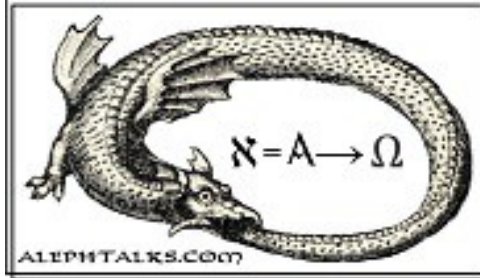
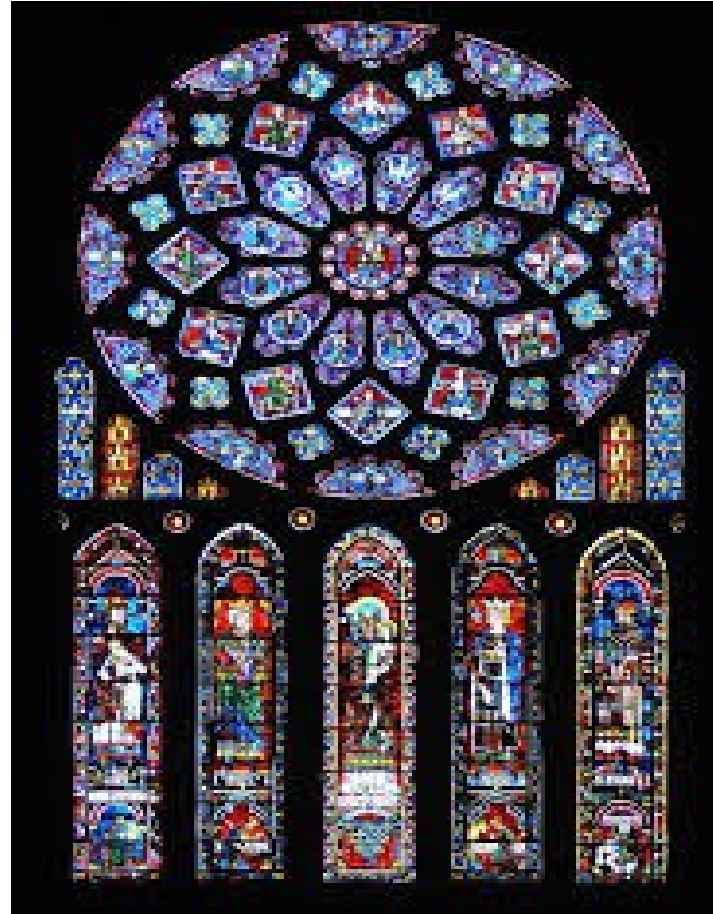


Is Mysticism Where Science, Art, and Religion Meet?



Subject Nine Walking Meditation: The Labyrinth

Overview



**The Solar Christ Surrounded
By the 12 Disciples of the
Zodiac**

Labyrinth





Source Information

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labyrinth>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJDcGQakKoU>
- <https://www.LaurenArtress.com>
- Chartres Cathedral and Sacred Geometry
- Labyrinths and similar structures around the globe: Chartres, Stonehenge, Carnac, the Grange, Gobekli Tepe (Ancient Turkey)
- **Relax:** The labyrinth is not a maze, that is, a puzzle designed to confuse you into losing your way. Labyrinths have no tricks or dead ends. It is a walking meditation, with one single path leading inevitably to (and from) the Center. Everyone's experience is unique, but a walk often has three internal stages, to be discussed further.

Introduction



- The labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world. It seems to be a true example of a C.G. Jungian “archetype.”
- Labyrinth designs have been found on pottery, tablets and tiles dating as far back as 4,000 years. Many patterns are based on spirals from nature. In Native American culture it is very similar to the Medicine Wheel and called The Man in the Maze [p. 27], which often appears on pottery and baskets. The Celts described it as the Never Ending Circle. It is also said to represent the Tree of Life from the Kabbalah in mystical Judaism; and the Stations of the Cross in Christian tradition. One feature they all share is that they have one single path which winds in a circuitous mandala form into (and from) the center.

