

The Sacred  
Geometry Oracle



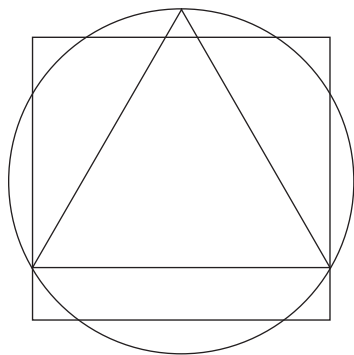
John Michael Greer

# THE SACRED GEOMETRY ORACLE



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*Designed and written by  
John Michael Greer*



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRED GEOMETRY ORACLE

**L**ines and arcs, circles and squares, patterns in space that run through the natural and built environment alike: the raw materials of geometry surround us every day. They play as profound a role in our thinking as they do in our experience of the world—which of us hasn't spent time standing in lines, going around in circles, or trying to figure out the angle from which another person is approaching a situation? It's not surprising that in many ancient cultures, geometry came to be understood as a shorthand for existence, or even the secret language the gods and goddesses used when they were building the cosmos.

Geometry has come down in the world since those days. Today, for most people, it's one of the less interesting subjects introduced in the schoolroom, something to be drummed into the heads of bored children, and then promptly and gratefully forgotten by them as soon as possible thereafter. Euclid's

*Elements of Geometry*, the standard school text on the subject since ancient times, has been discarded in most schools in favour of an assortment of bland and boring modern textbooks that become a little glossier and a little more dumbed down each year. One of the many things that have become lost in the process is any sense that geometry might have any deeper meaning, or any relationship to life.

Fortunately, a reaction against this dreary trend has begun to build in recent years, much of it associated with the curious phrase “sacred geometry”.

Startling though that phrase might be at first glance, it’s a useful label. In the earliest societies known to recorded history, the men and women who laid out abstract geometrical patterns on the earth—the original meaning of the word “geometry”, from the ancient Greek for “earth measuring”—were priests and priestesses, and their work was meant to mark out sacred precincts for worship or to determine the proper sites for temples and cities. It’s likely that their predecessors before history began, among the forgotten nations that raised the old earthen mounds and standing stones in so many parts of the world, had the same sacred status. As late as the seventeenth century, the rules governing the design and alignment of churches and other sacred structures were still considered secret lore, and were passed from masters to apprentices by way of early versions of the rites now preserved in Freemasonry.

To these and other practitioners of sacred geometry, the points, lines, arcs, and figures of the geometer’s art weren’t mere mathematical abstractions. They were symbolic forms through which the subtle dimensions of the universe of human experience come within reach. Like the characters and events of mythology or the creations of the arts, a geometrical construction approached in the right way becomes a window through which the world can be seen anew, as from a different angle. To the practitioner of sacred geometry, the act of drawing a geometrical construction according to the old rules—using pen,

straight edge, and compasses alone—becomes a subtle dance of mind and hand pursued in something of the same spirit as the Japanese tea ceremony, and practices from the wider field of Western inner spirituality are applied to geometrical forms as a path to realisation.

Sacred geometry, for that matter, was only one of four branches of sacred mathematics practised from ancient times straight through to the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. The other three were arithmology, the sacred science of numbers; harmonics, the sacred science of proportion and music; and astrology, the sacred science of the stars. These four arts comprised the Quadrivium, the “four ways” of sacred mathematics, which were once the foundation of magical spirituality throughout the Western world.

Those days are long past, and much that was readily available only a few centuries ago has been lost or obscured. In the contemporary revival of sacred geometry, most writers and teachers have focused on the far from inconsiderable task of assembling a coherent body of knowledge and practice out of the fragmentary materials handed down to them, and passing this on to new generations of students. That’s a task as worthwhile as it is necessary. Some work has also been done in applying the insights of sacred geometry in the arts and crafts, and that’s also a profoundly worthwhile task. It was by way of sacred geometry, after all, that the architects, artists, designers, and builders of many past societies created structures and works of art that still astonish the viewer by their beauty, their practicality, and their harmonious relationship to their surroundings.

These initiatives, though, praiseworthy and necessary as they are, don’t exhaust the work that needs to be done to bring sacred geometry back into a renewed relationship with our lives and our experience of the cosmos. From ancient times straight through to the eve of the modern world, geometry was practised as a spiritual discipline, and integrated into

other spiritual disciplines. Both the practice and the integration require the constructions of geometry to slip free of the realm of intellectual abstractions and go dancing out into the world of everyday life.

An old story claims that long ago, the sages and priests of an ancient, dying civilisation on the verge of its final collapse gathered together to devise some way that they could pass on their wisdom to future generations. Various plans were proposed and discarded. Finally the youngest of the priests suggested that a set of symbolic pictures, embodying the core concepts of the sacred teachings, could be painted on cards and distributed among the common people, who would use them for games and fortune telling. In that form, he suggested, the images would be passed down through the generations and shared with other peoples, and would carry their message for those in the future who could read it. The plan was adopted, and—so the story has it, at least—it was in this way that the Tarot cards were created.

