



TRADITIONAL MARTINIST ORDER

ORATORY SECTION

FIRST DEGREE



LESSON EIGHTEEN

"It is not the head which is necessary to advance in Truth; it is the heart."



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CONCURRENCE

The science of numbers, the theme of this monograph has ignited the interest of mystics in general and Martinists in particular. Below is a quote extracted from the writings of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, physician and philosopher of the 16th century. He is considered to be one of the founding fathers of *Occult Philosophy*.

Severinus Boethius said that all things which were first made by the nature of things in its first Age, seem to be formed by the proportion of numbers, for this was the principal pattern in the mind of the Creator. Hence is borrowed the number of the Elements, hence the courses of times, hence the motion of the Stars, and the revolution of the heaven, and the state of all things subsist by the uniting together of numbers. Numbers therefore are endowed with great and sublime virtues. For it is no wonder, seeing there are so many, and so great occult virtues in natural things, although of manifest operations, that there should be in numbers much greater, and more occult, and also more wonderful, and efficacious, for as much as they are more formal, more perfect, and naturally in the celestials, not mixt with separated substances; and lastly, having the greatest, and most simple commotion with the Idea's in the mind of God, from which they receive their proper, and most efficacious virtues: wherefore also they are of more force, and conduce most to the obtaining of spiritual, and divine gifts, as in natural things, elementary qualities are powerful in the transmuting of any elementary thing. Again, all things that are, and are made, subsist by, and receive their virtue from numbers. For time consists of number, and all motion, and action, and all things that are subject to time, and motion, consists of number.

Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535)



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THE SCIENCE OF NUMBERS

General Points

Dear Supplicant

I greet you before the Luminaries of the Traditional Martinist Order!

An old adage says: *“In the beginning, God geometrized.”* This adage, which presents God as the Grand Architect of the Universe, indicates that mathematical laws govern the entire Creation and that it is perfectly ordered. Joseph de Maistre, a Martinist of the eighteenth century, emphasized this point of view perfectly in the eighth dialogue of *The Evenings of Saint-Petersburg*, where he affirms: *“Remove the numbers, and you remove the arts, sciences, and, consequently, intelligence. Bring them back and with them will reappear their two celestial daughters, harmony and beauty; screams become chants, noise receives rhythm, a jump becomes a dance, force is called ‘dynamic,’ and traces are figures.”*

For millennia, we have been using mathematics to measure our environment and to make calculations. The thinkers of antiquity had also noticed that numbers permitted us to understand the laws governing Humanity, Nature, and the Universe. They understood that besides arithmetic, numbers could be used to go from multiplicity back to the first Unity, meaning God. That is why they considered numbers precious instruments to understand the connections uniting the invisible to the visible. Because of their mystical characteristics, numbers became privileged symbols to transmit esoteric and initiatory concepts.

Although the origin of the science of numbers is lost in time, the science is found in numerous civilizations. The Tradition also calls this science *Arithmosophy*, which literally means *the wisdom of numbers*. As we have previously mentioned, numbers constitute a language, a means by which the relationship between God, Humanity, and Nature can be defined and can be demonstrated. That is why the great mystics and the great philosophers of the past have always considered the science of numbers as fundamental. In fact, it was always part of their teachings.

Among the philosophers of antiquity, Pythagoras brought the use and the conceptualization of numbers the farthest. He was born in Samos, Greece, around 580 BCE. He traveled a great deal in order to perfect his knowledge. In Babylon, he met the disciples of Zoroaster. Plutarch reported that he had come to Gaul and noted that the Greeks owed much to the Druids, the extent of whose knowledge Pythagoras admired. He traveled through Phoenicia



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and Egypt, where he was initiated into the Mystery Schools of the time. After a stay of twenty-five years in Egypt, he founded a famous school in Crotona, Italy, where numerous disciples gathered.

