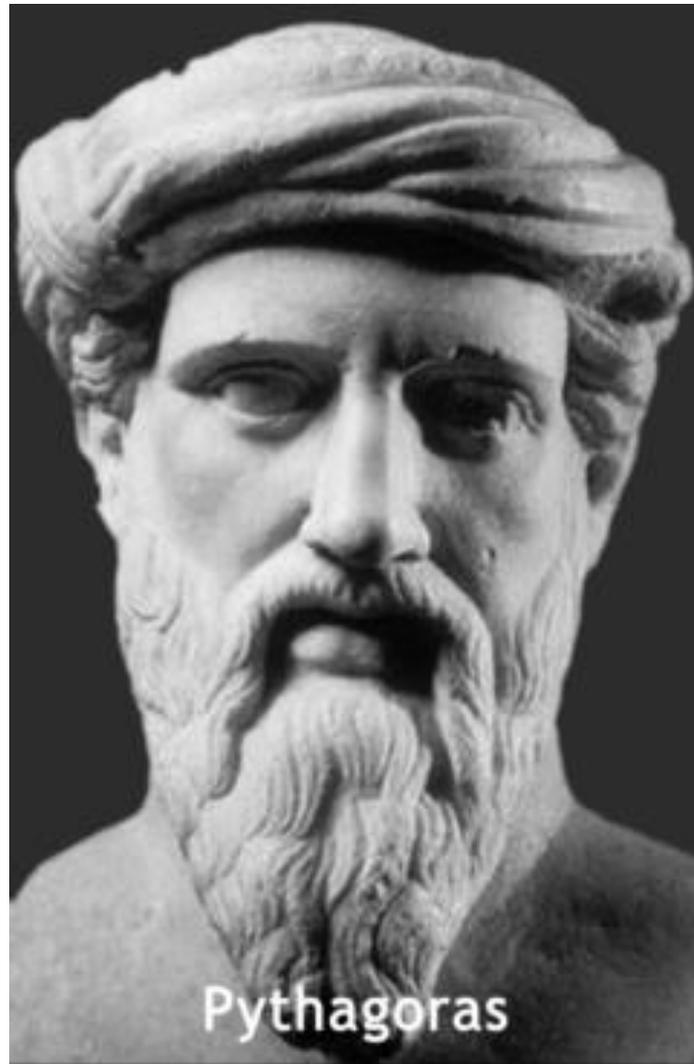


# THE WISDOM OF PYTHAGORAS



Pythagoras (Gr.). The most famous of mystic philosophers, born at Samos, about 586 B.C. He seems to have travelled all over the world, and to have culled his philosophy from the various systems to which he had access. Thus, he studied the esoteric sciences with the Brachmanes [Brahmins] of India, and astronomy and astrology in Chaldea and Egypt. He is known to this day in the former country under the name of Yavanâchârya (“Ionian teacher”). After returning [38 years travelling abroad] he settled in Crotona, in Magna Grecia, where he established a college to which very soon resorted all the best intellects of the civilised centres. His father was one Mnesarchus of Samos, and was a man of noble birth and learning. It was Pythagoras who was the first to teach the heliocentric system, and who was the greatest proficient in geometry of his century. It was he also who created the word “philosopher”, composed of two words meaning a “lover of wisdom”—philo-sophos. As the greatest mathematician, geometer and astronomer of historical antiquity, and also the highest of the metaphysicians and scholars, Pythagoras has won imperishable fame. He taught

reincarnation as it is professed in India and much else of the Secret Wisdom. [Adapted from HPB's Theosophical Glossary]

