

The Dawn of the Age of Conscious Evolution

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Now that the much ballyhooed Winter Solstice day of 12/21/2012 has come and gone without destroying the world as we know it, what are we to make of its passing?

Much has been written and talked about on the meaning of this day that marked the end of the 5,125 year Long Count calendar of the Mayans. Apocalyptic end-of-the-world scenarios were proffered, as also the beginning of a new and better era for humanity, as its special significance, whereas much of the world assumed it would be as ordinary a day as any other, as it proved to be by and large, except of course for the celebrations all around the world by aspirants who saw it as leading to some sort of a new golden age.

So then, what was the big deal about yesterday and why should anyone care going forward?

Let me propose that it is *today* -- the 22nd of December 2012 -- the day *after!* -- that is much more meaningful for us to focus on, since it marks the dawn of the Age of Conscious Evolution in which all of us will spend the rest of our lives.

Yesterday was the last day of the 13 Baktun calendar of the Mayan cycle. The Mayan elders tell us that their tradition makes no prophecy or prediction as to what comes after its end, though many believe that a resurgence of their ancient culture and wisdom, and happier days in that light, will now begin to happen. We should then ask, what does the end of this cycle, which also corresponds closely with Hindu calculations based on the cycles of yugas, mean in a more universal and also in a more specific sense? If some age or era is ending, what was it all about, and if some new journey is now afoot, where will it take us? Pray, what ended yesterday, and what begins today?

Today marks a radical cusp in the evolutionary saga of the human race. We change tracks today, if you want to pick *a* day, from our current *Homo sapiens* route, defined and driven by the dictates of the body-mind, to the arc of *Homo anandicus* in which our spiritual nature -- of love, peace and bliss, i.e. *ananda* -- will be the abiding essence of our being. *Ananda*, the innate bliss of pure consciousness, is the source and goal of human evolution.

The transformation of our species to this higher status will come about by a dramatic shift, a quasi-quantum jump if you will, from our current Darwinian modality of unconscious, snail-paced evolution, based on random mutations, to *conscious* and *accelerated* spiritual and *physical* evolution, by the proper exercise of our free will, aided by the ancient methods of the yogis and siddhas, and abetted by the new science of epigenetics.

In astronomical terms, today marks the entry of our Spaceship Earth into a special region of space-time in which we shall be showered for a few hundred years hence with atypical, *choice* particles, rays and other influences, mainly from and through the Sun, that will accelerate our spiritual and physical transformation to the next species. Nature thus arranges our transits through the infinities of space to precisely position us to receive whatever cosmic influences that are necessary to thwart or spur our evolution at any given time. If you look out the window or meditate on the Sun, do so with this new awareness that we are astronauts, with our planet as our mother ship, entering a zone of astonishing evolutionary fireworks. During our passage through this zone, we will more easily realize our essential nature as beings of bliss and, inspired by that discovery, divinize our lives on all fronts, from personal to societal to planetary, and at all levels from physical to mental to spiritual.

This turn, or re-turn, to our spiritual essence simultaneously signals the beginning of the end of a failed and unhappy world order to which we have been willing victims for too long, one built on such dubious virtues as materialism, consumerism, competition, differentiation, aggression, grab-and-hoard-ism, and the plundering and ravaging of nature to relentlessly expand the GDP. It would be premature to say that yesterday or today marks the *end* of this troubled but necessary phase of humanity's adolescence, but it surely signifies that a reflective maturity will soon overtake us and make us take on happier pursuits. Therefore, this era assuredly ushers in the upsurge of an utopian ideal inspired by the contrasting values, relative to the list above, of spirituality, contributionism, collaboration, compassion, give-and-share-ism, and the nurturing and rejuvenation of mother earth as another way to lovingly express our ananda.

Pulling all these strands together, we may conclude that today marks the end of a troubled dark age, what would be called Kali Yuga by the Hindus or Iron Age by the Greeks, and the end of which was foreseen by the Mayans! So the world view that led to that order now begins to wind down, as we entered at dawn today the *Dawn of the Age of Conscious Evolution*.

Now with regard to the flow of time, it should be noted that the Hindus have deeply rooted notions of *cyclical* time, whereby different ages repeat in endless cycles, in contrast to adherence to the linear arrow of time in Greek

and its derivative Western cultures. Hinduism, with her sister traditions Buddhism and Jainism casually talks of mega cycles of time running to *trillions* of years, with micro and mini epi-cycles within, the shortest being a 24,000 year cycle based on the precession of the equinoxes. In both the current Hindu and ancient Greek cultures, there is the notion of a cycle of four ages of varying degrees of spirituality and materialism -- labeled *Satya* (100% spiritual, 0% material; *Satya* means Truth), *Treta* (75s-25m%), *Dvapara* (50s-50m%), and *Kali* (25s-75m%) *yugas* in India, and the parallel Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron ages of Greece – through which humanity regresses, from the Satya yuga or Golden age, when the milk of human kindness spilleth over, to the current Kali yuga or dark Iron age in which we find that said milk is majorly missing in action.

