

Πυθαγόρας

The Pythagorean philosophy of numbers

The great mystic and philosopher, Pythagoras (580 BC – 490 BC), is well known to serious students of Western Esotericism. He is considered as a very remarkable part of the great “Golden Initiating Chain” of Ancient Greece, including: Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, and we may add Ammonius Sakkas, Porphyry and Iamblichus as well.

His life has been exclusively described in many books (and in numerous web-sites on the Internet); thus, we do not consider it necessary to provide in this article a full biography of Pythagoras. The only essential element which must be emphasized here is the fact that Pythagoras—through his extensive trips and initiations in the then-known world, incorporates in his mystical philosophy, besides the Greek Theological Tradition, the Babylonian, Chaldean, Egyptian and Persian Tradition. Also there are indications (but not full proofs on a historical basis) that Pythagoras was initiated in the Northern “Hyperborean” Tradition by the priest of the “Northern” Apollo, Abaris. (According to Ancient Greeks, the Northern lands were those “beyond the Celtic land” that is, Britain, Germany, Iceland and Scandinavian nations).

Thus Pythagoras became a “cosmopolitan” initiate and he was able to achieve a unique synthesis of the Ancient Initiatory Tradition. That Tradition was then “reflected” on the great Plato. According to Bernard Russel, Platonism is Pythagoreanism in the form of literature and Platonism became the main philosophical trend in the West for many centuries through the help of Margilio Ficino and the Platonic Academy in Florence, affecting modern philosophy up to (at least) Kant and Hegel.

Besides the philosophical and academic effect that Pythagoreanism –through Platonism- has exercised on Western Philosophy, the more mystical aspects of Pythagoras have affected and given rise to some important Esoteric Orders in the West such as:

The Fratelli Oscuri (The Order of Covered or Hidden Brothers), appeared around the 15th Century in Byzantium. In 1600, that Order had spread all over Italy. Its members claimed that the Order has its origins in the Pythagorean Circle of Byzantium. That Circle left Byzantium for Salonica (a major city in Northern Greece) and then, after the fall of Salonica to the Turks (1430) left for Italy.

In 1650 the Holy Inquisition intervened and stopped the activities of the Order in Italy. In the meantime through the English gentleman Sir Thomas Bodley who had been initiated in that Order in Italy in 1554, the Pythagorean Tradition was transferred to England in 1577. Queen Elizabeth was tolerant against spiritual organizations so the Order prospered. From the archives of the Order, we know the names of the Brothers who formed the first core of the Order: Sir Thomas Bodley (the Head of the Order until his death in 1612), Thomas Smith, William Sedley, Nicolas Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, the lord D'Avonay and Walter Midlemay. In order to secure the esoteric works of the Order, they created a "cover" which acted also as an introductory stage. They gave it the name "The Tavern of the Muses". Such "Taverns" were established in Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh. We have the continuous line of succession of the Heads of the Order until 1753.

On the 26th of July, King Charles II prohibited the activities of the secret societies in England. The Head of the Order then, Sir Thomas Stanly re-named the "Tavern" to "Club of Smokers". Smoking was a habit recently imported from America. Citizens liking that habit were free to create clubs in which they were free to enjoy smoking. So, under this cover, the Order continued existing. Walter White, secretary of the Royal Society of London, reports that even in 1888 the Order was existing and the great English poet Tennyson was a member also. We were not able to trace the history of the Order beyond that period. Either it ceased existing or it was absorbed into other Orders.

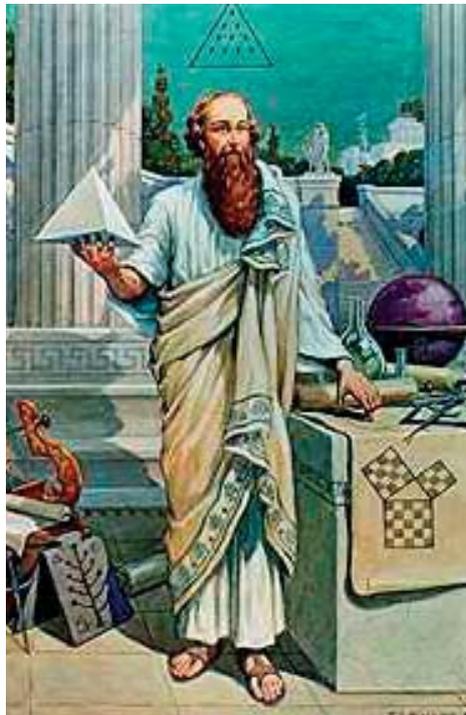
The Hermetic Rite of the Child's of Wisdom: From England the Pythagorean Tradition was transferred to France. The French Brothers received the Pythagorean Rituals from Lon-

don and they created that Order in 1871. We have some of the names of the Brothers who formed the core of the Order, such as Mal-leat, Cachire de Beaurepaire, Eslin, Etienne Bazot, etc. Well known esotericists were also members like Richard, Fabre- Palaprat (who was the man who revitalized or re-established

the Order of the Templars during the Napoleonic Period and has been also its Grand Master) and the great Mason and Masonic writer J.M. Ragon who according to some sources has been the Head of the Order as well. Again, we were not able to trace the history of the Order beyond the 19th Century so either it ceased existing or was absorbed into other Orders.

The Academy of the Sublime Masters of the Shining Ring or the Hermetic

Rite of Negotiators: This is also a French Order existing already in France in 1780. It was imported to France by the Baron De Blaerfindy, a Scottish military officer residing in France. He initiated the Brother Bommard who has been the mayor of the city of Douai. It is considered as a very important Pythagorean Order having Four Degrees plus a Fifth one for the Hierophants. Among its members was included the famous hermeticist Dom Pernety who established at Avignon a Pythagorean-Hermetic Academy with 100 members – the "Illuminated of Avignon". Another very important member was J.M. Ragon. He was initiated as a Mason in Belgium in the Lodge "The Real Friends" and he became the Worshipful Master of that Lodge. He also belonged in the Lodge "Phoenix" of the Grand Orient of France and also in the Misraim Rite. He supported the Order of the Temple, re-established by Fabre Palaprat as we mentioned earlier, and he was publishing the first French Masonic magazine under the title "Hermes".



