

The fear of number thirteen



Abstract and train of thoughts

Number 13 is but a veil over the Self-existent Unmanifested Deity.

Superstition is the sewer of dogmatic creeds and blind faith.

Number thirteen is a veil for Svayambhuva, the Fourteenth Manu. 3

As Manu Svayambhuva, the Self-Existent, is the synthesis of the Prajapatis, so Adam-Kadmon or “Heavenly Man” is the synthesis of the Sephiroth. 3

It is always a group of seven, or thirteen, and always six surrounding the seventh. 4

If the grindstone of a mill be represented by number twelve, then number thirteen is that of the grain which is to be ground. 4

The real “thirteen” is Absolute Unity that will be restored when the lower septenate is finally destroyed. 5

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Number 13 is but a veil over the Self-existent Unmanifested Deity.

Superstition is the sewer of dogmatic creeds and blind faith.¹

We personally know dozens, and have heard of hundreds, of educated, highly intellectual persons who would as soon think of committing suicide as of starting on any business on a Friday, of dining at a table where thirteen sit down, or of beginning a long journey on a Monday. Napoleon the Great became pale when he saw three candles lit on a table.²

Number thirteen is a veil for Svayambhuva, the Fourteenth Manu.

As Manu Svayambhuva, the Self-Existent, is the synthesis of the Prajapatis,³ so Adam-Kadmon or “Heavenly Man” is the synthesis of the Sephiroth.⁴

While the Eastern Occultists have seven modes of interpretation, the Jews have only four — namely, the real-mystical; the allegorical; the moral; and the literal or *Pashut*. The latter is the key of the exoteric Churches and not worth discussion. Read in the first, or mystical key, here are several sentences which show the identity of the foundations of construction in every Scripture. It is given in Mr. T. Myer’s excellent book on the Kabbalistic works he seems to have well studied.⁵

There now follows a commentary upon Isaac Myer’s *Qabbalah*, pp. 232-33, quoting from *Siphra di-Tseniutha* I, § 16 ff.

. . . the spirito-psycho-physical spheres of the Septenary chain, the Root Races, etc., etc. . . . They all “depend upon the Seven forms of the Cranium” up to the highest. The “second Earth” “does not come into calculation” because it is *no Earth*, but the Chaos or Abyss of Space in which rested the paradogmatic, or model universe in ideation of the OVER-SOUL brooding over it. The term “Curse” is here very misleading, for it means simply *doom* or *destiny*, or *that fatality which sent it forth* into the objective state. This is shown by that “Earth” under the “Curse” being described as “without form and void,” in whose abysmal depths the “Breath” of the Elohim (collective Logoi)

¹ [See homonymous article in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (EGYPTIAN MAGIC) VII p. 115; [consult “Egyptian Magic, good and bad,” in our Black versus White Magic Series, and “Egypt was the image of heaven on earth,” in our Atlantean Realities Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ Note that Nārada is the last of ten Prajāpatis or eminent saints, named by Manu.

⁴ *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 704; [*Commentary* on Stanza VII.1b.]

⁵ *ibid.*, I p. 374; [See book review by H.P. Blavatsky under the title “Blavatsky on the Qabbalah by Isaac Myer,” in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]

produced or photographed the first divine IDEATION *of the things to be*. This process is repeated after every *Pralaya* before the beginnings of a new Manvantara, or period of sentient individual being. “Thirteen depend on thirteen forms,” refers to the thirteen periods personified by the thirteen Manus,¹ with Svāyambhuva the fourteenth (13, instead of 14, being an additional *veil*); those fourteen Manus who reign within the term of a Mahāyuga, a “Day” of Brahmā. These (thirteen-fourteen) of the objective Universe depend on the thirteen (fourteen) *paradigmatic, ideal* forms.²

It is always a group of seven, or thirteen, and always six surrounding the seventh.

