Solstice Gateways

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November 21, 2001

Revised March 21, 2002

from Alignment2012 Website

My 1998 book Maya Cosmogenesis 2012 provides the context and background for certain clarifications of René Guénon’s polar-to-solar shift and the location of the solstice gateways. I know that my contribution to this area of Traditionalist thought will be met with suspicion, and rightly so—all advances in our understanding should not be greeted with casual acceptance, but with careful consideration.

And so I would like to take the time to summarize the key points in my new book, points of clarification that invite a reassessment of the true location of the solstice gateways. The implications of this reassessment are quite surprising and relevant to one of today’s most important topics: the timing of the end of Kali Yuga.

An important consequence of this reevaluation is that we can understand the galactic framework of Guenon’s polar-to-solar shift. The clarification I propose will also help us understand the astronomical cycles and alignments that underlie the yuga doctrine, and thus clarify for us when the end of descending Kali Yuga occurs, according to Traditional concepts.

1. The solstice gateways

Porphyry’s information is used by Guenon and others to identify the solstice Gateways with Capricorn and Cancer. However, as Macrobius points out, it is the constellations that rise heliacally at the time of the solstices that reveal the gateways.

Thus, in Porphyry’s era, these are Sagittarius and Gemini. The ecliptic (the zodiac of twelve constellations along which the moon, sun and planets move) intersects the Milky Way in Sagittarius and Gemini. This “crossroads” is an important though little recognized feature of many ancient cosmologies. For the Maya, this crossroads denoted the cosmic center.

Also, a dark-rift feature along the Milky Way, near this crossroads, was understood as a “doorway” into the underworld. It also symbolized a place of emergence for the Maya, a “gateway” to and from this dimension. While the solstices are the temporal gateways irregardless of where they may be positioned against the background of constellations, the astronomical phenomenon of precession moves them around the zodiac in a cycle of 26,000 years.

The solstices are always devayana / pitriyana gateways, but only on the level of the solar year. We need to consider the larger Great Year of precession, and we need to differentiate the solstice axis from the sidereal background that, in effect, doesn’t move. In other words, Porphyry implies—and Macrobius literally states—that Sagittarius and Gemini are the locations of the “gateways” not because the solstices are nearby, but because of the features in those constellations.

Namely, the features being the two points where the ecliptic intersects the Milky Way. As mentioned, Macrobius literally states (in his Commentary on the Dream of Scipio) that the gateways are where the zodiac intersects the Milky Way. These are fixed background positions; the solstice axis can precess in and out of alignment with these gateway locations, and this hints at the astronomical alignment that defines the end of descending Kali Yuga. (In my previous book, I pointed out that this rare galactic alignment or solstice-galaxy alignment culminates in the years around the Maya calendar end-date of AD 2012.)

Now, it is important here to identify something very significant about the framework that is created by accepting the ecliptic-Milky Way crossing points as the true location of the gateways. The ecliptic-Milky Way “crossroad” in Sagittarius is in the “nuclear bulge” of the Milky Way, where the center of the Milky Way galaxy is located. Thus, the gateways as defined by Macrobius (clarifying Porphyry) define an axial framework that runs from the Galactic Center to the Galactic Anticenter (which is above Orion in Gemini).

With this clarification, let us turn to Guénon’s polar-to-solar shift material.

2. The polar-to-solar shift

Here, I feel it is best to simply provide an excerpt from my book. However, I will preface the excerpt with the following: Because the Pleiades are the general indicator of the Galactic Anticenter, Guénon’s exposition of the symbolic and conceptual shift of the stars in the Big Dipper to the stars in the Pleiades indicates not only a polar-to-solar shift in cosmological orientation, but a shift to a galaxy-oriented axis as a superior cosmological framework in comparison to the older polar axis.

This is nothing more than the esoteric shift from a Hyperborean to an Atlantean phase of the historical cycle (spoken in Traditionalist or metaphorical terms).