Introduction



- The labyrinth design on Page 3 has been popularized by Rev. Lauren Artress of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. This Episcopal Priest, a Canon at the Cathedral, is known as “the Mother of the Modern Labyrinth Movement.” This is a replica of the 11-circuit labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral in France. This pattern, once central to cathedral culture, was inlaid into the stone floor in 1201. For the last 250 years, however, it was ignored – covered with chairs – until Artress led the effort to reintroduce the labyrinth into the world as a spiritual tool. (Incidentally, she was initially introduced to it by Jean Houston [of “Human Potential Movement” fame]. Houston is often credited as the grandmother.)

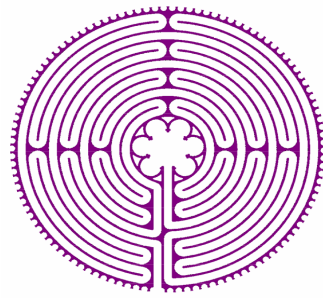
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Introduction (continued)



- One focus of the work of Lauren Artress and her organization “Veriditas” has been to make the labyrinth in Chartres open to the public once again. It is currently open for walking on most Fridays.
- Labyrinths are currently being used world-wide as a way to quiet the mind, find balance, and encourage meditation, insight and celebration. They are open to all people as a non-denominational, cross-cultural tool of well-being. They can be found in medical centers, parks, churches, schools, prisons, memorial parks and retreat centers as well as in people's backyards.
- [Sonja Ahuja, a member of UCW who passed away last year created a beautiful one on her property in Weston after walking ours.]

Introduction (continued)



- Again: The labyrinth is not a maze. There are no tricks to it and no dead ends. It has a single circuitous path that winds into the center. The person walking it uses the same path to return and the entrance then becomes the exit. The path is in full view, which allows a person to be quiet and focus internally. Generally there are three stages to the walk: releasing on the way in, receiving in the center, and returning; that is, taking back out into the world that which you have received. There is no right way or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. Use the labyrinth in any way that meets what you need. You can run or dance the labyrinth. You can crawl on your knees – as it is thought to have been done at Chartres, actually.



Introduction (continued)

- There are many ways to describe a labyrinth:
- It is a path of prayer.
- A walking meditation.
- A 3D mandala.
- A crucible of change.
- A watering hole for the spirit and:
 - a mirror of the soul.
- May you be nourished!

Introduction (continued)



- The word '*Labyrinth*' is a pre-Greek word (Minoan). There is a hidden irony in the current definition and the original myth of Theseus and the Minotaur's lair, within which one could get lost forever. Unlike a maze, which refers to a complex branching puzzle with choices of path and direction; the 'classic' labyrinth design has only a single, non-branching path, which leads to the centre. A labyrinth in this sense has a single, unambiguous route to the centre and back and is not designed to be difficult to navigate, so Theseus would have had little need for Ariadne's thread.

Introduction (continued)



- We do not know when the labyrinth structure first was conceived, but there are several incidences among the ideograms carved into rock faces across Neolithic and 'Bronze-age' Europe. We see the ideogram later on an Etruscan vase from c. 550 B.C.E. Later, at about 300 B.C.E., it was used on coins in Crete. During the middle-ages, it was used in European Cathedrals for pilgrimage, ironically because the Crusades had rendered the physical Journey to Jerusalem too dangerous.



Introduction (continued)

- A labyrinth is an archetype with which we can have a direct experience. We can walk it. It is a metaphor for life's journey. It is a symbol that creates a sacred space which leads us into its heart, then back out again along the same path. Although one is able to cross the lines at any time, we are compelled to follow the meandering path to the centre and back again.



Introduction (continued)

- *The Labyrinth represents both a journey to our own center and back out again into the world ... at the same time as acting as a metaphor for the path we walk throughout our lives. Crete, Sumeria, the Americas, the British Isles, and Italy, and in all cases, they share a common theme of pilgrimage and spiritual reward. They have also been used in shamanic initiation ceremonies, marking rites of passage. This has led some claim they represent a universal pattern in human consciousness.*



Introduction (continued)

- There is no getting lost in a Labyrinth. Rather, one is offered a path that weaves back and forth, in and out, until it ends in a central circular area. Here, walkers pause to reflect before departing as they came, carrying back any wisdom gained on the inbound journey. Labyrinth walkers say the certitude of the path knowing all decisions about direction have been made frees them to focus on contemplation instead of navigation. Some call this prayer; others, deep reflection. Whatever the name, the practice has been used to nourish the soul around the world for several thousand of years.

