

**A Personal Practice of Reflection and Renewal
for Individuals of All Faiths and Traditions
During the Twelve Holy Nights of the Year
December 25 til January 6**

***The Fourth Holy Night -
December 28***

Vertical and Horizontal

Tonight we explore the polarity of polarities. Vertical and horizontal are the poles that describe the two gestures of being human. We live in the vertical as beings bridging between spirit and matter. We live in the horizontal as we engage in and with the world. Together they form a cross, one of the earliest symbols of human understanding. To explore the meaning in each of these poles, particularly during this intensely spiritual time of year, we must understand the cross. To understand the cross we must penetrate the meaning and representation of proportion.

There is a very good description of the symbol of [the cross on Wikipedia](#). You may want visually to explore the images of the cross to develop your feeling for the poles of the horizontal and the vertical.

When we seek the vertical pole in our souls we are looking for our right relationship to spirit and matter. We are born into this life to incarnate fully. We want to engage fully with the weight of gravity. We need to feel our feet on the ground and have access to all the energies emanating from Mother Earth. The horizontal pole represents our relationship to earthly participation through perceptions, interests and experiences.

A horizon is a meeting or a boundary between two separate thoughts, feelings, entities or realities as known through our perceptions, our interests and our experiences. It is important to bring our attention to meaning and to the influence of the horizon.

Go outside and look at the horizon of the sky and earth. You are viewing the sense perceptible mirror of the reality of spirit meeting matter.

The vertical and horizontal poles become visible in the image of the cross. And the point where the poles cross makes visible the relationship of self to everything else through proportion.

Ideal proportion creates beauty.

There is no beauty when the arms of the cross are not proportional. Proportion is based on the proportions of the human body and is found in the [Golden Section](#). Proportion based on the Golden Section is not about equal proportions, it is about a beautiful ratio of one aspect to the other. Pythagoras, the great Greek initiate, said, "The Human Being is the measure of all things." All the great temples, cathedrals, pyramids and places of spiritual importance are designed as a reflection of the proportions of the human body. This is why these structures feel sacred. Each human being is a temple and feels sacred when the proportions of the crossing of the vertical and horizontal poles inwardly and outwardly express the Golden Section.

Each human being needs to find the right proportions, the beautiful horizons, of their souls and their lifetimes as they dwell

in the vertical between spirit and matter.

The Golden Mean as a philosophical experience is the recognition and understanding of deficiency and excess. Beauty is destroyed by excess and deficiency. The soul is able to seek, create and restore proportion.

Questions to Contemplate...

The polarity between the horizontal and the vertical lead us to many considerations and contemplations that are rich with self-knowledge and self-development.

Begin with the vertical pole between spirit and matter. Where on this pole is your horizon? Where does your spiritual sky meet your material earth? Have you fully incarnated into your earthiness? Do you appreciate it? Or do you lean to the spiritual and disdain the material. Nothing is more beautiful than fully incarnated spirit. If we resist spirit or resist matter, we do not express right proportion.

Now into the horizontal ? list some horizontal relationships. For example, how do you relate to obedience and rebellion, work and rest, art and science, age and youth, giving and receiving, speaking and listening? Do you prefer the excess of one and the deficiency of the other? Remember to consider your perceptions, your interests and your experience.

Do you perceive one more clearly than the other?
Do you have more interest in one than the other?
Do you have more experience with one than the other?

In the coming year, pay attention to proportion in all things. Keep a journal of proportion. Draw crosses. As you review your days draw the vertical and horizontal poles. Be truthful and compassionate in where you place the crossing point. You will be all the wiser for this attention and your ability to perceive beauty, to create beauty and to sustain beauty in your thoughts, your feelings and your deeds will increase proportionately.

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