

Preface

As the unabridged dictionary definitions given below makes abundantly clear, the English word 'sphere' represents many different things. Perhaps some of this diversity comes from its antiquity, having been filtered through so many centuries of interconnected and interdependent languages. The etymology of this word can be traced back to ancient Greece and perhaps Persia having the word 'sepehr' meaning sky. Whether or not they are cognate is debated.

sphere, noun. 1. a solid geometric figure generated by the revolution of a semicircle about its diameter; a round body whose surface is at all points equidistant from the center. 2. any rounded body approximately of this form; a globular mass, shell, etc. 3. a planet or star; heavenly body. 4. See celestial sphere. 5. *Astron.* any of the transparent, concentric, spherical shells, or layers in which, according to ancient belief, the planets, stars, and other heavenly bodies were set. 6. the place or environment within which a person or thing exists; a field of activity or operation: *to be out of one's professional sphere*. 7. a particular social world, stratum of society, or walk of life: *His social sphere is small*. 8. a field of something specified: *a sphere of knowledge*. 9. to enclose in or as in a sphere. 10. to form into a sphere. 11. to place among the heavenly spheres.
 [<LL *spher(a)*, var. of L *sphaera* globe < Gk *sphaira* (*ball*); r. ME *spere* (*globe*) < OF (*e*) *spere* < LL *spera*, var of *sphera*]
 -Syn. 2. See ball ΣΦΑΪΡΑ “ball”

Another important characteristic of a sphere lies within its three-dimensional nature. A sphere is the only fixed, finite size figure, i.e., not a point, found in the study of geometry that remains invariant when viewed from any direction. So what are we to do with such a word? Here we consider briefly a few of the more philosophical and psychosocial aspects of the *idea* of spheres. The remainder of this report will focus on the more solid, technical, mathematical, and scientific matter of spheres as they relate to unidentified aerial phenomena and flight safety.

A circle, as Carl Jung (1950) pointed out is a fundamental in life, indeed an archetype of wholeness in a psychological sense. In it he saw many different things and showed that the two dimensional circle is indeed a powerful symbol. His idea of *completion* comes from the fact that there is no beginning and no end to a circle. Jung's idea of a *safe refuge* derives from the enclosed space within it while the concept of *inner reconciliation* grows out of his theorizing that his clients often seemed to move in the direction of growth and balance within themselves.

The concept of the circle has Eastern roots as well. The term "mandala" is derived from an ancient Sanskrit term meaning "essence" plus "having" or "containing" and is also translated as "completion" or "circle-circumference." Originally of Hindu origin, the word "mandala" is used both as a noun (e.g., a tool used in spiritual teaching) and a verb (e.g., induction aid for meditation). To many people the mandala represents wholeness and serves as "... a model for the organizational structure of life itself--a cosmic diagram that reminds us of our relation to the infinite, the world that extends both beyond and within our bodies and minds." (Anon, 2009) The most accepted traditional design is a circle as a symbol of the cosmos combined with a square symbolizing the man-made world.

While this discussion may appear to be a long way from UAP and aviation safety, perhaps it is not as far as one might imagine. Consider that the circle is a two-dimensional form while a sphere is three-dimensional, the revolution of a semicircle about its diameter. This suggests that the sphere is a more solid representation (a symbol?) of super completion (in yet in one dimension beyond that of a circle) and exquisite perfection. Are spherical UAP meant to symbolize something to us beyond their outward physical appearance? Is their form really part of their message? Should we be seeking some truth beyond their physical characteristics and their effects upon airplane flight systems? The wise person will keep all of these doors open because no one yet knows what these particular UAP are.

This collection of articles is focused upon this single form. Each article considers a particular aspect of spherical UAP, those poorly understood but ubiquitous visual phenomena in Earth's atmosphere that existed yesterday, exist today, and will very likely exist far into the future!

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References

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