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Framing the Tree: The Lightning Flash & the Three Triads

The framework of the Spirit Tree is based on rhythm and relationship. The primary rhythms are those of the sun, moon, and stars. The main relationships are discerned in the rotational patterns of the Three Wheels and in the descending/ascending model of polarities and triads known as the Lightning Flash. The Lightning Flash or Zigzag pattern provides the vertical sequence of the ten Spheres (Figure 1), which latter are best approached initially through sacred number.

Engaging sacred number as a means of experiencing primal principles was widely practiced in esoteric or mystery circles in the ancient world (The most recognized and influential of these ~ though by no means the earliest ~ is the Pythagorean School). The following summary is necessarily dense, even meditative, for its purpose is not to give lengthy explanations of the intellectual meanings or historical developments of numbers, but to provide a ground of theory for experiencing them within various practical contexts such as the Zigzag and the Triads.

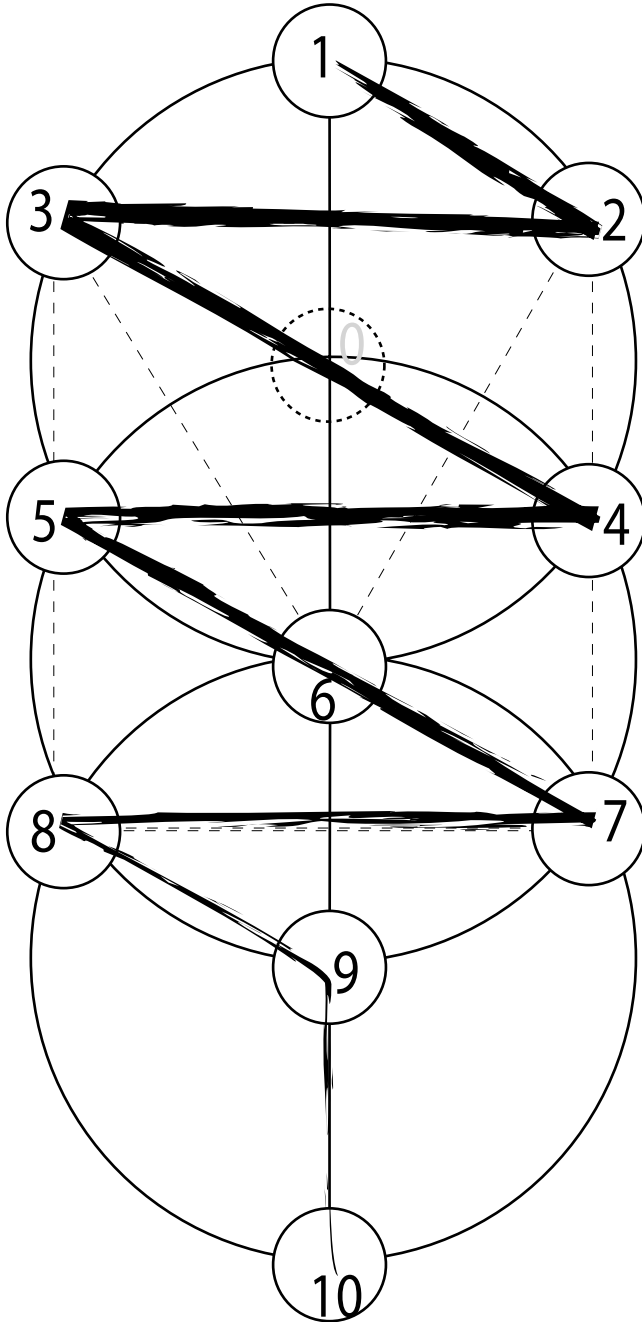


Figure 1: The Lightning Flash

One

One is the Source of all, the point of origination, the beginning. In cosmic terms, One is the first swirlings of creation ~ the nebula. It is something appearing where nothing was. One is the creative spark of being, the original burst of creative force. One is ultimate unity, it is The One.

