

# Gematria: Magic/Magick

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## GEMATRIA - Alphabets and Numbers

All the alphabets from India to the Atlantic have been derived from one very ancient phonetic alphabet known as North Semitic, which was developed more than 3000 years ago in the Middle East, North Semitic gave rise to the various European alphabets, via Phoenician, and the Semitic and Indian alphabets, by way of Aramaean.

## FIVE SACRED ALPHABETS

There are now five Sacred Alphabets in the Western world. These are, in order of age: Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Deva-nagari [Sanskrit] and the northern Runes. The general alphabet most widely in use throughout the world today is the Roman or Latin alphabet, which is that used for this article. The second most widely used alphabet is the Arabic script.

Hebrew has 22 characters, plus variant versions of five letters, which are used at the end of words. Although all Hebrew letters are consonants, three of them, Yodh, Heh and Wav, are sometimes used as vowels.

Arabic has 28 letters, all consonants, but three, Ha, Wav and Ya, are sometimes used as vowels.

The Greek alphabet has 24 characters, including 7 vowels and 17 consonants.

Deva-nagari, the script used for writing Sanskrit, has 48 letters of which 14 are vowels and 34 are consonants.

There are 32 Anglo-Saxon runes; but only 16 Norse Runes. The oldest runic alphabet is Teutonic, which has 24 characters. Runes have not been used for literary or everyday purposes for about a thousand years, their use being confined to magic, as it was when they were first developed a little less than 2000 years ago.

## FROM PICTOGRAMS TO PHONETIC LETTERS

Western alphabets are phonetic, i.e., each letter represents either a vowel or a consonant. Phonetic alphabets are the latest stage in the development of writing.

In Mesopotamia about 5000 years ago, the earliest form of writing, which used pictograms or sketches of actual objects, was developed by traders to record their business transactions. Because traders were the only people who did much travelling in those days, their idea of writing quickly spread and was adopted by other sections of society, such as the priesthood and the military. Egyptian pictograms are called hieroglyphs. After pictograms, syllabic writing was developed, in which each symbol represented the sound of a syllable.

It took about a thousand years for the idea of writing to reach China. The Chinese and other East Asian writing systems evolved into something very different from those of the Western world. For they stayed much closer to the pictographic stage of writing.

Chinese is called a logographic system, which uses symbols of pictorial origin to represent ideas in the Chinese language. It has the advantage of providing one common written language that is used by the speakers of all the hundreds of different Chinese languages and dialects. Chinese has a major disadvantage. You have to learn by heart more than 10,000 different characters to read a daily newspaper and 40,000 characters in order to use a Chinese dictionary. Compare this with modern Western phonetic alphabets, the most elaborate of which, Sanskrit's Deva-nagari script, uses 48 characters.

## WAYS OF KEEPING COUNT

### [1] TALLIES AND ROMAN NUMERALS

The oldest method of keeping count of things is tallying. What you do is either bend over a finger for each number or make a stroke on the ground with a stick. When you keep tally in its most primitive form, you end up with a row of strokes, something like this:

I I

This method does not work very well, as you end up with something that is as no easier to recognise at a glance as the number of sheep in a field, or the number of sacks on a cart.

Somewhere around 3000 b.c.e., some genius got the idea of using the fingers of one hand to record how many times you bent down all five fingers of the other hand; or scratching a stroke in across every fifth upright stroke in one way or another. Scratched in the dirt or on a damp clay tablet, the result would now look something like this:

I I I I V I I I I X I I I I V I I I I X

It is a lot easier to reckon the number of Vs or Xs at a quick glance, than a row of undifferentiated vertical strokes. In China, the tally system developed into the abacus. While in Rome, it developed into what we now call Roman numerals, e.g.

I	II	III	V	VI	VII	VIII	X
1	2	3	5	6	7	8	10

This method of keeping tally was spread throughout Europe and western Asia by the soldiers and traders of the Roman Empire and the Christian missionaries who followed them. It was the principal system used in England until about 1490. It is still occasionally used today on clocks, as page numbers or for dates. But, nobody would like to do calculations in Roman numerals.

