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# THE NUMBER SEVEN

Its Occult Significance in  
Human Life

A. E. ABBOT

The Number Seven, by A. E. Abbot

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CONTENTS

# THE NUMBER SEVEN

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A. E. ABBOT

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## CONTENTS

1. SEVEN - NUMBER OF CYCLIC COMPLETION  
The Essence of the Seven - The Days of the Week -  
The Seven in Religion and Folk-lore - The Seven  
in the Ancient Greek Civilisation - The Rose-  
Cross Symbol - The Seven Archangels.
2. THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES IN MAN  
The Physical Body and the Life Body - The Soul-  
body - The "I" or Ego - Spirit-self - Life  
Spirit and Spirit-man - Sevenfold Man -
3. THE SEVEN AND HUMAN BIRTH  
The Researches of Dr. Hermann Swoboda and  
Dr. Fliess
4. THE SEVEN-YEAR HUMAN LIFE PERIODS  
Examples of the Seven-Year Rhythm - The Periods  
of Childhood - Fourteen to Twenty-one - The  
Seven-year Periods from Twenty-one to Forty-two -  
Forty-two, Forty nine, Fifty-six, Sixty-three -  
The Incarnation Process - The Cosmic Planetary  
Stages.
5. SEVEN IN HEALING  
Examples of the Rhythm of Seven - The Seven  
in Medicine.
6. SEVEN IN THE BIBLE  
Seven in the Old Testament - Seven in the Life  
of Christ Jesus - Seven in the Apocalypse.
7. THE SEVEN COLOURS AND THE PLANETS  
Relationships between the Seven Planets and the  
Seven Colours of the Rainbow in the light of  
Spiritual Science.
8. THE SEVEN METALS  
Their Relationship to the Planets and their  
Use in Healing.



A. E. ABBOT, 1962

## 9. THE SEVEN CIVILISATION EPOCHS

Man's Changing Consciousness - The Ancient Indian Epoch - The Ancient Persian Epoch - The Egypto-Chaldean Epoch - The Greco-Roman Epoch - The Fifth (Present) Epoch - The Sixth Civilisation Epoch - The Seventh Civilisation Epoch.

## SEVEN-NUMBER OF CYCLIC COMPLETION

Numbers contain the secrets of things, -Pythagoras

Whereas the number 4 has to do with the more physical phenomena and the 12 with Space, the 7 is chiefly connected with the spiritual and mainly related to Time, in the changing positions of the Sun and the 7 planets.

It refers to cycle or age and expresses the rhythm of evolution. The week and its days is its simplest manifestation.

### THE ESSENCE OF THE SEVEN

The essence of the 7 is seen in evolution, time, and in transformations. It is a number of cyclic completion.

Time does not stem from the physical universe nor from earthly existence but has been introduced into the physical world; it is in a certain sense, a messenger from the spiritual world. Seven, being related to the heavenly, is the number of creative activity.

One is related to primordial impulse, 2 to the first manifestation of this impulse and 4 to the actual creation. The sum total of these 3 numbers is 7, which points to the spiritual origin of things. With its union with the number 3 (symbol of the divine triad with all peoples) and (related to the cosmic forces and elements) the 7 symbolises the union of the Godhead with the universe.

That there is something special about the 7 survives in the belief that the 7th son of a 7th son possesses healing powers. In law an infant reaches adulthood at 21 (3 times 7).

In man the 7 combines the triad (3) and the tetrad (4), or the spiritual and the earthly; The number 3 (the eternal) is wedded to the 4 (the transitory). The Creator and the created principle

meet. The spiritual works on the 4-fold nature to raise it to greater heights; the divine rules the 4-fold earthly man.

As C.J.Harrison rightly says in his book "Transcendental Universe"; Seven is the factor element in occult science and in every ancient religion. Wherever the heavens interweave with human life the 7 occurs in a subtle way.

The pure phenomenon of the rainbow with its 7 colours, the most supersensible sight we can behold on earth with the physical senses, is another example of the spiritual nature of the 7. So is the musical scale - tonic, second, third and so on, up to the octave which is a repetition of the tonic.

In Celtic mythology 7 has to do with the principle of motion and Time, as revealed through the planetary movements, and with the 7 life processes and 7 principles or organs of the body.

In fairy tales the princess often remains under a spell for 7 years. There are also references to 7 hills, 7 dwarfs, 7 years, or 7 times 7 years pointing to the heavenly aspect of the 7. The 7 planets, those seen by the ancients with the naked eye, are found in myths, legends and history and in the numerous references to 7 in the Bible.

#### THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

The symbol of the 7 is the 7-pointed star or heptagram, handed down from ancient Babylonian astronomy, to which the division and nomenclature of our days of the week is ultimately due. Since ancient times the greater part of mankind has been accustomed to successive weeks each comprising 7 days, 6 "ordinary" days being followed by a day of dedication and relaxation, as a healing for body and mind. Obviously any "reform" of the calendar which conflicts with rhythms and cycles directed by the spiritual world would work adversely upon human life.

In the rhythm of the weeks the human being has a connection with the Moon. The week has 7 days, the Moon has 4 phases. As the Moon fulfils its 4 phases

it is also, with each phase, passing through a different kind of relationship with the planets, and the Sun as well as the Earth, making in all 4 times 7 such relationships, or 28.

The origin of the week as a division of time is derived from the 4-fold sevens of the 28 days of the lunar month, each septenary portion of which is marked by one quarter of the moon. The principal nations of antiquity - the Babylonians, Egyptians, Hindus, Chinese, Druids and others - were acquainted with the "7-days" division of time, and consecrated them to their major gods, goddesses and the ancient planets.

The 7 planets have always been known to have a connection of a special kind with the Earth. They have often been nominally, as well as actually, introduced into the rhythm of the week: Thursday, the day of Thor, or Jupiter; Friday, the day of Venus (Freya); Saturday, the day of Saturn; Sunday, the day of the Sun, etc. The Sabbath, the 7th day, was ordained as a day of rest (Genesis ii. 1-3) on the completion of creation. This reason was assigned for its observance in Deut.v15. The 7th day of creation in the Mosaic history of creation corresponds with the mists of Atlantis, the "Lost Continent".

Each 7th year, according to the Mosaic code (Exodus xxiii.10.11) was to be kept holy by letting the land lie fallow that year, "that the poor of the people may eat". Debtors should be released from debts.

#### THE SEVEN IN RELIGION AND FOLK-LORE

The spiritual nature of the 7 and its relation to time and cyclic completion is seen in religion and folk-lore through the ages. Ancient India had 7 gods, the Devas, corresponding to the 7 Genii of the vision of Hermes, the 7 Amshaspands of Persia, the 7 great Angels of Chaldea, the 7 Archangels of the Christian Apocalypse. Education of children was begun by the ancient Persians at the age of 7. The Arabians had 7 holy-temples.

In the Mithraic religion there were "7 gates", 7 altars and 7 mysteries. Seven steps led to the altars indicating 7 degrees; temples were lit by candles in 7-branched candlesticks.

For the ancient Egyptians the 7 was the symbol of life eternal. Four lengths of 7-unit periods were employed by astrologers, namely, 7 hours, 7 days, 7 months and 7 years.

Man was regarded as consisting of 4 elements - earth, water, air, fire - and 3 supersensible members (Ka, Ba, Khou) corresponding to the Hebrew Nephesh, Ruach and Neshamah and the Greek Psyche, Pheuma and Nous).

In ancient Hermetic wisdom the orbits of the 7 planets or moral spheres formed a ladder linking heaven with earth, shown in the holy ladder of 7 rungs, the ladder of Jacob. The vision of Hermes, the Pymander, describes the descent of the human soul through the orbits of the 7-planets-or spheres of moral impulse-into earthly incarnation.

The most ancient sacred work of China, the "Yi King" or "Book of Changes" (1200 B.C.) translated by Legge, gives a septenary division of man. So do the old Brahmanical, Tibetan, Buddhist and Vedantic occult teachings.

The 7 was regarded as sacred in the old cultured Oriental civilisations and by later Western nations. This number became transformed into deities e.g. the Egyptians had 7 original gods, the Phoenicians, 7 kabiris, the Persians 7 sacred horses of Mithra. The 7 in the ancient Aryan sacred writings, in the Zoroastrian in the Vedas and the Upanishads, in works of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch and in the Mosaic books and the Kabbalah, is based on the Sun, Moon and the 5 planets known to the ancients. Thus 7 gates generally led to the great temples and cities.

The number occurs frequently in accounts of the Buddha. On a seven-gemmed ladder he descends from heaven, and, new-born, he takes 7 steps. There is a reference to 7 sacred places at Vesali and Rajagaha. In King Sudassan's town there are 7 ramparts and 7 rows of palm trees, while in the world Sukhavati

there are 7 terraces.