One is the sphere of originating universal light. It is that which generates reality ~ the worlds and realms ~and that to which all returns. It is the aim of spiritual traditions to link consciousness and being with this ultimate Source.

The universal geometric symbol of One is the point or dot. ¹

Two

Two is the number of basic polarity and dichotomy, the principle of opposites. Two is an extension or expression of the original creative burst. It is outgoing, originating power, Two is first polarization or vertical polarity, an extension of the Source. It is the universal axis or spindle of creation. It is thus streaming power focused and directed, the force or energy of creation. (Two relates to the splitting of the atom, atomic fission and a certain kind of nuclear power).

In another sense, Two is the streaming utterance, the primal shout of ecstasy or the primordial laugh, which contains all Wisdom in potential. Wisdom is gained through experience, the range of which is traditionally given form in the constellations or signs of the zodiac. The latter represent both the spectrum of human experience available through incarnation, and an accelerated cycle of Wisdom training or initiation. The zodiac is a polar or dyadic pattern in that it consists of six pairs of opposites that become active along a pair of axes (the horizon and zenith/nadir lines).

The shape of the numeral 2 is formed of a crescent or arc and straight line, representing two basic polar forces, receptive

(crescent) and active.² The universal geometric symbol of Two is the line (or two connected points).

Three

Three is first form, the triangle, the first shape. It relates to the triangular vulva, signifying the gate of entry into incarnation. Three is thus first limitation, the containment or envelopment of force, and by extension temporal and physical limitation or structure.

Three is also the number of synthesis, of a third arising out of the conjunction of One and Two ~ Three is thus linked to birth and generation. Three is that which underpins or stands beneath three-dimensional physical form. It is also first completion, as in a circuit or return to source. The triangle is a universal sign of the world mountain (apex up), and the cosmic cave (apex down). The Mountain and Cave are places where we contact primal forms, shapes and powers (i.e. stars and constellations ~ bright powers of the sky; and stones and springs ~ deep powers of the earth) that link to the Source through the OverRealm and UnderRealm. Three is specially connected to the number Ten, as can be seen in the perfect triangle of the Pythagorean tetractys. (Figure 2)

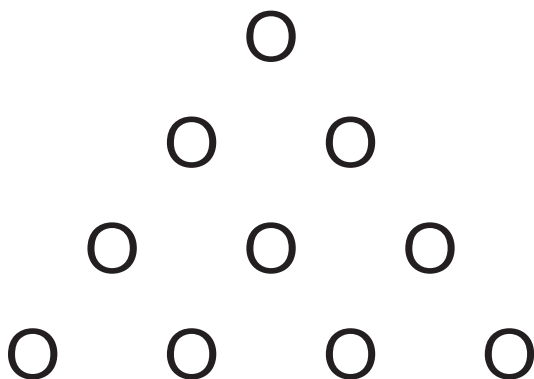


Figure 2

In architecture and building, the triangle is recognized as the strongest shape.

The shape of the numeral 3, consisting of dual crescents, suggests the forms of hills, waves and breasts.

Four

Whereas Three is strong, Four is stable. The tetrahedron or three-sided, four-pointed, pyramid is the first possible three-dimensional form.³ Four is thus a number of depth, stability, substance and support. This is why there are four magical Elements in a balanced world or psyche. Through the balancing or harmonizing principle, Four simulates the unity of One, and thus reflects or resonates the Source. Four is therefore the number of bestowal, of seeking balance through giving. This is why sacred lore mentions four universal or primordial rivers that radiate and bestow life and bounty upon the world; and four winds that carry influences. Four is stable and generally beneficent and thus is connected to the power of Sovereignty through rule and order.

The numerical shape of 4 is a cross, suggesting equilibration (the closed, or northern, arm is equivalent to the “narrow gate,” giving passage between levels or regions of reality). Note the similarity to the planetary sign Jupiter, the great Giver.

The universal geometric symbol of Four is the square.