- Pythagoras, like many great teachers travelled extensively to get instruction from many teachers of various traditions. In the 38 years he spent travelling abroad he became acquainted with amongst others the Greek, Druidic, Egyptian where he spent 22 years and was thoroughly tested before being initiated into their mysteries, Babylon [modern Iraq] where he was initiated by the Magi into the Chaldean Mysteries, and even went to the source of the Eastern knowledge and arrived via Persia to India where he studied under the Brahmins; it is to be noted that Buddha had just left the scene then but his influence was still highly felt there and the Pythagorean philosophy is there is such a close and intimate relationship between the Buddhistic and the Pythagorean systems;
- During this time, he studied and perfected knowledge in the great disciplines of mathematics, astronomy, music, gymnastics, medicine and philosophy
- in 529 B.C. founded the Pythagorean Brotherhood and the School of the Mysteries at Crotona, Southern Italy; Students passed through a period of probation lasting from two to five years, during which their powers of maintaining silence were especially tested as well as their general temper, disposition, and mental capacity. During those early years every thread of the disciple's moral fibre was tested and strengthened, for Pythagoras taught that true knowledge cannot be acquired until the lower nature is under control. The students in this degree were not permitted to ask questions. Questions were propounded by the teachers, but were not answered, every student being obliged to seek the answer within himself. These questions were usually on some abstract subject, such as: What is Harmony? What is the most powerful thing in the world? What is the most difficult thing in the world? Happy the student whose intuition told him that the most difficult thing in the world is for a man to know himself.
- These five years of silence accomplished two things. First, they trained the student's powers of self-reliance and intuition. Second, they gave him training in the secrecy obligatory for the higher degrees, wherein some of the secrets of the Mysteries were disclosed. Upon initiation every student was warned that "it is not lawful to extend to the casual person things which were obtained with such great labors and such diligent assiduity, nor to divulge the Mysteries of Eleusinia to the profane."
- In this degree the Unity of all things was stressed: the fundamental Unity lying behind all the diversity of nature; the underlying unity of all religions; the unity and friendship which should exist among all men. He unfolded the friendship of all things toward all. Iamblicus wrote: "Indeed he delivered such an admirable friendship to his associates that even now [300 A.D.] those who are benevolent in the extreme towards each other are said to belong to the Pythagoreans." (Iamblichus)
- The moral discipline of the Pythagorean student steadily increased in intensity, and the line of discrimination between right and wrong became finer with every passing year. Disciples were warned not to be surprised by anything that might happen and trained to meet the greatest shocks with an equal mind. Anger was considered as one of the deadly sins and every student was cautioned not to make a decision or rebuke a servant while under the influence of this passion. The Pythagorean idea of duty might well have been taken from The Bhagavad Gita. Iamblichus gives it thus: We should never do anything with a view to pleasure as an end. We should perform what is right, because it is right to do so.

- Teachings: The public teachings of Pythagoras consisted principally of practical morals of the purest and most spiritual type and emphasized the virtues of self-restraint, reverence, patriotism, sincerity, conscientiousness, uprightness, truth, justice, and purity of heart. He insisted upon the highest ideals of marriage and of parental duties, and always exerted his influence to suppress wars and dissensions. “Never say or do anything in anger. Virtue is harmony; health, the Universal Good.” He urged his disciples not to kill animals, because he declared that they have a right to live, as well as men.
- [The esoteric teachings were based on symbols/sayings that could be interpreted in more than one way. “Do not stir fire with a sword”: that is, do not return angry words to an angry man, for “hatred ceaseth not by hatred but by love—this is an everlasting truth.” or “Look not in a mirror by lamplight”: that is, do not be misled by the phantasies of the senses, but be guided by the pure, bright light of spiritual knowledge. “Do not offer your right hand lightly”: that is, do not make pledges which you cannot or will not keep, and do not divulge the Mysteries to those who are unfit and uninitiated.
- The leading idea of his system was that of the Unity in Multiplicity. Therefore the Pythagorean concept of harmony was based upon the relationship of the One and the Many, the idea of the One in Many and the Many in One—“as above, so below.” By number Pythagoras meant not merely figures, but regulated motion or vibration, rhythm, law, and order; for he made number equivalent to intelligence. The monad is God and the good, which is the origin of the one and is itself Intelligence. The monad is the beginning of everything. Unity is the principle of all things and from Unity went forth an infinite or indeterminate duality, the duad, which is subordinate to the monad as its cause.
- On reincarnation:
 

“Souls cannot die. They leave a former home,  
And in new bodies dwell and from them roam.  
Nothing can perish, all things change below,  
For spirits through all forms may come and go.  
(...) Thus through a thousand shapes, the soul shall go  
And thus fulfil its destiny below.  
Death has no power th’ immortal soul to slay;  
That, when its present body turns to clay,  
Seeks a fresh home and with unminish’d might  
Inspires another frame with life and light.  
So I myself (well I the past recall) .”
- Importantly, Pythagoras emphasised the idea of morning meditation and planning of the day and also in a symmetrical fashion, the end of day critical review, cultivating self observation, reflection and self discipline.

