



Many of us have found sitting in circle the deepest blessing and a welcome alternative to the squares and rectangles we normally inhabit. We have noted that so much of our life is box shaped; our houses and cities are aggregates of boxes – boxes that speak of partition, of category, of separation, of difference, of territory and all that comes with it. Sitting in circle is a step to coming home, space to be who we are in essence without labels, a space to acknowledge our humanity. The circle is the ground of being, the shape of the feminine.

### **The shape of life**

The ancients viewed their world, the whole of life, as cyclical. They saw that all things grew, flourished, died and again re-grew. Life and death were continuous. Like the moon and sun, which die and are reborn, so did the seasons and all living things. The skies overhead circled and turned in eternity and all was contained within the great spirit/mother/god who was all Life.

All matters divine relate to the circle; it is the primary shape of life. It appears in the ordering of the year, the swelling of a pregnant belly, the mystery of the moon, the marks in the dust of life-giving rain, the eternally returning cycle of fruit and fallow. We can see the circle everywhere in the patterns of nature. Mundane events were fashioned to mirror the ways of the divine. The first shelters, the early tombs and burial mounds are all round. The sacred marks on the landscape that defy our understanding are often round. Wells, vessels for food and water – these were also round – and, as containers, were symbolic of the divine belly.

### **A perfect whole**

Later, philosophers conceived the whole universe as a circle. Like the ouroboros, the serpent swallowing its own tail, it became a symbol of the greater, of the ceaselessness of eternity constantly devouring and renewing itself. This understanding was reflected in the zodiac, in the ritual dances tracing winding pathways to the centre, and in the architecture of the sacred. There is no beginning in a circle. No first or last. It speaks of infinity, wholeness and inclusion. There is no fixity except the centre still-point.

As a piece of sacred geometry it warrants our deepest contemplation and reveals itself as ever more profound.

The circle has stood for the all, for completeness, for perfection, for god/goddess. It is the sun, the moon, and the universe; and also the zero, and the void. It is the totality and the nothingness both – both fullness and emptiness. A circle can be the most sacred vessel or the most ordinary cooking pot, so intrinsically interwoven are divine and mundane. It is the ultimate container...nothing is outside of the circle. Life and death make a perfect whole.

### **The circle and creation**

We associate the circle with the magical, the sacred and the cosmic-stone circles, crop circles and fairy rings; the cauldrons of old, the grail, the round table of Arthur; the wheel of samsara and the mandala, or world map. And also these: the void, the black hole, the vortex ; Heaven as well as the Underworld. The circle encompasses paradox.

In all myth and cosmologies the circle is at the core. And these myths tell us clearly that we are part of the wholeness of life, connected to everything. We are not separate. We partake of and participate in the creation of the world. It is in constant renewal. Without renewal, it would cease to be. The circle is thus a cosmogenic gesture and in that, all circles are an acknowledgment of the act of creation.

Our modern culture has moved from wholeness to division, from inclusion to exclusion; we hold creator separate from the creation. When we sit in circle we again are encompassed by the totality of nature in its original unity. We enter the zone of the sacred – touch absolute reality.



### **All is included and all are equal**

The circle is the omphalos, or navel of the world. It is the sacred site from which we can reach the gods. At the centre of the circle is the bindu, sacred dot, symbol of the beginning of creation. Paradise is at the centre of the universe. We are at home in our centre. The Neoplatonists said, " God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere."

When we sit in circle, whether as sacred space or as a speaking structure for working within a group, we are invoking a model of equal participation and responsibility for the whole. There is no hierarchy, no leader, no right way to do or be. The circle is dependent on every part of its circumference for its strength.

### **Sharing our essential selves**

In Shematrix, we use the circle as a sacred place for experiencing and sharing the self and our essential humanity, and to invite collective wisdom. We create sacredness consciously; a bubble between the worlds – a bubble of now – outside world time, in sacred time. We engage in ritual to help create this sacredness. We call in spirit to dance in our seeing and our speaking, for the benefit of all beings. In the present, the here and now, we go into the womb, the labyrinth, the belly.

And in this timeless zone between the worlds, reached through the feeling body, we touch the authentic – the deepest places of the psyche, the place of being, of soul work.

### **Honouring all of life and creation**

We each speak from our deepest place. We speak in 'I' language. We take responsibility for what we experience as our own. Each one of us views life from a different place. And so we acknowledge difference with no judgment and make a practice of listening from the heart. The circle helps us to foster relatedness, inclusion, embodiment, and compassion. It is both a void to pour into and a well from which we can each draw blessings. Here there is life, death and renewal – all is available.

In this circular area of space with the candle at the centre, we honour all that life has offered us and offer ourselves back to life. In return for help from spirit, we make offerings of ourselves, our authenticity, our hopes, our fears, our truth. That is the giveaway. And so the circle pours back into the earth.

Whenever we sit in circle, whatever may have brought us to that place, we are also participating in the constant re-creation of the universe.

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