In the case of that Order, we are lucky enough: Part of its teaching became in 1826, the 12th Degree of the Scottish Philosophical Rite, an important Masonic Rite which is still active and prospering all over the world and considered as “regular” by the Grand Lodge of England. So, many Masons have the opportunity to have contact with (part of) its teaching.

The Order of the Free Pythagorean Initiators (Ordo Initiatorum Librorum Pythagorae): having Emille Dantine as a Head and then Jean Mallinger established in Brussels after the First World War. That Order was based on Pythagorean circles established during the second half of the 19th Century in Paris, Northern France, Belgium, etc. During 1955 the Order established branches in Germany (starting from Munich), in Austria, in Greece (1961) and in Brazil. It changed its name to:

The Order of the Golden Rose (Order Rosae Anreae): having Martin Erler as its Head. As far as we know-through discussions we had with a friend Mason participating in the Greek branch of the Order- the Order has seven degrees and works with Greek-Egyptian Rituals.

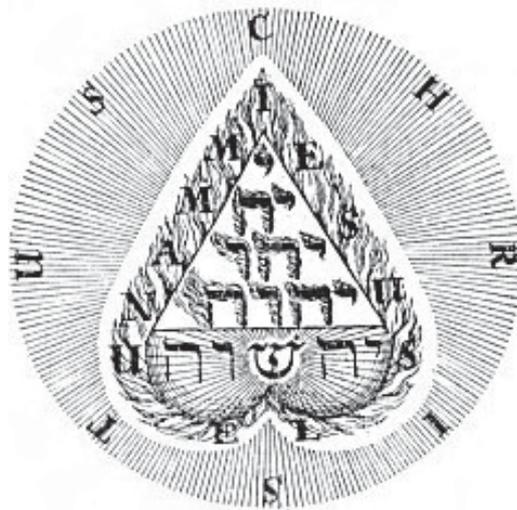
Important to mention also that according to the Founding Constitution of the Grand Lodge of England (1717), Pythagoras, Plato and the Ancient Academies are characterized as the cornerstone of all Masonry although the Orders mentioned previously are not Masonic

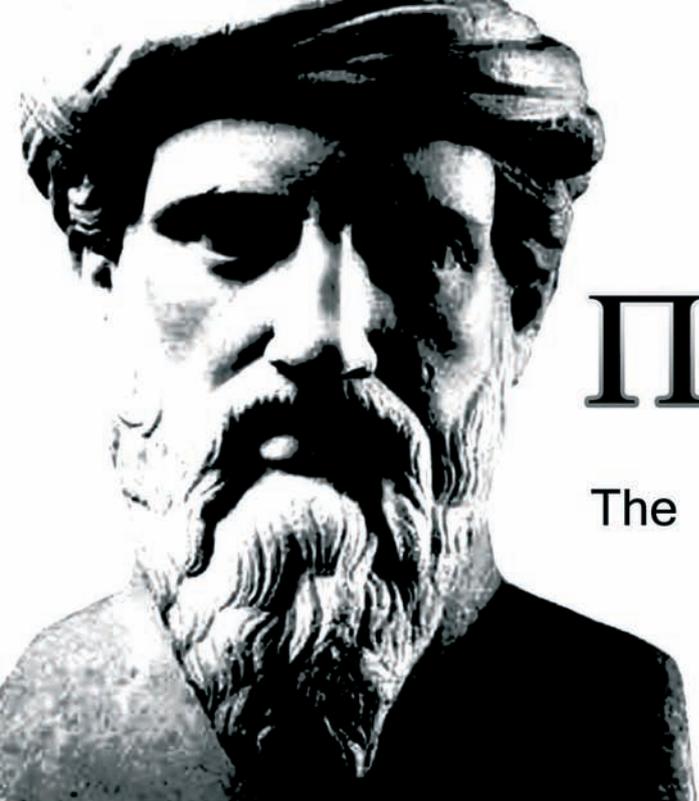
and their rituals and symbols are not connected to the Judeo-Christian Tradition which is more or less adopted by all Masonic Rites.

This is why we consider as important to examine the Pythagorean philosophy of numbers, the Pythagorean Numerology which incorporates within itself the essence of the Pythagorean Doctrine-which reflects as we have said earlier- the Initiatory Tradition of the Ancient World. Pythagoreanism holds that numbers are not only symbols denoting quantity and quantitative relationships but most of all symbols expressing various States of Existence, symbols expressing qualities and substances. According to the Pythagorean and Platonic approach, human kind hasn't invented numbers but has discovered them. That is numbers are not a human “product”—they exist independently of humans. Humans have invented the numerical symbols expressing the idea that each number denotes. According to Aristotle (Metaphysics I.6) Plato suggested that numbers are “the Causes of the Substance of Things” and considers them as intermediary entities between the Sensible Reality and the World of Ideas. This approach—that numbers do have their own existence independently of humans—is known in the History of Mathematics as the “Platonic Approach”. We always have to remember this approach when trying to understand the esoteric meaning that Pythagoreans have assigned to numbers.

End of Part I.

By Frater O.L.





Πυθαγόρας

The Pythagorean philosophy of numbers

We will try now to present, in a summarized form, part of the Pythagorean interpretation and philosophy of Numbers:

ABSOLUTE ONE:

This is not a number according to Pythagoreans. Under this term, the Absolute, Ineffable God is symbolized. The Unknown God, the Ain-Sof (in Kabbalah), the Tao. The Non-Existent God- not in the sense that God does not exist, but in the sense of the non-manifested, eternally Unknown, Hidden God- the Being of beings. There is no numerical symbol for the Absolute One. How could there be after all? The Absolute One transcends any human and angelic capacity of Understanding, in mental terms. Only in deep mystical states humans can have, to some extent the experience of the Absolute God and that experience cannot be expressed plainly in linguistic terms. This is why the deep mystical experience is always a secret one. Traces of such experiences are revealed by mystics sometimes. They have talked about “the feeling of the Ocean”, “the feeling of Infinite Love”, about “Merging with God”, and there is always in their descriptions an erotic element present. The “Divine Love”, a description used frequently by many mystics. Plotinus, according to his biography, had such an experience four times in his life. The

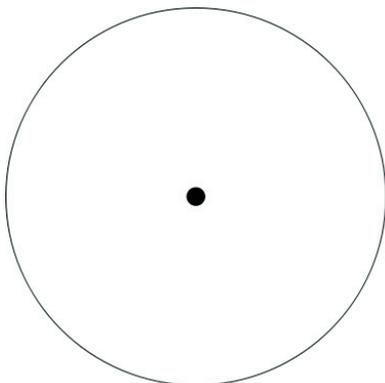
symbol for the Absolute One (if a symbol can be used in this case) is the all encompassing cycle.

