



The Heart of Quetzalcoatl  
Becomes One with the Heart of Heaven:  
The 2004-2012 transits of Venus across the Sun

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For untold ages men have worshipped the great god who redeems the world by rising out of darkness as a radiant light in the heavens.... Within the soul from its primordial beginnings there has been a desire for light and an irrepressible urge to rise out of the primal darkness. When the great night comes, everything takes on a note of deep dejection, and every soul is seized by an inexpressible longing for light.... It is the psychic primal night which is the same today as it has been for countless millions of years. The longing for light is the longing for consciousness.

--C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*

They used to say that when he died he did not appear for four days; he went to live in Mictlan, the Nether World, they said. And also in another four days, he made for himself arrows. So in eight days appeared the great star which was named Quetzalcoatl, and this, they said, is when he was enthroned as Lord.

--*Anales de Cuauhtitlan*

He looked at his own Soul with a telescope. What seemed all irregular, he saw and shewed to be beautiful Constellations; and he added to the Consciousness hidden worlds within worlds.

--Coleridge. *Notebooks*

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## INTRODUCTION

The transit of Venus across the Sun provides us with an Esperanto—a universal language of the sky through which we can communicate across the planet. In fact, it is not as visually dramatic as a bright comet or even a total solar eclipse. It will be seen as a small black dot crossing the face of the Sun. But the fact that it is the planet Venus, making a very rare daylight appearance, carries a special significance for us. Next to the Sun and the Moon, Venus is the third brightest luminary in our sky. The last occurrence of the transit was in 1882. The event occurs in pairs, eight years apart, so the next one will be in 2012.

Astronomers are excited about it. Astrologers are excited about it. People all over the world, for a variety of reasons, are excited about it. The World Wide Web is virtually singing with news and conversation about it.

For me, it is the consummation of years of study of myth of Quetzalcoatl and Mesoamerican spirituality. In that context, it is an event of remarkable and moving significance that has relevance to us now and to our immediate future. It becomes a marker, a challenge, an invitation.

\* \* \*

I am going to tell you a story in three languages: The language of poetry, the language of myth and the language of astronomy. In ancient Mesoamerica, as in ancient China and other places, these were one—a single impulse that guided the experience of a culture. I invite you to open your heart, to open your mind, and let this story flow through you at its many levels. If you do, I believe that you will find yourself recognizing parts of it as familiar, discarding parts of it as alien, bringing the story slowly forward with new meaning in a new time. This is the way it has always been with all stories.

Whether you read this story before the great event of June 8, 2004—the Venus transit of the Sun that Edmond Hubble called "the noblest event that astronomy has to offer"—or after it, perhaps even after the second event in June of 2012, I hope you will find yourself deepened by this convergence of history and story, past and present, Venus and the Sun, the heart of Quetzalcoatl with the Heart of Heaven, the Heart of Heaven and your own heart..

CHAPTER 1: THE POETRY

*FLOR Y CANTO – FLOWER AND SONG*

*SONG OF CINTEOTL, THE CORN GODDESS*

*I was born the multicolored maize  
tinted thus, the flowering corn.  
I came to open its grains in the presence  
of the god who makes the day.  
In the region of rain and mist,  
where the precious aquatic flowers  
open their corollas  
I have been fashioned by the one god.  
I am his creation.*

*Chorus:*

*Only within the tinted hues  
does your heart live.  
You sing among the matted reeds  
and make the kings dance  
You have command over the shores of water  
The god created you, as a flower he gave you life.  
As a song, he painted you.  
The Toltecs wrote; gone are their books  
But your heart has become perfect.*

*Cinteotl:*

*It is through art  
that I live on here forever.*

*--from a post-conquest Nahuatl theater piece  
(in Angel Garibay's Poesia Nahuatl, vol.III  
translated from the Spanish by Sheri Ritchlin)*

*"I came to open its grains  
in the presence of the god  
who makes the day."*

Let us begin with something very simple and very common to us all: corn.

Corn, or maize, is the ancient, life-giving food that has been the mainstay of the American diet since long before Europeans reached their New World. Mexicans to this day grind it for their tortillas and for the drink they inherited from their indigenous forbears, *atole*.

What are these strange things that the Nahuatl chorus is singing about their ancient goddess of corn? "Only within the tinted hues does your heart live. You sing among the matted reeds and make the kings dance. You have command over the shores of water. The god created you, as a flower he gave you life. As a song, he painted you. The Toltecs wrote; gone are their books. But your heart has become perfect." Now *that* is a mystery!

To unravel this mystery we have to look closely at the original Nahuatl language spoken by Aztecs and Toltecs in which the word for corn was *tonacoyotl*. The word is derived from the root word *tona* meaning Sun, and is also associated with the flesh of humans. We find the same root in the word for calendar, *tonalpohualli* in which a day is not only a measure of the Sun's apparent movement, but the radiant field of consciousness itself, a field of light, incarnated in the human and in the life-giving corn. Another name for the highest, Ometeotl (the "Dual God"), is "Lord and Lady of Our Flesh," as if divinity itself took up its "home" there.

[The word *tonacoyotl* ] can be translated into "our support," [and] connotes not only the basic cereal in the Mesoamerican native diet, but a cluster of related concepts that goes beyond its character--acknowledged by other authors--of sacred symbol... Besides having meanings associated with the sacred, it is understood and experienced as something primordial, and it becomes a dominant factor in the totality of the whole culture, it provides new forms of coherence, and it becomes an essential key in the conformation of the worldview and ethos of the community. (Leon-Portilla)

This brings us to another word that incorporates the root for Sun—*tonal* (pronounced *to-NAL*). This word was introduced into the mainstream of contemporary thought through the popular series of books written by Carlos Castaneda about his apprenticeship to a Mexican shaman, Don Juan Matus. Here is a conversation between the two which appears in *A Separate Reality*:

The *tonal* is the organizer of the world... On its shoulders rests the task of setting the chaos of the world in order... Everything we know and do as the work of men

is the tonal.... I would say that the tonal is a guardian that protects something priceless, our very being..... "

"We begin to groom it at the moment of our birth. The moment we take the first gasp of air we also breathe in power for the tonal.... The tonal begins at birth and ends at death...."

"The nagual is the part of us with which we do not deal at all...; for which there is no description--no words, no names, no feelings, no knowledge."... Don Juan made a sweeping gesture and pointed to the area beyond the boundaries of the table. "The nagual is there," he said. "There, surrounding the island [of the tonal]."<sup>1</sup>

All of the words that develop from *tona* are related to embodiment, order, culture, civilization, the *seen* world. That world is not separate from the human in the objective manner of Western thought. It is an emanation of an ordering principle, a spark of light, inherent in all of creation that incarnates, "enfleshes" itself in matter. It is, in fact, the very process by which energy—as light—enters *into* matter. As in Christianity the Word becomes flesh, in high Nahuatl thought, light becomes flesh and to light, it returns.

Yet another derivative of *tona*—*tonalli*--gives us a better idea of this process with respect to the human. It means 'to irradiate or make warm with the sun' (Carrasco-Religions). *Tonalli* was one of the most powerful of divine forces. Its source was Omoteotl, the supreme Dual God residing at the top of the nine (in some sources thirteen) celestial layers. At the moment of human conception, Omoteotl sent this vital energy into the womb of the female. Deposited into the head of the embryo, it determined the shape of one's temperament and destiny. The newborn child was ritually placed near a fire and eventually exposed to the sun in order to increase his or her *tonalli*. Among its meanings of vigor, warmth, solar heat and summer, *tonalli* is close to, but not identical to, our meaning of soul. It is not just a 'life force' but a cosmic force that emanates from the highest Dual God. As the organizing force enters the material order, it takes on shape not only in the human being but in the whole sphere of creation.