# THE GOLDEN VERSES OF PYTHAGORAS

## Notes on the Golden Verses *from the commentaries of Hierocles*

The Golden Verses may be divided into two parts, the first treating of the Practical or Human Virtues, whose aim is the making of Good Men; and the second, treating of the Contemplative or Divine Virtues, the end of which is to make Good Men into Gods.

One is greatly struck by the wonderful completeness of the Verses, and their scientific arrangement. They can be divided into groups dealing with practically every aspect and affair of life.

At the end of the first part (verse 47), we find the Most Solemn Oath that if a man follow these precepts faithfully, he will be ready to tread the further path, to devote himself to the Contemplative Virtues, and to become truly God-like, overcoming Death, and gaining a knowledge of the Gods.

The Verses may be grouped in the following manner (only selected portions given here):-

### PART I.--THE PRACTICAL VIRTUES.

**Higher Intelligences** 1. First worship the Immortal Gods,<sup>1</sup> as they are established and ordained by the Law. 2. Reverence the Oath, and next the Heroes, full of goodness and light. 3. Honour likewise the Terrestrial Dæmons<sup>2</sup> by rendering them the worship lawfully due to them.

**One's Lower Nature** 9. Accustom thyself to overcome and vanquish these passions:-- 10. First gluttony, sloth, sensuality, and anger. 11. Do nothing evil, neither in the presence of others, nor privately; 12. But above all things respect thyself. 13. In the next place, observe justice in thy actions and in thy words. 14. And accustom not thyself to behave thyself in anything without rule, and without reason.

**Actions and Speech** 24. Observe well, on every occasion, what I am going to tell thee:-- 25. Let no man either by his words, or by his deeds, ever seduce thee. 26. Nor entice thee to say or to do what is not profitable for thyself. 27. Consult and deliberate before thou act, that thou mayest not commit foolish actions. 28. For it is the part of a miserable man to speak and to act without reflection. 29. But do that which will not afflict thee afterwards, nor oblige thee to repentance. 30. Never do anything which thou dost not understand.

**The Manner of Life** 35. Accustom thyself to a way of living that is neat and decent without luxury. 36. Avoid all things that will occasion envy. 37. And be not prodigal out of season, like one who knows not what is decent and honourable. 38. Neither be covetous nor niggardly; a due measure is excellent in these things. 39. Do only the things that cannot hurt thee, and deliberate before thou dost them.

<sup>1</sup> A "God" in the sense of a highly evolved being, that was once human. Theosophy does not teach of a deity as a replacement for the One Immutable Absolute, but postulates humanity's development towards infinite perfectibility.

<sup>2</sup> "The Terrestrial Dæmons are the souls of men, beautified with truth and virtue, being Masters of Wisdom, having true knowledge. They are "terrestrial," remaining on earth in order to guide and govern men. The best worship to be offered to these men (who are men and yet resemble the Illustrious Heroes), is by obeying those precepts they have left and recommended to us, and by following their instructions as laws; purposing to ourselves the same course of life they lead, the tradition of which they have set down in writing. This tradition gives the principles of truth and rules of virtue, as an immortal and paternal inheritance, to be preserved to all succeeding generations for the common good. To obey these, and live accordingly, is the truest reverence that can be done (to) them." From the [Commentaries of Hierocles](#).

**Introspection** 40. Never suffer sleep to close thy eyelids, after thy going to bed, 41. Till thou hast examined by thy reason all thy actions of the day. 42. Wherein have I done amiss? What have I done? What have I omitted that I ought to have done? 43. If in this examination thou find that thou hast done amiss, reprimand thyself severely for it; 44. And if thou hast done any good, rejoice. 45. Practise thoroughly all these things; meditate on them well; thou oughtest to love them with all thy heart.

**The Oath** 46. 'Tis they that will put thee in the way of divine virtue. 47. I swear it by him who has transmitted into our souls the Sacred Quaternion, the source of nature, whose cause is eternal.

#### PART II.--THE CONTEMPLATIVE VIRTUES.

**Concerning the Help of the Gods** 48. But never begin to set thy hand to any work, till thou hast first prayed the gods to accomplish what thou art going to begin.

**Concerning the Nature and Constitution of Gods and Men** 49. When thou hast made this habit familiar to thee 50. Thou wilt know the constitution of the Immortal Gods and of men. 51. Even how far the different beings extend, and what contains and binds them together.