1 ONE/MONAD

This Number and these terms express the idea of the Manifested God, the Divine Mind and the Will of God in Action. It is also called the Creative Divine Monad. According to Proclus, the great neo-platonist and commentator of Plato, Monad is “the Mind the Indivisible”- the Mind penetrating the various realms of Existence. According to the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition, the Cosmos has been created through the mix of the Indivisible and Divisible substance. The Indivisible substance is considered as the Spirit, the Energy while the Divisible as the Matter- but not the Matter we observe in our daily lives in this physical world. It is something like the “root of Matter”. In the Platonic Dialogue “Timaeus” details are given but under a mythological cover which requires heavy analysis which cannot be provided here in this article. Thus, the Monad penetrates everything and this is obvious in the numbers we use daily: consider for instance the number 1,000,000. It is actually 1,000,000 monads. So any number “returns” to the Monad, is actually an extension of the Monad towards Infinity. This is why Proclus describes the Monad as the “Final or Conclu-

sive Cause” in the sense that is the first Cause of the Creation and the State at which everything returns. The Monad also has been described as the “Primum Mobile” by Aristotle, that which gives “movement” and starts the Creation while existing within everything independently of how far that everything is. So the Monad, the Divine Mind, the Will of God in Action, the Spirit, exists even at the lowest realm of Matter and modern physics (especially quantum physics) confirms this since Matter in its sub-atomic level is amounts (quanta) of energy. Actually, “we exist in the Mind of God” as the great modern Kabbalist Zev ben Simon Halevi had once said to us- but we do not understand it. One day we and the rest of the Cosmos will return to that “Oneness” when the purpose of this Universe will have been accomplished. The symbol used for the one Monad is the dot existing beyond Space and Time since Space and Time have not been created yet. The root of the word “Monad” comes from the Ancient Greek verb «μένειν» (menein) which means “to remain”.

Note: there is a difference between the Absolute One and the One /Monad: according to Rene Alledy (*Le Symbolisme des Nombres*): “The Absolute predates any numerical concept and is beyond any definition. The Monad can be confused with the Absolute but the Absolute was not emanated or born by the Monad. The Absolute corresponds (for the human mind) to a positive Zero while the Monad/Father is the beginning of the individuation through which the formation of the World starts”. According to some writers, there is an (obscure we have to confess) Theological- Philosophical difference between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church in this



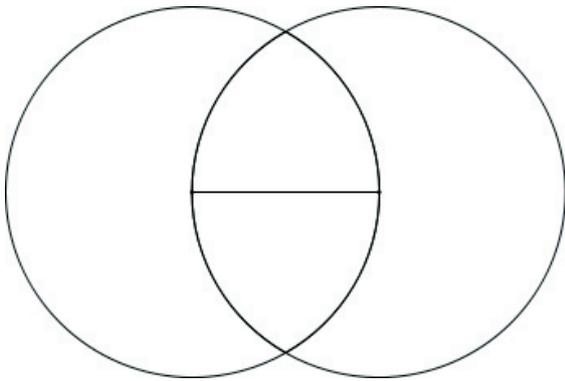
field: the first accepts the Monad as the Prime Cause, the Father, the Creator while the second-following the thought of Saint Dionysius, the Aeropagus – accepts that before any manifestation there was the Absolute Cause which is called by Saint Dionysius “the Divine Darkness” exactly in order to point out Its incomprehensible aspect.

2 TWO/DUALITY

This Number and these terms express the idea of the Divisible Substance (which is mentioned above) is the Archetypal Matter, the “root” of Matter, the Prima Materia of the Alchemist. It is the essential substance of Nature through which everything has been created in the Cosmos. According to the neo-Platonist Iamblichus: “Matter was created by God by exacting materiality out of Its own Substance”. A remarkable comment indeed! Those readers who are attracted to Alchemy will understand that Iamblichus gives a great “Arcanum” here: the method of Alchemy is quite similar but operates in the opposite direction- exacting the energetic/spiritual substance out of Matter (for further details on this see the works of Fulcanelli and Roger Caro).

Iamblichus continues: “that Materiality was of a chaotic/unidentified Nature”. Many Pythagoreans and neo-Platonists, assign the term “Chaos” to the Number Two. They also call that Number “Indefinite Nature”, “Divisible Substance” (as opposed to the Indivisible Substance which is the Monad) they also call it “Infinite” because with the Number Two the Creation begins and continues to Infinity- numbers never end although they always repeat themselves. With the ten numbers that we use in our mathematical system, we can create an infinite amount of numbers. According to Proclus, if the One has been defined as the “Final or Conclusive Cause” (see previous paragraph on the Number One) the Number Two is defined as the “Exemplary Cause”, it defines in a sense the Nature of the things to be created, this is why it is also called the “Essential being of Nature” – although

still at a Chaotic unidentified State. The root of the words Two, Duality, Dual are the Ancient Greek verbs: «διέναι» (diēnai) and «διαπορεύεσθαι» (diaporevesthai) which mean respectively: to penetrate, to cross. With the Number Two actually Creation begins-but not the physical material Creation as we perceive it with our physical senses because the physical Universe does not exist yet. It is actually a process of Archetypal Creation which will be completed and harmonized by the next Number Three. The symbol for the Number Two is a line which tends to Infinity.



