Sacred Geometry: The Square and Compasses, the Pythagorean Triangle, and Phi

by Todd Connor

The Square and Compasses

Why is the most prominent symbol of Masonry the Square and Compasses? Because the Square is the proper emblem of the Master of the Lodge? Because we should circumscribe our desires and subdue our passions in all our dealings with mankind? Or is there more behind that? How does the Square and Compasses relate to the equilateral and right triangles? Why was the right triangle and its dimensions so impressive to Pythagoras that he was inspired to sacrifice a hecatomb?

In his expository book on the symbols of the Symbolic Lodge, *Esoterika*, Albert Pike asserts that all things Earthly may be arranged linearly, squared and measured. Consequently, the Square represents the Earth and all things contained therein. Likewise, the ancient mysteries invariably saw the perpetual, divine model depicting the cycles of birth, life, death, and recreation reflected in heavenly constellations. Ancient astrologers measured and monitored the courses and cycles of the sun, the stars, the zodiacal constellations, and the planets rotating about the Earth in circles and arcs, adducing that these movements may be measured and projected with the Compasses[1]. If we pay attention, we can observe instances in art and symbols where applications of these working tools is borne out, for example, the Grand Artificer is depicted with the Compasses in *The Ancient of Days* (figure 1).



Figure 1 – The Ancient of Days

Leonardo Da Vinci explicitly shows this to us in his Vitruvian Man (figure 2), where the subject of the image is circumscribed both by a square and by a circle. Notice that the meridian line for the square passes over the groin of the man – which is often correlated to the more dense material sephiroth of Yesod[2]. This would suggest that the man who is ruled by the Square may be subject to the drives of earthly passions and ambition. Look now at the man within the circle