**Concerning the Nature of the Universe, and what is possible** 52. Thou shalt likewise know that according to Law, the nature of this universe is in all things alike 53. So that thou shalt not hope what thou ought'st not to hope; and nothing in this world shall be hid from thee.

**Concerning Ignorance, and the Liberty of the Soul** 54. Thou wilt likewise know, that men draw upon themselves their own misfortunes voluntarily, and of their own free choice 55. Unhappy that they are! They neither see nor understand that their good is near them 56. Few know how to deliver themselves out of their misfortunes 57. Such is the fate that blinds mankind, and takes away his senses 58. Like huge cylinders they roll to and fro, and always oppressed with ills innumerable 59. For fatal strife, innate, pursues them everywhere, tossing them up and down; nor do they perceive it 60. Instead of provoking and stirring it up, they ought, by yielding, to avoid it.

**Concerning Knowledge and Deliverance** 61. Oh! Jupiter, our Father! if Thou would'st deliver men from all the evils that oppress them 62. Show them of what dæmon they make use 63. But take courage; the race of man is divine 64. Sacred nature reveals to them the most hidden mysteries. 65. If she impart to thee her secrets, thou wilt easily perform all the things which I have ordained thee. 66. And by the healing of thy soul, thou wilt deliver it from all evils, from all afflictions.

**Concerning Purifications** 67. But abstain thou from the meats, which we have forbidden in the purifications and in the deliverance of the soul; 68. Make a just distinction of them, and examine all things well. 69. Leaving thyself always to be guided and directed by the understanding that comes from above, and that ought to hold the reins.

**Concerning the Result of the Contemplative Virtues** 70. And when, after having divested thyself of thy mortal body, thou arrivest at the most pure Æther, 71. Thou shalt be a God, immortal, incorruptible, and Death shall have no more dominion over thee.

**On the Heliocentric theory (Astronomy)**

SD Ip117 (fn)

"The doctrine of the rotation of the earth about an axis is taught by the Pythagorean Hicetas, probably as early as 500 B.C. It was also taught by his pupil Ecphantus, and by Heraclides, a pupil of Plato. The immobility of the Sun and the orbital rotation of the earth were shown by Aristarchus of Samos as early as 281 B.C. to be suppositions accordant with facts of observation. The Heliocentric theory was taught about 150 B.C., by Seleucus of Seleucia on the Tigris. — [It was taught 500 B.C. by Pythagoras.—H. P. B.] It is said also that Archimedes, in a work entitled *Psammites*, inculcated the Heliocentric theory. The sphericity of the earth was distinctly taught by Aristotle, who appealed for proof to the figure of the Earth's shadow on the moon in eclipses (Aristotle, *De Coelo*, lib. II, cap. XIV.). The same idea was defended by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.*, II., 65). These views seem to have been lost from knowledge for more than a thousand years. . . ." (*Comparative Geology*, Part IV., "Pre-Kantian Speculation," p. 551, by Alex. Winchell, LL.D.).

**On the Pythagorean symbols: the monad, the duad, triad and tetractys**

SD I p426-7

"This first, or rather ONE, principle was called "the circle of Heaven," symbolized by the hierogram of a point within a circle or equilateral triangle, the point being the LOGOS. Thus, in the Rig Veda, wherein Brahmâ is not even named, Cosmogony is precluded with the *Hiranyagarha*, "the Golden Egg," and Prajâpati (Brahmâ later on), from whom emanate all the hierarchies of "Creators." The Monad, or point, is the original and is the unit from which follows the entire numeral system. This Point is the First Cause, but THAT from which it emanates, or of which, rather, it is the expression, the Logos, is passed over in silence.

In its turn, the universal symbol, the *point within the circle*, was not yet the Architect, but the cause of that Architect; and the latter stood to it in precisely the same relation as the point itself stood to the *circumference* of the Circle, which cannot be defined, according to Hermes Trismegistus. Porphyry shows that the Monad and the Duad of Pythagoras are identical with Plato's *infinite* and *finite* in "Philebus"—or what Plato calls the *apeiron* and *pepaß*. It is the latter only (the mother) which is substantial, the former being the "*cause of all unity and measure of all things*" (*Vit. Pyth.* p. 47); the Duad (Mulaprakriti, the VEIL) being thus shown to be the mother of the Logos and, at the same time, his *daughter*—i.e., the object of his perception—the produced producer and the secondary cause of it. With Pythagoras, the MONAD returns into silence and Darkness as soon as it has evolved the *triad*, from which emanate the remaining seven numbers of the 10 (ten) numbers which are at the base of the manifested universe."