3 THREE/TRIAD/TRINITY

This Number symbolizes the Archetypal Idea completed, the Archetypal Creation Completed. Of course the Creation doesn't take place inside Nature yet. Important to mention that according to Ancient Greeks, by the term Nature we signify everything created. Only God exists "outside" Nature. The rest of the beings are included in Nature and are considered as physical, not metaphysical beings. Only Divinity Itself is a pure metaphysical Being. Thus the various deities, demons, heroes, etc are parts of Nature and have to adjust themselves to the Law governing their level of existence. An entity can be considered as metaphysical or superhuman only in relative terms, i.e. a demon can be considered superhuman as compared to man but is of a lesser caliber as compared to a deity. It seems that even Zeus "the Father of Gods and Men" has to adjust himself to certain Laws-something which opposes the Judeo-Christian concept of the Absolute Freedom of God. Here we

have to ask how much the Absolute God corresponds to Zeus but this Theological issue is outside the scope of this article. An excellent analysis regarding the concept of the metaphysical and the physical being exists in the book "Kybalion".

Returning now to the Triad according to the neo-platonist Proclus we can assign to it the term "Creative Cause" because the Triad gives, in a sense, the necessary structure to the Archetypal Idea/Creation without which no further manifestation is possible. According to Aristotle, the Triad symbolizes the Creative Energy, "the Law through which everything is being structured". Thus it is the symbol of Genesis. Proclus continues: "the Creative Triad receives the unique and total Creative Energy of the Father" (obviously the Monad). According to a modern Greek Pythagorean, (Andrianopoulos) "the Number Three is the Number which reveals the substance of the Monad" but we have to add regarding partly the function not the Substance Itself- who can approach the Monad which is the first emanation of the Absolute One?

All the Pythagorean philosophers assign a great importance to the Triad because Creation starts from it. Another great esoteric system, namely the Kabbalah, assigns a great importance to the first three emanations of the Absolute God. The Sephiroth: Keter, Hochmah, and Binah form the so-called "Supernals". According to the words of the modern Kabbalist James Sturzaker: "Keter, Hochmah, and Binah form the first unmanifest, known, unknowable Trinity and are known as the Supernals. The Supernals stand above the abyss which separates Force and Matter combined". In our opinion, it is an excellent statement signifying the nature (if we can use such a term) of the Archetypal Creation: it is still at the level of force while Nature/Creation, which is observable and felt by us, at any level of Existence is Force and Matter combined. Readers must not be confused by the fact that the Number Two signifies (as we said earlier), the Archetypal Matter-the Prima Materia-The Essential Substance of Nature. That Matter is

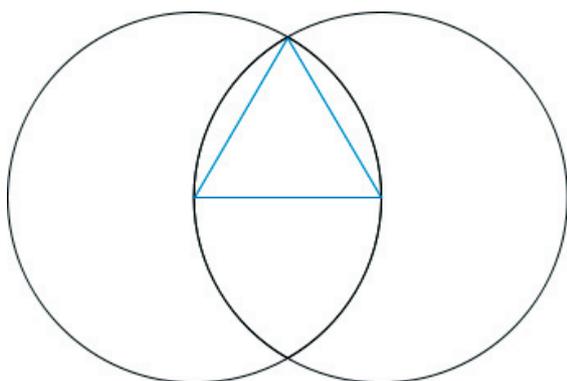
the “root” of Matter which remains unknown to both scientists and alchemists-the latter can work (if they are successful) with the Prima Materia but cannot comprehend it. Besides we know from 18th Century philosophy, that the maximum mental understanding we can ever achieve is to comprehend the relationships among things based on a perception which is relative and based on “a priori” principles. We cannot go further (see Immanuel Kant). Only the mystic can penetrate deeper by merging himself with the concepts: things and creatures surrounding him (see the 7th Epistle of Plato on that).

The Archetypal Trinity is a concept at the center of the Theology of various religions; thus, in Hinduism we have the Trinity of Brahma, Visnou, and Siva while in Christianity we have the Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The roots of the word Three, Triad, Trinity is the Ancient Greek verb: «τρειν» (trein) which means: I feel a fear, I feel awe, I live because I am scared. We believe that the concept of awe in front of the Archetypal Creation which is not penetrable to any created being is more relevant in defining the linguistic root of the Number.

Thus concluding for the Archetypal Idea/Creation we have:

The Monad -“the Final or Conclusive Cause”-
The First Cause of Creation and the State at which everything returns.



The Duality -“the Exemplary Cause” – “The Essential being of Nature” – The Nature of things to be created.

The Triad - “the Creative Cause” – “The Law through which everything is being structured”.

The Numbers One, Two, Three according to the Pythagoreans are called the Creative Numbers. The symbol of the Number Three is the Triangle.

4 FOUR/TETRAD

If the Numbers One, Two, Three symbolize (together) the process of Creation at the Archetypal level, the Number Four symbolizes the Creation at the level of Nature-and readers must recall here the concept of Nature according to Ancient Greeks mentioned previously: anything created at any level of Existence.

The first Three Numbers, The Creative Numbers as we said form the Archetypal Creation or, in other words, the Archetypal Triune Manifestation of the Absolute One. It is a kind of Creation but beyond our comprehension this is why it has been called:“ the first unmanifest, known, unknowable Trinity”. If with the first three Numbers we have Archetypal Creation at the level of Force, with the Number Four, we have Creation combining Force and Matter or interchanging Force and Matter (according to the concept of modern physics also).

The Number Four symbolizes “the dynamic manifestation of the Creative Energy of Triad” or “that phase of the Creation in which Matter was fully manifested and from this Matter solid bodies were created” (Adrianopoulos). So we have the various forms/kinds of Matter in which the traditional four elements are assigned.

Earth: Solid Matter

Water: Liquid Matter

Air: Gaseous Matter

Fire: The Energetic Condition of Matter/Matter Dissolved into Energy or Energy coagulated in Matter.

Also something of great importance: the Number Four symbolizes additionally the four levels of Existence (which remember are all parts of Nature) and to which also the traditional four elements are assigned:

Fire: The Archetypal World- or according to some writers The Divine World (but remember The Absolute One is beyond this completely unknown)-the World of Aziluth in Kabbalah-the World of the Pure Divine Emanations. Here we have to mention that according to the Kabbalists, that World, the World of Emanations, is not part of Nature or exists at the borderline of Nature. At this point we believe there is a difference with the Greek point of view but we cannot expand further in this article.

