



# The Mayan Influence on Natural Time

## 2012

THE MAYAN PROPHECY FOR WINTER SOLSTICE OF 2012 IS FOREMOSTLY A DESCRIPTION OF THE END OF A 26,000 YEAR CALENDAR CYCLE CALLED THE LONG COUNT. WE CAN EASILY IMAGINE THE GREAT CHANGE OF COMPLETING A SPAN OF TIME THAT PARALLELS THE EXISTENCE OF OUR OWN HOMO SAPIEN SPECIES. LET 12/21/12 HOLD THE SAME SENSE OF HEARTFELT RENEWAL WE FEEL AT THE START OF A NEW YEAR. IN THE TIME UNTIL THAT TRANSIT WE CAN FEEL BOTH LARGE SCALE ENDINGS ALL AROUND US, AS WELL AS THE UNDENIABLE NEW BEGINNINGS ALREADY FILLING OTHER LOSSES WITH GREAT JOY.

The ancient Maya were modern by comparison to the Greek and Egyptian civilizations - they co-existed with the Dark Ages of Europe, as their culture came to its most productive ascent in 800 AD. In that heyday the Maya mastered study and comprehension of astronomy, agriculture and the erection of mammoth stone pyramids without the aid of the wheel nor any pack animals - a mysterious and marvelous accomplishment. The colonists who arrived in the Mayan territories almost a millennia later judged the inhabitants as primitive, and the combination of imperialist violence and Catholic missionary zeal decimated nearly all spiritual teachings but those carved into the stone edifices. We are fortunate that the Maya had the forethought - or divine insight - to record their highly proficient understanding of astronomical cycles in hieroglyphs along their pyramid and temple walls. Archeological study of these etchings have resurrected the Mayan wisdom of the stars.

The Maya are thought to have had as many as nineteen calendars, but only three are referenced in Natural Time. The primary year-count for the Maya was a series of 20-day cycles called 'vinals'. Eighteen were celebrated each year, with a five-day 'vayeb' festival at the completion. The Mayan year began on July 26, with the rise of Sirius, the Dogstar, at dawn. Their lunar calendar - comprised of 13 28-day cycles - was less important than the honoring of the vinals, but it feels impossibly alien in the modern age to revert to months that are only 20 days long. We continue to honor the vinals as a poem translated from the Maya. Every **RED MOON** day of this **RED OVERTONE MOON** year, we will have spanned 20 days and can receive a new line of verse.

The most important Mayan calendar for our current usage is the Tzolkin count, which is 260 days long to reflect gestation from conception to birth. It's also the length of the growth cycle of corn in the Mayan territories of Central America - from germination to full harvest. The Tzolkin is a fractal - a microcosm - of the 26,000 year Long Count. The Tolkin calendar is sacred because it reveres the elemental gifts of life as perceived by the Maya; each day honors a foundational archetype that forms our existence: sun, moon, star, earth, as well as the creatures - serpent, dog, eagle - and the elements - wind, storm. The Maya also gave gratitude to the key roles of human society - warrior, shaman, priest - and their most basic needs of food, sexuality and shelter. We can imagine that ceremony and ritual accompanied each day's arising, and so when we follow the Mayan influence on Natural Time, we can seek the same. We can invoke the Tzolkin day name and its energy to offer thanks for its part in giving us life.

The Mayan numerical system is beautifully basic, culled from sticks and stones into simple etchings of 'dots' and 'bars'. It's rooted in 20, not ten as our decimal system. The Mayan 'vigesimal' count rises to 20 then begins again - like the vinals. This reflects their use of fingers and toes - a warmer equatorial climate inviting bare feet - in tracking everything from calendar days to commerce. The Maya also used animals to name their count from zero to 13.

The Mayan calendar still used in Central America is in its specifics different than Natural Time - but it is the true foundation of this modern version. May we honor the Mayan culture, ancient and contemporary, for the mystical insight and inspiration of this sacred walk through time.