Introduction (continued)



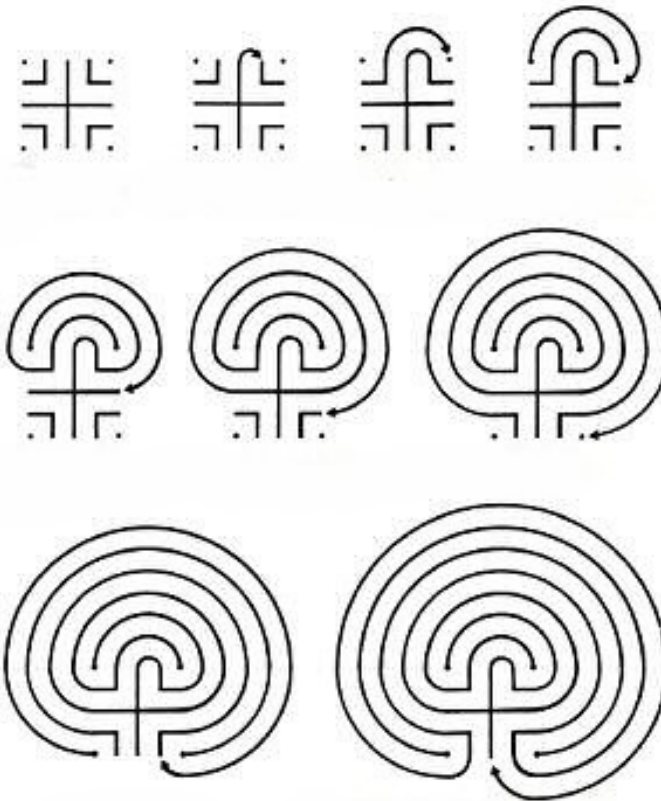
- The Labyrinth is a powerful geometric symbol – a mandala pattern – that has the power to create an experience of a sort of 3D “guided hallucination” (as one former “Golden Lab” at UCW in his 80s called it). It is an ancient archetype with which we have formed an almost symbiotic relationship. It allows us to enter within its physical form at the same time as entering into a non-physical communication with ourselves, and if one is open to it, with the Divine.



Introduction (**continued**)

- Because they are so ancient, the various interpretations of the Labyrinth today may not agree with the same concept of the labyrinths in ancient times. It is curious then that the same identical symbol is found in countries and major religious traditions from around the ancient world (such as India, France, Egypt, Scandinavia, Crete, Sumeria, America, the British Isles, and Italy), and that in all cases, they share a common theme of pilgrimage and spiritual reward. This has led some claim they represent a universal pattern in human consciousness.

Labyrinth Geometric Template



DRAWING THE CLASSICAL SEVEN CIRCUIT LABYRINTH

Labyrinth Geometric Template



- All 'classic' labyrinths are based on a simple geometric template, above.
- The ancient seven-circuit labyrinth (so called because the path creates seven concentric rings around the centre) is rich with symbolism. It draws on the mystical quality of the 7, a number of transformation and vision. In medieval times, the seven circuits were seen to correspond to the seven visible planets, and a walk in the labyrinth was a cosmic journey through the heavens. The seven circuits can also be seen to represent the days of the week, the chakras, colours, or musical tones.
- Some research suggests that the geometric shape [of a labyrinth] produces an energy field that can heal ailments of the body and calm the mind. It balances thoughts with the presence of the body to the point where one stops thinking and the intuition of knowingness takes over. (“Intuition” = Inner Teacher.)