Five

Five is a number of uncertainty, removal or reversal. Five changes meaning depending on perspective (consider the general meaning of the two ritual Pentagrams, one apex up, the other reversed), which links it to ambivalent forms such as fire and the serpent, the dragon, and so on. The most obvious representation of Five is in the human hand, but it is only slightly less obvious in the overall human form of two legs, two arms and head/torso.

Five is the four elements plus the quintessence, which is the catabolic or dissolving power that draws the four into itself resolving them into one. Five is thus often associated with death, the withdrawal of elemental structure, or the reduction of form into its spiritual essence or enlivening power. Five is the breaking down or removal of structures, particularly four-fold structures. This includes the breaking down of (false) belief systems, which are supported and justified by the four-fold psyche (emotionally, mentally, Passionately or sexual-energetically, and physically).

The numeric sign 5 suggests either a meander (two crescents) or a crescent and angle.

Six

Six is the doubling of Three. It is often depicted as two interlaced triangles, which can be seen as a conjunction of the sacred signs of cave and mountain, or the fusion of female and male. Six is thus a number of harmonization or mediation of opposites. In addition, the six-rayed star or asterisk sign, already found on the walls of Paleolithic caves and later stylized as the labrys or butterfly axe, expresses the harmonization of the six directions: above, below, before, behind, left, right. As a radiant sign, it could also represent a star or the sun. Rock crystals, signifying solidified light in archaic magical traditions, have an obvious hexagonal structure. In modern gemology the six crystal systems (or lattices) are based on variations of a six-fold directional model. Other forms related to Six are the cube, the cubic cross and cubic stone, the throne, the altar, the centre stone or keystone.

The shape of the numeral 6 (2 or more crescents conjoined, see 3 and 9) suggests a spiral, a radiation or concentration of force, a journey to a centre, a merging with the flow of inner/universal time ~ eternal in nature~ transcending or withdrawing from outer time.

Seven

Seven is the revealing of a hidden centre, the manifesting of the heart of the three-dimensional (six armed) cross. And although it signifies formless power objectified or earthed (that is, removed from the central position), the number Seven still expresses certain properties of the hidden Centre, notably, attraction and repulsion (one might say its centrifugal and centripetal forces), which often assume polar or sexual forms. Seven is thus linked with the objects of the Quest: the Graal, the Stone, the Lover and so on. The Quest is itself bound up with experiences of attainment (victory, triumph, exhalation), and climax (ecstasy). In sacred lore there are often seven stages or levels to the Quest, generally linked to the planets, the seven levels, stars, tones, etc.

The numeral 7 consists of an angularity: two contrasts meeting in a “corner” or unity point.

Eight

The numeric sign 8 is the well-known infinity sign, or reduplicating loop. The principle of constant reduplication suggests mental linking processes and the idea of Resonance or the perception of “correspondences” through the harmonic properties of creation. Harmonics implies raising and lowering of energy or of radiating/vibrating at several levels simultaneously. Ideas of honor, renown and glory arise out of ancient perceptions of radiating inner light or holy fire, shining especially from the head, as the nimbus (which is a pre-Christian magical form). The shape of 8 further suggests dual serpents such as those that wind around the caduceus or staff of Hermes, the Greek god of Magic and communication, or dragons of myth and lore that writhe beneath the earth or in the stars.

Eight also relates to the principle of the octave, constantly regenerating itself, and the ancient idea of the Ogdoad, the eighth planetary day or day of rebirth and recreation.

Nine

Nine is a number of birth and the womb and thus of form-giving or imaging. Its connection with the nine-month cycle of conception, pregnancy and birth also links it to ideas of pre-incarnation, to inner or psychic realms. Months are lunar time cycles, so Nine has a strong link to the Moon (which seems to grow like a child in the womb). Nine is a number of strength and solid foundation because it is represented by a triple triangle (see Three above: the triangle is the strongest shape).

Nine is connected with the ancient perception of a triad of sacred presences in each of the Three Realms. Thus the references in sacred lore to nine maidens, nine angelic orders, the nine hosts or orders of elemental beings in the tarot (as represented by the number cards).