An excerpt from Chapter 14 follows:

Guénon’s primary argument for a shift from a polar to a solar framework involves the transfer of the seven stars or Seven Sages (sapta riksha) of the Great Bear to the Pleiades. Each constellation has (or had) seven stars and the Pleiades resemble a tiny dipper. (The number seven also refers to the seven stages or rungs on the ladder of the cosmic pillar that the soul passes while ascending to the highest heaven.) A relationship between the Great Bear and the Pleiades is found in many stories.

For example, the Pleiades are still referred to as the Seven Sisters, but there are now only six Pleiads. The Greek legend tells that one of the Pleiades, Elektra, was kidnapped by one of the Seven Kings (one of the stars in the Big Dipper, Alcor) and now accompanies him as a binary star companion. This myth is associated with the Fall of Troy, which as we saw in Chapter 9 symbolizes the “fall” of the Big Dipper out of proximity to the North Celestial Pole, signaling a new World Age around 2200 BC.

(See Homer’s Secret Iliad by Florence and Kenneth Wood)

The Pleiades or Atlantides were the daughters of Atlas, and were therefore the children of the new Atlantean tradition. In addition, in Egypt the Big Dipper was called the “shoulder of the bull,” while the Pleiades are located in Taurus/Bull constellation, right on the bull’s shoulder.

Guénon brings in linguistic comparisons as well, but the point is clear: The Pleiades symbolically replaced the function of the Big Dipper. This equation is rich in implications, especially when you understand that the Pleiades mark the direction opposite the Galactic Center. The cosmological framework that once revolved around the circumpolar constellation Ursa Major was transferred to the north pole of the Evolutionary Axis that extends from the Galactic Center to the Galactic Anticenter.

The Pleiades are not precisely on the Galactic Anticenter, but then neither is the Great Bear precisely on the Polestar. They serve as symbolic marker points at the crown of their respective pillars.

Guénon writes that these two symbolic frameworks map onto each other and share the same astronomical references, making it difficult to identify the true intention of a given symbol, but the Hyperborean (northern) traditions is probably older. Generally, however, the same set of ideas regarding the “cosmic center” were applied, in two different eras, to two different parts of the sky.

The first is the Hyperborean polar symbolism. The second is solar or sun-centered symbolism which Julius Evola refers to as Olympian and others call Atlantean. Both locations occupy the summit of a cosmic axis and serve as centering points. Notice that the Pleiades are only solar in the sense that they are near the ecliptic and the sun passes by them once a year.

Their true function, above being a solar reference point, is that they indicate the direction of the Galactic Anticenter, the crown of the galactic axis. In this way we can amend Guénon’s reconstruction and call it, with good justification, a polar-to-galactic shift.

Here we can clarify our identifications in the polar-solar-galactic equation:

Polar

Solar

Galactic

North

Great Bear /

North Polestar

Cancer /

June solstice

Pleiades

South

South

Celestial Pole

Capricorn /

December solstice

Galactic Center

Three Cosmic Frameworks

When the “seven lights” of spiritual growth were shifted to the Pleiades, a new framework was identified that operates on the level of the galaxy. This galactic level comprises the tree or axis that starts at the Galactic Center (the muladhara root of creation), extends through earth, and proceeds outward toward the Pleiades (the sahasrara crown of creation)—the direction of the Galactic Anticenter (in Gemini).

The Galactic Anticenter is the topmost center in this new framework, because it is the direction out of our galaxy, into trans-galactic domains. The Pleiades, like the Great Bear, are a short distance from the highest point of the system, but nevertheless they serve as a mythic and symbolic indicator.

By this reasoning it follows that the Galactic Center is analogous to the south celestial pole, and has special affinities with the southern hemisphere. In fact, from the viewpoint of the northern hemisphere, the Galactic Center always arches through the southern skies, and its highest altitude at meridian transit is related to ones latitude of observation.

This clarification emphasizes, once again, that our attention must go to Sagittarius and Gemini. It just so happens that the symbolic, esoteric, and metaphysical qualities of Sagittarius were explored by Ananda Coomaraswamy in an essay he produced late in life. The symbolic features he explored are an extension of his enquiry into the “sundoor at world’s end” and therefore relate to the solstice “gateways” involved in human spiritual transcendence. However, his essay is not about Capricorn, but about Sagittarius. This should not surprise us, given the clarification on the true sidereal location of the gateways.