SD Ip440-1

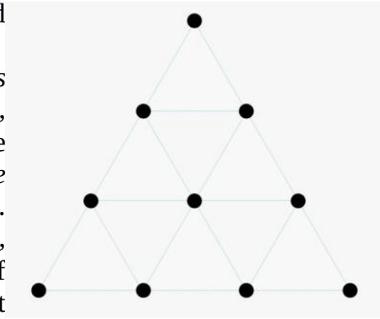
"And any one who has studied the numerical evolution in the primeval cosmogony of Pythagoras (a contemporary of Confucius) can never fail to find in his *Triad*, *Tetractis* and *Decade* emerging from the ONE and solitary Monad, the same idea [as Confucius, his contemporary]."

SD Ip612 On Pythagorean symbols which he transmitted from preexisting sources

"Theophilosophy proceeds on broader lines. From the very beginning of Æons—in time and space in our Round and Globe—the Mysteries of Nature (at any rate, those which it is lawful for our races to know) were recorded by the pupils of those same now invisible "heavenly men," in geometrical figures and symbols. The keys thereto passed from one generation of "wise men" to the other. Some of the symbols, thus passed from the east to the west, were brought therefrom by Pythagoras, who was not the inventor of his famous "Triangle." The latter figure, along with the plane cube and circle, are more eloquent and scientific descriptions of the order of the evolution of the Universe, spiritual and psychic, as well as physical, than volumes of descriptive Cosmogonies and revealed "*Geneses*." The *ten points* inscribed within that "Pythagorean *triangle*" are worth all the theogonies and angelologies ever emanated from the theological brain. For he who interprets them—on their very face, and in the order given—will find in these seventeen points (the seven Mathematical Points hidden) the uninterrupted series of the genealogies from the first *Heavenly* to *terrestrial* man. And, as they give the order of Beings, so they reveal the order in which were evolved the Kosmos, our earth, and the primordial elements by which the latter was generated. Begotten in the invisible *Depths*, and in the womb of the same "Mother" as its fellow-globes—he who will master the mysteries of our Earth, will have mastered those of all others."

SD Ip616 More on the symbol of the Tetractys (Geometry and metaphysical meaning).

"It [the Pythagorean Triangle or tetractys] consists of *ten points* inscribed pyramid-like (from one to the last four) within its three lines, and it symbolizes the Universe in the famous Pythagorean Decad. The upper single dot is a Monad, and represents a Unit-Point, which is *the* Unity from whence all proceeds, and all is of the same essence with it. While the ten dots within the triangle represent the phenomenal world, the three sides of the equilateral triangle which enclose the pyramid of dots are the barriers of *noumenal* Matter, or Substance, that separate it



from the world of Thought. "Pythagoras considered a *point* to correspond in proportion to unity; a *line* to 2; a *superficies* to 3; a *solid* to 4; and he defined a point as a Monad having position, and the beginning of all things; a line was thought to correspond with duality, because it was produced by the first motion from indivisible nature, and formed the junction of two points. A superficies was compared to the number three because it is the first of all causes that are found in figures; for a circle, which is the principal of all round figures, comprises a triad, in centre—space—circumference. But a triangle, which is the first of all rectilinear figures, is included in a ternary, and receives its form according to that number; and was considered by the Pythagoreans to be the creator of all sublunary things. The four points at the base of the Pythagorean triangle correspond with a solid or cube, which combines the principles of length, breadth, and thickness, for no solid can have less than four extreme boundary points." (*Pythag. Triangle*, p. 19.)"

SD Iip573-4 On the pythagorean decade and its Hindu source

"For them [THE early Gnostics] the whole of the Universe, metaphysical and material, was contained within, and could be expressed and described by the digits of Number 10, the Pythagorean *decade*.