*Only within the tinted hues  
does your heart live.*

The symbol which the Mesoamericans used to express the entire process was that of "flowering"—the emergence of something visible which enhanced the world through physical sustenance and soul nourishment. The *calmecac*, for example, which was the priestly school where the Aztec nobles were educated, was described as "the place where the body buds and flowers." The ultimate expression of the flowering was beauty, both the beauty of the natural world and the beauty of art. This explains the mysterious last line of the Hymn to Cinteotl, spoken by the goddess herself: *It is through art that I live on here forever*. What is remarkable is that what we would call *consciousness* appears simply as the highest octave of the entire process of "irradiation," which begins with an *incarnation*. Light itself is an ethereal manifestation of energy which takes on an increasing focus and finally embodies as living flesh—whether of corn, for example, or the human body. There is a constant ascent of this *tonalli* into higher levels of order until it reaches the imperishable level of *art*.

Western science places us in a *solar system* and in essence, this is close to the meaning of *tonal* on a broader and deeper scale. For us, the solar system represents the furthest extent of the "order" in which we live, with the sun as its center. The Hubble telescope has carried our vision deep into space, billions of light years. But beyond Pluto is the "infinite outdoors," while we remain safely indoors, warmed at the hearth of our own star, the Sun. Our cosmic weather includes the patterned movements of the Sun, the Moon, and the eight other planets with which we are, in a way, intimate: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto. We have extended our tonal only in the last century to include the last three outer planets, demonstrating that the tonal itself is a living, changing form with a destiny of its own, of which we are creatively a part. It is not a subject-object relationship for the Mesoamericans because all is a budding and blooming out of a central point of energy—Ometeotl—that is distributed through all of us. Nor can it be confined to a spatial arrangement. What are time and space to the Sun itself?

Native Mesoamericans, like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, have a long collective memory which seems to include periods of decline and the destruction of their civilized centers; their organized cultures; perhaps even their entire populations, like the great flood of Noah's time. Whether from drought, flood, wars, disease or internal disorder, we can't be sure. But we *can* be sure that early civilizations were vulnerable to all of the above. The idea of multiple Suns as eras of civilization, from their rise to their destruction, permeates the American continent. We find it among the Hopi, the Navajo, the Aztec, Toltec, Maya and others.

*The Toltecs wrote; gone are their books  
But your heart has become perfect.*

### *Teyolia and the force of the Human Heart*

Even more powerful than the force of *tonalli* as the emanation and incarnation of light, is a force known in Nahuatl as *teyolia*, which animates the human body and resides in the heart. Pedro Carrasco has likened it to "divine fire" that gives shape to a person's sensibilities and thinking patterns. "Every human heart contained this divine fire and an extraordinary amount of it resided in priests, artists, and men and women who impersonated deities at festivals. Each of these human types was considered to be a living channel of teyolia in the social world." The highest channel of all was the *hombre dios* (divine man) who is exemplified in the figure of Quetzalcoatl, the subject of our myth in the next chapter. When such a person died, his or her teyolia traveled to the world of the dead known as "the sky of the sun" or "the sky within the sky" where it was transformed into birds.

This force resided likewise in certain mountains and landscapes as well as in temples and communities and houses.



### *Making a Heart and Face*

This divine force of *teyolia* is undoubtedly related to a principle idea held by the Nahuatl sages regarding the importance of 'making a heart' and 'making a face' in life.

The Nahua peoples believed that we are born with a physical heart and face, but that we have to create a deified heart and a true face. The ordinary word for heart was *yollotl*, derived from movement. Thus the ordinary human heart is the moving, pumping organ that keeps us alive; but the heart that can be made by special efforts in life is called *Yolteotl*, or deified. The phrase used to describe the face that we must make if we are to be truly men is *ixtli in yollotl*, which signifies the process whereby heart and face must combine. The heart must shine through the face before our features become reliable reflections of ourselves.

Thus heart-making and face-making, the growth of spiritual strength, were two aspects of a single process which was the aim of life and which consisted in creating some firm and enduring center from which it would be possible to operate as human beings.... If we are unable to create this second heart and face, we are merely vagrants on the face of the earth. (Irene Nicholson )

The Nahuatl word *ahuicpa* sums up this idea of aimlessness that is seen as the human's ordinary state on earth. The cultivation of a divinized heart could only occur by releasing the *teyolia* or divine force within the heart through supreme acts of penitence, reverence and sacrifice.

*Teyolia* is also a cosmic force, (reminiscent of what cosmologist Brian Swimme has called "the hidden heart of the cosmos"), which was referred to in Mesoamerica by the phrase "Heart of Heaven" or the "Sky within the Sky," or the "interior of the sky." We find it as well among the Mayans and it appears in their Creation Story.

Whatever might be is simply not there:  
only murmurs, ripples, in the dark, in the night.  
Only the Maker, Modeler alone, Sovereign Plumed Serpent,  
the Bearers, Begetters are in the water, a glittering light.  
They are there, they are enclosed in quetzal feathers, in blue-green.  
Thus the name, "Plumed Serpent."  
They are great knowers, great thinkers in their very being.  
And of course there is the sky, and there is also the Heart of Sky.  
This is the name of god, as it is spoken.  
(Popol Vuh)

## *The Heart of Heaven*

*From within the heavens they come,  
the beautiful flowers, the beautiful songs.  
Our longing spoils them,  
our inventiveness makes them lose their fragrance  
Your beautiful song  
is a golden woodthrush  
most beautiful you raise it up.  
You are in a field of flowers  
Among the flowery bushes you sing.  
Are you perchance a precious bird of the Giver of Life?  
Perchance you have spoken with God?*

--Ayocuan, 15th century Mexico

From the interior of the sky, the heart of heaven, come the highest forms of creative expression. The sacred song, in any culture, always arises at the edge. It bursts out of the unmanifest into human expression as surely as the sun bursts out of the horizon or light out of the dark. From Aztec nobles who survived the Spanish conquest of Mexico, we hear descriptions of the skillful artist, like the goldsmith, who 'puts his deified heart' into his work. It is certainly suggestive (not to mention alchemical) that the word for gold in Nahuatl, *teocuitlatl*, literally means 'the excrement of god'; or that the scarlet poinsettia native to Mexico was called 'flowering excrement'. The song rises out of human pain and joy as the flower of individual life. But it is also the expression of the presence of the invisible god, frequently referred to as Tloque Nahuaque, the God of the Near and the Close.

## *The Tree of Life and the force of regeneration*

If we look at an image of the Tree of Life (Fig.3) in the Borgia Codex, we see this same cycle depicted as Quetzalcoatl descends on the left (west) into the Underworld toward a reclining figure whose head is a skull emerging from another skull and whose hands and feet are like the talons of the eagle which appears above. From the center of this figure rise two sacrificial knives, each with a human eye as a symbol of the day world of human consciousness (which alone is capable of the moral self-sacrificial act). Out of them rises the tree of life surmounted by an eagle. So much can be said about this image, but I simply



Fig. 36. Tree of Life from the Codex Borgia. Heaven above, Earth below. Quetzalcoatl on the left, Xochipilli on the right, evoke the unifying movement, first of descent and then of ascent.

want to point out here that on the right side of the 'wheel' of energies depicted is Xochipilli, god of flowers and patron of souls, rising in the east. His name means the 'Flower Prince' and he is often regarded as the god of flower and festivals; the patron god of Flower and Song. The word *pilli*, beside the meaning of 'prince', carries the connotation of 'child' and 'young shoot'. Brundage says "the stripling Xochipilli is indeterminately either the returning sun in the spring or the young maize plant just pushing out of the earth." We can see here a direct relation to Leon-Portilla's description of the deeper meaning of *tonacayotl* or corn, containing that basic root as 'the warmth of the sun'.