Proto Labyrinth

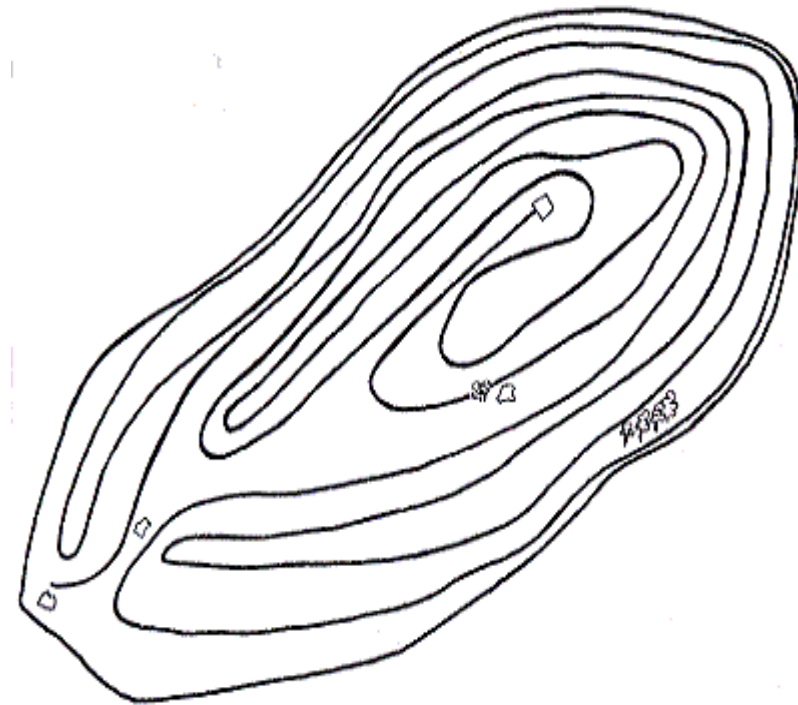
Prehistoric labyrinths have also been found carved on rock faces at Pontevedra, Spain and at Val Camonica in northern Italy, these latter ones are attributed to the late Bronze Age. The Rocky Valley labyrinths in Cornwall, England, are supposed to be from the Bronze Age. The labyrinth is found etched into the sands of the Nazca Plain in Peru, in use among the Caduveo people of Brazil and scratched on boulders and rockfaces in Northern Mexico, New Mexico and Arizona. It is suggested that the Labyrinth evolved from the spiral.



Glastonbury Labyrinth



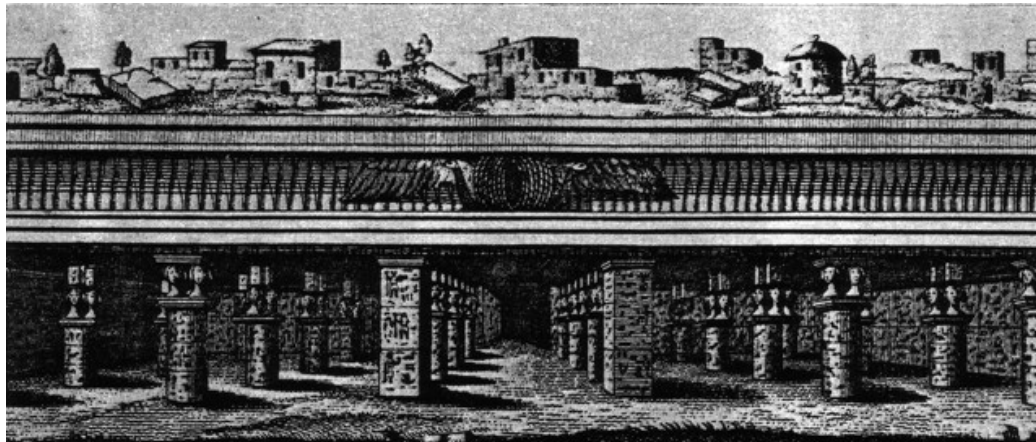
The Tor is a natural hill, but it has been established that it was altered in shape from the late Neolithic onwards. Whether or not the terraces were cut to replicate the 'classic' Labyrinth shape is still conjectural but the location, and the Tor's reputation as the 'Sacred Heart of England' makes it possible that the terraces were the final part of a pilgrim route.



Lost Egyptian Labyrinth



Herodotus (c. 484-424 BCE) describes his visit to the now 'lost' labyrinth after describing how the Egyptians divided the land into twelve parts, or *nomes*, and set a king over each. He says that they agreed to combine together to leave a memorial of themselves. They constructed the Labyrinth, just above Lake Moeris, and nearly opposite the city of crocodiles (Crocodilopolis). "I found it," he says, "greater than words could tell, for, although the temple at Ephesus and that at Samos are celebrated works, yet all of the works and buildings of the Greeks put together would certainly be inferior to this labyrinth as regards labour and expense." Even the pyramids, he tells us, were surpassed by the Labyrinth