Verily, then, as Rabbi Abbā said:

We are six lights which shine forth from a seventh (*light*); thou [Tetragrammaton] art the seventh light (the origin) of us all;

For assuredly there is no stability in those six, save (what they derive) from the seventh. For ALL THINGS DEPEND FROM THE SEVENTH.³

The (ancient and modern) Western American Zuñi Indians seem to have entertained similar views. Their present-day customs, their traditions and records, all point to the fact that, from time immemorial, their institutions — political, social and religious — were (and still are) shaped according to the septenary principle. Thus all their ancient towns and villages were built in clusters of six, around a seventh. It is always a group of seven, or of thirteen, and always the six surround the seventh. Again, their sacerdotal hierarchy is composed of six “Priests of the House” seemingly synthesized in the seventh, who is a woman, the “PRIESTESS MOTHER.” Compare this with the “seven great officiating priests” spoken of in *Anugītā*, the name given to the “seven senses,” exoterically, and to the seven human principles, *esoterically*. Whence this identity of symbolism? Shall we still doubt the fact of Arjuna going over to Pātāla (the Antipodes, America) and there marrying Ulūpi, the daughter of the Nāga (or rather *Nargal*) King?⁴

If the grindstone of a mill be represented by number twelve, then number thirteen is that of the grain which is to be ground.

The vulgar fear of superstitious feasters, when they find themselves thirteen at table, and their conviction that some misfortune threatens the youngest and weakest among them, is, like most superstitions, a remnant of magical science. The duodenary being a complete and cyclic number in the universal analogies of nature, invariably attracts and absorbs the thirteenth, which is regarded as a sinister and superfluous number. If the grindstone of a mill be represented by the number twelve, then thirteen is that of the grain which is to be ground.⁵

¹ [Manu is a generic term for the Pitris, the Progenitors of mankind at large, *i.e.*, Third Logos, collectively.]

² *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 375

³ *The Greater Holy Assembly*, verses 1160, 1161. Cf. MacGregor Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, p. 255.

⁴ *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 628

⁵ *Transcendental Magic*, (THE TRIPLE CHAIN) p. 263

The real “thirteen” is Absolute Unity that will be restored when the lower septenate is finally destroyed.

There are two “Tetragrammatons” in the Kabbala, or, rather — he is *dual*, and for the matter of that, even *triple*, *quaternary* and a *septenary*. He becomes *nine* and *thirteen* only toward the end when “thirteen” or UNITY destroys the septenate symbolised by the “Seven Inferior,” which seven, are “the *seven* kings of Edom” (when the races are concerned), and the seven “lower Sefhīrōth” when the human principles are referred to. The first Tetragrammaton is the ever concealed one, the FATHER — himself an emanation of the eternal light, thence not Ain-Soph.¹ He is *not* the four-lettered *Te-tractys*, but the *Square* only, so to say, on a plane surface.²

Therefore, though I do not feel the slightest objection to any mystic willing to unite himself with the Logos called “Tetragrammaton” or Microprosopus, I personally prefer a union with *Macroprosopus*, on general principles; at any rate in this cycle of incarnation. After which, with the help of the “PERFECT NUMBER,”³ I hope to see the supernal light reducing to ashes not only my “seven inferiors” (the Microprosopus), but even the semblance of the thirteen in the unity, that “wage war with seven,”⁴ and along with them the *Macroprosopical* square. The letter *Yōd* in the path of the *ninth* Sefhīrah having a decidedly phallic signification, I decline union with the lower sevenfold and seven-lettered Jehovah, and prefer pinning my faith to “Ain-Soph” — pure and simple; otherwise, why leave the bosom of Orthodox church at all?⁵



¹ [i.e., the “Father who is in Secret” of Matthew, not the “Father in Heaven” of the Churches. Look up “Dawn of Chaos-Theos-Kosmos,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series, and ponder. — ED. PHIL.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TETRAGRAMMATON) VIII p. 144; [consult “Tetragrammaton is the Key to Occult Theogony” and “Eastern and Kabbalistic Cosmogonies are Identical,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Cf. Student notes on perfect numbers seven, ten, and twelve.]