The eagle is universally a symbol of the sun and represents consciousness and light--the golden bird of spiritual consciousness--then this surely represents the cycle which creates and preserves light. Quetzalcoatl is light or spirit descending into matter from the House of the Sun. When the Sun 'calls him' to return, he can only complete his journey by descending into death where the necessary transformation occurs. It is a journey that can only be undertaken by the body, the 'trickster's gift'. In one meaning, it is Xochipilli, the young god of flowers, who will bear his soul back to the House of the Sun. But the wheel is not a perfect circle, it is 'split' in a form that resembles the human heart. Thus it is in the heart that cosmic energy is transformed and light is released. It is through the painful act of sacrifice, undergone in the place of death and darkness, that the divinized heart of Quetzalcoatl is released to be borne upward by Xochipilli.

In the Song of Cinteotl which introduces this chapter, we see the clear connection between life, art and divinity. It is easy for us to reduce the idea of 'corn' to its simplest denominator as the basic sustenance of life in Mesoamerica. But sustenance, if we look at the song carefully, includes what in modern parlance we would call 'food for the soul'. Thus to be alive, to be 'sustained', is to have responsibility for a potentially rarefied energy so beautifully expressed in the image of the quetzal bird—the shiest and rarest of creatures, who resides in the highest of trees and is known for his beautiful plumage.

It is through the tradition of Flower and Song that the transformation embodied in Quetzalcoatl can take place within life much as the Christian mystics could find union with God, Hindu mystics with Brahman or Buddhist sages experience a luminous nirvana in the depths of meditation. I think it is testimony to the subtlety of the Nahuas' understanding of energy and nature that human life, flowering nature and artistic expression find their places in an intricate ecological cycle that is connected with equal intimacy to the Sun and stars and the Giver of Life or Heart of Heaven. But of this, I will let the poetry speak for itself. Here is the rest of the song cited at the outset of this chapter.

Where the nectar of the flowers is found  
the fragrant beauty of the flower is refined....  
They interlace, they interweave;  
among them sings, among them warbles the quetzal bird.  
The flowers sprout, they are fresh, they grow:  
they open their blossoms'  
and from within emerge the flowers of song:  
among men You scatter them, You send them.  
You are the Singer.

## CHAPTER 2: THE MYTH

### *QUETZALCOATL AND THE HEART OF HEAVEN*

#### *Tamoanchan*

Before citing the actual myth of Quetzalcoatl, I want to quote here one of the earliest fragments of Nahuatl literature. I think it will provide a context for the story of Quetzalcoatl and lay out some of the archetypal themes which the myth presents. When Fr. Bernardino de Sahagun asked his sixteenth century informants about their ethnic origins, they recited an account which they claimed to have learned from their old ones. It deals with an ancient reinvention of Nahuatl culture after the long pilgrimage of a people.

They arrived, they came, following the way, they came to the end of it in order to govern here, on this earth [or 'in this land']. that was mentioned by only a single name as if it were but a small world. The name of the place which the first people chose was 'Tamoanchan' which was said to mean 'we seek our house'.

Tamoanchan represents the mythical origin of the high culture of the Nahuas and it is here that the first wise men or sages lived among the ancient people and were called, in Nahuatl, the *tlatatinimeh* or 'knowers of things'.

And there in Tamoanchan also they were the knowers of things, the so-called possessors of codices. But they did not remain very long. After a time, they left. They set forth and carried with them the black and the red, the codices and paintings, the art of the Toltecs, the music of the flutes... They say that the god came, speaking to them, and when they went, they turned themselves toward the direction of the face of the sun. They carried the black and the red ink, the codices and the paintings They carried the wisdom. They took all with them. The books of songs and the music of the flutes.

Informants of Sahagun, Codice Matritense de la Real Academia de la Historia

The old native informants add a particularly beautiful and poignant note which speaks of the reaction of those left behind in Tamoanchan, deprived of the ancient wisdom. Without the 'knowers of things' and the wisdom of the codices, it seemed impossible to go on existing. As Le3n-Portilla describes it, "it was thought that existence without history and culture implied the end, not only of their lives, but of the universe itself." We hear the lamentations of the old at having lost forever the light that guided them through their passage here on earth.

Will the sun shine?

Will it rise?

How will they go?

How will the people be established?

Because they have gone.  
Because they have taken away the black and the red ink  
How will the people exist?  
How will the city remain on earth?  
How will it have stability?  
What is going to govern us?  
What is going to guide us?  
What is going to show us the way?  
What will be our standard?  
What will be our measure?  
What will be our quality?  
  
Where is it going to end?  
  
How will it come to be, the torch and the light.

Fortunately, amid the confusion that reigned following their departure, the account tells us that the people discovered that they had among them at least four old wise men who had remained behind. Probably at the instigation of the people, the four old ones reunited and after long deliberation, they succeeded in 'reinventing' the ancient wisdom and the forms of preserving their memories of the past.

Thus they invented the account of the destinies,  
The annals and the account of the years,  
The book of dreams. They ordered how it was to be kept  
And how it was to be followed.  
The time that lasted.  
The Lordship of the Toltecs  
The Lordship of the Tepenacas  
The Lordship of the Mexicas  
And all the Chichimeca Lordships.

Notice here the significant elements which we have seen associated with 'tonalli': Destiny, order, illumination and the account of the years or *tonalpohualli*, which and refers to their calendar. There is a clear connection here with the description of a tonal as the field of time and human existence. These passages are describing the fundamental features of civilization and culture: the ordering of time, the recording of history and the lineage of rulers. They are as fundamental to the sustenance of a people as corn is to the body.

Two other elements of this account are of particular significance in relation to this study. The first is the idea of seeking one's house, described as the meaning of "Tamoanchan," the mythical origin of the Nahua people. The second is the importance attributed to the knowledge that the sages carried in the 'black and red ink' of the codices. It is identified with their quality, their measure, their stability. It is their 'torch' and their 'light' and, above all, their assurance that the sun will rise. With this as our background, we are ready now to approach the myth of Quetzalcoatl, the ultimate sage-hero-king-god of Mesoamerica. As the 'plumed serpent', (a meaning

of 'quetzalcoatl'), he appears as Kulculcan and Gucumatz among the Mayans and the abundance of his iconography at Teotihuacan shows him as the primary deity some two thousand years ago. As the myth comes down to us from the sixteenth century *Anales de Cuauhtitlan*, the tale of the god is overlaid with that of an actual king of the Toltecs, reigning over their great capital in Tollan, in the tenth century. Like much of myth, this story is multivalent and tells many stories at one time, undoubtedly including historical events surrounding the actual king.

### THE MYTH OF QUETZALCOATL

*In this year 2-Reed [Quetzalcoatl] built his House of Fasting, his place of penance and of prayer. He, our Lord One Reed Quetzalcoatl, carefully laid out his four houses: his turquoise-plank house, his coral in-lay house, his whiteshell-inlay house, and his quetzal-feather house where he prayed frequently, performed penance and observed his fasts.*

*And at the exact hour of midnight he went down to the place called Atecpan Amochco, by the water, and there he humbly inserted his penitential spines, which he did as well on the heights of Xicocotl and Huitzco and Tzincoc and Nonohualcatepec. And his penitential spines were made of precious greenstone and he offered them up on a bed of quetzal feathers. And for incense he burned turquoise, greenstone, coral; and his blood offerings were of serpents, birds, butterflies which he sacrificed.*

*And it is recounted, it is said he prayed often, he sought godhead in the depths of heaven... And the place to which he cried out was known as Omeyocan Chiuenepaniuhcan, "Duality Above Nine Heavens."*

*And so in this manner he knew those who there kept their dwellings, calling upon and petitioning them insistently in most honorable humility and contrition. And finally it was he who revealed the grandeur of wealth: jadestone, turquoise, gold--yellow and white, coral, mother-of-pearl, plumage of the quetzal, the cotinga, the roseate spoonbill, the troupial, the trogon and the heron. And he revealed the multicolored cacao as well as multicolored cotton. He was a great Toltec, a grand artisan, in all his earthenware, painted blue green, white, yellow, red and a multitude of colors. (from the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan*)*