In the Atharva Veda (xii,53) are the lines: "Time, like a brilliant steed with seven rays, full of fecundity, bears all things onward". Also: Time, like a seven-wheeled, seven-naval car moves on; His rolling wheels are all the worlds, his axle is immortality".

The number 7 occurs constantly in the Puranas, in the Book of the Dead, and in the Zendavesta. In the Persian Mysteries there were 7 spacious caverns through which the aspirant had to pass.

Just as there were 7 Holy Rishis of Ancient India and 7 holt teachers of other nations, so there were 7 Wise Men of Greece, certain sages who lived c.620-550 B.C., usually listed as Chilon, Cleobulus, Periander, Pittacus, Solon and Thales; another indication of the spiritual aspect of the number.

#### THE SEVEN IN GREEK CIVILISATION

The 7 vowels of the ancient Greeks were looked upon as having planetary correspondences. The Pythagoreans correlated the 7 planets to the notes of the musical scale. They saw it as a venerable number because it referred to the Creation, and because it was made up of 2 perfect figures, the triangle and the square. Seven signified the union of man and divinity and expressed the complete realisation in all things through 7 degrees. The 7-stringed lyre of Greek legend given to Orpheus by Apollo, the Sun god, represents the spiritual forces of the 7 planets.

Vows were taken by the number 7 because it was thought to be the most sacred of all numbers, the image of divine order and harmony in nature, containing twice the sacred number 3, the triad, to which the 1 or divine monad was added:  $3 + 1 + 3$ .

Plato in his "Timaeus" taught that the soul of the world was created out of the number 7, and the number also occurs in his various combinations of soul and spirit. The Platonists speak of 7 kinds of love: the love of man and woman; the love of parent and child; the love of a friend; the love of beauty; the love of good; the love of wisdom; the love of

God; In this we can see a step-by-step ascent from the personal and emotional to the spiritual.

The Hindus believe in 7 mansions of all created spirits, the earth being the lowest, while the seat of Brahma is the 7th and highest.

The Moslem pilgrimage is consummated when 7 circuits have been made round the sacred stone at Mecca.

There are 7 champions of Christendom: St. George of England, St. Andrew of Scotland, St. David of Wales, St. Patrick of Ireland, St. James of Spain, St. Denys of France, and St. Anthony of Italy.

The 7 occurs in the early history of Rome in the Seven Kings of Rome, based on the 7 principles of man, e.g. Romulus, founder of the State corresponded to the physical body, Numa Pompilius to the etheric or life-body (he established religion) Hostilius to the astral or soul-body. (Indications of the other Kings and their relation to the principles of man are given in "Anthroposophical Quarterly", Vol.5, No.5).

Mediaeval writers on number associated the 7 (3 + 4) with the Universe of Spirit and Matter. In the religious art of this time the columbine was used to symbolise 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit, which, when attributed to the Virgin, are Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Strength. Seven joys and 7 sorrows of the Virgin Mother are represented. It was the time when the human being was divided into (1) Corpus (2) Anima vegetativa (3) Anima reproductiva (4) Anima sensitiva (5) Anima activa (6) Anima reflectiva (7) Anima humanodivina.

Number symbolism appears in the Mass, which is composed of 7 parts, or offices. Seven acolytes lead the full episcopal procession (the 7 gifts of the spirit). Next come the pontiff, 7 sub-deacons (7 columns of wisdom), 7 deacons (Apostolic tradition), 12 priors (the 12 Apostles), and 3 acolytes bearing incense (the 3 Magi who brought gifts to the Holy Child.)

### THE ROSE-CROSS SYMBOL

The number 7 is prominent in the literature of the Rosicrucian stream, whose symbol is a black cross embellished with 7 red roses.

The black cross stands for the body, purified, through soul-striving, of the lower desires. The roses are "stations of the Cross"; each member of man becomes, step by step, a blossom of the Spirit. The 7 roses can also be taken in a cosmological sense to represent the 7 stages of the world evolution, the purification and ultimate resurrection of the Earth itself.

The Rose-Cross symbol contains untold secrets, cosmic and human, spiritual and moral, historical and even geographical. Things told by Rudolf Steiner concerning the hidden spiritual history of the Rose-Cross and its relation to the great religions of the world are elaborated in "The Mysteries of the Rose-Cross" by George Adams (New Knowledge Paperback)

### THE SEVEN ARCHANGELS

Trithemius of Sponheim in his "Archangel Calendar" wrote of the regular cycles in which 7 Archangels follow each other as leaders of historical periods, each period lasting approximately as many years as a year has days.

Occult science refers to 7 spiritual guardians of national development, or souls of nations, with periods of rulership related to the planets as follows: 550-200 B.C., Michael (Sun); 200 B.C., 150 A.D. Oraphiel (Saturn); 150-500 A.D. Anael (Venus); 500-850 A.D. Zachariel (Jupiter); 850-1190 A.D. Raphael (Mercury); 1190 A.D. - 1510 Samael (Mars); 1510-1879 Gabriel (Moon) 1879-2230 Michael (Sun).

A memory-cycle of 7 is one of the laws of psychology, remembrances occurring almost invariably, in periods of 7, 14, and 21 days. This is one of the many rhythms of 7 in man himself.

This number governs everything which is in constant movement within the human being. As Agrippa of Nettesheim says in his book, "The Cabbala", through the 7 man is "conceived, formed, born, nourished and his life and existence are maintained".

Man's 7 organs correspond to the 7 planets as follows: Heart, Sun; Brain, Moon; Liver, Jupiter; Kidneys, Venus; Milt, Saturn; Gall, Mars; Lungs, Mercury. Seven life processes vitalise everything and pulsate through the 12 senses. They are:

- (1) Breathing;
- (2) Warming;
- (3) Nutrition;
- (4) Secretion;
- (5) Conservation;
- (6) Growth;
- (7) Reproduction.

In the embryonic development of the human being, the life body begins its work after 7 weeks. The soul body takes hold in about the 7th month. After 7 years the second teeth appear, after 14 years, puberty occurs, about 21 man "comes of age" after 28 man ceases to grow, at 35 the middle of life, he is in his physical prime. There are significant changes at 49, 56 & 63. From ancient times the most remarkable changes in a person's life was considered to be at the climacteric, or  $7 \times 7 = 49$  years; or the grand climacteric,  $7 \times 9 = 63$ , or  $9 \times 9 = 81$  years.

The 7 rhythm can operate in an event which takes a week, a month, a year or a number of years, the event being related to the octave Spiritual Science shows that the whole of evolution occurs in octaves, the eighth tone being only a repetition of the first of the 7. This number governs all the parts of cosmic evolution, and human evolution is united with that of the cosmos. The 7-year human life periods (7,14,21 and so on) are not necessarily marked by outstanding external events, but by inward metamorphoses and experiences, indicating the spiritual nature of the number 7.

The subject of the number 7 as the number of Time and the 12 as the number of Space is dealt with by Rudolf Steiner in "The East in the Light of the West", and Eleanor C. Merry has an interesting chapter on the 7 and the 3 in her valuable work "The Flaming Door" (New Knowledge Books).

## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES IN MAN

The great septenary which enfolds the universe does not vibrate in the seven colours of the rainbow and the seven notes of the scale, only; it also manifests itself in the constitution of man, which is triple in essence, but sevenfold in its evolution. Edouard Schure in "The Great Initiates".

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The presentations of the being of man given in esoteric science differ according to the standpoint from which the relationships are reviewed. Man is described as a unity, a duality, a trinity, a 4-fold, 7-fold, 9-fold and as a 12-fold being.

Each of these divisions and analyses has a methodical basis, e.g. Man may be regarded as a 3-fold being of body, soul and spirit. He also has 4 principles: physical body, life-body, soul body and indwelling ego, sometimes called the "Lower quarternary".

In his 7-fold aspect man is constituted, according to occult science, as follows: Physical body, seen by the senses; the Life-body, bearing the formative forces of growth and reproduction; the soul-body, bearer of our thinking, feeling and willing activity; the Ego-principle providing consciousness of self or individuality; and 3 Higher Principles yet to be developed.

The following brief indications are meant only to draw attention to descriptions given in the literature of Spiritual Science which the present writer finds essential for a true understanding of man and his destiny.

### THE PHYSICAL BODY AND THE LIFE BODY

The physical body is acted upon by the Life body, more particularly through the lymphatic and glandular systems. Through the Life body the circulation of all the fluids in the body is carried out. It contains the forces of growth and assimilation, seen



working in the growing and blossoming plants in Spring.

The Life-body or etheric body is that super-sensible member of the human being which in that it permeates the entire physical body works upon it with formative and life-giving effect, holding all the organs together in their shape and form by its currents and movements.

The physical body which takes shape out of the Life body as ice forms out of water is preserved from dissolution every moment during earthly life. The Life body only recedes at death.

