

Thoughts on Number

By Herbert Shapiro, presented Summer Studies 2008

We are, we are told, Eternal born Soul. One integrally, and Real essentially, we enter here, into a world of magnitude and extension, mind and body. At first, we are ignorant of our natural place, then, incrementally perhaps, we shake off some of the forgetful sleep of non remembrance and the confusion it brings. We then look around and begin to see. This world, we realize has gifted us place. This mind body, to be sure in this view a descent, is also a gifted place. We, now living in the world, have come to see, that we are 'from' that Real, and with a kind of intuitive certainty of the possibility of actual order and beauty, it behooves us to put right the disorders we find here; human society struggling as it does, as do we. As we begin to know, the quest to right and order the world can -if it does- become a quest to right and order ourselves. We turn, orienting in that righting, toward what is good for us, perhaps at first. If understanding furthers toward what is good in itself, then we can perhaps, see good for more than just self. The righting and the finding are, in this view, part of our inborn birthright. The Good, our good, our unity, what can even be called the God within, our essential nature, is imprinted on us by deep spiritual conception. Pure intelligence formed with our very Soul, includes Soul's life and vision, powers, love, remembrance, capacity, sciences, arts and all order of structure that will become our life. That there is a reasoned science that helps lead toward the truths so promised, a science so conceived that leads to deeper intellection, knowledge by identity and more (means hither to unknown) is information passed to us by the wise of the past.

From ancient Egypt and Asia Minor to Greece, from Orpheus, Hermes, Zoroaster and the Magi, through Pythagoras, and Plato to Plotinus (where we stop for this consideration) a wisdom knowledge and science of number has been passed down to us, containing real, vital information about us and the world in which we live. The philosophies of these teachers are already arcane and no longer understood by modern consciousness. These philosophies contain within them the esoteric understanding that the world we live in is resident in a divinity that is One, the source of all; a Unity of divine Being, Idea, principle and powers. Further, the world thus understood, is an organized instantiation of Ideas, Powers, and immaterial Intelligences that form and regulate the world. These ancient philosophers assert that we can begin to grasp these ideas as mathematical intelligence: number; in various levels, as symbolized, in pattern, and processes to form geometries of existence as the world, -and subjectively, as the deep intellectual and moral structure of our own minds.

Plotinus' "The Enneads" is inspired by and are commentary on Plato. Platonic science understands the world as Objective Idea, born of and rooted in the Good or the One. The Ideas, or Forms, manifest, structure, sustain and guide the Universe. The Ideas, the deep universal intelligences are Real, Eternal and are with Power. How the Ideas are in the One, how they come out of the One, how they structure existence, how they are structured as such, are some of the problems that the ancient philosophies see fit to address and try to answer. In the Platonic/Plotinian view the Forms are Number. The deep Intelligences, are not simply symbolized by Number, they are Number and more. The problem of how the unified, simply whole One gives rise to the multiple Forms themselves, and how the Forms unfold in and as a variegated universe is a fundamental problem for any philosophy engaged in trying to understand the world and man's place in it. It is sought to be solved in this view, through understanding the world 'Here' and the world 'There' as Mathematical Ideas of number and it's various expressions.

Science, understood here as Reasoning on the Real, uses symbol as its medium of meaning. Number is most effective symbol. When we seek to relate by representing one order to another, or even parts of this order, in meaning terms, we symbolize. In symbols, equivalences either real or devised are used. Language, music, writing, drawing, arts, the sciences use number or its products in their symbolizing. Number as symbolic of itself, is peculiar in that the numbers we use as symbols are close to and continuous with what is symbolized. The unseen world of the Real, 'There', and the world of the sensible, 'Here', are capable of intersecting through number, intimate through closeness with their origin. The world as shown forth, sprung from principle, is the most natural of symbols to represent that principial world. It is number in its symbol forms that give accounting of this world, its parts, and hopefully its source. We are well aware, that there is almost no experience in this world without number or its products. Number being in fact the unifying concept of what we call forms in substance, life 'Here'.

Anthony's work is a sophisticated Symbolic representation of this mathematics, of both Plato's and Plotinus' deep philosophic work. The astounding nature of the Astrological Charts and their capacity for disclosing the workings of the Cosmos ever thrill the imagination and enlighten. Anthony unfolded a world view that permits us to schematize, and aspire to start to make sense of what the Platonic masters were trying to impart: How a Transcendent Unity becomes a multifaceted universe containing all that we

know of the objective visible world and to begin to articulate an understanding of the principles that structure the world.

3

For Plato, and this is the cause that Plotinus takes up, the Ideas, of and in The One, are most real, not visible, and are knowable by a deep intelligence beyond Reason. They are the causes of the structured orderings of the phenomenal world in all its processes. Their powers are the structuring, and are in the structuring. The Arithmetization of the Forms, is Plato's attempt to 'save' phenomena, balancing as he does between chaos of sheer multiplicity and a static sense of motionless Eternal Being. For Plato echoing the Pythagorean view, number and its geometrics – circles, lines, angles, triangles, squares, are not simply quantity and measure, but carry the qualitative intelligence of the invisible transcendent Form – Ideas or, Essential or preEssential Number. Phenomena and any human mind apprehending the phenomena, are the products of the Form/Numbers. As such to the extent that we, as human Souls, participate in this numbered world, morality and knowledge are possible. Life itself is possible because of the power of the forms and their unfoldment.

“On Number”, begins with the supposition that our suffering equates with multiplicity. For us this is our grasping of the multiplicity of the unlimited infinity of non-being. Now, as we have become manifold, we have forgotten ourselves and tend toward the multiple, toward extension and magnitude (inherent existence if you will). We live this way, extended out from ourselves. As such we suffer. To the extent that we retain ourselves, our unity, our simplicity, to the extent we remain in ourselves, suffering ends. This return to the unified, to Essence, is possible, as we are part of the Cosmos. Knowledge, evolution and development are now possible. We are educated by the Universe and by our participation in it. The Mathematical forms in mind and those in the world are both sourced from the same transcendent Forms. This sourcing, at once makes possible any knowledge in and of the world, but, closer still speaks to a capacity for intimacy with the inner being of the world.

It is not quite expected at the outset, however the intuition tantalizes, that a timeless order, belonging to the Unity and Being of the universe, the Divinity, becomes available through the Mathematical Forms and our training in them.

A door opens in to this real world, through number.

Science as such now, postulates no principal level of number. It seeks through and uses mathematics to try to find a unifying idea to incorporate all. Unified field understanding, becomes an attempt, here to grasp there. For science, there is no there to be grasped. A problem. The inversion of the intuition precludes the end. General relativity speaking of the vast, quantum

mechanics of the small, speak different languages. Through this kind of science we cannot find the one language we intuitively know is there, the deep coherence. Perhaps we have not thought deeply enough. The mathematics have not come to the fore. But whatever this unified theory will be, it will not bring that sense of universal sympathy, the non-dual basis of our

4

life, the ground of our astrological existence. This preexistent Unity, Forms, Ideas, Number, in non-dual relation, permits us to live in a world that is ordered.

Our evolution is our ordering in a world amenable to order. The Good Truth and Beauty of the Absolute conceived this way is now available to us. We just have to be still.