*Now it is recounted how Quetzalcoatl conducted himself when he disregarded the desire of the owl sorcerers that he should make human offerings, that he should sacrifice men. The owl sorcerers counseled together, those whose names were Tezcatlipoca, Ilhuimecatl and Toltecatl. They said, "Certainly it is necessary that he abandon the city, which we will occupy." They said, "Let us brew the pulque which we will give him to drink; so he will be corrupted and so he will no longer perform his sacramental penances." And then Tezcatlipoca said, "I say we must give him his own body, that he should see it."*

Tezcatlipoca and the owl sorcerers offer Quetzalcoatl a fermented drink which he first refuses. "No I will not drink it; I am fasting. Does it not intoxicate? Is it not fatal?" Thus he refuses but they persist. Finally he says that he will drink three drinks but they insist that he drink four and then they give him a fifth, saying that it is the 'ritual libation' and Quetzalcoatl becomes intoxicated. In his intoxication, he calls for his sister, Quetzalpetlatl, also well-known for her purity of character and the penances she performs daily on Mt. Nonohualca. The owl sorcerers trick her into the same libation until she too is intoxicated. "At dawn, they performed no sacraments and when the sun appeared they were stricken with anguish, their hearts were orphaned in remorse." In the version recounted to Sahagun, Tezcatlipoca appears with his smoking mirror to show Quetzalcoatl the image of his debauched face.

"Oh how unfortunate I am," he laments. "No longer is even a single day-sign counted in my house." In pain and humiliation, Quetzalcoatl departs his city, followed by his musicians and others, and sets out toward the east. He sends word for a sarcophagus to be made, in which he lies, and after four days he becomes ill and says to his herald, "let it be finished". Then he rises up, summoning his heralds, and they depart in search of Tlillan, Tlallan, Tlapayan--the Black Land, the Red Land, the Place of the Burning.

We meet once again the Red and the Black which were associated with those essential elements of culture which the first *tlamatinimeh* carried out of Tamoanchan. But here, as in other places, they stand for the duality that is such a central theme in the Nahuatl cosmos; the very nature of their highest god. The Black and the Red Land represent symbolically the place where the night and the day meet; where the sun rises out of the dark world into the world of day. As it is the place of burning, it also represents the center where duality itself is burned away. The Sun, by its nature, is fire. Through its cyclical journey through both worlds and its singularity as a source of light, it is the ultimate expression of this unity.

*And it was again on the day One Reed that he arrived at Teoapan Ilhuicaatenco, "along the divine water, at the shore of heavenly water". Then he halted and stood: he wept, took up his vestments and adorned himself in his insignia, his turquoise mask,.. And when he was fully adorned, he set himself on fire. He offered himself up in flame.... And it is said that even as he burned his ashes emerged and arose: and there appeared, before the sight of everyone, all the birds of great value which emerged and rose into the sky. They saw the roseate spoonbill, the cotinga, the trogon, the heron, the yellow parrot, the scarlet macaw, the white-bellied parrot, and every other bird of precious plumage.*

*And when the ashes were extinguished, then arose his heart--the quetzal bird itself.*

We could hardly have a clearer image of the human soul as it separates from the body and rises toward heaven as the most precious of birds, the quetzal. Yet it is not the soul that is described but the heart of Quetzalcoatl. It is obviously not the organic heart but the heart deified by fire that survives death just as the soul does. His heart rises as the quetzal bird, and the account says, "they saw it. And so they knew he had entered the sky within the sky. The old ones used to say he was transformed to the dawn star, thus it is said that when Quetzalcoatl died this star appeared, and so he is named 'Lord of the Dawn

House'. They used to say that when he died he did not appear for four days; he went to live in Mictlan, the Nether World, they said. And also in another four days, he made for himself arrows. So in eight days appeared the great star which was named Quetzalcoatl, and this, they said, is when he was enthroned as Lord."

Quetzalcoatl has become the Lord of the Dawn house or Venus. But note especially the use of the phrase 'the sky within the sky'. The heart of Quetzalcoatl, as a result of his sacrifice at the nadir of the Underworld, has risen to become one with "the sky within the sky," the Heart of Heaven. He has returned to the House of the Sun or what the poets called the House of the Giver of Life

\* \* \*

Let's take a closer look now at this myth in the light of the tonal, nagual and teyolia. Quetzalcoatl, as priest king, reigns at the center of the "tonal" that is the great city of Tollan, center of the civilized world. He is clearly one of those figures who becomes an abundant source of *tonalli* as described by Carrasco; a peerless gift for art, order, government and discipline.

Quetzalcoatl is also the heart and center of his kingdom; the force of *teyolia*. From him has emanated, not just a civilization displaying the fundamental features of Tamoanchan, but a civilization raised to a higher level of artistic, ethical and religious sensibility. He has replaced the tradition of human sacrifice with personal penance.

Quetzalcoatl, like the 'knowers of things' in the previous myth, is able to 'hear the voice of the god' and be heard by Him. The qualities of piety, ascetic practice, order and aesthetic beauty have reached their fullness; the edge of possibility. Quetzalcoatl has done his work well on this field of consciousness or *tonal*. But *tonal* is also 'destiny' which is why, in one version, Quetzalcoatl says to Tezcatlipoca when he arrives, "I have been waiting for you old father." This is reminiscent of Jesus' foreknowledge of his death as it has come down to us in the Gospels.

When a tonal or field of light completes its cycle, it loses energy and is over-run by the dark and powerful forces of the nagual, which is both destructive and regenerative. Hence Quetzalcoatl laments—"No longer will a single day sign be counted in my house"—indicating that a tonal has been lost. As the people of Tamoanchan lament, Quetzalcoatl is taking with him the 'torch and the light' and even the 'music of the flutes' because in one version his musicians follow him in his exile. A cycle has been completed, culturally, and must give way to something new. Tezcatlipoca and the Owl sorcerers are not only the dark force claiming their due much as the Lord of the Underworld claimed Persephone, similarly despoiling her virgin purity, but they are also the force of disintegration and chaos which drive the culture (as well as individual and cosmos) into new forms and a renewal of the tonal. It is Quetzalcoatl's conscience and remorse, and ultimately his personal sacrifice, that turn disintegration into renewal, degeneration into redemption. Human character, as the inner light of *tonalli*, becomes the reorganizing principle that reverses the tide of degeneration and entropy

In the Sahagun version, Quetzalcoatl encounters necromancers on his journey to the East who block his way and demand of him, "Whither goest thou? Why hast thou left thy people? To whom dost thou commend thyself? Who will do penance?" Quetzalcoatl replies that they cannot stop his departure "because I must go." Once again they ask him



where he is going and he replies, "I go to Tlallapan." When they ask him why he goes there he answers: "They have come to call me. The Sun is calling me." "Go and fare well," they say to him.

Quetzalcoatl's statement "the Sun is calling me" adds detail to the myth of Tamoanchan. The 'god who calls' is presented here as the Sun. The ultimate destination of the human beings who came to birth in that place called 'we seek our house' is the House of the Sun. The reunion with the source of life and light becomes the mystical quest of the warriors of later cultures, (especially Tenochtitlan), whose death in battle guarantees the soul's journey there. Interestingly, the only two forms of death that guaranteed this instant translation to the House of the Sun were death in battle or sacrifice, and death in childbirth; that is, bringing life into the world or in the midst of taking life out of the world. These deaths were directly related to the passage of that solar energy identified as *tonalli* and thereby returned essential energy to the Sun. It is their valor, in fact, that helped move the sun on its daily journey across the sky.