It was so difficult to add or subtract in Roman numerals, multiplication was considered advanced mathematics, while learned scholars wrote elaborate theses on improved ways of doing division. Imagine trying to divide MCLXXVI by XLIX. What is your answer ?

Can you do it without translating into modern numerals ?

In ancient Sumer in Mesopotamia, they tallied in 60s, and developed a different kind of number system. Although cumbersome by modern standards, it did enable them to do remarkably accurate astronomical calculations and predictions of star and planet positions.

## [2] GREEK HEBREW AND ARABIC LETTER-NUMERALS

The Greeks developed another system of keeping count. Not too long after 1000 b.c.e., they decided to use letters of the alphabet as number symbols. The Greeks had got the idea writing and letters from Phoenician traders who had got it from Semitic nations living near the seaboard of the eastern Mediterranean. Now, the Phoenician traders took the idea of using letters as numerals in the opposite direction, and taught it to the Semitic tribes.

In this system, the first letter of the alphabet is used as the numeral One, the second letter as Two and so on, until the ninth letter is assigned to Nine. Then you start on the Tens, assigning the 10th letter to Ten, the 11th letter to 20, and so on, until you reach the 18th letter which is assigned to 90. Then, you count in hundreds, the 19th letter is used as a symbol for 100, the 20th letter for 200 and so until you reach the 27th letter and the number 900.

Hebrew uses all 22 letters of its alphabet plus the 5 variant forms called final letters as its 27 numerals. The Greek alphabet has only 24 letters, so it uses three ancient characters, Digamma or Fau, Qoppa and Tsampi which had dropped out of use as letters as the numerals 6, 90 and 900. The Arabic alphabet has 28 characters, one of which [Ghain] is used a symbol for 1000.

## [3] ARABIC NUMERALS, which were actually invented in India

The symbols of our modern decimal system of numeration are usually called Arabic numerals, because Europeans learned them from the Arabs in the 12th century c.e. Actually, they were invented in India about 1500 years ago. The Indian mathematicians introduced two factors which improved numeration so much that their "positional decimal system" has been universally adopted, except in the inner hardware of computers where "positional binary" is more efficient.

Firstly, the Indian mathematicians used only nine number symbols which are assigned to the digits. Tens and hundreds are signified, not by new symbols, but by shifting the position of the symbol. We know that 123 means a hundred plus twenty plus three. In Roman numerals it would CXXIII. In Hebrew, this would be QKG [Qof Kaf Gimel]; in Greek, RKG [Rho Koppa Gamma]; in Arabic QKG [Qaf, Kha, Jim]. Positional enumeration simplified mathematics enormously and enabled it to develop far beyond anything the ancients had imagined.

Secondly, These geniuses invented the idea of using a symbol to signify Zero. This represented an enormous step forward in human thinking, which we who have grown up with it cannot comprehend. The decimal system was at first rejected in Europe because it seemed irrational nonsense to hard-headed businessmen and scientists to say you could write down nothing.

# MAGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Medieval mystics were quick to perceive the significance of Nothing as a concept. An earlier idea considered appropriate to express the Unmanifest aspect of God had been the Infinite or 'Ain Sof. It was now expanded by renaissance era kabbalists to become the Three Veils of the Unmanifest: 'Ain, 'Ain Sof, 'Ain Sof 'Or, which means Nothing; No Limit; No Limit to the Light.

# NUMERALS AND PHONETIC EQUIVALENTS

Note that the alphabets are here arranged in numerical order. Arabic has a different letter order.