We possess the Life-body in common with the plants, flowers and trees. Everything that grows does so through the fact that this formative force organises the substance of which it is composed. Another function of the Life body is that it represents and preserves the more permanent qualities of the soul and is their vehicle. It is the bearer of memory, temperament and habits. The etheric or Life-body consists of 5 main life currents or streams flowing in and through it. If a man stands with the feet apart, and the arms and hands outstretched, the direction of the 5 streams can be followed; they form a pentagram; thus the pentagram has come to be known as the figure of man.

#### THE SOUL BODY

Man has a Soul-body or astral organisation in common with the animals but on a higher scale. The soul-body is often confused with the Life-body but the 2 are not similar. The Life-body brings life, the Soul-body gives feeling and psychological awareness. This difference can be clearly seen when we contemplate the plant and the animal kingdom: the latter possesses a soul body; the former does not.

The Physical body and the Life body are the instruments of the soul body, which is the mediator of sensation, the actual sensing and feeling part of man, the vehicle of impulse, pain and pleasure, passion and craving, hunger and thirst. It shows its activity in the workings of the sensory and nervous systems.

The physical body, Life body and soul-body are the 3 members which constitute the Lower Triad of the human being, the organisation which enables him to function as earthly man.

#### THE "I" OR EGO

In the soul dwells the Ego, by means of which man is raised above all the other beings of Nature surrounding him on earth. Man transcends the animal kingdom by virtue of the fact that he is an individual. He possesses the self consciousness which animals lack, the capacity to say "I", and to think. He is a spirit.

The "I" or Ego, the most hidden sanctuary in man, expresses itself in his soul-life in thinking, feeling and willing. It is actually the builder of the soul. Human evolution from life to life consists of its work on the soul. The "I" is like the craftsman, the body like a tool. A good craftsman can only produce the best work with good tools - hence the importance of the body. But good tools alone will never produce anything, hence the importance of the craftsman, the Spirit. How the "I" or essential individuality of man transforms and spiritualises the "lower" bodies or sheaths, and develops the Higher Triad (described later) is dealt with in Steiner's book "Theosophy", where the nature of the soul itself is shown as 3-fold.

The spirit-the Ego in its highest and noblest aspect is immortal. The physical body in its purely physical nature is perishable. The soul is the entity which acts as the channel or mediator between them sharing both in what is eternal and what is perishable.

Within the soul are thinking, the "light" of the spirit; will, expressing itself in the deeds of the body; and feeling, the characteristic quality of the soul itself.

The soul is rooted in the body and blossoms in the spirit. That part of the soul which is most closely connected with the body is called the Sentient soul, which receives impressions from the surrounding world through the body and transforms them, into sensations and feelings. Instinctive life expresses itself in this part of the soul.

In the Sentient soul the life of the soul is still mainly cosmic, directed outwards and under the sway of immediate sense-experiences (colour, scent, sound, taste and so on.) It is driven hither and thither between contrasts and extremes.

The Sentient soul is the activity of the Ego on the soul body. In it the "I" is active in such a way that man is hardly aware of his Ego; at this stage he is still unguided by reason.

In the individual human life this part of the soul life develops between the ages of 21 and 28, the period when sensations predominate. In mankind the Sentient soul developed during the third cultural epoch, the Egypto-Chaldean civilisation (See chapter ). The Sentient soul, expressed particularly in the Italian and Spanish peoples may be called the lowest part of the soul members.

The central member of the inner human being is designated the Intellectual or Rational soul. It is the activity of the Ego on the Life body and is developed through man's work on his habits. Unlike the Sentient or sensation-soul, the Intellectual soul is served by thinking. It is the "knowing" soul, through which man begins to reason on his emotions. In the Intellectual soul the mental images and conceptions are not governed by sense-experiences: the soul lives in a balance of heart and head.

Our modern culture is built up on the Intellectual soul, e.g. railways, aeroplanes, telegraphs, radio, television, etc-things that cater for human comfort and convenience. The need is to rise, through thinking, above such a culture, which is obviously concerned mainly with the transitory.

In the individual human life the Intellectual soul begins to unfold from the age of 28 to 35. It is the period in which man recapitulates the stage of evolution which occurred in mankind in the Greco-Roman epoch. The Intellectual soul, a recapitulation of the Greco-Roman epoch is expressed particularly in the French people. Moliere and Stendhal are examples of the forces of the Intellectual soul which seek to create balance between heart and head. Montaigne and

Descartes are examples of the French philosophy, which is rationalistic, analytical and critical. (New forces are evident in Saint-Exupery).

As man's soul life becomes more influenced by his power of thought the Sentient soul develops into the Intellectual soul. This middle part of the soul is able to turn either towards the body via the Sentient soul or towards the spirit. When it turns towards the latter it thereby becomes the Consciousness soul or Spiritual soul, the eternal principle of the inner human being.

Just as the Sentient soul receives impressions and impulses from the surrounding physical world through the physical organisation, so the Spiritual or Consciousness soul receives motives and impulses to action from the Spiritual world. As the sentient soul is linked with the physical world through the body, so the Spiritual world is linked with the Spiritual world through Manas (Spirit-self) the eternal or Higher Self of man.

In the Consciousness soul man becomes an "onlooker"; there is a more inward soul-life, activated from the sphere of the will. This soul-life is devoted to the revelations of the supersensible world, conveyed to it through art, religion and a spiritualised science. It is concerned with eternal truth.

In contrast to the sensation-preoccupied Sentient soul in which sympathy, antipathy and passions hold sway, the more evolved Consciousness soul lives and rules in inward quiet. The inner life is guided from the Ego.

Man becomes for the first time fully conscious of his spiritual nature. His thought becomes the expression of his own individuality. He ceases to need so much support from external laws and conventions.

An enhanced consciousness of the effect of man's actions on others brings the unfolding of morality, for in the Consciousness soul, we encounter truth and morality, i.e. the deepest creative forces working in the universe. Man becomes in his real development master of himself. The cultivation of the Consciousness-soul is the special task of the present epoch of civilisation (1413-3500)

The Higher Triad of man consists of Manas (Spirit self), Buddhi (Life Spirit) and Atman (Spirit man). These 3 make up the eternal spiritual quintessence of man.

#### SPIRIT SELF

Manas is a product of the transformation of the soul-body by the Ego. In the spiritually-cultivated human being the ego has worked on the Soul body, and ennobled his desires. The more this has occurred the higher the moral development—Manas is the essence of knowledge in Man. The spirit can come to activity within the human being only to the extent that he purifies his astral body, i.e. makes his thinking, feeling and willing free from egoism.

Insofar as man purifies his Soul Body, so far does he develop Manas and the ability to act increasingly from the impulse of the spiritual, for Manas is the individualised spiritual, embraced by the "I".

Through the transformation of the Soul-body into Manas, man is born into the supersensible realm. Manas bears within it the self-existent truth that is in the Consciousness-soul which is independent of sympathy and antipathy. This truth is taken up into and enclosed by the "I". It becomes part of the individuality of the person. Through this individualisation of the eternal truth the "I" attains to the eternal.

Thus Manas is really a revelation of the super-sensible realm within the "I". This revelation can be called intuition, for intuitions come from the higher thinking of Manas. Through intuitions, the "I" draws into itself messages from the Spiritual world.

As man more and more rules his soul-body and develops Manas, the "I" more and more gives itself up to the super-sensible opening increasingly to the eternally true and the eternally good. In this way, forces are given to the soul-body so that it becomes illuminated, transformed and spiritualised.

#### LIFE-SPIRIT AND SPIRIT MAN

The failings of the Soul-body, if continued, can become a habit. These failings are then slowly imprinted upon the life body. With persistent striving

of the "I" however, the faults can be transformed.

The transformed Life-body is called Buddhi or Life Spirit, the ether-spirit, or spiritualised life-force. So we come finally to the third and highest part of man's Higher Triad Atman (in German, Atman, to breathe) This is the transformed physical body.

To work on his physical body is the greatest achievement man can attain on this earth. It implies control not only of the breathing powers but also of the circulation of the blood, the nervous system and the thinking processes. In present-day man, Atman exists only as a possibility.

The first germ of Atman, implanted in man at the end of the far distant period of the first cosmic planetary condition (described briefly in the article on "World Evolution" in "Encyclopaedia of Numbers") developed only at the end of the present planetary course. It is of the nature of Will, and at present the will is only feebly developed. Only in the distant future is it to become man's predominant principle.

Thus, the human being is so constituted that the body works from below upwards with a limiting effect on the soul. The spiritual works from above downwards into the soul, expanding it. Steiner stresses that the more the soul fills itself with the true and the good, the wider and more comprehensive becomes the eternal in it.

Gradually man ascends into the spiritual, into his Higher Self, rising from a created being to a creator. Through such work on himself in repeated earthly lives, through the absorption of spiritual truths, Spiritual sciences can really live in individual men. It can become the way for mankind to reunite with the super-sensible world. The future of mankind depends on man's learning to live with the spiritual world as naturally as on the earth he lives with the physical; to be at home again in the spiritual world as he was in the beginning, in primeval times.