3. Coomaraswamy’s “Early Iconography of Sagittarius”

Coomaraswamy’s essay was apparently written in response to an article by Dr. Willy Hartner that appeared in Ars Islamica, 1938. Hartner’s paper identified the locations of the lunar node’s exaltations in Islamic, Greek, and Hindu astrology. This is simply the two positions in the zodiac at which the lunar nodes (Rahu and Ketu) are considered particularly powerful. The sidereal locations he identified are at 3° Sagittarius and 3° Gemini; the one in Sagittarius is within 3° of the Galactic Center-Galactic Anticenter axis discussed above.

It wasn’t openly, or perhaps even consciously, recognized that the lunar nodes (which indicate the intersection of the solar and lunar planes) are analogous to the “nodes” of the ecliptic and galactic plane. The Bundahishn comes into play here too, but I must keep this brief; Chapter 8 in my book is devoted to this interesting material.

At any rate, Coomaraswamy’s exploration of Sagittarius confirms the astronomical location of the “gate” as well as the metaphysical importance of the Galactic Center within the Vedic doctrines, especially the Theft of Soma. The ideas he explores relate to the cosmic tree, the cosmic center, the grail cup that holds the elixir of immortality (soma), and the doorway between the symplegades that leads to a domain transcendent to the earth-plane of attachment to duality.

Although the astronomical references are not made explicit, these metaphysical concept can be said to have their material extensions on the galactic level of the cosmological house.

I feel I have already exceeded the space that I wanted to occupy for fear of losing the interest of my readers. This is not a simple, uncomplicated topic; that is why I’ve devoted many chapters in my forthcoming book to it. I don’t want my book to pass into the remainder bin without being made known to those in the world who might appreciate its perspectives, and so I offer this concise summary.

I have not sought to summarize or explore the advanced metaphysical challenges of Traditionalist thinking, but only to clarify some points relating to the astronomical anchoring of the yugas. As such, the end of descending Kali Yuga may very well be signaled by the same astronomical alignment that the ancient Mayans sought to indicate with their 2012 end-date: the alignment of the solstice sun with the Milky Way—specifically, that part of the Milky Way that houses the Galactic Center.

This is an alignment in precession that occurs once every 26,000 years. John Michell, in his introduction to Robert Bolton’s The Order of the Ages, posed the question as to where we are located within the great precessional cycle of the Platonic Year. My work indicates that the original Vedic World Age doctrine was congruent with Mayan cosmology, in that the end of the current historical cycle occurs when the solstice sun precesses through the Milky Way—near the Galactic Center.

As such, modern astronomy offers a precise dating for this: May of 1998 (Jean Meeus, Mathematical Astronomy Morsels, 1997). Many questions arise from pursuing this line of enquiry, and certain parameters may extend this date into a range of years, and I weigh these various considerations and options in my new book.

My work to reconstruct ancient Mesoamerican calendrics and cosmology has taken me in a certain direction over the years, and I have found it necessary to distance myself from the New Age self-promoters who pollute the field (necessary because my work has been lumped into the same category, or mistakenly assumed to be derivative). These writers are opportunists who have sought to appropriate the ancient Mayan tradition—which is really congruent with Traditional sciences—and create their own systems.

My work has only been to reconstruct and give voice to the traditional Mesoamerican wisdom and, in seeking an explanation for the Mayan calendar 2012 end-date, I was led to precession and the alignments to the Galactic Center, which are factual occurrences.

The Galactic Center, as is apparent from the forgoing clarifications, is apparently one of the gateways in Vedic cosmology. Yet I understate. The Galactic Center may well be considered to be the Hypercosmic Sun, the Well of Remembrance, the Sundoor at World’s End, the eye of the heart, the cosmic center, the Holy Grail, etc.