Air: The Spiritual or the Mental World or the World of Principles according to some writers-the World of Beriah in Kabbalah.

Water: The Psychological-Emotional-“Astral” (according to Paracelsus) World. The World of Yetzirah in Kabbalah.

Earth: The Material World-the World of Solid Bodies-the World of Assiyah in Kabbalah.

Important to mention here (again) that “metaphysical” and “physical” and also “spirit” and “matter” are relative terms: so for example an Angel inhabiting the Psychological Sphere seems “metaphysical” or a “spirit” to us but if we are able to transfer ourselves to this World it will seem like a physical being to us meaning that we will have direct perception of that Angel. Remember only the Absolute One is a metaphysical Being according to Greeks and according to Kabbalah the Absolute One plus the Divine Emanations as long as a Cosmic Cycle is going on (regarding the latter see the works of Zev ben Simon Halevi on that).

Each of the Worlds is subdivided into the four elements, thus we have:



<i>Fire</i>	Fire
	Air
	Water
	Earth
<i>Air</i>	Fire
	Air
	Water
	Earth
<i>Water</i>	Fire
	Air
	Water
	Earth
<i>Earth</i>	Fire
	Air
	Water
	Earth

According to Ancient Greeks all of the dimensions of Nature (that is the four Worlds) are inhabited by beings be they minerals, plants, animals, humans, demons (good and bad-remember the entirely negative concept of the word “demon” started with Christianity, Greeks accept good demons also-see the case of Socrates), nymphs, lesser gods, greater gods, etc. They assign to minerals and plants some kind of soul or consciousness, but of course from humans and on self-consciousness starts. Even the too rational Aristotle admits that: “the whole Cosmos is full of gods”.

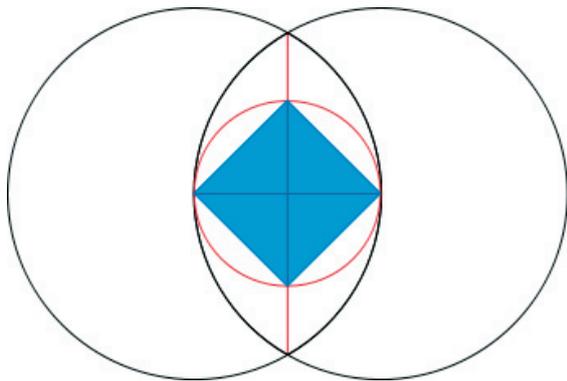
According to the Pythagoreans, the Number Four signifies the full development of the Archetypal Idea/Creation to the most dense level of the Physical being and also its return back to the Archetypal Monad. This is why they call the Number Four: “Creator and Cause of everything”, “Image of the Manifested God in the World”. Cosmos is created through Four and “Cosmos” in Greek means “jewel” –something of extraordinary Beauty.

Through the Number Four everything exists potentially and this is the famous Pythagorean Tetraktys which has the form:1+2+3+4=10 which means that with the first four Numbers

(and whatever these signify) everything can be created. Pythagoreans and our modern mathematical system also use ten numbers through which they construct any amount of numbers wanted-so ten is the Whole.

Proclus goes further by defining that: “the Creative Action is of a four-fold Nature” that is the Creative Monad plus the Triad. So it seems that the Creative Monad “activates” the Triad. The Monad is defined by Proclus: “the One Creator” while the Creative Triad that of “the lesser Fathers”. So it seems that the Creator is “fusing” Its power within the Triad but remains at the same time something separate. The text is obscure and we cannot penetrate more.

We have to say that the Number Four had such a great significance to the Pythagoreans that they were taking oaths by using it. The root of the word Four/Tetrad is the Ancient



Greek word «τετράς» “tetras” meaning “she who bears” probably signifying Nature which accepts all manifestations and transformations. Another term given to the Number Four is the “key holder of Nature”. The symbol of the Number Four is the pyramid (sometimes the cube) and also the triangle with ten dots inside starting from the top.

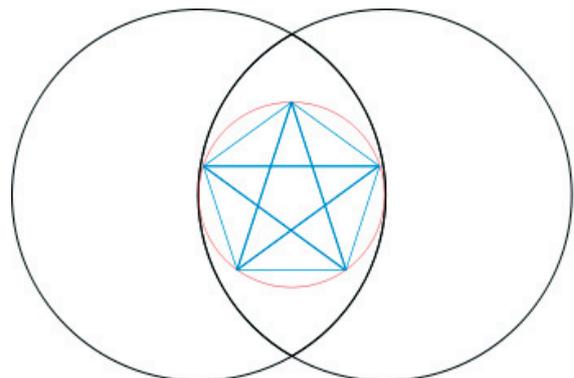
5 FIVE/PENTAD

This Number according to Pythagoreans signifies the maximum manifestation inside Nature. They were calling that Number “marriage” because it unites the Archetypal Idea (3) to the Archetypal Matter (2). It signifies

