have overlooked something. You have overlooked the changes that have been happening to you. You are now strong enough to break out of the shell and into a whole new world that you never could have even imagined - a world filled with family, friends, plenty of room to roam, blue sky and lots of food! You have entered a world where you are now naturally doing your part by simply being yourself. While this is radically different in form from when you were in the shell, we should not overlook the fact that it is also true that you were naturally doing your part then, too.

Is it possible that a similar dramatic shift is waiting for all those who have the wisdom and courage to embrace an attitude of cooperation and break through the shell by putting into action the values of caring and sharing without fear of what might arise? Is this the rebirth that is awaiting you as the next stage of your natural development? Is this the rebirth that is awaiting all of humanity? Will we break out of our shell of competition and be reborn as conscious creators of a peaceful world, naturally united in cooperation? And is this development automatic, just like a seed growing into a mighty tree?

We have all heard it said, "As above, so below." But what does this phrase actually mean and is there any truth to it? Notice that it does not say what is in the sky creates or controls what is on earth. My opinion is that at its core, this phrase is stating that all of creation and everything that happens is a reflection of the mind of God, the source of everything. The power and will of God is making all of this come forth in a natural and divine way.

It is the divine that is above it all!

Mystical Optimism

When it comes to 2012, should you be an optimist and see the glass as half full and the future as bright *because you think that it will match what you desire?* Or is the glass half empty and big trouble just around the corner?

Both the optimist and the pessimist make a fundamental mistake when they believe that the very essence of the future can be either good or bad. Again, the experience of goodness or badness is not intrinsic to outer conditions; they are part of the subjective experience that arises from the thoughts that we add to the mix.

For me, reframing the glass as half-full rather than half-empty seems like a shallow, emotional manipulation since it does not change what I actually have or change what I am aware of. This doesn't interest me as much as discovering, for example, that the glass can be filled again from a nearby faucet or stream. Now that makes a real difference!

But certainly some situations do not reframe so easily into a desirable scenario. What if you are in a desert and that half-glass of water is all you have for a two-day hike to safety? This is where the view of the mystic comes in. As I mentioned before, a mystic realizes that God and creation are the same reality in different forms. Ice does not just come *from* the water; *it is* the water!

The mystic's view offers us the most profound reframing available. With this mystical understanding, you can joyously embrace an optimistic attitude like never before. I call this “mystical optimism” and with it you can fully embrace whatever you have before you right now and also whatever comes tomorrow because you see it all as fully divine and you know that whatever form it takes, it can never harm your true self, your divine awareness!

So put mystical optimism and the values of caring and sharing into action at every moment. Work towards a more desirable future in any way that appeals to you. Do so joyfully with hope in your heart and without fear of what will arise. While it is not our nature to know exactly what will arise next on the physical plane, we can glow with the flow and dance with the divine in a way that allows us to experience the deepest richness that life has to offer no matter what shows up!

Yes, embrace the whole of life and you will embrace the whole of God!

The End

Thanks for reading my essay! I hope that you have found it to be both inspirational and transformational. I do enjoy it when people tell me that they find my work inspirational. But that is not why I write. Inspiration without proper guidance leads nowhere. I write to awaken people into understanding reality in a completely new way, a way that leads to personal liberation. May you experience this liberation as your ultimate rebirth!

Have a magical and mystical day!



Thomas Razzeto

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All my 2012 essays are freely available at: <http://www.2012essays.com>

and you can find all of my work at: <http://www.infinitelymystical.com/>

Suggested reading: *The Afterlife Experiments* by Dr. Gary Schwartz.

Children's Past Lives and Return from Heaven by Carol Bowman.

Life Before Life by Dr. Jim Tucker.

The work of Dr. Jeff Long at the Near Death Experience Research Foundation.

And finally, Robert Monroe's three books on the out-of-body experience:

Journeys Out of the Body,

Far Journey and

Ultimate Journey.