Although Pythagoras did not leave any writings, his teachings have come to us through the writings of his disciples. Thus, we know that he used numbers to illustrate the laws governing Humanity and Nature. In a general manner, he thought that all things could be returned to a number and that one number is at the origin of all things. According to him, the understanding of numbers permitted us to embrace all the secrets of Creation. When he was asked: *"What is the wisest thing?"* he answered: *"Numbers."* And when he was asked: *"What is the most beautiful thing?"* he answered: *"Harmony."* He also thought that Arithmosophy was the fastest and best way to master abstract concepts. For him, the aptitude to think in numbers permitted one to raise one's thoughts above terrestrial things and gave access to a clear conception of the Divine World.

As most people know, Pythagoras had a particular interest in the Decad, which is composed of the first ten natural numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. He said that: *"The Decad contains all things, since numbers beyond it repeat the first ten."* ($11 = 10 + 1$; $12 = 10 + 2$; $13 = 10 + 3$, etc.) And yet Pythagoras gave a much greater importance to the Tetract, which is the first four numbers, of which the sum brings us back to the Decad, as $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$. He and his disciples even venerated it as the *Divine Tetract* or *Sacred Tetractys*. In the *Golden Verses*, texts attributed to Lysis, disciple of Pythagoras, we can read on this subject: *"It is the source of nature whose course is eternal and is no other than God, who created everything.... God is the number of numbers, because if all things exist by eternal decrees, it is obvious that in each species of beings, numbers depend on the cause that produced them. This is where the first number is found, and from there it came to us. However, if the finite interval of numbers is ten, whoever wants to count further must come back to one after ten.... The power of ten is four, because before one can arrive at the perfect and complete ten, one discovers all the virtue and all the perfection of ten in four."*

The importance given to the Tetractys by Pythagoras is found in the *Hieros Logos*, the sacred discourse of the Pythagoreans. *"Bless us, Divine Number, you who have engendered the gods and humanity! O Holy Tetractys, you contain the root and the source of the eternal flow of Creation. Divine number, you begin from the pure and profound unity, and then you reach the Sacred Four. Then, you engender the mother of all, who joins all, the firstborn, who never deviates, the sacred Ten, who holds the key of all things."*



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Pythagoras was one of the first to formulate the science of numbers in a systematic manner. After the disappearance of his school founded in Crotona around 530 BCE, this science was transmitted secretly. In the fourth century BCE, Plato saw in this science the highest degree of Knowledge. Moreover, one finds an entire theory of the ideas-numbers in several of his writings such as the *Timaeus*, the *Republic*, the *Parmenides*, the *Theaetetus*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws*. In the first century CE, Nicomachus of Gerasa, also called “The Pythagorean” developed an arithmetical theology in which he demonstrated the divine nature of the first ten numbers. In the second and third centuries, the Neo-Platonists again paid homage to this theory. Like the Pythagoreans, the Neo-Platonists conceived a mystical geometry demonstrating the relationship that exists among numbers. Among the Neo-Platonists of the third century, Iamblichus, and a little later Proclus, celebrated the marvelous virtues of numbers. At the same time, Saint Augustine was very interested in numbers as well.

After the fall of the Roman Empire and the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, the science of numbers was transmitted principally by Romanesque architecture. In the Middle Ages, it was probably the Jewish mystics and the Christian Kabbalists who introduced it to the West. The science of numbers became popular again in the sixteenth century with the humanists of the Renaissance, such as Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. At the same time, Reuchlin, also called *Pythagoras Redivivus*, attempted to bring the tradition back to Germany and in his famous *De Verba Mirifica*, explained a somewhat altered Pythagorean science of numbers. Henry Cornelius-Agrrippa proposed his understanding of Arithmosophy in the second book of his *Occult Philosophy*, entitled, *Celestial Magic*. As for Giordano Bruno, who is considered the greatest Pythagorean of the Renaissance, he also saw in numbers the means for discovering the secrets of nature and for elevating oneself in the contemplation of God.

