

The Divine Numbers 1-6

by Anthony J. Damiani

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SUBJECT: One

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CONTENTS:

Number One:

- 1) represents Absolute Mind/meta-ontological infinity**
- 2) cannot be thought of quantitatively or as first in series**
- 3) comparable to Eastern concept of Zero**
- 4) principle of oneness - prerequisite for anything to exist**
- 5) correlates with first house and Mars in Aries**

Number Two:

- 1) represents Power of the One**
- 2) symmetrical relation of One and Triad**
- 3) paradigm for complementarity of the powers of substance and function**
- 4) multiple interpretations**
- 5) correlates with Venus in Taurus**

Number Three:

- 1) reflects One as Triad**
- 2) source of all, Universal Being**
- 3) interaction of One and Dyad; internal completion**
- 4) principle of bound and determination, suggests Universal Mind**
- 5) correlates with Mercury in Gemini**

Number Four:

- 1) prefigured in the Absolute**
- 2) superior version of quaternity**
- 3) represents total synthesis of states of consciousness (Turiya)**
- 4) passive aspect of Double Act**

Number Five

- 1) number of Divine Incarnation at level of Being**
- 2) One as present in any “aspect” of itself; each aspect a unique formless form**
- 3) source of perfection of any ‘one’**

Number Six

1) non-finality/infinity

2) eternal essence of Intellectual

3) addition of One, Infinity, Bound as unlimited function

4) transcendent principle of Number

BOOKS / MAGAZINES QUOTED FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)
- *The Shrine of Wisdom*, "Symbols: Number," iv, no. 16

PLOTINUS QUOTES REFERENCED: V.4.1, V.5.4, V.5.5

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NOTES:

- **RETYPE AD PAPER presented in class (V09MP).**
- This is **1983 03/18c, The Divine Numbers 1-6 Paper, and the third entry associated with this date. 1983 03/18a = Plotinus; One Class. 1983 03/18b= Invocatory Prelude Paper. 1983 03/18d = The One: Exposition Paper.**
- This paper is read and discussed in WG Class 1983 0318a Plotinus; One, where Anthony refers to it as a Table of Contents or an Outline that he uses to guide him in his writing of the chapter on the One.

THE DIVINE NUMBERS 1-6

[Paper as read by AS in WG Class 1983 0318a Begins]

The Absolute Mind, or meta-ontological infinity, the One, is complete perfection itself. When Plotinus presents us with a self-sufficient Unity, the transcendent Simplex, the One-Only, we have the paradigm for the meaning of the Number 1. One cannot be thought of in a quantitative way as the first in a series, or in relation to others, for it is from the One that all the others will arise. “The One does not bear to be numbered in with anything else, with a one or a two or any such quantity; it refuses to take number because it is measure and not the measured; it is no peer of other entities to be found among them...” (V.5.4.) The Oneness is not quantitative or a point, as we will remark, for it is infinite, and “...The First remains intact even when other entities spring from it. In the case of numbers the unit remains intact while something else (the Dyad) produces, and thus number arises in dependence on the unit: much more then does the unit, The One, remain intact in the principle which is before all beings...” (V.5.5.)

In illustrating the identity of the Absolute mathematically, the choice has been with the symbol 1, and not the 0, for that second symbol, Zero, was not available when the Greeks were discussing these Ideas. The Absolute, the One, is conceived as a fullness, and each number will have from the One a unique intact aseity, that is, will be some one thing. The meaning of 1 as used by the Neo-Platonists is really equivalent to that which the Easterners assign to Zero. In the case of the one we have an affirmative theology whereas the other provides us with a negative theology. But both would insist that all things arise from the One or in the other case from the Zero, and both would insist that if you take fullness from the full, the full would remain. Plotinus’ remarks are very much to this point when he says that the many arises from the One but the One remains intact. And similarly, the Easterners would say that everything arises from the Void (0) and is Void. Now Plotinus would consider this a confusion of the levels of Reality--that is, that which arises from the Void is not the void. Within universal relativity, only a fool--or a Sage--could make that remark.

So we have the 1, which is, strictly speaking, the principle of oneness, in that it is a necessary prerequisite that for anything to be at all, it must first be a one. The principle of the number 1 will bear the same connotations or, at least, reflect the same remarks that will be made about the One-Only. The individuality and uniqueness of the self-sufficient transcendent, the infinite unity and simplex, these are all synonyms for the meaning of 1. This meaning correlates with the view of the One as the first house, and in the Triad sequence, is correlated with the Mars in Aries as the principle of oneness.

Two. In its widest application the two represents all the remarks that we will make about the Double Act of the One (and have made in the past). Characterized by infinite Power, which exhibits two aspects--active and passive perfection, or substance and function--the One reveals something of itself through its paradoxical nature. But, it itself remains inscrutable. Also, the interrelationship of this power with the One, a completing completed power, is included in its total perfection. So 2 represents the infinite indeterminate Power, inseparable from the One, and also exhibiting the One’s inner nature, through the dual modes of repose and act.

