

# Spiral Gate: The Arc of the Covenant

BY GARY A. DAVID

THE GALACTIC SPIRAL



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Gazing into the heart of a spiral galaxy, we sense a familiar path, a journey taken long ago, resonating perhaps from another lifetime. We are awed by the vibrant colors the Hubble space

telescope beams back. Despite the high-tech clarity of these images, a primordial urgency rises to greet us. If we stare long enough, the pinwheel of stars entrances our sensibilities until

we enter a golden realm of déjà vu, traveling back to the ultimate Source. It is the Tibetan mandala, the Diné (Navaho) sand painting, and Dante's Mystic Rose all rolled into one.

Our own Milky Way drifts through space like a bioluminescent starfish. Technically called a barred-spiral galaxy, it measures over 100,000- light-years across and 1,000 light years thick at the outer edges. The elegant theories of modern astronomers place a mysterious black hole at the center of most galaxies, including our own.

The Maya knew this dark heart as Hunab K'u, the *Only Giver of Movement and Measure*, represented by the spiral or stepped fret. Located upon the star road of the Milky Way between the constellations of Sagittarius and Scorpio, our Great Mystery beckons. Our solar system where we live, is poised on the inner edge of a sidereal arc, a dozen or so, of which forms our celestial spiral. This local arc is known as the *Orion Arm*. In

other words, we inhabit an arc of stars that reaches from the heart of the cosmos toward the constellation Orion.

Surprisingly, this and adjacent constellations are brought down to Earth in the American Southwest as a pattern of ancient star cities and sacred canyons or caverns coordinated by a special type of spiral.

## THE GOLDEN MEAN SPIRAL

This unique spiral is ubiquitously created in nature by what is called the Golden Mean, Golden Section, or Divine Proportion. Also known as phi, this ratio is simply 1:1.6180339... It is derived from Fibonacci's series, or a numerical list whereby each new number is the sum of the previous two numbers: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144... and so on. Regardless of how large the spiral becomes, the ratio of its dimensions remains constant.

On the map we see how the Golden Mean spiral integrates many of the ancient pueblo sites in northern Arizona with a specific pattern of stars. The “terrestrial” Orion closely mirrors his celestial counterpart, with prehistoric “cities” corresponding to every major star in the constellation.

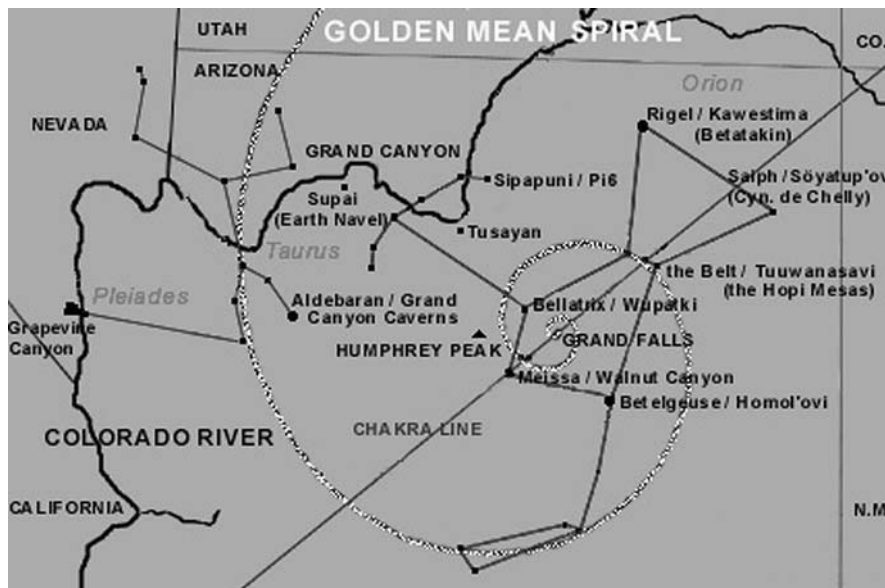
His belt is represented by the three Hopi Mesas, where the Hisatsinom (ancestral Hopi, also known as the Anasazi) settled about 1100 AD. Near the top right of the map, the blue-white supergiant Rigel (Orion's left leg) correlates to Betatakin ruin at Navaho National Monument, while the faint yellow star Saiph (his right leg) is represented by the ruins in Canyon de Chelly National Monument. The red supergiant Betelgeuse (his right shoulder) corresponds to Homolovi Ruins State Park near Winslow, whereas the blue giant Bellatrix (his left shoulder) is equated with the ruins at Wupatki National Monument north of Flagstaff. (This terrestrial Orion is upside down compared to the way we see Orion in the sky.)