Lost Egyptian Labyrinth



Strabo, who lived about 400 years after Herodotus also described them first hand. After referring to the lake and the manner in which it is used as a storage reservoir for the water of the Nile, he proceeds to describe the Labyrinth, "a work equal to the Pyramids." He says it is "a large palace composed of as many palaces as there were formerly *nomes*. There are an equal number of courts, surrounded by columns and adjoining one another, all in a row and constituting one building, like a long wall with the courts in front of it. The entrances to the courts are opposite the wall; in front of these entrances are many long covered alleys with winding intercommunicating passages, so that a stranger could not find his way in or out unless with a guide. Each of these structures is roofed with a single slab of stone, as are also the covered alleys, no timber or any other material being used." If one ascends to the roof, he says, one looks over "a field of stone." The courts were in a line, supported by a row of twenty-seven monolithic columns, the walls also being constructed of stones of as great a size. "At the end of the building is the royal tomb, consisting of a square pyramid and containing the body of *Imandes*." Strabo says that it was the custom of the twelve *nomes* of Egypt to assemble, with their priests and priestesses, each *nome* in its own court, for the purpose of sacrificing to the gods and administering justice in important matters.

Cretan Labyrinth for Minotaur



- In Greek mythology, the Labyrinth was an elaborate structure designed and built by the legendary craftsman Daedalus for King Minos of Crete at Knossos to conceal the Minotaur.
- *'At that time there reigned at Knossos, in Crete, a monarch called Minos, who held sway over what was then the most powerful maritime state in the Mediterranean. Minos had a son named Androgeos, who, during his travels in Attica, was treacherously set upon and slain, or so his father was informed. In consequence of this Minos imposed a penalty on the Athenians in the form of a tribute to be paid once every nine years, such tribute to consist of seven youths and seven maidens, who were to be shipped to Knossos at the appointed periods*



Cretan Labyrinth for Minotaur



- *There was at the court of Minos an exceedingly clever and renowned artificer or engineer, Daedalus by name, to whom all sorts of miraculous inventions are ascribed. This Daedalus had devised an ingenious structure, the "Labyrinth," so contrived that if anybody were placed therein he would find it practically impossible to discover the exit without a guide.*
- *The Labyrinth was designed as a dwelling for, or at any rate was inhabited by, a hideous and cruel being called the Minotaur, a monstrous offspring of Queen Pasiphaë¹/₂, wife of Minos. The Minotaur is described as being half man and half bull, or a man with a bull's head, a ferocious creature that destroyed any unfortunate human beings who might come within its power. According to report, the youths and maidens of the Athenian tribute were periodically, one by one, thrust into the Labyrinth, where, after futile wanderings in the endeavour to find an exit, they were finally caught and slain by the Minotaur'*