The power of the One, the 2 is also the symmetrical relation of the One as remaining intact, and the One exhibited in its completeness as the source of all, or in other words the Triad. Each of the indivisible unities, and ultimately all being, will participate in this power, or in some imitation of it. The Dyad is thus the paradigm for the complementarity of the powers of substance and function, or yin and yang, which are revealed in the levels of reality from the Triad down to the sensible world. “If the First is

perfect, utterly perfect above all, and is the beginning of all power, then it must be the most powerful of all that is, and all other powers must act in some partial imitation of it.” (V.4.1)

To complete this short discussion of the indeterminate Dyad, we could list many ways of seeing the power of the Dyad, all of which represent the double act which is so simply put by mathematicians as $1 + 1 = 2$, or $2 = 1 + 1$. The 2 is the One plus its infinite power. Or the 2 is the repose and act remaining in the One as identical with it. Or the 2 is the repose and act or infinity and bound exhibited as Houses 2 and 3. Or the 2 is the indeterminacy and symmetry of the One as transcendent and [as] immanent. Another one: the 2 as the complementarity of the sevenfold function and fourfold substance. In terms of the unities the 2 would be correlated with the second Unity, the Venus in Taurus.

The number 3 reflects the description of the One as the Triad. Here we see the One, not as the Intact simplex, but as the source of all, the total of indeterminate aspects or Universal Being which prefigures in itself in an unmanifest and undifferentiated way all of the principles. Here we have the internal completion in the One, symbolized as the interaction of the One and the Dyad. Neither the One nor the Dyad is strictly a Number principle, for, as we have said, the One is measureless and without relation and the 2 is indefinite. The 3, though, is the principle of bound and determination and suggests the super-essential principle of Universal Mind, and this correlates with the Mercury in Gemini, in our sequential ordering. The 3 is also the stable and unchanging product of the One and the Dyad, and it is inclusive of the two priors and non-different from them.

The perfection in the One can be conceived of as having indescribable indivisible aspects which are only illusorily divided. Each of these indivisible aspects or quotients may be conceived of as the One in its entirety in a certain mode, and each and every mode will be a transcendent paradigm for the unities that exist in Being, in Soul, and so on. These considerations result then in the notion or concept of the Triad.

The number 4 is prefigured in the Absolute, and it suggests that in its own mysterious manner the One includes the superior version of the quaternity in its utter perfection, quaternity here referring to the three Hypostases and their immanence in the Soul or System of Nature. Of course all of this fourfold would then be duplicated within the sensible world.

Also the 4 represents the total synthesis of what we understand as the separative states of consciousness, which here is referred to as the 4th State or Turiya. Incidentally, it serves as a model for any ‘one’ which will extend through all the levels of Reality, so that we would be allowed to speak of a ‘one’ as having a Unity, Being, Soul, and Body. Within the Triad the 4 can be seen as the passive aspect of the Double Act, that is, the Substantial aspect which is the ground or passive perfection of the Double Act.

Five. “The Pentad is the Number of Divine Incarnation, of the infinite monad [or one] manifesting in the Finitude of the Tetrad.” [*Shrine of Wisdom*, “Symbols: Number,” iv, no. 16, p. 122] This is according to the Editors of the Shrine of Wisdom. We endorse and fully accept this at the level of Being, for if our understanding of it is correct, then they are referring to the presence of the One in the Intellectual-Principle or Being, and even further, its presence in any idea within Being. In other words, the One is immutably present in each Idea. However, our interest is in pointing out that this principle is already prefigured in the One itself when we say “indivisible aspects” of the One. At this level we would have to try and say that the One is present in any “aspect” of itself, and it is its presence in all its aspects of itself that gives rise to the notion of the Divine Pentad. Thus we can refer to each aspect of the One as a pure indistinguishable one. Therefore each aspect of the One, or each Unity, is a unique formless form.

We are in effect tracing the principle of the Divine Pentad to its source. The perfection of any 'one' is ultimately due to this transcendent principle.

Six. The Divine Hexad refers to the totality of all the permutations and combinations of possibilities by the power inherent in them, that is it refers to the fact that there is no finality, or infinitude. This infinitude or non-finality of the combinations of unities is symbolized by the number 6. This principle is also then the very essence or eternal schemata of the Intellectual, as the paradigm for the fact that Number within Pure Being is the very substance and force of activity that is found within Being.

Within the first quadrant itself there is already exhibited the unmultiplied and evenly distributed power of the One. This may be expressed by the view that the addition of the One, Infinity, and Bound speaks to us of the One's unlimited function.

When we speak of the intact perfection of the One we are referring to the completed and lawful order of the One's power evenly distributed throughout the totality of actualized possibilities that it contains, and which we must consider as non-final or endless. This could be conceived as the transcendent Principle of Number, the number 6 within the One, which is of course reflected in the eternal ordering of the Supernals in Being.

[Paper as read by AS in WG Class 1983 0318a Ends]