The transformation that we see in the death of Quetzalcoatl and the rebirth of his soul or 'divinized heart' as the quetzal bird, could also occur within life through the mystical experiences of 'flor y canto' or 'flower and song'. They were re-enacted in Nahuatl theater and song, as we have seen in the Hymn to Cinteotl, the Corn Goddess where the chorus sings—

*The Toltecs wrote; gone are their books  
But your heart has become perfect.*

They might well have been singing of Quetzalcoatl.

## CHAPTER 3: THE ASTRONOMICAL EVENT

### *QUETZALCOATL AND THE VENUS TRANSIT OF THE SUN*

*The sight of Venus transiting the sun is by far the noblest that astronomy has to offer.*

--Edmond Hubble

The myth tells us that Quetzalcoatl spent eight days in the Underworld in some essential reconstitution of the unity of the opposites symbolized by the Red and Black Land where they are fused into one in the Fire of the center. As Laurette Sejourné describes it, "After first appearing in the Western sky, Venus disappears 'underground' and remains hidden for several days, reappearing, brighter than ever, in the eastern sky when she reunites with the sun. The soul follows the same route: she descends from her celestial home and enters the darkness of matter, only to rise again, glorious, at the moment of the body's dissolution." The details of the myth suggest that Quetzalcoatl becomes a god, not when he reaches 'the interior of the sky', but in the Underworld when he puts on his regalia and steps into the fire. These are the adornments of the god, and only the god-like mind, (the divinized heart), would be capable of this act. The forging of arrows or 'energy' is similarly the act of a god. It is the regeneration of matter into light. In psychic and organic language, it is the return to the primordial creative energy of the nagual embedded in the dark natural forces symbolized by creatures like the owl, the serpent and the jaguar which are the animal doubles of the human. These are used and transformed by Quetzalcoatl as the arrows—now the positive, conscious, directed force of the nagual. This is the kindling of the energy of a new and more powerful tonal that will become Venus, created around the force of Quetzalcoatl's perfected heart.

The career of matter, energy and life moves through its creative course toward entropy and death, at which point the dual principles return to a unity in the unmanifest until they are brought forth again into a new creative cycle. I am intentionally casting this process in modern scientific terminology to emphasize the sophistication of the cosmology being expressed here. The fact that their explanations were presented in mythological terms does not reduce what might be called its clear ecological component, to use another modern term. If the universe seeks the most efficient route to entropy, then the Nahuatl sages were masters at understanding and abetting this process. They were constantly concerned with the energy of things. They found in the planet Venus—their Quetzalcoatl—the perfect metaphor to express it, writing its message in the long intricate passages of its light, woven across the night sky through centuries.

## *The Tonalpohualli—Portrait of the Cosmic Chamber*

The Mesoamericans, in a tradition thought goes back millenia, kept a complex and detailed calendar based on the extensive and precise observations of the movements of the celestial bodies, the most important being the Sun, Moon and Venus. The Zodiac—or "serpent of the sky"—is represented also as the body of Quetzalcoatl and is one of his aspects. The number 13—the divisions of the zodiac—times 4, the four directions, results in a sacred unit of 52 called a 'bundle'. Both the days and years are gathered into bundles which correspond to our centuries. The Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs had 2 different counts or calendars. The one which determined individual destiny was a 260 day calendar made up of 20 units of 13 days, 20 being the basis of the Mesoamerican numerical system. The total of 260 is also  $52 \times 5$ , which may have some relation to the image of the quincunx which appears throughout Mesoamerican iconography as a symbol of Venus. It is usually depicted as four dots arranged in a square (the glyph for solar hear) round a dot in the center (like the point out of which the heart energy of *teyolia* issues).

There was also a solar calendar that was made up of 18 months of 20 days (360) with 5 days added at the end of each year to complete the 365 day passage of the sun. The last of these calendrical units was the 52 year cycle that ended the 'bundle of years.'

The Mesoamericans—both Nahuatl (including Toltec and Aztec) and Mayan—divide their histories into long eras or "suns" which were semi-historical and semi-calendrical; measures of time and mythological records of past destructions. They calculated the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Sun as 3113 B.C. and its ending in 2012 A.D., representing a total of 5125 years. (They may have made additional adjustments over long periods that brought it closer to 5200—a "bundle" number. Calculations are based on our own dating system.) If this is the Fifth Sun, the Sun of center and therefore the completion of the Quincunx, the beginning of the cycle would have been 26,000 years ago (at  $5200 \times 5$ ) or 25,625 at 5,125. The current scientific calculation for the precession of the equinoxes is 25,600 years.

We are ready now to extract from all of this the critical 'mystic' moments of initiation in the cosmic chamber. These bewildering numbers come together into patterns of profound significance to the Mesoamerican sages. Every 8 solar years, as we have noted, represent 5 synodic revolutions of Venus and so we have our first intersection or conjunction. Every 52 years, the 260 day calendar synchronizes with the solar calendar. This is very important because every day is colored by its position in each of these cycles and carries a number or glyph defining each of those positions. Every 52 years, all of the cycles start over together. 104 years marked the exact intersection of the 2 calendars and the cycle of Venus. Mathematically speaking that means that  $365 \times 104$  or 37,960 days is divisible by 260, 365, 584 and 52. The ratios are so perfect and harmonic that if we listen carefully inside of our chamber, we may—like Pythagoras and Kepler—hear the music of the spheres.

### *The Heart of Heaven*

At Teotihuacan, which was laid out with meticulous mathematical, astronomical and sacred calculations by its sages, the Pyramid of the Sun was constructed in exact alignment with the point at which the sun rises on the day it passes through the zenith of the sky; the 'heart of heaven'. It seems likely that the passage of Venus through this point would have also had particular significance, as would the conjunctions of the Sun and Venus every 8 years, although this would not be visible. These calculations are embedded in the quincunx as the sign for Venus containing the 5, 8 and 4 that are of both calculative and sacred significance to that planet: the 584 days of its synodic revolution; the conjunction with the sun following 5 revolutions of Venus and 8 revolutions of the sun.

In Aztec times this was celebrated with a festival dedicated to a renewal of energy called *Atamalqualiztli* every eight years.

The rationale behind [this festival] assigned to the staple maize a psychic life of eight years. During these eight years the corn had been decapitated, buffeted, ground between stones, pricked with salt, and burned with chili until--overwhelmed by such insults--it died. The need to apologize to the corn, to cajole it and to rejuvenate it was of prime importance for all men, whether nobles, priests or commoners....The rites had begun where possible, with the day Seven Reed (which was the birth date of Quetzalcoatl in Cholula) and ending on the day One Flower, the birth date of Cinteotl the maize god.

(Burr Brundage, *The Jade Steps*)

### *The Venus Transit of the Sun*

Everything that you have read so far was written a decade ago. When I had reached this point, it seemed certain to me that there was an astronomical event that would have corresponded to the peak moment of Quetzalcoatl's story when his heart rises as the quetzal bird to become one with the heart of heaven. Surely it had to be the most "precious" event in the cosmic chamber of the Mesoamericans. What would it be?

From an astrological perspective, it would be a Sun-Venus conjunction, but this description would not take into account their physical conjunction at the zenith of the sky. To occupy the same degree of the zodiacal circle, (thus be conjunct), they did not have to be at the same position vertically on the horizon, (known as the angle of declination). For example, every month the Sun and Moon are conjunct at the New Moon but only during an eclipse do they occupy the same position *exactly*; vertically and horizontally.