Thus, 9 members of the whole man have been briefly characterised: Physical body, Life body; Soul body; Sentient Soul; Intellectual Soul; Consciousness Soul. Spirit-self or Manas; Life Spirit or Buddhi; Spirit Man or Atman. Soul body and Sentient soul are characterised

by Steiner as a unity in earthly man. In the same way Consciousness-soul and Spirit-self are a unity.

#### SEVENFOLD MAN

Thus the 7 parts in the earthly man may be regarded as Physical body; Life body; Sentient soul body; Intellectual soul; Spirit-filled Consciousness Soul; Life Spirit or Buddhi; Spirit Man or Atman. The 3 lower principles, the physical body, Life-body and Soul body are taken hold of by the ego and thereby made into a 7-fold being as it transforms them into Manas (Spirit Self) Buddhi (Life Spirit) and Spirit Man (Atman).

When this work of the ego upon the other members is taken as a basis the 7-fold arrangement of the members of man is: (1) Physical body (2) Life body (3) Soul body; (4) "I" as soul-kernel; (5) Spirit-self as transmuted astral body (6) Life-spirit as transmuted life-body; (7) Spirit-man as transmuted physical body.

The development of the 7 members of man are related to the incarnations of the Earth (See article on "Evolution" in "Encyclopaedia of Numbers") as follows: (1) Saturn (physical body) (2) Sun (Life body) (3) Moon (astral or soul body) (4) Earth (Ego) (5) Jupiter (Spirit Self) (6) Venus (Life Spirit) (7) Vulcan (Spirit Man). The development of a human principle is associated with each incarnation as shown above. The interesting fact emerges from these considerations, that man in his 7-fold nature is not yet complete and that the 7, in one of its aspects is the number of cyclic completion.

Today man is in the number 5, insofar as he is a good or bad being. As a creature he is in the number 4. "When he will have developed everything that he has in him as a seed, then he will be, of his kind, a seven-membered perfect being...Everywhere, in every sphere of life, you can find the Seven as a kind of number of perfection". (Steiner).

## THE SEVEN AND HUMAN BIRTH

That the number 7 is related to the mystery of human birth was confirmed after a study of thousands of cases by Dr. Hermann Swoboda. This Viennese scientist concluded that man's fertility and woman's receptivity are especially marked during a 7-year. He found that a 7-year is more propitious for the propagation of the human race than any other. Children born in a 7-year of their parents are stronger both mentally and physically than those born in the years between.

There are many examples of children with special gifts or genius born to parents after 7 years of marriage, e.g. Michelangelo, Oliver Cromwell, William Blake, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Handel, Kant and Fichte.

Darwin was born in a 7-year (his father, grand-father, great-grandfather, and great-great grandfather). Bismarck was born in a 7-year of a grandfather, Goethe was born in a 7 year of his maternal grandfather.

Investigations of many families by Dr. Fliess of Berlin (1857-1928) have shown that in respect of death and rebirth quite definite numerical relationships are in evidence.

Dr. Fliess set himself the task of registering the connections between births and deaths, by following them up in different families.

One of the many cases investigated was that of the grandmother of a family. A certain number of days before her death a grandchild was born, the number of days being 1,428. "Strange to say, 1,428 days after the grandmother's death another grandchild was born and a great granddaughter 9,996 days after her death".

Divide 9,996 by 1,428 and you have 7. After a period therefore, 7 times the length of the period between the birth of the first grandchild and the death of the grandmother, a great grandchild is born. Rudolf Steiner pointed out that in the above case it was interesting to see that, if for example we take the number 1,428, again we have a number divisible by 7.

## THE SEVEN-YEAR HUMAN LIFE PERIODS

Rhythm has a magical character. Through rhythm sublime worlds belong to us. Goethe.

"My own discovery of the rhythm of seven gave me a new sense of inner certainty. It strengthened my faith in the spiritual background of all life".

Rom Landau, author of "God is My Adventure".

"When a man learns to know all the things that should be considered with these human life periods, what is best for him or should be kept away from during them, he will also know much about how to prepare himself for a good old age". Rudolf Steiner.

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According to the Psalmist, the "allotted span" of life is "threescore years and ten". Though some live beyond this time and others die much earlier, 70-72 years do in fact relate the rhythm of man's life to the rhythm of the universe.

In what is called the "precession of the equinoxes", the sun moves once through all 12 signs of the Zodiac in 25,920 years (called by Plato "the great world year") Just as the ordinary year consists of 365 (and a bit) days, this world-year can be divided by a like number, and we find the length of a world-day to be between 70 and 71 years, the "allotted span" of a normal life indicated in the Psalms.

The ancients divided man's life into 7-year periods, recognising that this number has to do with the spiritual rhythm of individual man.

In his "Elegy" of the Hebdomades" Solon refers to these 7-year human life periods. Other thinkers who refer to them include Aristotle, Hippocrates, Aristophanes of Byzantium, Philolaus, Diocles of Karystos, Seneca, Cicero, Ptolemy, Agrippa of Nettesheim, Thomas Aquinas, Aegidius Romanus de Colonna and Martin Luther.

### EXAMPLES OF THE SEVEN-YEAR RHYTHM

A 7-year rhythm is particularly discernible in the lives of all exceptional personalities. In his

28th year Buddha left the royal palace in search of truth and at 35 found it under the "Tree of Enlightenment". Aristotle was 49 when he started his Peripatetic school in the Lyceum.

In his 21st year St. Francis abandoned a military career after having a spiritual experience and in his 28th began to preach to the poor at Assisi, founding the Order of the Friars of St. Francis. At 42 he beheld the vision of the Angel nailed to the Cross on Mount Alverno - the age of St. Columba when he went from Ireland to Iona to begin the period of his greatest activity.

When Goethe produced the "Metamorphosis of Plants" he was passing through one of the most important epochs of his life - he was 42.

In his 21st year Schiller completed his first drama; at 28 he met Herder and Wieland, and at 42 his "Aesthetic Letters" appeared. At the age of 7 Mozart was already in the public eye as a musician. He died at 35, at the same age as Raphael. Hugo wrote his "Notre Dame de Paris" when he was 28.

At 14 Darwin delivered two papers before the Plinian Society at Edinburgh University, at 21 he set out on the Voyage of the Beagle, at 49 he began to write his "Origin of Species", and his most valuable book "The Expression of the Emotions" was published when he reached the 9th cycle of 7 years - 63.

At this age Strindberg had his greatest spiritual experience and died shortly afterwards. At 14 Michael Faraday read his first book on chemistry, at 21 he heard lectures by Sir Humphrey Davy which changed his life; at 29 he made his great discovery that a magnet will revolve continuously around a magnetic current - the birth of the electric age.

Isak Dinesen the Danish author wrote her first book at 49. In his 21st year Tolstoy went to Petersburg University, at 35 he began "War and Peace"; at 49 he completed "Anna Karenina"; at 63 he renounced copyright in his works written since 1881 and gave his property to his family; at 70 he

finished "What is Art?"

It is the 7-year life periods which determine the maturing process of human life. Certain forces are born every 7 years. Climaxes occur at the ages of 7, 14, 21, 28 and so on. Up to the age of 7 the human being is related to the Moon sphere, from 7 to 14 to the Mercury sphere, from 14 to 21 to the Venus sphere, 21 to 42 to the Sun sphere, 42 to 49 to the Mars sphere, 49 to 56 to the Jupiter sphere, and 56 to 63 to the Saturn sphere.

The 7-year periods are described in the literature of Spiritual Science in a way which shows the organic relationship of spirit, soul and body in the individual as each stage is reached.

#### THE PERIODS OF CHILDHOOD

In the Rudolf Steiner schools 3 rhythmical 7-year periods in the life of the child are taken into account. Childhood is regarded as a descent from the spiritual to the physical world in which the child's dreaming ego descends ever more deeply into the physical body and awakens more fully within the physical processes of life.

Up to the age of 7 when the human being is related to the Moon sphere, the physical body is built up. The child works at the formation of his own body, at the bone system which hardens it and raises it to an upright position. We can see that around the 7th year the bodily form has acquired a certain firmness.

About the 7th year, when the child is related to the Mercury sphere, the etheric or life body becomes free. The changing of the teeth is a sign that the life forces of the body have completed their first task - the building of the physical organism, and are ready for the next. From then to puberty at 13, 14 or 15 the life-forces are made available for thinking, memory and imagination.

The human being has gained ground as it were against the heredity power in his body during these first 7 years and a kind of liberation of soul forces from the body occurs. The thought forces now released are not of an intellectual nature. It is a kind of

thinking related to the time of ancient myths and sagas, and is permeated with feeling and imagination.

In the whole time from the 7th to the 14th year the child is given up to a more psychical element than that of the sense impressions.

#### FOURTEEN TO TWENTY-ONE

About the 14th year when the soul-body becomes free is the time when the soul strives to free itself to a certain extent from its dependence on the physical organs. The body development reaches a certain completion; the soul is no longer so much occupied in helping the body.

