SACRED GEOMETRY

Sacred geometry is a term generally associated with the geometry used to plan and construct religious structures. It is so named because of the sacred or symbolic meanings associated with the various shapes and proportions of such structures. Ancient philosophers considered geometry as a means to understand the Divine and thus ascribed sacred or symbolic meanings to various shapes and proportions, as well as numbers, order and symmetry, found in geometry.

The Golden Spiral is a shape found on earth (such as in the unspiraling of a nautilus shell or a fern or in the proportions of the human face) or in space (in the spiral of a galaxy of stars). These spirals grow proportionately wider by a factor of Φ (phi or the Golden Ratio) for every quarter turn. To the human eye, these proportions appear symmetrical and harmonious and thus have been used in many works of art.

To the ancients, numbers had significance also. For some, 0 was chaos, the void. 1 was the Creator, and 2 the Creator and its Creation, often in conflict. However, 3 introduces to the Creator and its Creation a third and reconciling force, that of the *Logos*, which harmonizes or balances the other two. Thus, the number 3 and the associated equilateral triangle have had special sacred and symbolic significance.

The Divine or Supreme Being is not something which can be observed. All that can be observed is the physical expression of the work of the Divine. The observation and consideration of this physical expression, the Divine's work in the world, is therefore the only way to reason back to the nature of the Divine itself. No matter how violent may be natural occurrences, whether on earth or elsewhere in the universe, harmony, balance or equilibrium will ultimately return. As the universe and its harmony were the ultimate expression of the work of the Divine, from that harmony the nature of the Divine itself could be discerned. Ancient philosophers found in geometry the natural laws which explain that harmony. The study of geometry therefore was viewed as the study of the Divine and a device by which Man could obtain a deeper understanding of it. Studying harmony in the universe to understand the Divine can be traced back to the philosophical school surrounding the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (570 BCE-495 BCE).

As geometry measures the ultimate work of the Divine in creation, geometry then becomes a symbol or metaphor for the Divine itself. Thus has the most important although intangible tool of the Operative Mason, the science of geometry by which he designs his structures, become for the Speculative Mason his most important tool or symbol, that of the Divine or Supreme Being itself. From the observation of geometry and the imitation of what it explains, we can discern the pattern of conduct expected of us: harmony, balance and or equilibrium.