The problem seemed to be that Venus disappears in the sky as it approaches the light of the Sun, just as the Moon cannot be seen during this same period. It seemed me a prerequisite that this event be a visible one for the Mesoamericans. At this point, my paper was complete and I was due to turn my attention to research for my dissertation on an ancient Chinese commentary on the *I Ching*. I turned reluctantly from these pursuits and spent the next decade working with the Chinese text of the *Ta Chuan*. The work was

completed in the spring of 2003, and in the course of the following winter, I stumbled accidentally on Edwin Hubble's description of the astronomical event of the Venus transit of the sun as "the noblest that astronomy has to offer." I discovered that Captain Cook had timed his first voyage to be in Polynesia when such an event occurred so that he could *see* it and in the next century, the Royal Astronomer of England set off for Australia to observe it, along with many others. I discovered that the event occurred in pairs, eight years apart but that the pairs themselves were separated by over a century. Specifically, there is a 243 year cycle that has the following pattern:

Venus transit 1  
+8 years = Venus-Sun transit 2  
+105 years=Venus transit 3  
+8 years=Venus transit 4  
+122 years=Venus transit 5

---

243 years total cycle

Obviously you can begin the calculation anywhere in that cycle, but at the end of 243 years it will repeat again. Our June 8, 2004 (GMT) transit comes 122 years after the last one in 1882. There was one 8 years before that in 1874 and the one previous to that was in 1769, 105 years earlier, and so on. The next Venus transit after 2012 will be 105 years later in 2117. No one who is alive today will see it.

The great irony here is that, while this event perfectly matches the arrival of Quetzalcoatl Venus in the House of the Sun, and the merging of his heart with the Heart of Heaven, it is unlikely that the Mesoamerican astronomers could have directly observed the event. There is, to date, no record of it that we have discovered, although the Mayans kept meticulous Venus records in what we now refer to as the Dresden Codex. They would not be looking directly at the Sun to discover it by chance. It was not discovered in the West until it was seen in 1631, following its prediction by Kepler. The 2004 Venus transit is not visible in most of the United States. It will only be seen fully in the hemisphere of Quetzalcoatl in 2012.

This reminds us that the past is not disconnected from us. It is an ongoing fabric that we are adding to day by day, with our own observations and discoveries. Retelling the story, refining the details with our advanced equipment. Sharing the event across the blue planet through the technological wonders of telecommunications and the world wide web.

I have created a table of some events that occurred during the eight year periods between previous Venus transits. They are a mere sampling of events gathered quickly, but they do give a feeling of the transitions from era to era. I'm not suggesting that events in those periods were more significant than others, but they provide compressed snapshots of the character of the periods before and after. Certainly in the period between 1518 and 1526, the ancient world of Mesoamerica came to an end. It is ironic that Moctezuma welcomed Cortez and the returning Quetzalcoatl, fulfilled an old prophecy of his return from the East. Perhaps, in a way, he did.

The eight year field between 2004 and 2012 is still empty; a tabula rasa.

<b>2004-2012 = 8</b>	?????
<b>1882-2004 = 122</b>	<i>Duration between transits</i>
<b>1874-1882 = 8</b>	<p>1874-French impressionists hold their first exhibition in Paris.</p> <p>1874-Introduction of the Remington typewriter causes a revolution in written communication.</p> <p>1874-London School of Medicine for Women founded</p> <p>1875-Alexander Graham Bell pioneers the telephone.</p> <p>1875-First patent for a photoengraving process on which an industry is founded</p> <p>1877-John D. Rockefeller, president of Standard Oil of Ohio, signs a contract with the Pennsylvania Railroad that strengthens its oil monopoly.</p> <p>1877-The final defeat of the Nez Perce by US troops. Chief Joseph: "I will fight no more forever."</p> <p>1877-Queen Victoria proclaimed empress of India.187</p> <p>1878-First commercial telephone exchange opens in Connecticut.</p> <p>1878-Edison Electric Light Company founded.</p> <p>1878-First pathology lab opened at Bellevue Hospital</p> <p>1878-First laboratory for experimental psychology established.</p> <p>1878-Yellow fever sweeps through the South killing 14,000, 4500 in New Orleans alone.</p> <p>1878-Electric light-bulb invented</p> <p>1878-Cleveland and San Francisco employ arc-light street-lighting systems</p> <p>1879-First cash register launches NCR.</p> <p>1880-Parcel post begins in England</p> <p>1880-First British telephone directory</p> <p>1880-First wireless telephone message transmitted by Alexander Graham Bell on his photophone.</p> <p>1880-First half-tone illustrations appear in newspapers.</p> <p>1880-A federal circuit court calls Tennessee's "Jim Crow" law unconstitutional.</p> <p>1880-The bacillus of typhoid fever is discovered.</p> <p>1880-Robert Koch discovers a vaccine against anthrax.</p> <p>1881-Western Union created</p> <p>1881-Pneumococcus bacterium that causes pneumonia is discovered.</p> <p>1881-Electricity from the Edison illuminating company lights up part of New York.</p> <p>1882-New York's first Labor Day parade brings out 30,000 marchers.</p> <p>1882-Parliament passes the Married Women's Property Act.</p> <p>1882-Manganese steel is invented</p>
<b>1769-1874 = 105</b>	<i>Duration between transits</i>
<b>1761-1769 = 8 Paired transits</b>	<p>1761-British Royal Astronomer Neville Maskelyne sails to St. Helena to view the transit of Venus.</p> <p>1761-British rule begins in India</p>
<b>Total Cycle 243</b>	<p>1761-First successful test is made of John Harrison's chronometer which eventually leads to the precise system for calculating longitude.</p>

1761-1769 (cont.)	<p>1761-Rousseau's <i>Social Contract</i> published. It's antimonarchist views drive him into exile in Switzerland to escape persecution.</p> <p>1763-St. Louis is established as a trading post on the Mississippi and will become "the gateway to the west."</p> <p>1765-James Watt invents the steam engine.</p> <p>1765-The first American medical school opens in Philadelphia. It will later become the College of Physicians and Surgeons.</p> <p>1765-Patrick Henry protests the Stamp Act and the Sons of Liberty are formed in Boston and other colonial towns to protest it.</p> <p>1766-The 10 year old Mozart returns with his family to Salzburg after his successful tour of Paris and London.</p> <p>1766-<i>History and Present State of Electricity</i> published by Joseph Priestley.</p> <p>1767-Daniel Boone reaches Kentucky, in spite of King George's decree.</p> <p>1768-Capt. Cook sets sail for the Pacific to establish an observatory in Tahiti, persuaded by the Royal Society that the best view the transit of Venus is from the South Pacific.</p> <p>1769-Father Serra arrives from Spain to found the first California mission—San Diego de Alcalá. This is followed by founding establishments at Los Angeles and San Francisco.</p> <p>1769-The transit of Venus is observed.</p>
<b>1639-1761 = 122</b>	Interval between transits
<b>1631-1639 = 8</b>	<p>1631-Puritan John Winthrop has arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and set himself up as the first governor.</p> <p>1632-Maryland founded as the first proprietary colony in the New World.</p> <p>1633-Dutch colonists establish beginnings of the Connecticut Colony</p> <p>1633-Galileo goes on trial in Rome and is threatened by the Inquisition with torture if he does not retract his belief in the Copernican idea that the sun is the center of the universe and the earth moves around it.</p> <p>1634-Jean Nicolet is the first white explorer to arrive in Michigan and Wisconsin.</p> <p>1637-Descartes's <i>Discourse on Method</i> published with its "Cogito ergo sum."</p>
<b>1526-1631 = 105</b>	Interval between transits
<p><b>1518-1526 = 8</b></p> <p>—</p> <p><i>Total Cycle</i> 243</p>	<p>1517-Montezuma begins to experience omens of pending calamity</p> <p>1517-Luther posts his 95 theses</p> <p>1518-Luther's reformation begins to take root with the support of Zwingli</p> <p>1518-New Spain receives its name from Juan de Grijalva</p> <p>1519-Death of Leonardo da Vinci</p> <p>1519-Magellan sets sail on an expedition that will cross the Pacific and be the first to circumnavigate the world.</p> <p>1519-Cortez sets sails from Cuba to conquer New Spain and is welcomed into the Aztec capital by Moctezuma, believing him to be the returning Quetzalcoatl. Cortez takes him prisoner and conquers Tenochtitlan in the <i>Noche Triste</i>.</p> <p>1524-Verrezano explores the North American coast</p> <p>1525-Francisco Pizarro sails from Panama to explore, and later conquer, Peru.</p> <p>1526-William Tyndale, influenced by Luther, secretly publishes the Tyndale Bible, an English translation of the New Testament.</p> <p>1526-Copernicus is completing his revolutionary work on the sun-centered universe.</p>