From 14 to 21 when the human being is related to the Venus sphere, the soul body is organised. In early childhood the boy or girl looks out on to the world with a certain amount of enchantment; but after puberty, when the soul is "born" this world seems grey, and so, during the early 'teens there may be shocks, or a veil of dreams may be drawn over what seems a cruel hard world, and a negative attitude to life can cause difficulties for both children and parents.

The feelings and emotions of the teenager are often in a turmoil. These years of saying "No" to life should be followed by a time of positivity, when slowly the child gets on top of himself and takes more interest in life. Then he becomes keen to learn, experiment and argue. The growing pains of early adolescence - the moodiness, super-sensitivity, the clumsy body - are due to the fact that at puberty the boy or girl really stands on earth for the first time.

Up to this time the spiritual forces, which have been brought from the pre-natal period are still strong. When younger the child is mobile, elastic and sprightly; but after puberty his body is differently related to the forces of gravity and feels the weight of his limbs, so that the diminished control over them leads to self-consciousness.

#### TWENTY-ONE TO FORTY-TWO

In fact, the will impulse does not take hold of the limbs fully until the human being is about 21. At about this age the Sentient soul becomes free. From 21 to 42 the human being is related to the Sun sphere. In general the bodily development shows an ascending tendency until about the 27th or 28th year.

From 28 to 35 is the time of the development of the Intellectual or Rational soul, the human being begins to think differently, develops more consciousness in the sphere of judgments and feelings, and a tendency towards a more serious life.

The age of 35 marks the halfway milestone of the human earthly journey. The years 35-42 are life's high summer in regard to our physical powers. At this time we are most fully incarnated; it is the zenith of the earthly life of man. "The body is in its prime from 30 to 35", wrote Aristotle in his "Rhetoric".

Before 35, activity is directed to the development of the physical body.

After this age the physical forces no longer foretell the influx of spirit but can be transformed into spiritual faculties. The years between 35 and 42 constitute a period of inner, subconscious preparation for a "fulfilment" in life.

As Eleanor C. Merry writes in her book "The Flaming Door": "It is a spiritual law that in the first thirty-five years of human life much has to be developed and worked through that is like a coming to terms with the inherited forces of family and race as against the free forces of the individual spirit. And after that, the working out of the now liberated destiny that leads on into the future. The change may be one that is only felt inwardly in the soul; or it may be reinforced by a pre-destined change in outer circumstances".

Because it is about the 35th year that the Conscious soul becomes free, this does not mean that only after reaching the 35th year can the tasks of the age of consciousness be undertaken. A younger man may well think, feel and will as a complete human being,

but the principles of his being are not yet wholly pressed down into the physical body, which only occurs about the 35th year.

#### FORTY-TWO, FORTY-NINE, FIFTY-SIX, SIXTY-THREE

From 42 to 49, when the human being is related to the Mars sphere, the incarnation process has ceased and normally at this age man is in occupation of every room in the house of his body and soul, the ego having entered fully into the soul and body states. It is the time of a beginning of a possible development of Spirit-self. These years being an echo of the 14 to 21 period, they provide opportunities to fulfil the ideals of that period.

The age of 49 (7 x 7), as one might expect since the 7 is a number of cyclic completion, carries a certain finality; there is usually not the same degree of initiative and adaptability which exists in earlier life-periods.

From 49 to 56, when the human being is under the influence of Jupiter, unredeemed mistakes of the past and interferences and influences which were harmful at the beginning during early education - the errors which have not been adjusted and transformed, may begin to manifest themselves in certain forms of illness.

"The individual may not only be tired and settled down, but also the body may become ill" writes Donald M. Perkins. "Man clings to his body, he becomes its victim, weighed down by its burden. He is confined within his bodily nature". There also tends to be a feeling of isolation and an ever-increasing fear of approaching old age and of death looming up.

This period which is related to the development of Life Spirit, marks in one respect a kind of climax-something of a summing-up of the good which has accrued to the past 7-year periods. We ask ourselves whether our life experiences made us wise valuers of life, whether we made the most of our opportunities. The remaining years are regarded with more sense of urgency.

From 56 to 63 when the human being is related to the Saturn period, is connected with the development of Spirit-Man. The 63rd year is the "grand climacteric" of ancient medicine. There is an old superstition that there is danger to life in the 63rd year.

After "three score years and ten", the "years of grace", the question of how we can seek out and decide how to best use the last lap of our earthly existence is uppermost in mind. This problem is discussed by Dr. Norbert Glas in a new book, "Old Age", in which he approaches the subject from the standpoint of the 7-year human life periods.

#### THE INCARNATION PROCESS

Thus the incarnation process is divided into 7-year rhythms. The change of teeth marking the end of the first 7-years, puberty the end of the second 7-years. From 21 onwards the several stages are more inward. Normally the incarnation course goes through 9 times 7 years, the fifth 7-year period being the middle of life.

Up to this time human development leads to deeper and deeper embodiment; after this there is less and less union with the physical body.

In the latter part of earthly life the higher members of man's being incarnate; the human being re-ascends as it were to the spiritual world. Development after the middle period of life calls for an inner force in man.

In the first 35 years man experiences a coming to terms with the inherited forces of family and race as against the free forces of the spirit. In the latter half of life there is a working out of the now-liberated destiny that leads to the future.

After 35 we can start to ascend to the super-sensible world and use our forces for spiritual development; no longer do the physical forces forestall the influx of Spirit; free from the body, they can be transformed into spiritual faculties. We can transform the moral impulses received in childhood from environment into moral intuition. It is the



time in which a person can learn to have reverence for life's realities and accept his destiny with a positive attitude.

As Dr. Guenther Wachsmuth writes in his book "Reincarnation": "In just about the middle of life it must become manifest whether the person is able to apply to his own spiritual psychic activity the forces then becoming free from the previously more intense corporeal development. If he is able to do this, the line of spiritual development will show a markedly ascending tendency by the side of the more or less descending line of corporeal development". After 35 a person must himself give birth to a spiritual world out of his won inner being.

#### THE COSMIC PLANETARY STAGES

The relationship of the 7-year human life periods to the great cosmic planetary stages known as Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan is dealt with in the literature of Spiritual Science and there is space for only a brief mention here.

In the old Saturn evolution the Thrones created the principle of the human physical body. This period is related to our first 7 years during which our physical body is built up. On the old Sun epoch the Kyriotes created the life-body or etheric body, corresponding to the period between 7 and 14 when we develop this member.

In the old Moon period the Dynamis created the soul-body or astral body which we develop in our life on earth between the ages of 14 and 21. The 4th cosmic planetary stage, that of Earth, the Exusiai or Spirits of Form created the human Ego, corresponds to the ages 21 to 42 when the human "I" comes into its own.

In the cosmic planetary stages to come - Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan - Spirit Self (Manas), Life Spirit (Buddhi) and Spirit Man (Atman) are to be developed. An understanding of the laws of 7 in life leads to a knowledge of how to make the most of the final chapters of earthly life, for in these 7 year periods a person can bring about beneficial or adverse results for the rest of his life.

Knowledge of the laws of 7 can provide a glimpse into cosmic unity and the spiritual background of life.

## SEVEN IN HEALING

The 7-year rhythm in human life as an organic force is seen in the periodical septenary return of cycles in the rise and fall of diseases, and in the birth, growth, maturity, decay and death of the human being

### EXAMPLES OF THE RHYTHM OF SEVEN

In healing the rhythm of 7 is evident in the fact that a minor wound heals in about 7 days. The surgeon removes stitches from a suture after 7 days according to the size of the wound it will heal, generally speaking, in a number of days which are a multiple of 7 i.e. 14, 21, 28 days etc.

On the 7th and 14th days of an illness, fever will assume a certain character, e.g. in pneumonia the 7th day represents a crisis. In most acute illnesses, injuries or operations, the process of healing is at its height or nearing its conclusion on the 7th day following the outbreak, accident or operation.

In cases where recovery is necessarily slower, simple multiples of 7 play a role, i.e. 14 days, 21 days, 7 weeks (7 times 7 days), observation shows that real recovery is established. Even in the case of chronic disease the 7 often occurs at significant turning-points.

### THE SEVEN IN MEDICINE

In the new medical science based on indications given by Rudolf Steiner, plant juices are submitted to rhythmic processes corresponding to rhythms in nature and adapted to the character of particular plants. These new techniques, evolved during the course of decades of research, have led to the production of healing plant-juices ("mother tinctures") which are self-preserving and which retain living plant qualities.

"Tinctures" made by these processes—in which plant juices are brought rhythmically into connection with warmth or light during a 7-day cycle of treatment—form the basis from which an extensive

range of new therapeutic preparations have been developed.

It has been found that plant juices prepared by these methods will normally remain in good condition and retain living qualities for a period of many years.