Orion's upraised right arm points south toward the ruins of the Hohokam (another ancestral Hopi group) near the Phoenix metropolis. His left arm holding a shield, or a bow, is aimed at the smaller Hisatsinom ruins located throughout the Grand Canyon. Also depicted on this map are Taurus and the Pleiades, corresponding to Grand Canyon Caverns and Nevada's Grapevine Canyon respectively.

A chakra line runs from the belt's middle star (Alnilam, corresponding to Shungopovi, first Hopi village settled) to his Third Eye (the ruins at Walnut Canyon National Monument). It continues southwest across Arizona toward the mouth of the Colorado River (not shown on map). In the opposite direction (northeast) this same line traverses the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado (also not shown).

The esoteric philosopher Dan Winter positions the center of the Golden Mean spiral at the Orion's heart chakra. It passes through Bellatrix and then arcs across the belt stars of Mintaka, Alnilam, and Alnitak. On our map the center of the spiral, which also wells up from Orion's heart chakra, correlates to Grand Falls along the Little Colorado River.

The Hopi word for this site is *Söynapi*, which means 'sound of rushing water'. Another name for it is *Pöosiw*, or 'waterfall'. However, the related term *poosi'at* means 'eye', while *poosi'yaqa* refers to a medicine man using a crystal for diagnosis. Grand Falls may be connected to the concept of vision, especially done in a sacred way. Combining this with the heart chakra location, we have the common American Indian notion of seeing with the “eye of the heart.”



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FROM BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY

### THE EARTH SPIRAL

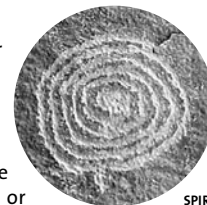
Many examples of the spiral are found painted on ancient pottery from the American Southwest. In particular, the whirlpool or double-spiral motif represents the “gate of Masau's house.” This portal located at the bottom of the Grand Canyon is also called the Sipapuni, actually a travertine dome. Legends say that the Hisatsinom emerged from the past Third World (or Era) to the present Fourth World from this place.

Masau is the complex Hopi god of war, death, fire, the Underworld, and the earth, but he is also the god of transformation. He was present when the Hisatsinom came forth upon the surface of the earth and began to make their migrations; he was there again when they finished them after many centuries. Most importantly, Masau serves as the humble agrarian deity who lives in balance with his harsh environment. Carrying a dibble stick and a sack of seeds, he provides a paradigm of purity and simplicity. It is Masau with whom the Hopi established their divine Covenant.

On a naturalistic level the spiral represents water, an indispensable element, especially for a desert existence. The presence of a spiral petroglyph (in Hopi known as *potave'ya*) can mean that a water source is or was nearby. One of the major Hopi shrines is called *Potavetaka* (literally, 'spiral nest'), or Point Sublime on the north rim of the Grand Canyon. Here again we see the spiral motif --an icon of passage or transcendence-- associated with the canyon that the Hopi consider their Place of Emergence.

In addition to water, the spiral can refer to the whirlwind or dust devil, a frequently destructive force in nature. On the other hand, whirlwinds usually precede rain, so they also can be viewed as propitious.

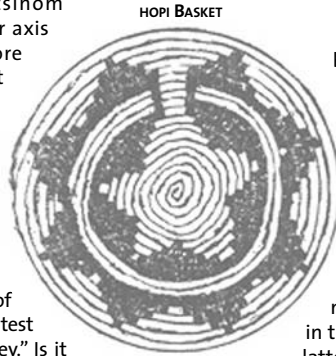
In rock art the spiral suggests migration across the surface of the earth, especially if it is adjacent to footprints carved in the stone. In this context a spiral signifies the number of rounds, or pasos, a clan made as it journeyed though the centuries toward its



SPIRAL PETROGLYPH

ultimate goal of the sacred Center of the World. The Hopi call this the Tuuwanasavi, namely the three Hopi Mesas. While a Muslim's circumambulation of the rectangular Kaa'ba in the holy city of Mecca may take a dozen hours, the Hisatsinom circumambulatory migration around their axis mundi ('world-axis') took a dozen or more generations. During this time the Ancient Ones built a series of pueblo villages in which they lived for a varying number of decades, moving only when Masau instructed them to do so.