In the yuga theory of the Puranas, the four ages follow each other in succession, after transition periods in between, and the descending curve of spiritualism to materialism, at the near bottom of which we are now, is reversed in an ascending upsurge, called *utsarpini* by the Jainas, that awakens us from the body-mind to the spiritual dimension of our being. So we, humanity as a collective, alternate between Golden and Dark ages, Satya and Kali yugas, with the other two ages in between.

In the mega-cycle reckoning, we have now turned just past the half-way point in a 311 *trillion* year cycle. In the mini-cycle count, we are now about 5000 years into a Kali Yuga, which began around 3100 BCE. In the BrahmaVaivarta Purana, Sri Krishna assures the goddess Ganga that 5,000 years after the onset of Kali, which is marked by Krishna's avataric departure at the end of the Dvapara yuga, there would be the onset of a 10,000 year upward cycle of Satya Yuga. Since any upturn after the depths of Kali will lead to the next Satya Yuga eventually, we can say that we are now in the early days of transit to that next Golden Age, the age of human perfection and fulfillment in the light of Truth, in the bliss of Self-Knowledge, and in the divinization of life and society based on ananda.

Now fixing *one* date for such an epochal shift is a somewhat futile exercise, since it is more a time-frame or zone or window that we enter during which our evolutionary progress is accelerated. In physical terms, we have now entered a region of our solar-galactic trajectory that will flood us with the admixture of particles, waves, and other influences that will trigger our easy transformation. We will transit through this region in some 400 or so years. As we enter this evolutionary slipstream, its influence will be initially slow and perceived only by the finely attuned, and the effects will become increasingly profound as we enter its central zone of maximal impact.

If we wanted to pick one day or year as marking this super-shift of the ages, worthy candidates range from 1956, when the Mother of Sri Aurobindo's ashram brought down the supramental consciousness and fixed it on the earthly plane as a field to accelerate our own ascent to those heights, to 1998 when there was the closest galactic alignment between the Earth, the Sun, and the center of our Milky Way Galaxy, to 2025 CE when we enter the 300 year yuga transition leading to the ascending Dvapara yuga, en route to the golden Satya yuga that beckons beyond. With these and possibly other dates within this range to choose from, we can turn to our Mayan campadres and fix the day the transition begins -- between the end of our current dark age and the beginning of the new spiritual era -- as today, 12/22/12, *the day after* their 13th Baktun Long Count ends.

To understand what all this means, let's start with some basic questions. When we talk of evolution, *what* is it that is evolving? And what is it evolving into or out of? If humans evolved out of the ape, what will we next evolve into? Or has evolution hit a wall with our species, as some scientists seem to think, and are we stuck with our current dubious nature forever endlessly, as in the hedgehog movie!? And if at all possible, how does one evolve *consciously*?

Sri Aurobindo, poet, yogi, and philosopher extraordinaire, lived the better part of his life practicing a synthesis of yoga that he pioneered, whereby he was able to discover bold and startling new insights into the mysteries of our existence and evolution. He famously said: "*Man is a transitional being.*" and went on to show how we can ascend from our current limitations to attain yet higher levels of light, power, knowledge, and bliss. Among recent rishi visionaries, he was the first to declare that *the ascent has to be followed by a descent* – after a spiritual experience or realization of a higher plane is consolidated, the powers from those heights are then to be brought down, even to the level of the cells, to divinize the physical body as well. An escape into pure spirit in samadhi or nirvana is not the finale of our evolutionary efforts; the lights from up there must be brought down to transmute the body and transform society, so that the ananda of the infinite is manifest right here in all its earthly variations and vibrations. Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus *The Life Divine* is a textbook for all those who aspire to get on the fast-track of conscious evolution, to reach the *supramental* summits which he showed was humanity's eventual goal.

With that brief intro of our guru of this new knowledge, let us now plunge into the answers he and other rishis have revealed to us on these matters. A starting axiom to keep in mind is that: "*Only something that is involved can evolve; something cannot evolve out of nothing.*" So if life evolved out of matter, it is because matter has always carried deep within it the seed

and instinct for life, and if mind evolved through life over the ages, it is because the seeds of the mental man were already embedded in our developing brains. *Evolution is thus the unfoldment of something that is already involved or intrinsic in the emerging platform, however deeply concealed it might be.*

If we ask what is the ultimate principle or source behind this sequence of evolution – of matter out of energy, life out of matter, mind out of life, supermind after mind, the final answer we are given -- and told to discover for ourselves by direct spiritual experience -- is *consciousness*. Consciousness, which is a singular of which the plural is unknown, in the memorable words of Erwin Schrodinger, one of the founders of quantum mechanics, involves itself in all kinds of manifest forms and names, playing a game of hide-and-seek in our body-mind, while retaining its unitary poise as our Self. The real-I-zation of this Self as one with the singular blissful consciousness that pervades, evolves, and dissolves umpteen universes, is a hallmark spiritual experience, referred to as Self-Knowledge or Self-Realization.