The working of the 7 in healing should be considered in relation to the 5, as indicated in the article "Five - Number of Destiny" in "Encyclopaedia of Numbers" (Emerson Press, London, 1962)

## SEVEN IN THE BIBLE

Many references to the 7 in the Bible indicate the basic idea of cyclic completion. Genesis (ii.2. and 3) we read : "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had made. And God blessed the seventh day".

Balaam, as a test of the will of God, built 7 altars and prepared 7 oxen and 7 rams for sacrifice. Job refers to the effectual protection of Providence with the words "in seven troubles there shall no evil touch thee", and "Wisdom hath hewn her seven pillars".

### SEVEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The 7 sometimes appears as a number of servitude, as in the 7 years which Jacob serves for Leah and for Rachel. It can also signify a period of trial as in the 7 months during which the Ark of the Covenant was in the hands of the Philistines, and in the 70 years of bondage.

In the land of Midian, Moses met the 7 daughters of Jethro. These 7, symbol as it were of the Eternal Feminine, personified the 7 soul powers of ancient man. We read of a 7-fold circuit of Jericho prior to its complete overthrow, while Naaman was commanded to bathe 7 times in the Jordan as a prelude to his complete restoration to health.

Pharoah dreamed of 7 "well-favoured kine and fat-fleshed" and of 7 "ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine that did eat up the 7 well-favoured and fat kine;" also of 7 ears of corn upon 1 stalk, and 7 thin and blasted ears which ate the full ears. These dreams were rightly interpreted by Joseph as 7 years of plenty succeeded by 7 years of famine (Genesis xli)

In Hebrew ritual there are 7 altars, 7 sacred wells, 7 lamps, and blood is sprinkled 7 times. The 7-branched candlestick in the sanctuary symbolised the illumination bestowed by the Spirit of God. Hebrew literature speaks of 7 planets, 7 planetary deities, 7 circles of heaven, 7 altars, 7 sacred lamps and 7 natures in the constitution of man.

Mosaic Law insisted upon cessation of work on the 7th (Sabbath) day and oaths were confirmed by 7 witnesses.

On the 7th day of the 7th month a holy observance was ordained to the children of Israel, who feasted 7 days and remained 7 days in tents. The 7th year was to be observed as a Sabbath, and at the end of the 7 times 7 came the great year of Jubilee.

The words of Jehovah are purified 7 times (Ps 12.7) Seventy (7 x 10) palm trees grow in an old sacred spot (Exodus 15.27); 70 elders of Israel go up into the Mount (Exodus 24.1.9.); 70 "souls" go down to Egypt (Genesis 46.27)

#### SEVEN IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST JESUS

Seven signs marked the birth of Christ. Jesus fed the 4,000 with "seven loaves of bread" and "seven baskets" of meat. The words of Christ Jesus and the number of times He spoke are based chiefly on the 7, indicating the steps in spiritual development.

Seven scenes occur with Pontius Pilate. In the Passion there were 7 stages: the Washing of the Feet; the Scourging; the Crown of Thorns; the Bearing of the Cross; the Crucifixion; the Resurrection; and the Ascension.

There were 7 utterances on the Cross "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" ... "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" ... "Woman, behold thy son" ... "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ... "I thirst" ... "It is finished" ... "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit".

The Lord's Prayer has 4 physical and 3 super-sensible invocations.

Rudolf Frieling in his "Die Heilige Zahl im Johannes Evangelium" shows that St. John's Gospel is founded on the rhythms of 3 and 7.

In the Apocalypse the 7 is the most emphasised number. The Candlestick and its 7 branches (Rev. i. 13) represents the 7 Creative Principles, or Spiritual Beings before the Throne of God. This 7-armed candlestick was still to be seen in 1710 on the Arch of Titus spanning the Via Sacra in Rome.

The Christo-Gnostic training has 7 stages related to the Passion; The Washing of the Feet (St. John xiii); The Scourging (St. John xix); The Crown of Thorns; The Crucifixion; The Mystic Death; The Burial; The Resurrection (St. John xx) These stages of initiation, leading to union with the Christ Jesus are described in Harry Collison's book "Investigations in Occultism", based on early lectures of Rudolf Steiner.

#### SEVEN IN THE APOCALYPSE

The last book of the Old Testament is constructed upon the number 7 and so is the Apocalypse, the last book of the New Testament.

Written in rich concentrated language, the latter deals with great problems of human spiritual development which are particularly relevant to our present difficulties. In it we can find an understanding of the Being of Christ as Leader of mankind through the dangers of the present and of the future.

Its pictures constitute a description of the Christian initiation, one through which the future of humanity is revealed. The literal meaning of its words should not be taken as they stand but a deeper meaning should be sought, not least in regard to its references to Number.

The 7 letters may be regarded as the 7 categories of the physical world. The 7 seals are associated with the geological epochs; the 7 trumpets with the 7 cosmic manifestations of which the present world is one; the 7 vials of wrath with what must be abandoned in order to attain the highest spiritual development.

The ancient Hebrew mystics depicted the 7 planets as the 7 eyes of God. In the Apocalypse the cosmic lights are also described as eyes: "And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God ... And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth".

## THE SEVEN COLOURS AND THE PLANETS

In Occult Science various relationships are indicated between the 7 planets and the 7 colours of the rainbow, which has been called "the gateway and living messenger between the human and the Divine". The pure phenomenon of the rainbow the most super-sensible sight we can behold on earth with the physical senses is an example of the spiritual nature of the 7.

In one of his indications to Eurhythmists, Rudolf Steiner related them as follows: Sun, white; Venus, green; Mercury, yellow; Mars, red; Jupiter, orange; Saturn, blue; Moon, violet.

The 7 colours of the spectrum were related to the Zodiacal circle as follows: Aries, red; Taurus, orange; Gemini, yellow; Cancer, green; Leo, blue; Virgo, indigo; Libra, violet.

In the second lecture of his Agricultural Course Dr. Steiner refers to the shining forth of the red-flower forces of Mars. From the yellow flower shines the Jupiter forces, from the blue Saturn, while in the green leaves live the forces of the Sun. This is understandable only when we realise that the planetary spheres are manifestations of a Divine life of soul and spirit.

There are 2 sets of colours; those where darkness prevails (blue, purple, turquoise), and the colours where light prevails (yellow, orange red).

Blue, the dark possible colour before blackness, is related to Saturn, the planet which is a remembrance of the 1st great cosmic planetary stage of evolution, called ancient Saturn.

Orange is related to the planet Jupiter, which is a remembrance of the "ancient Sun" evolution, second great cosmic planetary condition; Red is connected with the planet Mars, yellow with Venus. Green, a complete balance between Light and Darkness, is related to Mercury. Lilac is related to the Moon. White, in which there is only Light and no Darkness is related to the Sun.

The colour Peach-blossom, the result of uniting the darkest purple and the darkest red, is related to Earth. The Rainbow colours are: Red, Orange, Yellow, Turquoise, Green, Blue and Violet.

Goethe laid the foundations of a science of pure colour, renewing for our times the old Aristotelian teaching (derived from the Mysteries) regarding colour as the active interplay of Light and Darkness. His work was carried further by Rudolf Steiner, whose pupils in the Anthroposophical Movement are working on his indications arising from spiritual knowledge and the fresh discoveries and technical facilities modern science has developed since Goethe's day.

An important treatise on this basis has been written by Michael Wilson, co-founder with George Adams of the Goethean Science Foundation, entitled "What is Colour?" "The colours speak a living language" writes Mr. Wilson "Through them Man can perceive the drama of the world-creative forces of Light and Darkness. The garments in which the colours appear to Man's physical eyes are found to resemble vibrations. Though the measurement of these can be calculated with accuracy, their real nature still remains a mystery".

"It has long been the fashion to assume that the vibrations are the cause of the colours. But is this not an arbitrary assumption? It is not more reasonable to think that the living colours existed before their physical garment - perhaps even created them?

"Newton was determined upon a study of these garments, Goethe upon knowing the living colours themselves. Modern technique has enabled Man to make the garments and to conjure up the colours at will. Can he not with modern consciousness learn to meet the living colours in their own realm?"

References: Adams (G) "The Rainbow Gate" in Notes and Correspondence", Stourbridge Midsummer 1947. Boas-Hamburger (H) "The Creative Power of Colour". Steiner (R) "Speech and Drama p.323; Colour; also Mayer (G) "Colour & the Human Soul"; "Colour & Healing"; "The Mystery-Wisdom of Colour"; Merry (E.C.) "Art-Its Occult Basis & Healing Value; Wilson (N), "What is Colour?"

## THE SEVEN METALS

The Seven Metals lead the imagination back to the pristine ages when the world came forth out of the surging original mass. They are related to the planets as follows: Lead, Saturn; Tin, Jupiter; Iron, Mars; Quicksilver, Mercury; Copper, Venus; Silver, Moon.

The earth, which provides the various metals, once crystallised out of the original mass. But what we see has still remained in the earth in the metals.