The numeric shape of 9, which shares or complements the form of 6, suggest a spiral journey inwards and outwards.

Ten

Ten is the number of living and manifesting, and in that sense it fuses and expresses all the other numbers. Most obviously represented in the two hands, it expresses completion, totality, and also the Power of Making. As the number of Life (9, birth, +1), Ten is the expression of the earth and the universe in its inner and outer aspects.

The Pythagorean tetratys presents Ten principles in a triangular (primordial) pattern. This is a way of saying that Ten represents matter and individual beings in their primal state, not necessarily their currently perceived or expressed forms (which are more closely linked to Nine).

Ten is thus ultimately the paradisaal matrix, the potential or original perfect world, so ubiquitous in sacred lore. This ties into ideas of primordial elemental forces and beings (which include faery beings, elementals, certain types of angels, regents and

living ancestral energies or memories), as builders, sustainers and recreators of paradisaal patterns..

The form of the numeral 10 shows a fusion of Axis (extension) and Sphere (possibility, potential), which marks it as a number of creation or expression.

The Mystery of Zero

Zero is not a number, it is the absence of number. It thus signifies Non-being, the Void, pure potential, total emptiness, infinity. Our English word Zero comes from the Greek zephyr, meaning the West Wind. West is where the sun sets, the place of darkness coming, or light descending. It is, significantly, the place of death and transition. The numeric sign 0 represents emptiness and wholeness, fullness and the Void. Mystically it is Divine Darkness, the Dark Cloud, the Mist of Unknowing. The circle or Zero sign is also a sign of completion, (which can be connected to knowledge or knowing), and is also the shape of the vowel O, which is associated with the element of Earth and the northern direction (the direction of wisdom and the knowledge of deep things).

Zero represents Reality beyond all imagery, all concept and thought, and is known by unknowing, or by stripping away all images, thoughts, philosophical structures and assumptions. Paradoxically, Zero is knowledge through annihilation of awareness or Unknowing (this is somewhat in the sense that sexual union is an annihilation of separateness). It is a union that unmakes the self-identity and is thus utterly transforming.

Engaging Sacred Number

The decimal system ~ obviously resonant with the human form (the number of fingers or toes) though not necessarily derived from it ~ overlaid on the geometry of the Spirit Tree gives the pattern of the Lightning Flash. (Figure 1) Within this pattern can also be discerned three triads, which function according to the magical principles of polarity and synthesis (dual polar energies emerge out of, or are reconciled in, a third synthesizing one, Figure 3).

There are thus two primary ways of magically experiencing the Spheres of the Spirit Tree through sacred number:

- i) through the Lightning flash pattern as a total sequence.
- ii) through triadic patterns of polarity and synthesis.

The Spirit Tree pattern can be overlaid on the human body, with which it resonates.

The Lightning Slash

Familiarize yourself with the Ten Numbers and Zero by reading thorough the passages above, noting any additional realizations that might come to you, then proceed, as described below and on the CD, to experience the Lightning Flash moving through your energy field or aura. Do not dwell mentally on each point of the Lightning Flash or the meaning of the numbers, simply experience each as a field of meaning or energy that you feel as a whole, like a spark or flash of energy.

Say each number to yourself or out loud as you envision the sequence.

0 Enter the Deep Peace;

1 A burst of originating light appears over your head;

2 flashes down to your left ear,

3 flashes across to you right ear;

4 streaks across your throat to your left shoulder;
5 and over to you right shoulder;
6 into your heart;
7 down and over to your left hip;
8 across to your right hip;
9 into your genitals;
10 and finally streams down into the Earth where it joins with the secret flame at the centre of the planet.

Now reverse the pattern, from Ten to Zero.

The Three Triads

1) Proceed as above, but pause after each triad for deepening participation. This should be an acknowledgment and awareness of activating energy patterns, not an intellectual effort.