## CONCLUSION:

### *GAIA: A NEW TONAL*

The Mesoamerican Venus is not a god of love and beauty. We can certainly miss the feminine elements of our Western Venus-Aphrodite, or the more ancient Inanna. Quetzalcoatl is more accurately a symbol of the mystery of human life—its wrenching paradox; its lowest and highest moments, from degradation to redemption; from degeneration to renewal, from death to resurrection. He does not battle armies, like other heroes and gods, but battles forces within himself and his kingdom. In this he is uniquely modern and relevant to the inner explorations that have developed in our culture since the 1970s—from psychotherapies and twelve step programs to the various spiritual and religious practices that have flourished on new ground. His story is a reminder that each individual life is also a *tonal*, potent and empowering.

We have microscopes and telescopes now to gaze upon new fields of energy from electrons to distant galaxies. Here is a lovely contemporary description by Caroline Webb of the way in which a single cell, a chloroplast, itself a minute tonal, transforms the incoming energy of the Sun into the essential food of planetary and human sustenance:

Rooted in time and a space vastly greater than our own short lives, we are an embodiment of the Earth and its endlessly fertile relationship with the generous Sun... We can transform our world towards sustaining and creating more beauty, not less. We can become the human equivalent of chlorophyll, the pigment that can speak to the Sun in the deepest of understanding. (Earthlight, Spring 2004)

There is an archetypal relationship here greater than any single era, culture or language. Whether we speak in scientific, mythological or religious terms, we are recounting the mystery of the relationship—the eternal and ineffable bond—between human and cosmic light that has brought forth the genius of human consciousness, unfolding on fields of light and time as families, cities, nations, civilizations, ebbing and flowing through our own seasons of light and darkness. From the core of each tonal, whether as small as a cell or as large as a mountain or as miraculous as a human life, springs a heart force, *teyolia*, that is one with every other *teyolia* as the dynamic seed out of which the entire living universe arises. The perfecting of the heart—through all of its anguish and ambiguity—is the shedding of the husk so that the seed may germinate, and slowly lean toward and flower into the Sun.

We have a new Tonal. A new field. Out of millennia of human existence has come the first complete awareness of the collectivity of life on the planet, both as the seamless unity of its natural life and a global awareness of its human cultures. It is only within the last century that we have been able to SEE our planet—the lovely blue orb turning in space. Through television and the internet, we can SEE planetary and cosmic events together. We now have joint ventures into space, into the seas, into the past, into the future.

We cannot imagine where this will take us, and our planet—Spaceship Earth. Granted we are still beleaguered by the same ills and the same perils that have confronted, and ultimately destroyed, countless civilizations before us, among them the Aztecs and



the Mayans. Civilizations are perishable. But something endures, as we are reminded by this fifteenth century song by Nezahuacoyotl, the poet-king of Texcoco:

*My flowers will not come to an end,  
my songs will not come to an end  
I, the singer, raise them up  
they are scattered,  
they are bestowed  
Even though flowers on earth  
may wither and yellow,  
they will be carried there,  
to the interior of the house  
of the bird with the golden feathers.*

\* \* \*

So here is an eight-year period with a tonal of its own, because the whole world is now aware of the Venus transits that stand, like bookends, at the end of an age as measured by thousands of people who were the inhabitants and psychic guardians of this hemisphere. In that respect, we are their inheritors, as are contemporary people throughout the world whose lives are built upon ancient cultures which preceded them on their landscape.

During these eight years the corn had been decapitated, buffeted, ground between stones, pricked with salt, and burned with chili until--overwhelmed by such insults--it died. The need to apologize to the corn, to cajole it and to rejuvenate it was of prime importance for all men, whether nobles, priests or commoners....The rites had begun where possible, with the day Seven Reed (which was the birth date of Quetzalcoatl in Cholula) and ending on the day One Flower, the birth date of Cinteotl the maize god. (op.cit.)

We too have to recognize the abuses of the corn—our bodies, our minds, our families, our cities, the earth, our living consciousness, the ground of our field. In the Year 2000, the Jubilee Year of the Catholic Church—Pope John Paul proclaimed a time of apology for the sins of the Church. During this period, Truth and Reconciliation commissions have been established to recognize and heal the deep wounds that have been inflicted on the "tonal" of places like South Africa. We have learned to do this within ourselves, honestly acknowledging our own wounds and failings and seeking healing in various forms from therapies to rituals to prayer.

Let us prepare our hearts over these eight years to "apologize to the corn, cajole it, rejuvenate it, whether nobles, priests, or commoners." How do we do this? We do it each day on awakening into a new field of light—valuing and caring for our bodies; valuing and caring for our families, valuing and caring for our communities and our nations; expanding our awareness to take in the great new tonal of planet earth. A Sun is dying. We should grieve over the loss of civilizations, languages, cities and cultures that have

been the substance of our human history for 5000 years, using the Mesoamerican Fifth Sun designation of the period from 3113 BC to 2012. This encompasses all of the written history we know and how rich it is!

A new Sun is being born. Through the force of tonalli that flows through us from the Giver of Life, we are meaning-makers in the universe; light-bearers; "upbringers in the light that shines." We bring everything we are to that task and so the meaning of this moment is yet to made, its story is yet to be told, its history yet to be written.

What will it be?

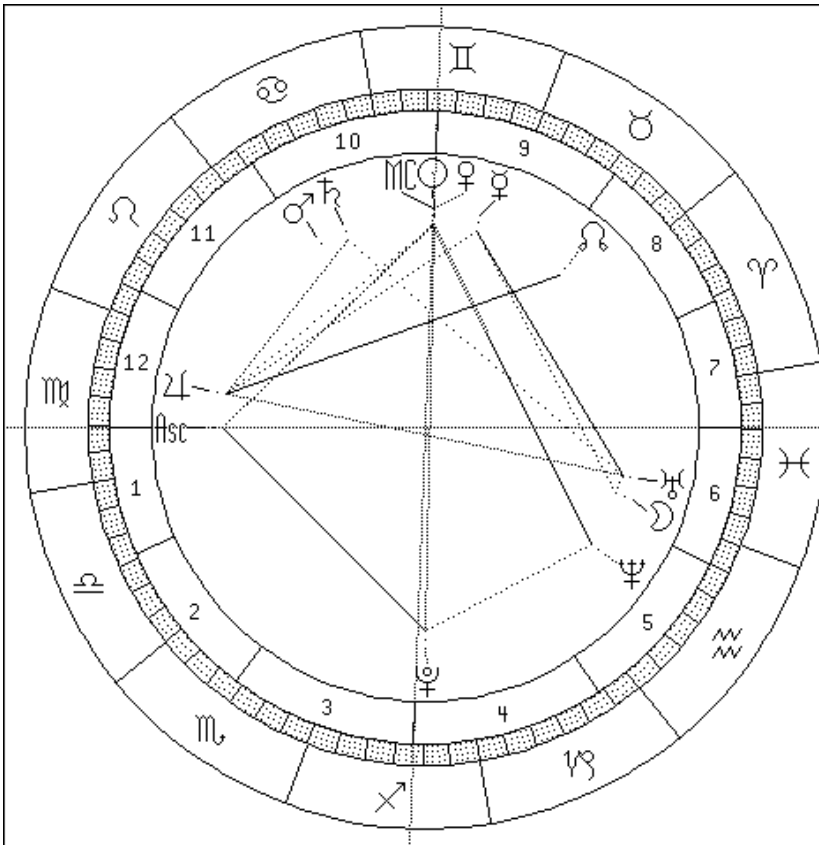
## APPENDIX

### Astrological Charts

Astrologers may be interested in the charts for the moment when the Sun-Venus conjunction reaches the zenith of the sky in 2004 and 2012, GMT. In 2004, Pluto-Tezcatlipoca lies directly opposite Venus-Quetzalcoatl in a planetary re-enactment of the encounter between the two in Tollan and their primordial relationship in the ancient Mesoamerican pantheon as gods of the night force and the day force, darkness and light. It seems to underline the importance of the moment for us as the leading edge of a long historical unfolding.