In spiritual and religious traditions in the east and west and north and south, the mystics and gnostics have always exhorted man to Know Thyself, pointing to the need for this plenary knowledge of unitary consciousness. The pursuit and realization of Self-Knowledge is the first step in the ladder of spiritual evolution. Consciousness is eternal and primeval, infinite and primal; its eternity and infinity, and its *rasa*, or flavor of *ananda* -- of intrinsic delight and innate joy, due to its fullness and perfection -- are available for discovery through meditation and other means, at which time our integral unity with that oceanic presence is also realized.

Once consciousness is appreciated as the zeroth truth and first and final principle, it will be self-evidently known as the source of all manifestations and the end-point of all regressions, the uber producer of countless worlds as cosmic video games for experiment and play in which it hidingly embodies itself in various forms, such as us, and after myriad cycles of evolution finds its original nature fully in some life, after breaking through the veils of the body, mind and intellect that hide it from itself. This is the hide-and-seek loop of evolution, from consciousness as the source through its hidden manifestations to its finding, or rediscovering, itself in some human birth as the Self of pure consciousness.

From this perspective, spirit *is* consciousness, whether the universal aspect of it or the individual Self that we call soul. To be spiritual is to be conscious, to some degree at least, of this Self beyond the body-mind; and

spirituality is the science of consciousness and the process for the realization of higher states of being that transcend the mind. The whole universe is divine when it is seen as a movement of consciousness manifesting and pervading all things and beings, and watching it all smilingly as the eternal witness!

All of us are variously evolved on a spiritual continuum, in terms of our awareness or knowledge of the grand drama of consciousness, and the pathways onwards and upwards are different for each of us, even if they all lead to the same goal eventually. The march of evolution takes all comers, from the vanguards of the next species to the laggards of the previous one, and moves them forward at a pace and on a path that their unique life experience has made them ready for. It would be fair to say that life will take you wherever you need to go to learn your evolutionary lessons.

This background sets the stage for a different understanding of the nature of time. According to the view of modern science, which is rooted in the concept of linear time, our universe started with the Big Bang about 13.7 billion years ago. From then to the formation of galaxies out of clouds of gas and dust, then to the formation of star and planetary systems that allow the phenomenon of life to emerge over millions of years out of some primordial gloom, and then to the arrival of mental man at the current point in the time-line of evolution – this is the saga that science in all its branches has mapped for us in admirable depth and detail so far. However, whether it be cosmology or physics, biology or psychology, none of these fields of knowledge dares address fundamental questions such as what came before the Big Bang, or how consciousness manifests the cosmos, or what happens at death. Physicists and philosophers seem to be equally flummoxed when it comes to questions about the plan of our universe and our purpose in its script!

If we start with the premise, to be validated by direct spiritual experience, that consciousness predates, pervades, and survives all phenomena, which are all transient manifestations *within it* somehow – it is correct to say that we are all *in* consciousness, since there is no outside to it, and space and time are constructs within it! – all these big and puzzling questions become easily amenable to simple, direct and logical answers.

The yuga model of a cyclically evolving humanity – from material to spiritual, and then devolving – from spiritual to material, followed by a repeat of the same sequence up another spiral through the kalpas, also happily posits that transitions across these ages are moderated by adepts and ascended masters, such as rishis and yogis and vibhutis, gnostics and mystics, as also

incarnations of the divine from above down, avatars, who bring the liberating light of spiritual knowledge to those who are imprisoned in the darkness of material ignorance. In other words, yuga sandhyas, or the transition period between the yugas, are aided and abetted by the active intervention of higher powers and beings in the field of our evolution, in order to fire up the vanguards of the transit to the next age and higher species. They also are the evolutionary models of the supramental beings all of us will also someday become, as our destiny unfolds on the ascending arc of Satya yuga for the next many millennia.

It now remains to be explained, now that we have fixed 12/22/12 as the day marking the dawn of the Age of Conscious Evolution, what this entails exactly, and how pioneers of our next species – ACERs, if we want to coin a name for them -- can get involved with this process and accelerate their own take-off into the supramental orbits. These topics will be taken up in a follow-up to this essay.

For more information, insight and instructions on topics of interest to aspiring ACERs, please visit www.AgeOfAnanda.net. You will find there excerpts and other materials from **The Age of Ananda: Conscious Evolution to the Life Divine**, and links to audio recordings on the secrets of consciousness and the process of double helical conscious evolution.

Also visit www.SavitriYajna2012.net to find the full recording of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual poem **Savitri**, which is a record of his discoveries on his own yogic journey of conscious evolution. The Savitri reading project was concluded after one year of contributions by some thirty souls around the world from six continents, just in time to usher in the Age of Conscious Evolution.

“Live joyously, evolve consciously.”

The Rishi of Ananda, in The Age of Ananda

www.AgeOfAnanda.net
www.SavitriYajna2012.net