Whether this story belongs to history or myth, the idea seemed worth trying again, and it was with that in mind that I originally designed the Sacred Geometry Oracle. At that time—the original deck was published in 2002—the rebirth of sacred geometry was still a very new and fragile growth, and it seemed uncomfortably likely to me that it might suffer the same fate as the promising but short-lived revival of sacred geometry in the very early twentieth century. My thought was that a deck of divination cards might find a wider audience and put the basic ideas of sacred geometry into circulation, or at least give them another refuge in which they could weather whatever difficulties the tradition might face in the decades to come.

Fortunately, those worries turned out to be misplaced. Instead of faltering, the rebirth of sacred geometry has gone from strength to strength; it's a measure of the range and depth of new and reprinted works on the subject that the

bibliography of useful books on sacred geometry I included in the first edition of this book has had to be doubled in length for this new edition. Good practical books on sacred geometry are easier to come by these days than ever before in modern history, and though there's also plenty of nonsense laying claim to the same label, the same rule applies to spiritual traditions as to brewing beer: it's the froth on the surface that tells you that a ferment is under way down below.

Thus it seems timely to bring out a new edition of the Sacred Geometry Oracle. I have taken advantage of the opportunity to revise some of the text, and to change the order of the cards in a few places. I'm also grateful to have been able to replace the original unsatisfactory card images produced by the original publisher with a new set much closer to my original vision.

The Sacred Geometry Oracle consists of thirty-three cards, divided into three Circles of eleven cards each. Every card bears an image drawn from the lore of traditional sacred geometry. These images—like the runes, the cards of the Tarot deck, the figures of geomancy, the hexagrams of the I Ching or the elements of any other divinatory system—can be made to serve as a bridge between intuitive awareness and the world of our experience. Each card has certain things associated with it, which serve the student and diviner as guides to the card's meaning and application.

### *Name and number*

The name on each card is the title of the diagram on the card, and the number is simply a help for putting the cards in their proper numerical order.

### *Diagram*

The diagram on each card is a traditional geometrical form or construction that expresses the essential principle of the card.

At one level, this can simply be used as a visual image, a way of remembering the card and an anchor for its meanings. At a deeper level, those who take the time to learn what the construction is and what it represents will find that the diagram itself has much in the way of guidance to offer.

### *Keywords*

Each card has two keywords, one upright, one reversed, which are for use in divination. In some card-based oracles, upright cards are given positive meanings, and reversed ones are given negative ones. Few things in life, though, are entirely positive or entirely negative, and so this sort of approach seems unnecessarily limiting. In the Sacred Geometry Oracle, by contrast, upright cards tend to stand for relatively comfortable situations and events, while reversed cards tend to stand for relatively challenging ones, and the keywords reflect this.

### *Divinatory meanings*

These are given in the following pages, and expand on the upright and reversed keywords in a variety of ways relevant to the practice of divination. It should always be kept in mind that these meanings aren't hard and fast rules for interpretation. Rather, they're suggestions and hints, meant to spur your own intuitive abilities and guide you to find your own personal sense of the meaning of each card. Staying rigidly focused on the literal meaning of the texts that follow is like trying to jump off a diving board and hang onto it at the same time, and the best advice is the same in either case: let go!

### *Geometrical exercise*

Each card also comes with a geometrical exercise, which is also given in the pages that follow. The prospect of actually

doing sacred geometry—rather than just reading about it, or looking at diagrams that unfold from it—will fascinate some people and frighten others. For the sake of the latter group, it should be said first off that you don't have to do the exercises in order to use the Oracle. On the other hand, if you do decide to attempt the exercises, the result will be a much deeper comprehension of the cards, as well as a good basic introduction to the practice of traditional sacred geometry itself.

The basic toolkit of the geometer consists of a pen or pencil, a straight edge or ruler, and a pair of compasses. (The sort you probably used in school, with a little yellow pencil that clips to one side, is fine.) You can get all of these in the school supplies section of your local stationer for a few pounds.

These three things, along with a supply of unlined paper, will be all you'll need for most of the geometrical exercises given here. A few other things will be useful in certain exercises:

- A length of string
- Several drawing pins, the sort used to hold things up on bulletin boards
- Graph paper, preferably with small squares (around a quarter of an inch works well)
- Heavy paper or light poster board
- Clear adhesive tape
- A craft knife, or a sharp pair of scissors.

Armed with these simple and inexpensive tools, you'll be ready to tackle any of the constructions in this book.