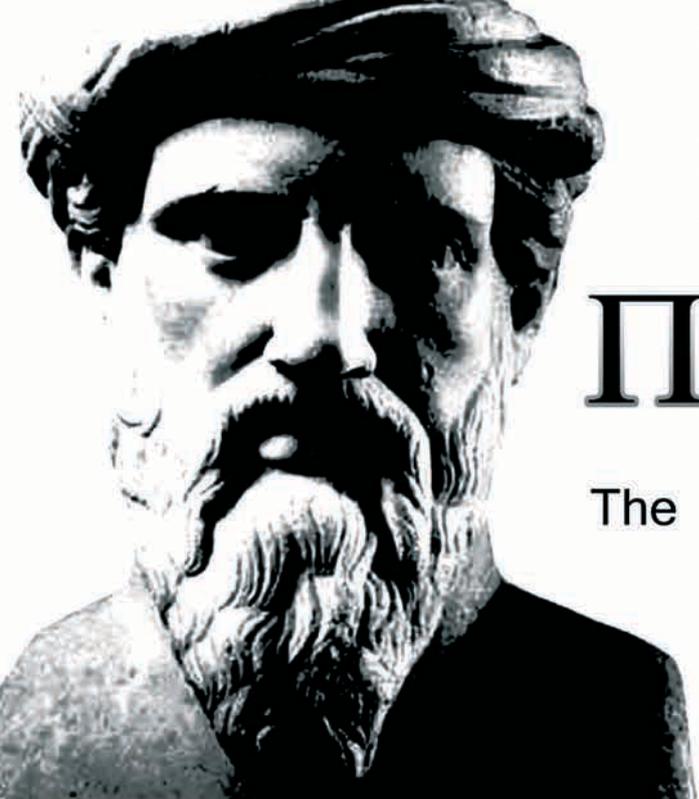
also any form of life existing in a structured way (be it a plant or an animal or a mineral, etc.). So it’s the factor bringing Nature and Matter into structured Form and Life. It also symbolizes consciousness as it unfolds itself inside Nature: so we can say that minerals have the less developed consciousness, plants a greater one, animals a much greater one and humans are the most developed creatures on earth regarding their consciousness. This is why this Number is also called “Mind”. It is the symbol of the fully developed human. Also it signifies the quintessence-the “Ether” according to Ancients-an element penetrating and balancing the rest of the four (Fire, Air, Water and Earth).

The root of the word is the Ancient Greek word: «πεμπάς» (pempas) meaning “that which sends” so it’s the Number “sending”, “providing” structure and Life to Nature. That structure and Life finally will create a certain level of consciousness which in the case of Mankind reaches its maximum. Important to mention here is that self-consciousness and ethical consciousness in the case of humans corresponds to Freewill. This is why the Number Five is the Number which its symbol (the five point star) in its upright position signifies the fully developed Man dominating over the four elements of Nature (and thus on his animal nature also) but the symbol in its reverse position signifies the “Fall of Man” into the state of an animal thus a loss of consciousness because of his own Freewill. The Number Five also symbolizes health exactly because it brings balance among the four elements.

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Part III will follow
in next issue



Πυθαγόρας

The Pythagorean philosophy of numbers

Part 3

6 SIX/HEXAD

Through this Number the Pythagoreans symbolize the correspondence between the various levels of Existence-between the various Worlds - which results in Harmony and Beauty. It signifies the Sprit entering into Matter and the Matter elevating to Spirit (remember always that “Spirit” and “Matter” are relative terms to each other as mentioned previously). This is why they were calling this Number “friendship”- the power connecting the various Worlds. Consequently this Number signifies the trend of Superior Worlds towards Material manifestation and the trend of the Inferior Worlds towards Spiritual evolution. This is why the symbol for this number is the six pointed star (or the Star of David as we used to call it - a major symbol also in Kabbalah and the symbol which has been chosen for the flag of the Nation of Israel in our days).

Pythagoreans went deeper supporting that the Superior Worlds give a “soul” to the Inferior Worlds and maintain them in existence. Iamblichus uses the following expression for the Number Six: “Structure of everything, a Soul-maker and maker of vital links” between the Worlds we dare to add. Because the Worlds have such a trend (to attract each other and manifest themselves to each other) it seems

that there is such a “habit” in the whole Cosmos (any level of Existence) - and this is what the word “Six” means in Ancient Greek - the root comes from the word: «ἔξη» (exe) which means: trend, habit.

We have to mention something important here: according to Pythagoreans the Numbers 1-5 reveal the descent of the Absolute (the Kabbalists would say “part” of the Absolute) into Matter, the descent from Unity to Multiplicity. The Numbers 5-10 reveal the path of the return to the Monad, the Absolute, the path which is followed by those creatures who, having first acquired individuality through the physical evolutionary process and through numerous reincarnations, wish to return to the Monad (the “Lost Paradise” in other traditions). The Number Ten is another expression for the Monad as we will see later on. This is why the Numbers 5-10 are called the “restoring” or “reintegrating” Numbers. So by summarizing up to now we have:

- The Creative Triad (1, 2, 3) which remains to a large extent unknown to us (see the comments in previous paragraphs).
- The Four/Tetrad (4) signifying the manifestation in Nature (and by the term “Nature” we mean any level of Existence-the Creation of the various Worlds)

-The Five/Pentad (5) signifying the maximum manifestation in Nature, the appearance and the evolution of Consciousness leading to the most fully developed creatures which are Humans. At the level of Humans Freewill exists.
 -The Six/Hexad (6) signifying the relationships between the various Worlds and levels of Existence and the fact that the Worlds are linked to each other in a harmonious and vital way and they have the trend to manifest themselves to each other.



7 SEVEN/HEPTAD

This is considered as the sacred Number by the Pythagoreans. Its root exists in the Ancient Greek word «σεπτὰς» (septas) which means “the respected one”. This Number symbolizes the Monad which after the full descent and function into Matter is fighting for the return and the reintegration. It signifies the restoration of beings and the return to the Monad. This is why according to the Pythagoreans this Number symbolizes the Initiation and the Sacrifice. It is the Spirit having sacrificed Itself by descending into Matter from which it will return having acquired all the necessary experience to Its Primitive level.

According to the ancient mathematician Theon, it is the only Number among the ten which cannot be a product of multiplication and if multiplied with another Number it doesn't give a result included among the ten. For example, the 4 can “give birth” to 8 ($4 \times 2 = 8$) and can “be born” by 2 ($2 \times 2 = 4$).

Other Numbers are “born” but cannot “give birth” like 6. It is “born” by $2 \times 3 = 6$ but if multiplied gives a number outside the ten, $6 \times 2 = 12$. The 3 and 5 are not “born” by multiplication but if multiplied can “give birth” (the first $3 \times 2 = 6$, $3 \times 3 = 9$, the second, $5 \times 2 = 10$). Only 7 seems that at the same time is not “born” and cannot “give birth”. This led the ancient mathematicians to consider the Number 7 as a Number having the quality of the Monad inside the realm of the full physical Manifestation. Remember that the Monad “remains” intact at any level of Manifestation (and this is how it acquires its name “Monad” from the Greek verb “menein” which means “to remain”). The Number 7 remains alone among the ten Numbers because it is not “born” by others and cannot “give birth” all together. This led the ancient mathematicians to pay full attention to the Number 7 and try to unlock its secret because they saw it as the “reflection” of the Monad inside Nature (remember Nature is symbolized by Four and its Completion in terms of Evolution and Consciousness by the Number Five).