It is an academic and scholarly challenge to demonstrate how ancient metaphysicians and cosmologists—not to mention astronomers—had attached their eschatological doctrines to the rare alignment of solstice sun and galactic heart. And it should be thought-provoking and productive to introduce the fact of this alignment—considering its esoteric, symbolic associations—into contemporary Traditional discourse.

4. The end of descending Kali Yuga

I have been reading Robert Bolton’s intriguing new book, The Order of the Ages. I am especially interested in his discussion of the Kali Yuga, where he computes (by one method) the end of the Kali Yuga to occur in the late 21st century. He even makes a general association between this Vedic Yuga computation and the Mayan end date, which occurs “in the same century” (in AD 2012).

My research shows that this association is not inappropriate; in fact, the Vedic and Mayan traditions were both concerned with calibrating the same astronomical alignment, and anchoring their eschatological doctrines to it. This alignment is none other than the alignment of the solstice sun with the galactic equator (the Milky Way), with the Galactic Center nearby. European astronomer Jean Meeus and the U. S. Naval Observatory calculated this alignment—with a precision perhaps unwarranted—to have occurred in the year 1998.

I have demonstrated in my books (Center of Mayan Time, Izapa Cosmos, and Maya Cosmogenesis 2012) that the Maya intended to target this “galactic alignment” with the 2012 end-date of their Long Count calendar, first carved in stone some 2,100 years ago. Now, in my next book, I show how this alignment is the key to the Vedic Yuga doctrine and it defines our shift from descending Kali Yuga to ascending Kali Yuga.

My analysis of the yuga timing question proceeds differently than Bolton’s, and is based on the insights uncovered in my study of Mayan metaphysics, cosmology, and calendrics. I began with the first Vedic source of commentary on the yuga doctrine, the Laws of Manu. That ancient text implicates a 24,000-year period for the yugas, clearly a reference to the precession of the equinoxes.

The larger numbers generated in some yuga calculations are usually base-ten multiples of the key yuga numbers (given below), and derived either from an inappropriate excitement over generating “big numbers” or from an interest in speculating about very large cosmic cycles. However, let’s stick to the Laws of Manu. The Hindu swami, Sri Yukteswar, in his little book The Holy Science (originally written around 1895), explains the Vedic and Hindu ideas related to the yuga doctrine as found in the Laws of Manu.

The 24,000-year period, following the devayana / pitriyana doctrine of ascending and descending phases of all temporal processes, is divided into two halves. One ascends toward the cosmic source and the other descends away from it. One extreme indicates a Golden Age, the other extreme indicates a very Dark Age. Each half is divided into four ages, with the following numerological scheme:

Golden Age = 4800 years

Silver Age = 3600 years

Bronze Age = 2400 years

Iron Age (Kali Yuga) = 1200 years

The total equals the half cycle of 12,000 years, one-half of a precession cycle. At the “bottom” of the cycle, when descending Kali Yuga ends, a fundamental shift occurs and the universal cycle shifts to the ascending phase; “ascending” Kali Yuga thus begins, moving upward to eventually culminate in a new Golden Age.

Since this process is rooted in precession, we must ask ourselves what kind of alignments within precession might define the shift points. It is perhaps best here to insert an extensive excerpt from Chapter 12 of my new book:

[excerpt ]

Vishnunabhi and the True Anchor of the Vedic Yugas

One of the oldest writings in Vedic literature comes from a pseudo-historical god-man called Manu. René Guénon pointed out that Manu belongs to a family of related archetypal figures, which include Melchezidek, Metatron, St Michael, Gabriel, and Enoch. As an angelic inspiration for the rebirth of humanity at the dawn of a new era, or manvantara, Manu is the primal law-giver, and his laws were recorded in the extremely ancient Vedic text called the Laws of Manu.

Much of its contents describe moral and ethical codes of right behavior, but there is a section that deals with the ancient Vedic doctrine of World Ages — the yugas. Manu indicates that a period of 24,000 years — clearly a reference to precession — consists of a series of four yugas or ages, each shorter and spiritually darker than the last.