Labyrinth in India

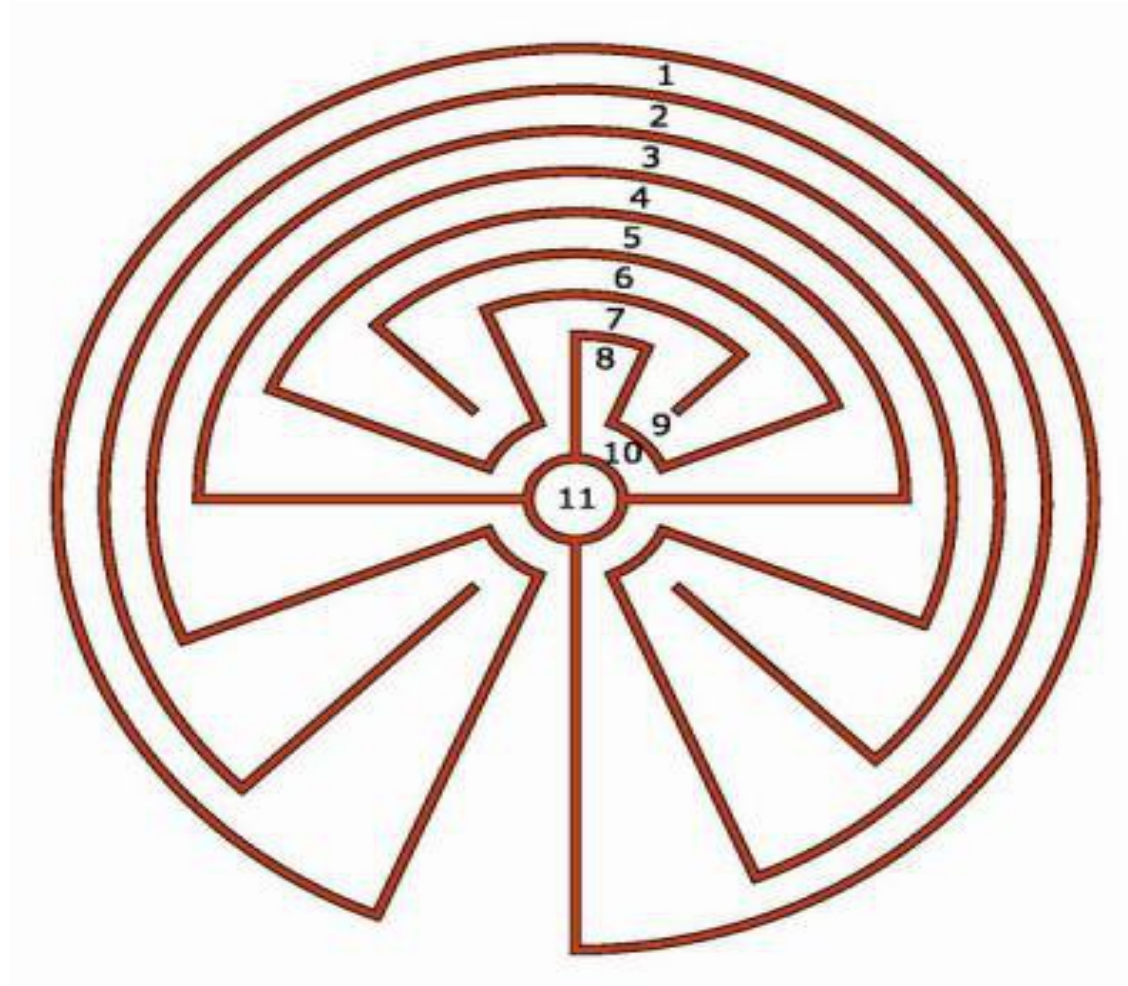
Currently the earliest evidence for the labyrinth in Asia is probably a labyrinth carved amongst other prehistoric petroglyphs, recently discovered on a riverbank at Pansaimol in Goa (Kraft, 2005). The age of this labyrinth is the subject of considerable dispute amongst experts on Indian rock art, but it could date to the Neolithic period, maybe c. 2,500 B.C.E. which would make it as old, if not older, than similar early labyrinth petroglyphs in Europe. Several examples of the labyrinth symbol have also been found amongst cave art in the north of India. One example at Tikla, in Madhya Pradesh, has been dated to approximately 250 B.C.E., although doubt remains as to whether the labyrinth is contemporary with other more dateable figures (Kern, 2000).



Neolithic Labyrinth



Native American Labyrinth



Nazca Labyrinth



- A five-year study by British archaeologists has shed new light on the enigmatic drawings created by the Nazca people between 100 BCE and CE 700 in the Peruvian desert. They discovered an itinerary so complex they can justify calling it a labyrinth, and see it as serving ceremonial progressions.
- In the midst of the study area is a unique labyrinth originally discovered by Prof Ruggles when he spent a few days on the Nazca desert back in 1984. When I set out along the labyrinth from its centre, I didn't have the slightest idea of its true nature, Professor Ruggles explained. Only gradually did I realize that here was a figure set out on a huge scale and still traceable, that it was clearly intended for walking. Invisible in its entirety to the naked eye, the only way of knowing its existence is to walk its 2.7 miles (4.4 km) length through disorienting direction changes which ended, or began, inside a spiral formation.

Nazca Labyrinth



Nazca Labyrinth



- The labyrinth is completely hidden in the landscape, which is flat and virtually featureless. As you walk it, only the path stretching ahead of you is visible at any given point. Similarly, if you map it from the air its form makes no sense at all.
- But if you walk it, discovering it as you go, you have a set of experiences that in many respects would have been the same for anyone walking it in the past. The ancient Nazca peoples created the geoglyphs, and used them, by walking on the ground. Sharing some of those experiences by walking the lines ourselves is an important source of information that complements the hard scientific and archaeological evidence and can really aid our attempts to make anthropological sense of it.