	Greek		Hebrew		Arabic	
1	Alpha	A	'Alef	glottal stop'	'Alif	' glottal stop
2	Beta	B	Beyth	B or V	Ba	B
3	Gamma	G	Gimel	G or J[?]	Jim	J
4	Delta	D	Daleth	D or Dh	Dal	D
5	Epsilon	E short	Heh	H [A]	Ha	H [A]
6	[Digamma]	----	Wav	W [O or U]	Wav	W [O or U]
7	Zeta	Z	Zayin	Z	Za	
8	Eta	E long	Cheyth	Ch [as in loch]	Cha	[loch]
9	Theta	Th	Teyth	T	Ta	T
10	Iota	I	Yodh	Y [I or E]	Ya	Y [I or E]
20	Kappa	K	Kaf	K or Kh[?]	Kaf	K
30	Lambda	L	Lamedh	L	Lam	L
40	Mu	M	Meyim	M	Mim	M
50	Nu	N	Nun	N	Nun	N
60	Ksi	X [KS]	Samek	S	Sin	S
70	Omicron	O short	"Ayin	Ay " pharyngeal	"Ayin	" pharyngeal stop
80	Pi	P	Peh	P or F	Fa	F
90	[Qoppa]	----	Tsaddi	Ts	Tsad	Ts
100	Rho	R	Qof	Q[back K]	Qaf	Q
200	Sigma	S	Reysh	R or Rh[?]	Ra	R
300	Tau	T	Shin	S or Sh	Shin	Sh
400	Upsilon	U	Tav	T or Th	Ta	T
500	Phi	F	Kaf [f]	K	Tha	Th
600	Chi	Ch[loch]	Meyim [f]	M	Kha	Kh
700	Psi	Ps	Nun [f]	N	Dhal	Dh
800	Omega	O long	Peh [f]	P[?] or F	Dhad	D
900	[Tsampi]	----	Tsaddi	Ts	Dza	Dz
1000	----	----	Alef writ large		Ghain	" guttural stop

In some cases, the pronunciation is not able to be expressed adequately in ASCII.

## THE MEASURING OF WORDS

Magicians continue to use the letters of the Sacred Alphabets as numerals, even though Jews, Greeks and Arabs nowadays also commonly use "positional decimal numbers'.

Because each letter of these three alphabets is not only a letter but also a numeral, any word in one of these tongues not only has a meaning and pronunciation, it also has a value or measure. The measuring of words is called Gematria. It is one of the most important techniques of Western magic. It is used far more than many casual students of magic and mysticism ever realise.

In the same way, that we commonly associate words by their meanings; and poets commonly associate words by their sounds; magicians associate words by their measures. The method of gematria is to add the letters of words in those three alphabets to get their measure. There are many ways of analysing the numbers produced by gematria for magical purposes.

## NUMEROLOGY

Unfortunately, the Roman letters which the Western world generally uses does not lend itself to gematria. The craft of Numerology bears a superficial resemblance to Gematria in so far as it adds the letters of names and other words together. It is usually interpreted very differently. There is no universally accepted system of allocating numbers to the letters.

The simplest, most straightforward and by far the commonest system is to number the letters of the 26 letter alphabet [A-Z] in order from 1 to 26.

There have been attempts to use the numeral equivalents of Hebrew, Greek and Arabic for the letters of the Roman alphabet, but this presents many problems, as can readily be seen by an inspection of the above Table. There can be many quite legitimate variants for some letters to the point that, in my opinion, it is folly to attempt it. There is no system that can handle the fact that while there are five vowels in the Roman alphabet, there are seven in the Greek alphabet; and none at all [perhaps three, sort of] in the Hebrew and Arabic alphabets.

Nevertheless, there are systems of cabalistic magic that do use the Roman alphabet, notably those developed by William Gray and , that are magically quite reasonable. I would not discourage anyone from studying them, even if I myself prefer something different.

I always translate any word from a European or other language into Greek or Hebrew. I do not have enough Arabic to be able to work with that language sufficiently accurately unfortunately.

I use gematria in my magic extensively; my personal gematrical dictionary has been built up over nearly fifty years and fills four filing cabinet drawers. It contains something like eight thousand 5" x 8" cards, typed or hand-written on both sides, arranged in numerical order [all numbers from Zero and 1 to 1200, most numbers up to 5000, and many beyond that. Each card can hold up to 40 words in either Hebrew or Greek. It is s-l-o-w-l-y being transferred on to a database. [I need either to win the Lottery; or be given a flatbed scanner with outstandingly good OCR, please? \*grins\*].

I felt it was necessary to put all this down, partly because I felt that many folk on this echo could use some reliable information on what Gematria is and how it came about, before I gave my own gematrical analysis of the word Magic.