This Decade representing the Universe and its evolution out of Silence and the *unknown* Depths of the Spiritual Soul, or *anima mundi*, presented two sides or aspects to the student. It could be, and was at first so used and applied to the Macrocosm, after which it descended to the Microcosm, or Man. There was, then, the purely intellectual and metaphysical, or the "*inner* Science," and the as purely materialistic or "surface science," both of which could be expounded by and contained in the *Decade*. It could be studied, in short, from the Universals of Plato, and the inductive method of Aristotle. The former started from a divine comprehension, when the plurality proceeded from unity, or the digits of the decade appeared, but to be finally re-absorbed, lost in the infinite Circle. The latter depended on sensuous perception alone, when the Decade could be regarded either as the unity that multiplies, or matter which differentiates, its study being limited to the plane surface; to the Cross, or the *Seven* which proceeds from the ten — or the perfect number, on Earth as in heaven.

This dual system was brought, together with the Decade, by Pythagoras from India. That it was that of the *Brachmans* and *Iranians*, as they are called by the ancient Greek philosophers, is warranted to us by the whole range of Sanskrit literature, such as the Purānas and the laws of Manu. In these "Laws" or "Ordinances of Manu," it is said that Brahmā first creates "the *ten* lords of Being," the ten Prajāpati or creative Forces; which ten produce "*seven*" other Manus, or, rather, as some MSS. have it, *Munin*, instead of Manūn = "devotees," or holy Beings, which are the Seven Angels of the Presence in the Western religion. This mysterious number Seven, born from the upper triangle, the latter itself born from the apex thereof, or the Silent Depths of the unknown universal soul (*Sigè* and *Bythos*), is the sevenfold *Saptaparna* plant, born and manifested on the surface of the soil of mystery, from the threefold root buried deep under that impenetrable soil. This idea is fully elaborated in Vol. I. § "Primordial Substance and Divine Thought," which the reader has to notice carefully, if he would grasp the metaphysical idea involved in the above symbol. In man as in nature, it is, according to the cis-Himalayan esoteric philosophy (which is that of the *original Manu* Cosmogony), the septenary division that is intended by Nature herself.

The seventh principle (*purusha*) alone is the divine SELF, strictly speaking; for, as said in Manu, "He (Brahmā) having pervaded the subtle parts of those six of unmeasured brightness," created or called them forth to "Self"-consciousness or the consciousness of that *One* SELF (V. 16, ch. i. *Manu*). Of these six, five elements (or principles, or *Tattva*, as Medhātithi, the commentator thinks) "are called the atomic destructible elements" (v. 27); they are described in the above-named section.

SD Iip582 On the sacred meaning of numbers (in particular 1, 3, 4, 7)

Pythagoras, who brought his wisdom from India, left to posterity a glimpse into this truth. His school regarded number 7 as a compound of numbers 3 and 4, which they explained in a dual manner. On the plane of the noumenal world, the triangle was, as the first conception of the manifested Deity, its image: "Father-Mother-Son"; and the Quaternary, the perfect number, was the noumenal, ideal root of all numbers

and things on the physical plane. Some students, in view of the sacredness of Tetraktis and the Tetragrammaton, mistake the mystic meaning of the Quaternary.

The latter was with the ancients *only a secondary* "perfection," so to speak, because it related only to the manifested planes. Whereas it is the *Triangle*, the Greek *delta*,  $\Delta$ , which was the "*vehicle of the unknown Deity.*" *A good proof of it lies with the name of the Deity beginning with Delta.* Zeus was written *Deuß*, by the Boeotians,\* thence the *Deus* of the Latins. This, in relation to the metaphysical conception, with regard to the meaning of the Septenary *in the phenomenal world*, but for purposes of profane or exoteric interpretation, the symbolism changed. *Three* became the ideograph of the *three material elements* — air, water, earth; and four became the principle of all that which is neither corporeal nor perceptible. But this has never been accepted by the real Pythagoreans. Viewed as a compound of 6 and 1, the *senary* and the *unity*, number seven was the invisible centre, the spirit of everything (see further the explanation of 6), as there exists no body with six lines constituting its form without a *seventh* being found as the central point in it (see crystals and snow-flakes in so-called *inanimate* nature). Moreover, number *seven*, they said, has all the perfection of the UNIT — the number of numbers. For as absolute unity is uncreated, and impartite (hence number-less) and no number can produce it, so is the seven: no digit contained within the decade can beget or produce it. And it is 4, which affords an arithmetical division between *unity* and *seven*, as it surpasses the former by the same number (three), as it is itself surpassed by the seven, since *four* is by as many numbers above *one*, as *seven* is above *four*. (From a MS. supposed to be by "St. Germain.")