In one story this process of increasing limitation is envisioned as a cosmic cow standing with each leg in one quarter of the world; with each age that passes a leg is lost, resulting in the absurd and unstable world we live in today—a cow balancing on one leg.

According to the information in the Laws of Manu, the morning and twilight periods between the dawn of each new era equals one-tenth of its associated yuga, as shown in the [table above].

In Vedic mythology, a fabled dawn time existed in the distant past, when human beings had direct contact with the divine intelligence emanating from Brahma—the seat of creative power and intelligence in the cosmos. This archaic Golden Age (the Satya Yuga) lasted some 4800 years.

After the Golden Age ended, humanity entered a denser era, that of the Silver Age, lasting only 3600 years. In this age, humanity’s connection with the source was dimmed, and sacrifices and spiritual practices became necessary to preserve it. The Bronze Age followed, and humanity forgot its divine nature. Empty dogmas arose, along with indulgence in materialism. Next we entered the Kali Yuga—in which we remain today—where the human spirit suffers under gross materialism, ignorance, warfare, stupidity, arrogance, and everything contrary to our divine spiritual potential.

As the teachings tell, Kali, the creator-destroyer Goddess, will appear at the end of Kali Yuga to sweep away the wasted detritus of a spirit-dead humanity, making way for a new cycle of light and peace. Notice that the Manu text takes us from a pinnacle of light to the ultimate end-point of the process—the darkness of Kali Yuga. And notice that the four ages, when the overlap period is added, amounts to only half of the 24,000-year period of the Vedic Yuga cycle. This points to an obscure aspect of the doctrine that a Hindu Master, Sri Yukteswar, sought to clarify.

Sri Yukteswar’s Update

Sri Yukteswar was a Hindu saint active in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He was the master of the famous Yogananda, founder of The Self Realization Fellowship, whose book Autobiography of a Yogi awoke many people to the magic and mystery of Indian spirituality. Yukteswar was interested in contemporary scientific advances and in showing parallels between Hindu religion and Christianity.

His book The Holy Science is primarily about these correspondences. It was written in the mid-1890s at the behest of his teacher, Mahavatar Babaji. However, the Introduction contains an intriguing clarification of the World Age system of the Yugas.

Although the exact timing of the Kali Yuga’s beginning is subject to debate, no one argues that we are deep into it. Unfortunately, the cycles and year-counts of Hindu chronology are subject to gross exaggerations and manipulation—the sorry effect of clueless Hindu scholars trying to reconstruct the ancient doctrines. And these errors have been inserted into doctrines as long ago as the fourth century AD, thereafter being passed down to unsuspecting students as a kind of conventional wisdom.

However, it strikes me that Sri Yukteswar got closest to the true intention of the Yuga doctrine. Yukteswar based his “updated Yuga model” on the Laws of Manu as well as other traditions in Vedic and Hindu astronomy and mythology.

The tradition he shares is as follows:

. . . the sun, with its planets and their moons, takes some star for its dual and revolves around it in about 24,000 years of our earth—a celestial phenomenon [precession]. . . . The sun also has another motion by which it revolves around a grand center called Vishnunabhi, which is the seat of creative power, Brahma, the universal magnetism. Brahma regulates dharma, the mental virtue of the internal world.[1]

In reading an account like this, it is immediately apparent that things could be worded more clearly. This is a typical problem in translated works, and, unfortunately, as a reader it is always tempting to mentally ignore the unclear section and keep reading. But there is a huge grain of wisdom inside of Yukteswar’s description, and it is worth looking at very closely. Let us see if we can read between the lines and get a sense for what Yukteswar is really referring to.

We have an important identification of the “grand center” as Vishnunabhi or Brahma, the seat of creative power. Vishnunabhi is the navel of the Hindu god Vishnu, the emanation point of the cosmos, and modern Vedic scholar David Frawley identifies Vishnunabhi with the Galactic Center.