Thus according to Pythagoreans if Five symbolizes the completion of Nature and the Evolution of Form and Consciousness-reaching their maximum level which is the human Consciousness and Freewill-Number 7 symbolizes the reflection of the Monad on the mind of humans-the only creatures able to “grasp” the concept of Monad-that is the concept of Divinity. This is why Number 7 is called by Proclus “the mental light” or “the light according to Mind”. Thus the most developed creature in mental terms which is the human being becomes truly developed only when the Monad is reflected on its Mind, only when he realizes that he is the Image of God, only when he is searching for God and becomes a “religious” being. The Ancient Greek term for the human being is «άνθρωπος» (“anthropos”) denoting both male and female and meaning: “he/she who looks upwards”-that is the creature who is searching for God and aspires towards progress not the creature who has a very developed brain due to natural evolution only.

If the process was ended by the Number 5 we would have in Nature the appearance of the “homo sapiens” a very powerful being in mental terms dominating on the rest of the creatures. But with Number 7 we have the “homo religiosus”, a self-conscious being, also mentally developed who aspires towards God and eternal progress. The “homo-religiosus” includes the “homo sapiens” but at the same time it surpasses it. According to the Pythagoreans only the “homo-religiosus” can be considered as a fully human and developed being because besides mental development and Freewill has also ethical standards and cultivation having an ontological foundation on God. This is why the Number Seven is called by the Pythagoreans also “Wisdom”.



We insist on the fact that the Number Seven denotes the concept of initiation: the “homo sapiens” is initiated (the Monad is reflected on his mind-he/she starts wondering about God and the Existential meaning of Life) and becomes “homo religiosus”. This process is at the same time a sacrifice: the human understands that he/she is a stranger in this World. Together with the beauty of Life he/she understands that tragedy of Existence and experiences an “Existential deficit” (as it is called by modern philosophy). In order to fulfill that deficit, he/she has to connect him/herself with the Divine Source-to return back, to restore or reintegrate him/herself. The Number Seven is the “restoring” or “reintegrating” Number par excellence and its Symbol is the Cross in which the horizontal line denotes the level of the Physical Existence “interrupted” by the vertical line denoting the Divine Manifestation. At this level the “homo religiosus” exists, crucified between a physical/animal

self and a Divine self, partaking at the same time in two Natures: the animal/human and the Divine One. But this crucifixion although painful is the only path towards his final resurrection. The marvelous Christian Theological concept of the “Christ within” exists at this level.

8 EIGHT/OGDOAD

The Number Eight according to Pythagoreans was related to the goddess Venus. It symbolizes Harmony because its cube ($2 \times 2 \times 2$) is the only one existing within the ten numbers (that is if developed $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ the result does exceed the number Ten-this does not happen for the rest of the Numbers besides the Monad). According to Proclus the Number Eight “is the Cause of any progress for all things” and according to a modern Greek Pythagorean (Adrianopoulos) that Number symbolizes also “emotions of sympathy, love and friendship among the creatures”. According to the Ancient Greek Orphic Theology, Love (Eros) is one of the most important Cosmological Powers in the Universe.

Also the Number Eight was related to the god Dionysus symbolizing the descent of the Soul and the Matter and its ascent to its original position. The form of the digit Eight corresponds to the caduceus that the god Hermes holds (and this can be one of the symbols for that Number). The caduceus having two snakes combined around a vertical axis symbolizes the “Fall of the Prima Materia-the Archetypal Matter-at the level of the material World we know-thus the Creation of that “illusionary” World and at the same time the ascent-the Resurrection of the corruptible Matter and its restoration to its prime glorious condition. At this point we can observe similarities with Hindu and Buddhist concepts: both of these systems consider the world we live in as an “illusion” called “Maya” or “Samsara”. Mankind has to overcome that illusion and become a “Buddha”, an Enlightened One. The Symbolism of the Number Eight-the Symbolism of Salvation and Resurrection has been used heavily by Christianity,

besides it is one of its fundamental Theological concepts. The famous Christian “Chi-Ro” symbol has affinities with the Number Eight and together with the caduceus and the form of the digit Eight itself (two circles touching each other vertically) are the symbols of this Number.



Important to mention here is the following: the Ancient Egyptians had four “models” or “systems” of Theology taking their names from the centers of the religious life in Ancient Egypt. Thus we have the Theological system of Heliopolis, that of Memphis, that of Hermopolis, and that of Thebes. We have to emphasize here that these are different systems not different religions. The system of Hermopolis is based on the Ogdoad, the “Primordial Eight” which together form a single Entity.

In an excellent analysis provided by Lucie Lamy we read: “Their names are Naun and Naunet meaning both the “initial waters” and “inertia”, Heh and Hehet meaning “spatial infinity”, Kek and Keket meaning “the darkness” and Amun and Amunet meaning “that which is hidden”. The latter couple sometimes was replaced by Niau and Niaut meaning “the Void”. The Eight are called the “Fathers and Mothers of Re-the principle of light itself”. Although it’s not the purpose of this article to present the Egyptian Theology we consider worth examining the fact that the Theology of Hermopolis operates through the Number Eight (Great Ogdoad) while that of Heliopolis with the Number Nine (Great Enniad) which will be mentioned also when we will examine that Number. Also Christian Gnostic systems have used the Number Eight in order

to present (in their view) the totality of the Divine Manifestation under the term “Pleroma” a Greek word meaning “full of”. Thus the “Pleroma” of the Gnostic Bardesanus from Edessa is consisted of the following Ogdoad: Father and Logos which give birth to Christ and the Wisdom Ahamod, which in turn give birth to the four elements: Fire, Air, Water, Earth.

Unfortunately we were not able to detect the linguistic root of the word Eight/Ogdoad through our sources.