Since we live in an age of computers, some readers may want to do the exercises onscreen with a graphics program, rather than on paper with traditional tools. While this is one way to go about it, it misses much of the value that's to be gained by doing the exercises by hand, in the old-fashioned way. The subtle dance of hand over paper is a surprisingly important part of the learning process, much more so than our



usual habits of thought would suggest, and the sheer simplicity of the geometer's tools helps refocus the mind away from the noise and bustle of everyday life, towards the subtler and deeper realities revealed by geometrical form. Time spent performing the exercises by hand, in the traditional way, will not be wasted.

### *Meditation*

Each of the cards also has a meditation associated with it. Again, as with the geometrical exercise, it should be said right at the beginning that you don't need to do the meditations to use the Sacred Geometry Oracle for divination. As with the exercises, though, those who venture into this phase of the system will be rewarded by deeper insights into the cards, as well as a solid introduction into the practice of Western meditation.

It's too rarely remembered that the Western world has meditation traditions of its own, and that these are different from the systems of India, eastern Asia, and other parts of the world. There are many similarities—the human mind is much the same everywhere—but one central difference. This lies in the attitudes of these different systems towards the thinking mind. In the East, most systems of meditation teach the student to stop the thinking process altogether, by repeating mantras, constructing complex symbolic visualisations, or concentrating on thought-stopping paradoxes such as the koans of Zen.

In Western mystical traditions, by contrast, the standard approach is to train and reorient the thinking mind, not merely to shut it down. Ever since the time of Pythagoras, the founder of the tradition of sacred geometry in the Greek world, Western mystics and sages have recognised that the mind need not be the enemy of the spirit, if it's brought into harmony with itself, with the larger human self of which it forms a part, and with the cosmos as a whole. The rational can be a vehicle for the

spiritual: this is the premise (and the promise) of most Western mystical paths, and particularly of those in which sacred geometry has flourished.

In the thirty-three meditations that follow, then, the crucial skill you'll be learning is the ability to think in a meditative way. Like everything else, this takes practice, and you'll find that the more often you do the meditations, the more skill you'll develop in doing this. While the meditations given here are basic, steadfast and regular practice can take you a long way. Don't assume that one session spent on a given meditation from this book, or for that matter ten such sessions, will reveal everything that the theme of the meditation has to teach.

The Western style of meditation used with the cards of the Sacred Geometry Oracle is easy to learn and practise. Full instructions are included in the last section of this book (pages 168–173).

### *Initiation*

As already noted, it's entirely possible to approach the Sacred Geometry Oracle as a divination tool and nothing more, to use the cards to cast readings about the events of everyday life for yourself and your friends, and leave things there. It's equally possible to go a little further into what the Oracle has to offer by practising meditation now and then, doing some or all of the geometrical exercises, and reading some of the books on sacred geometry listed in the bibliography. Both of these are valid and worthwhile approaches in their own right, and for those people who aren't yet ready to take up a serious spiritual path, or who follow some other path unrelated to sacred geometry, either one of these can be an appropriate choice.

There is, however, a third option, for those who feel called to it. The sequence of geometric diagrams and themes that make up the core of the Sacred Geometry Oracle are not chosen at random. Rather, they define a path of initiation.

What is initiation? The word comes from a Latin term meaning “beginning”, and in Western teachings of magical spirituality, it’s used for the traditional process of training and preparation that enables a novice to come into contact with the inner dimensions of human experience. Some schools of magical spirituality have traditionally accomplished this work by way of initiation ceremonies, in which novices are brought into a state of heightened awareness via ritual methods, and then confronted with a series of emblems, ideas, and teachings which later instruction will then unfold for them. That confrontation makes it easier to use the emblems, ideas, and teachings as vehicles for expanded consciousness. In many of these schools there are several grades of initiation, each with its own symbols and teachings, each taking its initiates step by step further into the hidden potentials of human consciousness.

Not all Western inner teachings make use of initiation rituals, though. In the old schools of alchemy, to name only one of the exceptions, students were directed to study books full of strange images, each of which had a title, a poem, and a few pages of text associated with it. Focused reflection on these things, repeated over days and weeks and months, did the same work that initiation ceremonies were meant to do, without the expense and the difficulties involved in staging a complex ceremony. The Tarot cards do the same thing in the same way when they’re approached as a way of initiation; careful attention to the Tarot trumps in their traditional order, supported by meditation and the other basic exercises of Western magical spirituality, turns the Tarot into an initiatory path that can be walked in the privacy of one’s own home.

The Sacred Geometry Oracle has been designed to serve the same function. Each of the three Circles is a grade of initiation; the diagrams, exercises, themes for contemplation, and meditations for each Circle, taken in the order in which they’re

presented, provide the attentive student with a vocabulary of symbolic experiences and a set of practices that can be used to accomplish the work of initiation. I plan on making certain additional resources available, as time permits, for people who are interested in pursuing this work.