SD Ip361-2 On the history of numbers (Arithmetics)

"The Arabs had their figures from Hindustan, and never claimed the discovery for themselves. † As to the Pythagoreans, we need but turn to the ancient manuscripts of Boethius's *Geometry*, composed in the sixth century, to find among the Pythagorean numerals ‡ the 1 and the *nought*, as the first and final ciphers. And Porphyry, who quotes from the Pythagorean *Moderatus*, § says that the numerals of Pythagoras were "hieroglyphical symbols, by means whereof he explained ideas concerning the nature of things," or the origin of the universe."

"Now, if, on the other hand, the most ancient Indian manuscripts show as yet no trace of decimal notation in them, and Max Müller states very clearly that until now he has found but nine letters (the initials of the Sanscrit numerals) in them; on the other hand, we have records as ancient to supply the wanted proof. We speak of the sculptures and the sacred imagery in the most ancient temples of the far East. Pythagoras derived his knowledge from India; and we find Professor Max Müller corroborating this statement, at least so far as to allow the *Neo-Pythagoreans* to have been the first teachers of "ciphering," among the Greeks and Romans; that "they at Alexandria, or in Syria, became acquainted with the Indian figures, and adapted them to the Pythagorean abacus" (our figures). This cautious admission implies that Pythagoras himself was acquainted with but *nine* figures. Thus we might reasonably answer that, although we possess no certain proof (*exoterically*) that the decimal notation was known by Pythagoras, who lived on the very close of the archaic ages, ¶ we have yet sufficient evidence to show that the full numbers, as given by Boethius, were

known to the Pythagoreans, even before Alexandria was built. ¶ This evidence we find in Aristotle, who says that "some philosophers hold that ideas and numbers are of the same nature, and amount to TEN in all." \*\*

This, we believe, will be sufficient to show that the decimal notation was known among them at least as early as four centuries B.C., for Aristotle does not seem to treat the question as an innovation of the "Neo-Pythagoreans."

But we know more than that: *we know* that the decimal system must have been known to the mankind of the earliest archaic ages, since the whole astronomical and geometrical portion of the secret sacerdotal language was built upon the number 10, or the combination of the male and female principles, and since the Pyramid of "Cheops" is built upon the measures of this decimal notation, or rather upon the digits and their combinations with the *nought*. Of this, however, sufficient was said in *Isis Unveiled*, and it is useless to repeat and return to the same subject.

### **On the allegory of the churning of the ocean in the hindu tradition, which was taught by Pythagoras under the cover of numbers, then made more intelligible by Plato**

SD Ip348

"The Hindus have an endless series of allegories to express this idea. In the primordial Chaos, before it became developed into the Seven Oceans (Sapta Samudra) — emblematical of the seven gunas (conditioned qualities) composed of trigunas (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas, see Purânas) — lie latent both Amrita (immortality) and Visha (poison, death, evil). This allegory is found in the "Churning of the

Ocean" by the gods. Amrita is beyond any guna, for it is UNCONDITIONED per se; yet when fallen into the phenomenal creation it got mixed up with EVIL, Chaos, with latent theos in it, and before Kosmos was evolved. Hence, one finds Vishnu — standing here for eternal Law — periodically calling forth Kosmos into activity — "churning out of the primitive Ocean (boundless Chaos) the Amrita of Eternity, reserved only for the gods and devas; and he has to employ in the task Nagas and Asuras — demons in exoteric Hinduism. The whole allegory is highly philosophical, and we find it repeated in every philosophical System. Plato, having fully embraced the ideas of Pythagoras — who had brought them from India — compiled and published them in a form more intelligible than the mysterious numerals of the Greek Sage. Thus the Kosmos is "the Son" with Plato, having for his father and mother the Divine Thought and Matter.\* \* Plutarch, "Isis and Osiris," I., vi.