9 NINE/ENNEAD

This Number symbolizes the perfection and the completion of a certain cycle of Divine Manifestation. According to Proclus “the Number Nine is a multiplicity created by the Monad and moves toward a new Unity”. The term itself-Nine-comes from the Ancient Greek phrase: «Ἐν νεο Ἐν» (“En neo En”) which means “a new One” or “a new Total”. Also it could derive its root from the phrase “En to En” which means “inside the One” meaning a multiplicity caused by and included inside the One. After the Number Nine a new cycle will begin (after being fully summarized and reflected at Number Ten) extended to Infinity: Numbers never end but they repeat themselves based on the first ten numbers. These are the numbers needed for expressing any Number we want independently of its size. So the “Ennead” Proclus continues “includes the totality of the Creative Agents of Genesis”. Important to mention here that the Ancient Egyptian Theological System developed in Heliopolis is based on the “Great Ennead” (while that developed in Hermopolis on the “Ogdoad”-see the analysis of Number Eight). According to the excellent analysis provided by Lucie Lamy: “in another version (of the Helipolitan System) Atum (the One) creates Himself by the projection of His own heart and brings forth eight elementary principles which, together with Himself, make up the Nine-the Great Ennead of Heliopolis: Shu and Tefnut, Geb (the Earth) and Nut (the Sky) and finally Osiris and Isis, Seth and Nephtys,

entities of cyclic life and renewal, of death and rebirth. It is written that “none of these entities are separate from Him, Atum”.

Also important to mention that according to the Christian Theology we have Nine “Orders” or “Kinds” of Angels:

- The Seraphim (Angels of Love and Light)
- The Cherubim (Angels of Wisdom and Intellect)
- The Thrones (Angels of Power and Life)
- The Dominations (Angels of Freedom)
- The Powers (Angels of Holiness)
- The Virtues (Angels of Humility)
- The Principles (Angels of Personality)-according to R. Steiner
- The Archangels (Angels of Fire)-according to R. Steiner
- The Angels (The Sons of Life)-according to R. Steiner

We observe that in both systems, the Egyptian and the Christian, we have functional “Agents” (be them either the entities of the Great Ennead or Angelic beings) expressed through the Number Nine. Lets remember the phrase again by Proclus that Nine “includes the Creative Agents of Genesis”.

By concluding up to now we may say that:
 Numbers 1,2,3-The Creative Numbers
 Numbers 4,5,6-The Numbers of Manifestation (at any level of Existence)
 Numbers 7,8,9-The “Restoring” or “Reintegrating” Numbers, the return to the Monad.
 Numbers 1-9- A full cycle of Genesis (divided in three subtotals from three numbers each).

The symbol of the Number Nine is based on the above classification and is represented by three triangles forming a larger one.

10 TEN/DECAD

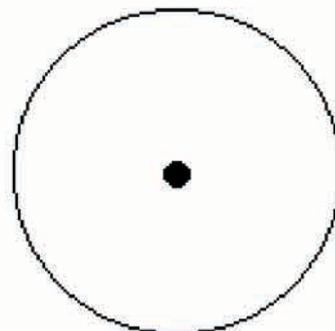
With the Number Ten the Pythagoreans symbolize the Cosmos, the Existence, which is fully developed and at the same time the Number Ten symbolizes the face at which a new Manifestation begins. Also it is the le-

vel at which the Ennead (the Creative Agents of Genesis) are reflected on. This is why the ancient root of the term “Ten” is the term: «δεχάς» (“dachas”) which means “that which accepts, receives”.

According to Proclus “the Four/Tetrad includes in itself everything united while the Ten/Decad includes everything but in a divided way-this is why Ten is inferior to Four”. It is an obscure phrase, and in our opinion, means that while Four symbolized the face of Creation at all levels of Nature (see the analysis of Number Four) Ten symbolizes the created World in which everything is mixed. In Kabbalah the Number Ten is expressed through the Sephirah “Malkuth” which has the same function as the Number Ten of the Pythagorean system: it receives the influence of the previous (and Superior) Sephiroth. Proclus in a striking similarity is using this phrase: “Ten symbolizes the Cosmos which accepts the images of all the Divine Numbers which are transmitted to it by above”.

Philolaus, another Pythagorean commentator characterizes Ten as “accepting the Infinite” and also “without it everything is obscure”. According to Spephsipus, the first head of the Platonic Academy, Ten is “the most perfect paradigm projected by the Creator of the Universe out of Himself” (note also the striking similarity with the Egyptian Theology regarding the Creation by Atum-see the analysis of Number Nine).

Thus Proclus concludes for the Number Ten: “Monad is the symbol of the Creative Cause of the Cosmos while Ten is the symbol of the full development and completion of all Cosmic Forms”.



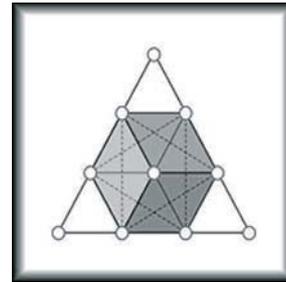
The symbol for Number Ten is the cycle, the same symbol used for the Absolute One. In a sense with the Number Ten we return to the Monad (10=1+0+1), a Cosmic Cycle has been completed. The symbol also denotes that the Monad still exists and operates even in the most minute part of the Created Cosmos, veiled under Matter, as in Kabbalah the first Sefhira “Kether” exists deep under the veil of the last Sefhira “Malkuth”.

great mystics and philosophers of the past and the present as we did-the journey towards unlocking the great mystery of Numbers.

The writer wishes to thank deeply his wife Loukia for typing the article which was first written in manuscript form which sometimes “seemed Greek” even to its writer.

Frater O.L.

Our article has reached its end at this point. We would like to emphasize that, whatever has been presented must not be interpreted by the reader in a dogmatic way. This article expresses the understanding and the approach of its writer. Readers must undertake by themselves-being helped of course by the works of the



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Since this article was not intended for an academic presentation we didn't consider it necessary to provide a detailed, per page footnote system. Instead we will present below the books that have been of great help to us in preparing this article:

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Our article relies heavily on this book. Phrases in quotation marks without referring to a specific author are taken from this book. Also almost all of the neo-platonic commentators on Pythagoreanism and their approaches are taken from this book.

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