A Sakoian and Acker (1973) astrological description of the Pluto-opposite-Venus aspect fits our myth perfectly: "The opposition confers a predisposition for getting involved in intense emotional and sexual relationships which can be demoralizing. [ An understatement in this case! In one version of the myth, Quetzalcoatl sleeps with his sister, Quetzalpetatl, in the ultimate act of ignominy.] The natives often attract associations of an undesirable kind. In extreme cases, there are underworld involvements..." Indeed!

In the 2012 chart, Mars sits on the ascendant. If the eight years between transits is viewed as a higher octave of the eight days spent by Quetzalcoatl in the Underworld, then we have the 4 days spent in the sarcophagus and the 4 days spent fashioning arrows, imaging the death and regeneration of energy that prepares his rising to a higher level. At the end of 4 years, in 2008, there is another Sun-Venus conjunction to mark this but the planet does not directly transit the Sun. The presence of Mars on the ascendant indicates a completion of the renewal of energy, although we have no idea now how it will be expressed. It could just as easily be an apocalyptic war as renewal of cultural energy and the movement toward a higher level of consciousness.

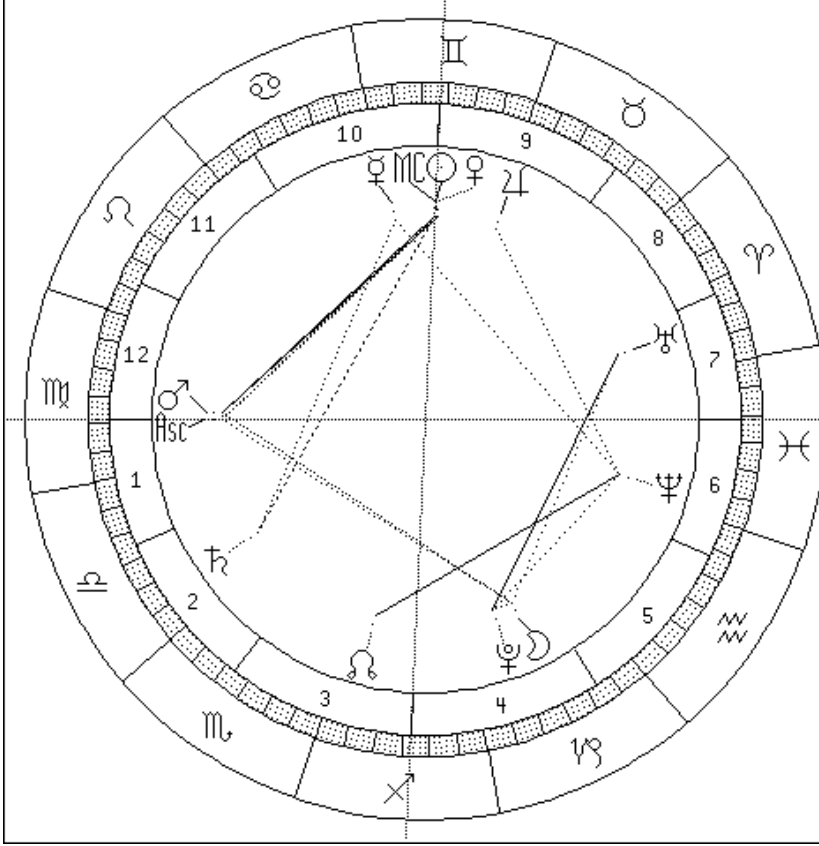


Astrolog 5.40  
 Tue June 8, 2004  
 12:00pm (ST +0:00 GMT)  
 0°00W 47°36N  
 Placidus houses.  
 Tropical, Geocentric.  
 Julian Day = 2453165.0000

1st house: 28Vir33  
 2nd house: 14Lib13  
 3rd house: 13Sco36  
 4th house: 18Sag14  
 5th house: 23Cap47  
 6th house: 24Aqu52  
 7th house: 20Pis33  
 8th house: 14Ari13  
 9th house: 13Tau36  
 10th house: 18Gem14  
 11th house: 23Can47  
 12th house: 24Leo52

Sun: 18Gem01 + 0°00'  
 Moon: 1Pis21 - 4°51'  
 Merc: 5Gem47 - 0°44'  
 Venu: 17Gem48R - 0°12'  
 Mars: 20Can19 + 1°15'  
 Jupi: 10Vir38 + 1°13'  
 Satu: 12Can59 - 0°19'  
 Uran: 6Pis48 - 0°46'  
 Nept: 15Aqu16R - 0°03'  
 Plut: 20Sag59R + 8°55'  
 Node: 9Tau15R + 0°00'

Fire: 1, Earth: 3,  
 Air: 5, Water: 4  
 Car: 2, Fix: 2, Mut: 9  
 Yang: 6, Yin: 7  
 M: 7, N: 4, A: 3, D: 8  
 Ang: 3, Suc: 2, Cad: 6  
 Learn: 9, Share: 4



Astrolog 5.40  
 Wed June 6, 2012  
 12:00pm (ST +0:00 GMT)  
 0°00W 47°36N  
 Placidus houses.  
 Tropical, Geocentric.  
 Julian Day = 2456085.0000

1st house: 19Vir09  
 2nd house: 12Lib39  
 3rd house: 11Sco53  
 4th house: 16Sag28  
 5th house: 22Cap06  
 6th house: 23Aqu20  
 7th house: 19Pis09  
 8th house: 12Ari39  
 9th house: 11Tau53  
 10th house: 16Gem28  
 11th house: 22Can06  
 12th house: 23Leo20

Sun: 16Gem11 + 0°00'  
 Moon: 14Cap22 + 3°21'  
 Merc: 28Gem03 + 1°49'  
 Venu: 15Gem28R + 0°03'  
 Mars: 17Vir01 + 0°58'  
 Jupi: 28Tau48 - 0°47'  
 Satu: 23Lib03R + 2°39'  
 Uran: 8Ari00 - 0°42'  
 Nept: 3Pis09R - 0°35'  
 Plut: 8Cap50R + 3°53'  
 Node: 4Sag38R + 0°00'

Fire: 2, Earth: 5,  
 Air: 5, Water: 1  
 Car: 4, Fix: 1, Mut: 8  
 Yang: 7, Yin: 6  
 M: 6, N: 5, A: 4, D: 7  
 Ang: 4, Suc: 1, Cad: 6  
 Learn: 8, Share: 5

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<sup>1</sup> The nagual of this description reminds us of physicist David Bohm's description of the invisible implicate order out of which the created, manifest world arises or Tao without name and form beyond the gateway of mystery. In Mesoamerica it was the potent force used by *nahualli* or sorcerers, sometimes—but not always—toward evil ends. I often think of it as like the dark matter of the universe, the fecund womb that gives birth to stars. It is correlated in the Mesoamerican pantheon with Tezcatlipoca—Smoking Mirror—originally the demiurge at the origin of Ometeotl's creation; akin the darkness that moved upon the face of the waters in Genesis.