## THE GEMATRIA OF MAGIC AND MAGICK

[A] Numerological analysis of the English words: using the system [A-Z::1-26] MAGIC:  $13+1+7+9+3=33=1 \times 3 \times 11$ .  $33 > 6$ . A threefold expression of Magic or knowledge, assuming the 11 is a number signifying magic or knowledge. Magic should be expressed in Body, Mind and Spirit.; a magician should seek full knowledge of Body, Mind and Spirit. The number 6 is referred to the Central Sefirah of the Tree of Life, referred to the Sun and the Self [Holy Guardian Angel]. We should seek to know ourselves through our magic, and from this we achieve knowledge of and conversation with our Holy Guardian Angel. The 33rd degree is referred to Final Meyim, The Cubic Stone; Ice; and the Archangel Mika'El.

MAGICK:  $13+1+7+9+3+11=44$ .  $44 > 8$ .  $1 \times 4 \times 11$ . A fourfold expression of magic, through body [Malkuth]; soul [Yesodh]; intellect [Hodh] and Feelings [Netsach] to resolve them all in Tifareth [the Self]. Magic is achieved through the fourfold Way: To Know; To Will; To Dare and to Be in the Silence. 8 is another number of Magic, for it is referred to Hermes, the Lord of Magic and Messenger of the Gods. Here the Magic is concerned with both Activity and Receptivity in an infinitude of Duality in Unity, for Hermes is, in the 8th Sefirah, androgynous [Mercury of the alchemists]. 8 on its side is infinity.

BTW, 11 is also an expression of duality, but the duality is more hermaphroditic and still requiring to be resolved. The 11th degree is referred to Beyth and to The Magician among the Triumphs Tarocchi; as well as to wisdom AND to folly.

As you can see, it is quite possible to see good things in any number.

MAGIC and MAGICK [Adapting the Greek Gematria to English]:

Magic :  $M40+A1+G3+I10+C?$  [either Kappa20 or Chi600? lets use Chi so we can add a Kappa for MAGICK Magic =  $654 = 1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 109=654 > 15 > 6$  [aha, see Magic above] 654 is the 6th degree of Briyah. [It is too hard to explain in detail why here; degrees are based on cycles of 144 numbers, with 4 subcycles of 36 numbers each].

Magick =  $654+20 = 674 = 1 \times 2 \times 337=674 > 17 > 8$ . Quite coincidentally, we have a similar picture to the A-Z:1-26 model.

Adapting the Hebrew Gematria to English, in one of the way commonly used. [i'll wash my hands later \*grins\*] MAGIC =  $M40+A1+G3+I10+C8 = 62 = 1 \times 2 \times 31 = 62 > 8$ . 62 is 26th degree. 31 is both AL,'El, God; and LA, lo' not. therefore it expresses the gnomic saying We can say "Nothing about God" and the magical formula  $0=0$ . For 8, see above. 26th degree is Peh, The Devil among the Tarocchi, Capricorn and, in our system, Jupiter; in the GD system, Mars [I think]. Lots of energy is expressed in this number.

MAGICK: Adding 20 for the Kaf:  $62=20=82 = 1 \times 2 \times 41 = 82 > 10 > 1$ . A number of underlying materiality with the Unity underlying it. All numbers like this refer to the magical expression, "Kether is in Malkuth and Malkuth is in Kether, but after another manner. " 82nd degree is the 10th in Briyah, i.e. Malkuth and the Earth. This is a very material number to be associated with magic.

I do hope that noone will flame me for pointing out that the physical side of things had a far greater influence on Crowley than it does on most folk. His physical strength and endurance [as a mountain climber] his involvement with chemical means to enlightenment; his sexual excesses, his constant searching for money through his magic [see his magical diaries], all point to the 'earthiness' of his 'Magick.'

"Every magical operation must be earthed" and this number says so, loud and clear.

I hope you have enjoyed my playing the numbers game for a while. In my next post, I will discuss some Greek and Hebrew words associated with Magic. But I might have to wait a day or so. I am going on seventy and all this word processing is bugging my arthritic fingers.

Be blessed as you walk in the Way of the Great Work.