### Comparison of the Hindu, the Greek and the Chaldean Cosmogonies

SD Ip432-433

Thus Vâch, Shekinah [Th Glossary: Shekinah being the veil of AinSoph, the Endless and the Absolute; hence a kind of Kabbalistic Mûlaprakriti], or the "music of the spheres" of Pythagoras, are one, if we take for our example instances in the three most (apparently) dissimilar religious philosophies in the world—the Hindu, the Greek and the Chaldean Hebrew. These personations and allegories may be viewed under *four* (chief) and three (lesser) aspects or *seven* in all, as in Esotericism. The *para* form is the ever subjective and latent Light and Sound, which exist eternally in the bosom of the INCOGNISABLE; when transferred into the ideation of the Logos, or its latent *light*, it is called *pasyanti*, and when it becomes that light *expressed*, it is *madhyama*.

Now the Kabala gives the definition thus: "There are three kinds of light, and that (fourth) which interpenetrates the others; (1) the clear and the penetrating, the *objective light*, (2) the *reflected* light, and (3) the *abstract* light. The ten Sephiroth, the *three* and the *Seven*, are called in the Kabala the 10 words, DBRIM (Dabarim), the numbers and the Emanations of the heavenly light, which is both Adam Kadmon and Sephira, or (Brahmâ) Prajâpati-Vâch. Light, Sound, Number, are the three factors of creation in the Kabala. Parabrahmam cannot be known except through the luminous Point (the LOGOS), which knows not *Parabrahmam* but only *Mulaprakriti*. Similarly Adam Kadmon knew only Shekinah, though he was the *vehicle* of Ain-Soph. And, as Adam Kadmon, he is in the esoteric interpretation the total of the number ten, the Sephiroth (himself a trinity, or the three attributes of the *incognisable* DEITY in One).\* "When the Heavenly man (or LOGOS) first assumed the form of the Crown † (Kether) and identified himself with Sephira, he caused seven splendid lights to emanate from it (the Crown)," which made in their totality ten; so the Brahmâ-Prajâpati, once he became separated from, yet identical with Vâch, caused the seven Rishis, the seven Manus or Prajâpatis to issue from that crown. In Exotericism one will always find 10 and 7, of either Sephiroth or Prajâpati; in *Esoteric* rendering always 3 and 7, which yield also 10. Only when divided in the manifested sphere into 3 and 7, they form , the androgyne, and , or the figure X manifested and differentiated.

This will help the student to understand why Pythagoras esteemed the Deity (the Logos) to be the *centre of unity* and "Source of Harmony." We say this Deity was the *Logos*, not the MONAD that dwelleth in Solitude and Silence, because Pythagoras taught that UNITY being indivisible is *no number*. And this is also why it was required of the candidate, who applied for admittance into his school, that he should have already studied as a preliminary step, the Sciences of Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry and *Music*, held as the four divisions of Mathematics.‡ Again, this explains why the Pythagoreans asserted that the doctrine of Numbers—the chief of all in Esotericism—had been revealed to man by the celestial deities; that the world had been called forth out of Chaos by Sound or Harmony, and constructed according to the principles of musical proportion; that the seven planets which rule the destiny of mortals have a harmonious motion "and intervals corresponding to musical diastemes, rendering various sounds, so perfectly consonant, that they produce the sweetest melody, which is inaudible to us, only by reason of the greatness of the sound, which our ears are incapable of receiving." (*Censorinus*.)

In the Pythagorean Theogony the hierarchies of the heavenly Host and Gods were numbered and expressed numerically. Pythagoras had studied Esoteric Science in India; therefore we find his pupils saying "The monad (the manifested one) is the principle of all things. From the Monad and the indeterminate duad (Chaos), numbers; from numbers, *Points*; from points, *Lines*; from lines, *Superficies*; from superficies, *Solids*; from these, solid Bodies, whose elements are four—Fire, Water, Air, Earth; of all which transmuted (correlated), and totally changed, the world consists."—(Diogenes Lærtius *in Vit. Pythag.*)

[And this may also, if it does not unriddle the mystery altogether, at any rate lift a corner of the veil off those wondrous allegories that have been thrown upon Vâch, the most mysterious of all the Brahmanical goddesses, she who is termed "the *melodious* cow who milked forth sustenance and water" (the Earth

with all her mystic powers); and again she "who yields us nourishment and sustenance" (physical Earth). *Isis* is also mystic Nature and also Earth; and her cow's horns identify her with *Vâch*. The latter, after having been recognised in her highest form as *para*, becomes at the lower or material end of creation—*Vaikhari*. Hence she is mystic, though physical, Nature, with all her magic ways and properties.]

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