At the end the sixteenth century, the science of numbers ceased to be openly studied and became an *Occult Science*. It is only in the eighteenth century, in the time of Martinès de Pasqually, that the science of numbers benefited from a renewal of interest. Pasqually taught that the third son of Adam was the first to receive this secret teaching. In the *Treatise on Reintegration*, he made this clarification on the subject: “By means of his spiritual messenger named Hély, the Creator instructed a blessed man, Seth, on the secret divine forces that contained and directed all of nature, whether material or spiritual. Seth immediately received from the Creator, from the Spirit, all knowledge of the immutable laws of the Eternal and learned from this that all laws of temporal creation and all divine actions were founded on different numbers. He learned, again from Hély, that all numbers are co-eternal with the Creator and that



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by these different numbers, the Creator formed all figures, all his conventions of creation, and all his conventions with his creatures.” Pasqually adds: “this virtue of numbers made the sages of all times say that no one can be wise ...without the knowledge of numbers.”

Martinès de Pasqually affirmed that the Order that he lead had received the sacred inheritance of the science of numbers. The theories that he expressed on this subject have achieved a significant importance. In a general manner, one can say that Arithmosophy is an essential characteristic of Illuminism, or in other words, of the esoterism of the 18th century. Karl von Eckartshausen, a Rosicrucian of that time, took a great interest in this science, and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin himself extensively employed it to conceal the secret meaning of his writings from the profane. Beginning with the teachings of Martinès de Pasqually and through personal meditations, Saint-Martin developed a rich arithmosophic system.

Today, many authors write about the science of numbers and propose personal theories on its esoteric applications. Most often, these authors consider the science of numbers solely as a means of divination, abandoning its mystical and initiatory value. Some have even altered it by making it more or less the foundation of a fanciful numerology. As Martinists, we may naturally return to the source and study the purest aspect of this science. This is what we will do in the next monograph, in the light of the writings of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin.

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom!



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PRACTICAL APPLICATION

THE DECAD	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Base of all Numbers
THE TETRAD OR TETRACTYS	$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$	Manifested Divinity
THE GOLDEN NUMBER	$(1 + \sqrt{5}) / 2 = 1.618$	Number of Harmony
THE MONAD	1	Un-Manifested Divinity

As shown in this manuscript, Pythagoras was one of the first to formulate the science of numbers in a systematic way. He gave particular importance to the Decad, the Tetrad, the Golden Number, and the Monad.

SUMMARY

After carefully studying this monograph, read the following summary. It contains the major points that you may want to reflect and meditate on during the coming days. If you have trouble understanding one of the points, return to the explanations given in the monograph. Immerse yourself in learning the points covered in this summary before proceeding with the study of the next monograph.

- In conformity with the adage “*In the beginning, God geometrized,*” all of Creation is governed by mathematical laws and is perfectly ordered.
- Numbers allow for the understanding of the laws governing Humanity, Nature, and the Universe. Besides arithmetic, numbers may be used to go from multiplicity back to the first Unity, that is, back to God.
- Although the origin of the science of numbers is lost in time, the science is found in numerous civilizations. Within the Tradition, the science of numbers is also known as Arithmosophy.
- Pythagoras thought that all things could be returned to a number and that there was one number at the origin of all things.
- Pythagoras had a particular interest in the Decad, which is composed of the first ten natural numbers. And yet he gave a much greater importance to the Tetrad, which is the first four numbers.
- The Tetrad, also called the *Sacred Tetractys* by Pythagoras, brings us back to the Decad, i.e., $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$.
- The Golden Number is equal to about 1.618. When a geometric figure, a sculpture, a painting, or a piece of architecture is based on this number, the result is especially harmonious and aesthetic.
- Pythagoras was one of the first to formulate the science of numbers in a systematic manner. After the disappearance of the school he founded in Crotona, this science was perpetuated and we can find it today in Martinism.
- To understand the mystical applications of the science of numbers, we must return to the source and study this science in its purest aspect.

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