What the earth once produced together with Venus has remained behind in the metal copper. Thus illness which has been specially caused through Venus used to be healed through copper, obtained from plants which have it dissolved into their leaves. A plant containing copper is connected in its whole growth with the planet Venus.

The ancients, and even physicians of a few centuries ago knew that if such and such an illness developed, then a definite metal or a definite product from a plant must be used. They associated the different planets with the metals found in the earth, connecting Venus with copper, Jupiter with tin, Saturn with lead and so on.

It was found that when a person has such diseases of the bones as arise in lead poisoning, this had something to do with radiation from Saturn. Mars was connected with disturbances of the blood and with iron.

In her book "Working of the Stars in Earthly Substances" Frau Dr. Kolisko writes of the connection between the metals and the planets. On the basis of many thousands of experiments carried out over a period of more than 30 years, she shows how the influences of the 7 main planets can be clearly discerned in the metals belonging to them.

Only brief indications can be given here- The reader is also referred to W. Pelikan's "The Seven Metals" and to the lecture by Rudolf Steiner

entitled "The Connection of the Metals with the Planets and Their Curative Effects" (Feb. 10th 1923); "Mystery Centres", lecture 5; also the lectures on the Rosicrucian Mysteries given in Dornach, January 4th, 1924, all available at Rudolf Steiner Libraries.

## THE SEVEN CIVILISATION EPOCHS

If we understand numbers in their spiritual interpretation we have the key to the evolution of both man and cosmos, for they show the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm. John Carr.

To the knowledge of the physical world and physical man, which is alone accessible to the natural-scientific methods of today, spiritual science adds that of the spiritual origin of world and man. An account of evolution given by Rudolf Steiner in his basic book "An Outline of Occult Science" is derived from factual observation of the historical phenomena as preserved in the Cosmic Memory or Akashic Records, the eternal, indestructible picture of all that has ever happened, sometimes called the Book of Life in religious writings.

The subject of evolution in the light of occult science and how it is based on the number 7 is too vast and complicated to be dealt with in a booklet. The attempt will be made, however, to deal in brief outline with the 7 epochs of civilisation.

The 7 successive civilisations which follow the Great Flood that submerged the continent of Atlantis, are known in theosophical literature as Sub-races; and in Spiritual Science the ancient Indian, Persian, Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Anglo-Saxon or Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea epochs.

### MAN'S CHANGING CONSCIOUSNESS

Each of the 7 Post-Atlantean civilisations (since the 15th-century we have been living in the 5th) marks a stage in the evolution of the human soul. In each the consciousness of the ego and the working of its 3 members, the soul body, life body and physical body is developed further and further (See Chapter 2) World history is the story of man's changing consciousness, his descent from and reascent to the spiritual world.

Each civilisation or cultural period lasts one-

twelfth of the Platonic year, i.e. 2160 years. The time taken by the Sun, in the precession of the equinoxes, to move from the centre-point of one sign of the Zodiac to the centre-point of the next. There is a further division into 7 smaller time-periods of 300-350 years, guided by 7 ruling spirits, the Spirits of the Epochs.

#### THE ANCIENT INDIAN EPOCH

The lofty culture of the first Post-Atlantean civilisation, the old Indian epoch, (7200 B.C. - 5,000 B.C.) founded under the influence of Initiates by means of colonies has its last remnants in the Vedas.

People of this first civilisation epoch looked back to the original wholeness of the solar system, feeling themselves strangers in the physical realm. The material world was illusory and transitory, and their great longing was for the spiritual world. They felt and knew themselves to be citizens of the whole wide universe. The idea of Unity prevailed. Man felt so united with the spiritual origin of his existence that he was not afraid of death but of life. He lived more in the memory of the ancient past than in the present.

Led by high spiritual beings, the exalted wisdom of this civilisation was fostered on earth by the 7 Holy Rishis who were its cultural leaders. Their teaching given in vital imaginative picture-language deriving from the wisdom of the 7 Atlantean Oracles stressed that man's mission was to become increasingly the master of his earthly surroundings.

#### THE ANCIENT PERSIAN EPOCH

After the first cultural epoch—a seed-condition for the future epochs—came the old Persian epoch (5000 B.C. - 3000 B.C.) in which the idea of a Duality prevailed.

In this civilisation there was experienced the antithesis of the light and dark worlds and powers, expressed in Zarathustra's teachings of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Man began to feel the earth as his home and developed the impulse to cultivate the soil and engage

in other earthly tasks. It was the first step towards the conquest of the external world.

Unlike the ancient Indians, with their desire to escape from earthly life, the prehistoric Persian regarded "Maya" as his field of action upon which he had to imprint the spirit. The sense-world was seen as ruled by evil demons who had to be driven out and good spiritual beings brought in.

This second civilisation was guided by the Archangels, the Spiritual Beings who rank next below the Archaic. Initiates inspired by them on Earth had the double task of inculcating the maintenance of man's consciousness of the supersensible world, and discovering the secrets of nature and using them in the service of mankind.

Zarathustra, the earthly inaugurator of the Persian civilisation taught that the material world is not mere lifeless matter but behind it is a supersensible world. He spoke of the God of Light the Sun Spirit, or Ahura Mazdao, and his conflict in human souls with Ahriman, god of Darkness and enemy of spiritual development; a conflict in which man must engage. As Gladys Mayer writes in "Colour and the Human Soul" (New Knowledge Paperback): "In the world conception of ancient Persia two spiritual Beings stood in opposition to one another: the Spirit of Light and the Spirit of Darkness— Ahura Mazdao and Ahriman. The one was regarded as belonging to the forces of the Sun, the other as belonging to the forces within the Earth.

"The conflict between the forces of light and darkness were conceived as a conflict between Ahura Mazdao and Ahriman for the rulership of the Earth. Anthroposophy teaches us that the same great Spiritual Being who was looked up to by the ancient Persians as the Bearer of the sun-forces to Earth was He who later appeared and incarnated in the body of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ Who was the Light of the World".

Zarathustra gave the initial impulse to that current of thought which urged humanity to call upon the active power of the spirit, that they might overcome all that is material. His teachings stressed



man's problem of finding a balance between the 2 forces of light and darkness in earthly life.

Thus the second civilisation stood at the opposite pole from the first. The ancient Indian cherished religion and openness to the spiritual. The Persian moved to conquest of the earth. One attitude was directed to the heavens, the other to the inner and the earthly. We see the contrast between the 1 and the 2 - between Unity and Duality.

#### THE EGYPTO-CHALDEAN EPOCH

In the third post-Atlantean civilisation, the Egypto-Chaldean or Assyrian-Babylonian-Chaldaio-Egyptian-Hebrew epoch (3000 B.C.-747 B.C.) there appeared the conception of the divine Trinity-Osiris, Isis and Horus-the prototypes of all human experience.

Now the Earth was looked upon as a material reflection of the Divine measures of the stars. Man felt he could mediate between the 2 through the arts and the science of geometry. With the development of his soul body, he sought to act on earth in such a way that after death he could unite with supersensible beings whose action in the material world he knew in life.

In the Mysteries of this period there was a union between the whole world of Nature-the primal concern of the ancient Persians and the world of the spiritual inwardness of man. Only in the Mystery-centres did man have direct connection with the supersensible world, but there was still belief that the human being came from that world and would return to it. Human sciences arose by means of research into the spiritual laws behind the material world.

This civilisation was inaugurated by the initiate historically called Hermes, whose mission was to see that the ancient Egyptians prepared themselves for companionship with the Spirit of Light. Hermes showed that man's task was to bring down the heavens into number, measure and weight (At present we experience an echo of this in an increasing interest in the technique of numbers)

In Chaldea and Assyria especially there developed the science of mathematics, applied on the one hand to the observation of the stars (astronomy and astrology) and on the other to architecture and the industrial arts.

In the course of ages the guidance of the civilisations passed from higher to lower-ranking Beings, the 3rd civilisation being under the guidance of the Angels and of semi-divine laggard beings known as Luciferic Angels. Man gradually evolved from more spiritual states of consciousness to increased awareness of the external world, and so there was some decline of the hereditary clairvoyance towards the end of the 3rd civilisation epoch. This epoch paved the way for the birth of conscience and the growth of individuality.

#### THE GRECO-ROMAN CIVILISATION

In the fourth post-Atlantean civilisation, the Greco-Roman epoch (747 B.C. - 1413 A.D.) man becomes independent of spiritual guidance. Left more to himself, he became self-sufficient and self-aware and felt more at home in the physical world. In fact the 4th civilisation was the time of deepest descent into the material (See Four-Number of Earthly Things). There was no knowledge of the spiritual worlds except through the Mystery-centres and myths. The Mysteries were concerned with the secrets of the Sun and their connection with the human Ego.

The 2nd (Persian) civilisation had been one of Will, and the 3rd (Egypto-Chaldean) one of Feeling. The 4th (Greco-Roman) civilisation added the power of Thinking to Willing and Feeling. Thus Theosophia gave place to Philosophia and spiritual consciousness began to withdraw into an intellectual consciousness. The spiritual world came to be spoken of as the "world of the shades" and life after death seemed shadowy and unreal.