The plaques woven into spirals by Hopi women (mostly from Second Mesa) represent the path we take in life's journey and the adversities we face along the way. "This is a coil basket symbolizing the road of life. It is called 'Boo-da', meaning some great test which we will experience during our journey." Is it merely a coincidence that this Hopi term sounds the same as Buddha, the primary figure in one of the world's great religions?



HOPI BASKET

### THE DUAL SPIRAL

Most of us recognize the caduceus as the symbol of the medical profession. Originally carried by the Greek god Hermes, it is formed by a pair of serpents entwined around a central staff surmounted by a pair of wings. This archetypal motif has been found at differing times in diverse parts of the world.

Many Westerners are now familiar with the age-old Tibetan practice of kundalini, a form of Tantric yoga. The word Kundala means 'coiled' and refers to the energy of the cosmic serpent asleep at the base of the spine. In addition to the seven chakras, or the energy wheels positioned along the spinal column, two subtle nerves called the Pingala and the Ida form a double spiral that interlaces it. They in essence channel solar (masculine) and lunar (feminine) energy up and down the spine.

According to Frank Waters in his groundbreaking *Book of the Hopi*, this North American tribe was also familiar with the chakra system, utilizing five rather than seven psychophysical centers.

In all the excitement about the human genome mapping project and its potential for medical science, we sometimes forget the ineffable beauty of the DNA double helix, that spiral staircase gently uncoiling itself with mathematical precision inside every living thing. Perhaps the ancients intuited even more so than we its spiritual significance beyond esthetics.

From his book *Living In Truth: Archaeology and the Patriarchs*, Charles N. Pope has observed that the double helix is the "fundamental literary structure of the Torah," the body of Jewish religious literature contained in the Old Testament and the Talmud. The name itself is related to the English words tornado and torsion, both meaning 'to twist'.

Oddly enough, the Hopi word *tori* means 'twisted spirally', while the word *toriritaqa* means 'whirlwind'. The village at the base of Second Mesa is called Toreva, literally 'twist water', probably referring to a spring.

Why, then, would the Hopi and the Jewish people share both the same etymology and semantics for the spiral? Is this just another coincidence?

### THE SPIRIT SPIRAL

On a more psychospiritual level, the spiral represents a gateway between worlds or dimensions. It is the doorway through which the shaman begins his or her ecstatic quest from the physical to the spiritual plane. The word spiral comes from the Latin *spira*, 'coil', while the term spirit is derived from the Latin *spirare*, 'to breathe'. In a ritualistic trance the shaman's "breath-body" searches the interstices of the spirit world for a specific cure or a personal vision to bring back to the tribe.

The spiral functions as a portal or gateway from the mundane to the eternal realms. The Yaqui sorcerer Don Juan Matus calls these respective states the tonal and the nagual, although it is much more complex than this simple dichotomy. Anyone well versed in the techniques of non-ordinary reality, however, can gain access to the latter, as the tutelage of Carlos Castaneda demonstrates.

The iconography of the spiral is sacred beyond belief. In other words, it goes beyond all belief systems to reach deeply into the processes of astronomy, biology, and human history. The term covenant is derived from the Latin *convenire*, which literally means 'to come together' or 'to unite'. The spiral unites the firmament and terra firma, as illustrated by the template of the Golden Mean spiral linking Orion, Taurus, and the Pleiades to their terrestrial correlations in the Arizona desert.

Is this, then, the deeper significance of the spiral? To provide the Arc (spelled with a "c") of the Covenant by which the realms of earth and sky are bound? If we abide by this Covenant and heed the hermetic maxim "As above, so below," the spiral's numinous path may ultimately reveal the gateway to either resurrection or enlightenment.

Gary A. David is an independent researcher and writer living in rural Chino Valley, Arizona. *The Orion Zone: Ancient Star Cities of the American Southwest* was published in late 2005 by Hayriver Press. This book discusses an Orion correlation of Hopi villages and Anasazi ruins in the Four Corners region of the US. His articles have appeared in *Atlantis Rising* and *Ancient American* magazines.

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Ancient Star Cities of the American Southwest

Gary A. David

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