In his 1990 book Astrology of the Seers he writes,

“The galactic center is called ‘Brahma,’ the creative force, or ‘Vishnunabhi,’ the navel of Vishnu. From the galactic sun emanates the light which determines the life and intelligence on Earth...”[2]

Without mincing words, it is clear that the ancient Vedic skywatchers were aware of the Galactic Center, and, indeed, considered it to be the center and source of creative power in the universe. Again, as I’ve argued for the ancient Mayan skywatchers, recognizing the Galactic Center as an important place along the Milky Way is completely within the possibility of naked eye observation (although that may not have been the only method used).

Yukteswar suggests that the sun “takes a star for its dual” and revolves around it in one precessional cycle. Clearly, the reference is not to an actual orbital period, such as the moon orbiting around the earth, but is rather to the precessional shifting of the sun around the zodiac. If the sun’s dual is a fixed star against which the sun’s precessional motion is measured, then we can understand this more clearly.

This kind of conceptual or linguistic muddiness can delay deeper understanding right away. Now, in order to measure the precessional motion of the sun, the ancient astronomers would need to identify a specific “sun,” or solar position, in the seasonal cycle—for example, the vernal equinox sun or the summer solstice sun.

This specification will anchor the sun to a seasonal quarter so that the “orbital” motion referred to by Yukteswar (which is really precessional shifting) can be measured against a fixed sidereal location, the sun’s “dual.” Aldebaran might be a candidate, but the real fixed “dual” against which the cycle of precession is tracked in this Vedic description may actually be Vishnunabhi—the Galactic Center.

In the quote given above Yukteswar also mentions “another motion” of the sun around the Galactic Center, which is probably its actual orbital period—a huge cycle of some 225,000,000 years. Although it is striking that he mentions this (writing back in the 1890s), this larger cycle applies to the meaning of multiple precession cycles and is not relevant to the immediate question under consideration.

Back on track, Yukteswar continues:

When the sun in its revolution around its dual comes to the place nearest to this grand center, the seat of Brahma (an event which takes place when the Autumnal Equinox comes to the first point of Aries), dharma, the mental virtue, becomes so much developed that man can easily comprehend all, even the mysteries of the spirit. . ..[3]

The precessional movement of “the sun” closer to “the grand center” causes the full expression of a Golden Age of Light, a time indicated in Vedic and Hindu traditions as occurring a dozen or so millennia ago. As such, it must be the precessional motion of the June solstice sun around the grand center that is indicated, because the June solstice sun was “closest to” the Galactic Center roughly 12,000 to 13,000 years ago.

I should emphasize that this “closeness” is in terms of alignment (as viewed from earth), not distance. Unfortunately, Yukteswar attempts a precise dating based upon a 12,000-year period for one-half of a precession cycle. As a result, he backdates to the time of the fabled Golden Age (which he later gives as 11,501 BC) by using an autumn equinox point in Aries that is in error.

Yukteswar’s diagram preserves the important insight of a descending phase and an ascending phase of the precessional cycle, but the timing of the shift from descending Kali Yuga to ascending Kali Yuga must be adjusted (see diagram below).

The outer wheel shows the descent of time clockwise from the Age of Leo a the top, when the June solstice sun was closest to the “grand center.” The shaded wheel indicates the equinoctial age of precession according to the unadjusted Western zodiac. The inner wheel shows the actual sidereal position of the solstice axis. Why the need for an adjustment?

Sri Yukteswar wanted the end of descending Kali Yuga to correspond to his historical understanding, based on a nineteenth-century education, of the European Dark Ages and his belief in the elevation of human consciousness beginning around 500 AD. He cites scientific advances and Europe’s slow emergence from the Dark Ages to support this, but in my opinion technology has thrust us deeper into material dependency and spiritual darkness.

In addition, his scenario is Eurocentric and ignores Islamic and Chinese civilization. I realize it may seem presumptuous to correct a saint on this point, but his intention was to elucidate astronomical details of ancient doctrines that, by his time, had eroded into semantic vagaries. And he was writing before modern science had rediscovered the Galactic Center.

Perhaps it seems that I’ve injected my own biased reading into Yukteswar’s work. But my conclusions—and corrections—are fairly straightforward. The reader must judge with discernment.