⁴ [Siphra Dtzenioutha:] *Book of Concealed Mysteries*, Ch. V, ¶ 27; [i.e., *Kabbala Denudata: The Kabbalah Unveiled. Containing the following Books of the Zohar: The Book of Concealed Mystery, The Greater Holy Assembly, The Lesser Holy Assembly*. Translated by S.L. MacGregor Mathers. Paragraph 27 reads as follows:

Thirteen kings {that is, the twelve metatheses of the Tetragrammaton with its radix, which are the measures of mercies} wage war with seven {with the Edomite kings; because, while the lights of the former flowed down, these could not maintain themselves, and, besides, they are the classes of the most rigorous judgments which are opposed to the mercies. For seven kings are seen in the land {Edom}, and now after that their vessels are broken, they are called shells, who have fallen down among the inferiors. {These} nine vanquished in war {the measures of Microprosopus, concerning which see the “Idra Rabba”; through which David conquered his enemies}, which ascend in the paths of those which pass downward, on account of His ruling power {that is, which make thirteen, as they are in Macroprosopus and his beard, which is called his influence, and freely floweth down}, and there is none who can withhold their hand. {For whilst the supernal measures permit the increase in the inferiors, all judgments are subdivided.}

⁵ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TETRAGRAMMATON) VIII p. 149

On the perfect numbers — 6, 10, 12.

Hints for students.

From *The Secret Doctrine*, Stanza IV, 5 (ii)

THE VOICE OF THE WORD, SVABHĀVA, THE NUMBERS, FOR HE IS ONE AND NINE.

- 1 Which makes ten, or the perfect number applied to the “Creator,” the name given to the totality of the Creators blended by the Monotheists into One, as the “Elohim,” Adam Kadmon or Sephora — the Crown — are the androgyne synthesis of the 10 Sephīrōth, who stand for the symbol of the manifested Universe in the popularised Kabala. The esoteric Kabbalists, however, following the Eastern Occultists, divide the upper Sephīrōthal triangle from the rest (or Sephora, Hokhmāh and Bināh), which leaves seven Sephīrōth. As for Svabhāva, the Orientalists explain the term as meaning the Universal plastic matter diffused through Space, with, perhaps, half an eye to the Ether of Science. But the Occultists identify it with “FATHER-MOTHER” on the mystic plane.¹
- 2 The pillar and Circle (IO), now constituting the first decimal number, and which with Pythagoras was the perfect number contained in the *Tetractys*,² became later a *pre-eminently phallic Number* — amongst the Jews, foremost of all, with whom it is the male and female Jehovah.³
- 3 In Hebrew 10 is the perfect number, or Jehovah.⁴
- 4 Pythagoras, and after him Philo Judæus, held the number 12 as very sacred. “The dodecahedron is a PERFECT number.” It is the one among the signs of the Zodiac, Philo adds, that the suns visits in twelve months, and it is to honour that sign that Moses divided his nation into twelve tribes, established the twelve cakes⁵ of the *shewbread*, and placed twelve precious stones around the *ephōd* of the pontiffs.^{6, 7}
- 5 But number *seven*, or the *heptagon*, the Pythagoreans considered to be a *religious and perfect* number. It was called “*Telesphoros*,” because *by it all in the Universe and mankind is led to its end, i.e., its culmination*.⁸

See also article on “Letter X” in the *Theosophical Glossary*.

¹ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 98 fn.

² Because composed of ten dots arranged triangularly in four rows [▲]. It is the *Tetragrammaton* of the Western Kabbalists.

³ *ibid.*, I p. 463

⁴ *ibid.*, II p. 416 fn.

⁵ *Leviticus* xxiv, 5

⁶ *De Fuga et Inventione*, xxxiii

⁷ *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 649

⁸ *ibid.*, II p. 602; [quoting Philo Judæus, *De opificio mundi*, xxxv]

Suggested reading for students.



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- THE RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL IS NEITHER RELIGIOUS NOR PHILOSOPHICAL
- THE RUSSIAN MOTE AND THE BRITISH BEAM
- THE SEWER OF DOGMATIC CREEDS AND BLIND FAITH
- THE SPARKLE OF “LIGHT ON THE PATH” HAS BEEN DIMMED BY A DARK STAIN
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