The first triad (1-2-3) signifies primordial originating energies;

The second triad (4-5-6) interrelates energies of stability, uncertainty and harmony;

The third triad (7-8-9) is concerned with interactions of attracting, illuminating and form giving energies.

2) Allow the Three Triads to fold into one stream of light or energy in your genitals⁴ from where it pours into the earth.

3) Then let them unfold into Zero by reversing the sequence given above.

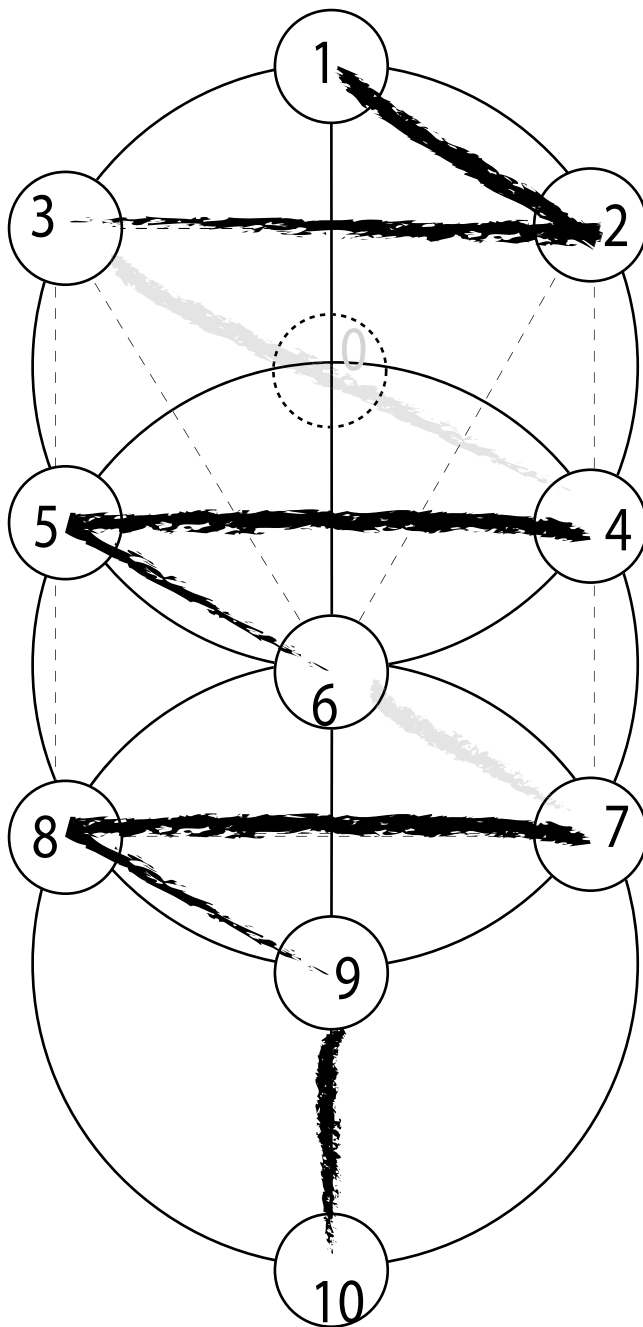


Figure 3: The Triads

Notes

¹ The numeric sign 1 was not originally or intentionally a line, but a representation of the human finger (the most basic or primal counting system). In the Sumerian numeral system, One was represented by a wedge, which must be considered a stylization of the dot or point.

² There are four prime components of the numeric signs.

i) The crescent, which signifies change, and flow (possibly derived from the Lunar cresecent)

ii) The angle, signifying polarity, conjunction of opposites, focusing of polar energies into a central point.

iii) Circle, relating to non-being, Mystery, completeness, cyclic or rotational energies.

iv) Line, which expresses singularity, unity, and also axial power or polar force.

³ Excluding the sphere, which relates to the number Ten and contains all forms.

⁴ The area of the genitals (and the base of the spine) is associated with foundational creative energy in the human body.