Let’s look at it this way: Yukteswar writes that the Golden Age ended and we began our descent into spiritual darkness in 11,501 BC. This was roughly 13,500 years ago. Now, Yukteswar also said that this Golden Age occurred when “the sun” was close to Vishnunabhi (the Galactic Center).

And the context of his description is solar movements within the cycle of precession. Now, the question we must ask is this: what kind of precessional alignment between the sun and the Galactic Center happened roughly 13,500 years ago, the reverse of which happens one-half of a precession cycle later?

The answer is quite apparent — the Golden Age shift is timed with the alignment of the June solstice sun and the Galactic Center. The reverse event is the alignment of the December solstice sun with the Galactic Center, and we can get a true bearing on the timing of this event, as modern astronomy has calculated it. We must shift these timing parameters to accord with solstice-galaxy alignments, and therefore we have two dates: era-2000 AD and era 10,800 BC.

There are actually several factors and features involved in the timing issue which enrich our understanding of what these Galactic Alignment might mean to us. I’ll address the issues and parameters of the current galactic alignment in Part IV.

An important implication in this material is that the Golden Age mentioned in Yukteswar’s quote given above represented the culmination of the previous ascent phase and the shift to the descending phase, the archaic “fall of man” scenario. The flipside—the shift to ascending—therefore occurs at the astronomically opposed event (in era-2000 AD):

After 12,000 years, when the sun goes to the place in its orbit which is farthest from Brahma, the grand center... [then] dharma, the mental virtue, comes to such a reduced state that man cannot grasp anything beyond the gross material creation.[5]

This is the Vedic doctrine, clearly based in astronomy, that underlies René Guénon’s belief that modern people are unconscious degenerates with little resemblance to the full human potential that our ancient ancestors manifested. Furthermore, as we will see shortly, it underlies and defines the end of Kali Yuga that Guénon (without being specific) foresaw occurring very soon.

The Galactic Dimensions of Vedic Astrology

Vedic scholar and teacher David Frawley assessed Yukteswar’s model and adds some clarity:

“When the Sun is on the side of its orbit wherein its dark companion comes between it and the galactic center, the reception of that cosmic light appears to be greatly reduced. At such times there is a dark or materialistic age on Earth.”[6]

David Frawley (Vamadeva Shastri) is qualified on many levels to make this statement. As a respected Vedacharya (Vedic teacher), he is one of the few Westerners recognized in India as an authentic teacher of the ancient Vedic wisdom. His work includes translations and interpretations of the ancient scripture, and books on ayurveda, Vedic astrology, and studies on mantra and yoga. His work can be found on the internet at [http://www.vedanet.com](http://www.vedanet.com/)

I would add that the June solstice sun’s “dark companion” could be the December solstice sun, the day of greatest darkness in the solar year. In this scenario, the June solstice sun continually revolves around (in opposition to) the December solstice sun. Whether or not there is an actual occulting of the June solstice sun in terms of energetic radiation may simply be besides the point; the metaphor points us to the astronomy involved in this doctrine and the Vedic belief system woven around it.

The critical information encoded in Yukteswar’s book—written decades before the Galactic Center was “officially ” discovered in the 1920s—is that the ancient Vedic Yuga doctrine was calibrated with the periodic alignments of the solstice sun and the Galactic Center. If we do sense that the Vedic wisdom speaks a truth to us (nothing less than a lost science of the galactic influences on human evolution) the words of David Frawley may help us understand the importance of our impending “harmonization” with the Galactic Center:

An important cosmic event is occurring now. The winter solstice is now at a point in conjunction with the galactic center . . . This should cause a slow harmonization of humanity with the Divine will as transmitted from the galactic center . . . By the accounts of thinkers like Plato, the flood that destroyed Atlantis (and probably ended the Ice Age) occurred about 9300 B.C. (9000 years before Plato). This appears to have been when the summer solstice was in conjunction with the galactic center—a point completely opposite to the one today.[7]

In fact, Frawley believes that all of Vedic astrology “orients the zodiac to the galactic center” as the source of creative intelligence, mediated to human beings by the fixed stars of Sagittarius and the guru planet Jupiter, the Divine teacher.[8] Frawley gives an astronomically accurate sidereal location for the Galactic Center: 6° 40’ Sagittarius. This corresponds to 28° Sagittarius in the unadjusted tropical system, wherein the December solstice is nearby at 0° Capricorn (by definition). Again, the precise parameters of the galactic alignment will be explored later.