Christianity and Labyrinth

Probably the oldest known example of this nature is that in the ancient basilica of *Reparatus* at Orleansville (Algeria), an edifice which is believed to date from the fourth century CE. It measures about 8 ft. in diameter and shows great resemblance to the Roman pavement found at Harpham and the tomb-mosaic at Susa. At the centre is a *jeu-de-lettres* on the words SANCTA ECLESIA, which may be read in any direction, except diagonally, commencing at the centre. But for the employment of these words the labyrinth in question might well have been conceived to be a Roman relic utilised by the builders of the church to ornament their pavement. Such pavement-labyrinths, however, with or without central figures or other embellishments, and of various dimensions and composition, are found in many of the old churches of France and Italy.



Christianity and Labyrinth



- As to the function and meaning of the old church labyrinths, various opinions have been held. Some authorities have thought that they were merely introduced as a symbol of the perplexities and intricacies which beset the Christian's path. Others considered them to typify the entangling nature of sin or of any deviation from the rectilinear path of Christian duty. It has often been asserted, though on what evidence is not clear, that the larger examples were used for the performance of miniature pilgrimages in substitution for the long and tedious journeys formerly laid upon penitents. Some colour is lent to this supposition by the name “Chemin de Jerusalem” at Chartres.

Christianity and Labyrinth



- In the days of the first crusades it was a common practice for the confessor to send the peccant members of his flock either to fight against the infidel, or, after the victory of Geoffrey of Bouillon, to visit the Holy Sepulchre. As enthusiasm for the crusades declined, shorter pilgrimages were substituted, usually to the shrine of some saint, such as Our Lady of Loretto, or St. Thomas of Canterbury, and it is quite possible that, at a time when the soul had passed out of the crusades and the Church's authority was on the ebb, a journey on the knees around the labyrinth's sinuosity's was prescribed as an alternative to these pilgrimages. Perhaps this type of penance was from the first imposed on those who, through weakness or any other reason, were unable to undertake long travels

Chartres Labyrinth



- There have been at least five cathedrals on this site, each replacing an earlier smaller building that had been destroyed by war or fire. It was called the 'Church of Saint Mary' in the eighth century.
- One of the best known examples of Cathedral Labyrinths is found at Chartres, in France: As well as the huge 11-circuit labyrinth on the floor, the cathedral has a spectacular rose window over the great west doors. This has the same dimensions as the labyrinth and is exactly the same distance up the west wall as the labyrinth is laterally from the cathedral's main entrance below the window.

Chartres Labyrinth

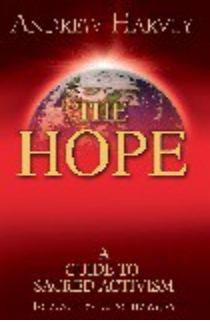


- The labyrinth at Chartres was known as a "*Chemin de Jerusalem*" "*daedale*," or "*meandre*," terms which need no explanation. The centre was called "*ciel*" or "*Jerusalem*."
- When pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem was made difficult and dangerous by the Crusades. The Church designated seven European cathedrals, mainly in France, to become Jerusalem for pilgrims. The labyrinth became the final stage of pilgrimage, serving as a symbolic entry into the Celestial City of Jerusalem. All seven cathedrals used the 11-circuit labyrinth design.

Walking the Labyrinth



- **Releasing:** on the way in, allow yourself to let go of daily preoccupations
- **Receiving:** in the center, allow yourself to enter the moment, receive inner peace
- **Returning:** on the way out, you may integrate what you released, received and learned



Sacred Activism®

- “A spirituality that is only private and self-absorbed, one devoid of an authentic political and social consciousness, does little to halt the suicidal juggernaut of history.
- On the other hand, an activism that is not purified by profound spiritual and psychological self-awareness and rooted in divine truth, wisdom, and compassion will only perpetuate the problem it is trying to solve, however righteous its intentions.
- When, however, the deepest and most grounded spiritual vision is married to a practical and pragmatic drive to transform all existing political, economic, and social institutions, a holy force – the power of wisdom and love in action – is born.
- **This force I define as Sacred Activism.**” – Andrew Harvey (who coined and trademarked the term in 2008): <https://AndrewHarvey.net>