In place of the old clairvoyance man developed an awareness of his creative ability, artistic imagination, powers of intellect and moral judgment. No longer dependent upon the Spiritual world, he grew to self-conscious self-independence and gained

the power to say "I" to himself.

Essentially artists and lovers of beauty, the ancient Greeks sought to realise the Divine through the Human in the form of beauty. Producing in wonderful works of art a perfect image of man in the outer material world, they led the world for thousands of years in sculpture, drama and philosophy. In the 4th-epoch the Ego lit up within the Intellectual or Mind soul.

In the ancient Persian Mysteries the central theme was the battle of the light and dark forces in man. The Egyptian-Babylonian epoch was concerned with the shaping of life on earth and after death.

To the Greek epoch belong the Orphic, Dionysian, Delphic, Eleusinian and Pythagorean Mysteries, which were directed toward harmony with the cosmos, toward achieving accord between man's knowledge and action and the powers of creation.

The temple of Hellas was the expression of a new experience of music and geometry. Evidence of the geometrical trend is seen in early Aegean pottery which shows a geometrical style in the use of the swastika, the Cross, the triangle, the circle and the vertical and horizontal line. About 7 or 8 centuries B.C. there awakened in the Greeks a keener sense of number, measure and time, and in 776 B.C. they began with their calendar, dating it from the first Olympiad. In the Pythagorean Mysteries the harmony of cosmos and earth in the laws of nature was understood. (See articles on Pythagoras and the Pythagorean Community in "Encyclopaedia of Numbers")

The people of the 4th civilisation stood between the old divine guidance and the entrance of earthly intelligence into the human ego. Conscious thinking was born and the Intellectual soul awakened. When man was in danger of losing all knowledge of the spiritual world-of his origin, there came the turning point of time- there occurred the Event, veiled in deepest mystery and of decisive importance for humanity, for the earth and its future states:

the incarnation and death on the Cross of Christ Jesus.

At this point of evolution the Sun-Being Whom we call the Christ united Himself with the Earth-evolution, bestowing through the Deed on Golgotha the power for each human being to regain, through his own individual effort all that was lost to him through his descent into matter- this turning point in man's evolution was the pivot upon which the great cycles of the evolution of the civilisations turned, through the Mystery of Golgotha.

Writing of the special nature of the 4th civilisation epoch, Hans Liebstoekl in "The Secret Sciences" refers to the mystery of the 4 and the 7. He points to the 4 as forming, as it were, the bridge between the 2 threes, a lower and a higher. In the 4, the reckoning and grouping come to a rest or pause, for one group (1,2,3) is to the left and another (5,6,7) is to the right. It thus contains the essential elements of the two triads that are in the 7, and is as it were, soaked with the content of both triads, the preceding and the following.

"Hence the fourth phase of evolution of the Post-Atlantean culture has a quite unique position, for the fifth that follows it repeats the third that precedes it, the sixth the preceding second, and the following seventh the preceding first; and above and below the mystic space round the number 4, combinations of the 5 and the 3, the 6 and the 2, the 7 and the 1, can easily be thought out.

"The Mystery of Golgotha is thus a central event in the whole history of mankind and of the earth... The 4 four saves the two triads of the past and the future, in that it connects them, anchors them and binds them into the unity of the seven".

In the old Mysteries, the Sun Logos, Christ, held the central place. In ancient India He was referred to as Vishvakarman, the "Light of the World". In Persia he was Ormuzd; in the Zend-Avesta it was said of Him that He would descent to Earth, overcome age, death, decay and create free decision, and when the time is ripe for the resurrection of the dead he would have victory of

life. In the Egypto-Chaldean epoch He was called Oriris; for Moses He was the "I am". In the Greco-Roman epoch He was Apollo.

Before the descent of Christ to the earth, spirit could only approach men from without. Man's own "I" or Ego had not become active. After the Mystery of Golgotha, a spiritual germ, the Ego, became active within each individual man and woman. As already stated Christ came to earth at the middle point of the evolution of the human soul, when it had reached its lowest descent from the supersensible to the material. Through the Christ-impulse the human soul has begun to ascend to spiritual knowledge.

The profoundly-transforming influence of the Creative Spirit of the universe is working upon the spiritual, psychic and physical being of man. Because a supersensible Being united Himself with the Earth, there has been born in every soul, as it were, a latent power which can be brought into consciousness and activity by the human being himself. The Christ Being uniting Himself with humanity since the Resurrection, dwells within the Earth-existence, within the evolution of humanity. We are living in the 5th epoch of culture which may be called the Germanic, English-American culture (1413 A.D. - 3573 A.D.) Its chief task is the development of conscious thinking, ego-consciousness, the scientific mastery of the material world, and freedom.

#### THE FIFTH CIVILISATION EPOCH

In the 15th-century the faculties by which men could have direct consciousness of the spiritual world were finally withdrawn in discoveries. A state of soul which is object-conscious began to develop the secrets of the physical world based on inductive thought and direct sense experience. Early in this epoch Columbus discovered America, Galileo constructed the first telescope, Copernicus pronounced a new astronomical system, Drake made his voyages. In order to see the sense-world clearly man had to be temporarily blinded to the spiritual world.

That goal has now been reached. He needs to evolve further, by facing in full consciousness the data given both by the senses and by the spirit. Man's thinking has to be developed to an understanding of the supersensible background of the material world, of human history, and of himself as a spiritual being. This is the civilisation of the development of the Consciousness or Spiritual-Soul, the kernel of human consciousness and the highest manifestation of the ego.

The human being now seeks to become aware of his own individual ego or spirit. This occurs when thinking becomes the expression of his own individuality, not dependent upon public opinion. Man seeks to control his feelings through reason and insofar as he is successful he has less need of outer laws and conventions.

Though two further civilisation-epochs follow ours, the present is the decisive one. In his battle with the forces of evil man learns that in the Christ Being he has the helper who will enable him to transform evil into good.

The tendency of our age has been to place the emphasis on Jesus of Nazareth, the Man and His Teachings, rather than on the Christ, the all-embracing cosmic Being Who dwelt for 3 years from the Baptism to the Crucifixion- in the physical human body of Jesus. The Mystery of Golgotha - the death of the loftiest Divine Being in a human body, and His Resurrection in an immortal spiritualized body free from all mineral substance - is indeed of the most supreme importance in all cosmic evolution.

What Christ achieved in the body of Jesus of Nazareth can only be accomplished in mankind as a whole after aeons of time. It will take the whole earth evolution to bestow on the human race the inner spiritual principle through which man is a microcosmic image of God, namely the "I" or Ego.

Another planetary evolution will be needed before the "I" can completely penetrate and spiritualize what is now the soul body. In a further planetary evolution the life body or formative forces body will be spiritualised. In the far-off period when

Christianity—which contains the fundamental wholeness of all the religions of the world—will be fully understood, man will become an image of Jesus of Nazareth when there dwelt in him the Christ Being in every part of his life and physical body. At present the spiritualising work of the Ego has begun and a small part of the 3 bodies is spirit-permeated. The future task of civilisation as a whole is to become reunited with the Spiritual.

#### THE SIXTH CIVILISATION EPOCH

The Sixth Post-Atlantean Epoch will be in a certain sense the fruit of what we have to develop in the way of spiritual civilisation. It will be the "resurrection" of the Second or Ancient Persian. In this epoch, called "Philadelphia" the social and the anti-social will confront each other in a marked degree. It is the age of the true spiritual life of wisdom and of love. Spiritual wisdom acquired in the Fifth Epoch should become the impulse of love in the Sixth age.

Man should become independent and in freedom show love towards other human beings. He should have found the individual "I" within him in a higher degree, so that external factors fail to work upon him.

#### THE SEVENTH CIVILISATION EPOCH

The imprint of the first epoch is to be mirrored in the 7th in a transformed and higher stage of evolution. This epoch, called "Laodicea" in the Apocalypse, will have as the centre of its destiny the fight of the denial of the future, i.e. hopelessness, against the Christian affirmation of the future—against Hope. This is stated in St. John's Revelation.

In this "resurrection" of the First or Ancient Indian Epoch, the test for mankind will consist in overcoming the temptation to rest content with riches from the past, otherwise evolution will be at a standstill.

The evolution of human consciousness was a kind of contraction of awareness. Originally man had a direct clairvoyant perception of the supersensible

world, but gradually this awareness has contracted, so that now he looks out at the world through his senses, seeing only the material.

Since the Mystery of Golgotha the process has been reversed: Man is evolving towards a new kind of awareness of the supersensible worlds. In the grandiose picture of the future of man given by Rudolf Steiner in "Outline of Occult Science" (Chapter 4) and "The Apocalypse" (Chapter 10) it is clear that the number 7 governs the whole of evolution, just as the tone in music progresses from octave to octave.

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