The lunar mansions of Vedic astrology indicate the Galactic Center region as a “root” place. The naksastra or lunar mansion corresponding to the 13°-wide lunar “sign” that embraces the Galactic Center is called mula, which means “root.” The mansion that occurs before “root” is called “the eldest,” suggesting that this spot in the sky is the end-beginning nexus in an ancient concept of the zodiac, which would be understandable given the precessional importance of the Galactic Center as a “root” or beginning point for time. This material augments the Vedic and Islamic information about the lunar south node being exalted at 3° Sagittarius, explored earlier.

There are compelling events in Hindu-Vedic mythology that are associated with the Galactic Center, Sagittarius, the theft of Soma, and the solstices. These events comprise a Vedic metaphysics of spiritual transcendence. However, many eras of overlapping symbology makes it difficult to sort out the original meaning with certainty. The head of the horse, the Ashwin twins, and the Churning of the Milky Ocean myth are all involved.

The head of the horse and the head of the simshumara crocodile (or makara) could very well be the bulging area of the nuclear bulge with the dark-rift mouth. The story of the Ashwin twins is symbolically identical to the Hero Twins in the Popol Vuh: they facilitate the resurrection of their father, the winter solstice sun. Some of these topics will be explored further in Chapters 14 and 15.

[end of excerpt]

This is only part of the material that I cite. There is a school of interpretation that, many centuries ago, tried to calculate the yuga doctrine with a slightly erroneous conception: it was believed that the dawn of the age (the dawn of time) began when the sun, moon, and all the planets were at their “station” or beginning points.

Hindu astrologers thus tried to back date with planetary periods and arrived at a calculation in 3102 BC. It is intriguing that this is close to the beginning of the 13-baktun cycle of the Mayan Long Count, but there is a problem. The idea in this conception is that the end of the yuga should be when the sun, moon, and all the planets return to their beginning points. This sounds like a half-understood fragment of the ancient doctrine.

The “stations” of the sun might be better understood as the equinox or solstice stations. And the references to all the planets seems to indicate the ecliptic in general. When the equinox or solstice “stations” of the ecliptic precess back around to the “starting point,” the age ends and begins anew. According to my understanding of the probable true basis of these ideas, the “starting point” of precession is the bright band of the Milky Way, which stretches like a finish line across the night sky.

The primary solar station of the ecliptic (the December solstice) has now precessed back to its starting point on the Milky Way, signaling the end of descending Kali Yuga.

As my book is moving along in the publication process, I am in dire need of feedback and commentary, even endorsements. I believe this is an important contribution especially in the realm of Traditional ideas, and I have been working largely in a vacuum. I know my concern here is really only a small fragment of Traditional metaphysics, and a rather exoteric one at that (in that it concerns astronomy).

However, we can at least now see how Mayan tradition belongs on the same level with Vedic and Egyptian metaphysics. In fact (and I may be somewhat biased here) Mayan cosmology seems to provide the clearest exposition of a very central part of all Tradition—the galactic alignments that define the alpha and omega of time.

The millennium has passed. However, the “end of world” discussion now relates most directly to the Mayan 2012 date, a subject I have researched and written about at length. It is my interest to be a voice of clarity on this, to define its astronomical basis, and thereby also frame the “end of Kali Yuga” in empirical terms.

This is actually a compelling doorway into the metaphysical idea of spiritual transcendence explored by Coomaraswamy and others, and that is where the discussion leads. In my work, I have always been in service to (even before discovering Traditional writers) elucidating the Traditional understanding, rather than emphasizing my own efforts or framing my views as “my system.”