



# **The ‘Great Initiate’ Pythagoras of Samos**

Mathematician, Geometer, Philosopher

# Édouard Schuré

- Édouard Schuré (1841 - 1929) was a French philosopher, poet, playwright, novelist, music critic, and publicist of esoteric literature, 20 years senior to Steiner.
- In 1900, the actress Marie von Sivers came into contact with him because she intended to translate his works into German (***The Great Initiates*** 1889, *The Sacred Drama of Eleusis* and *The Children of Lucifer*).
- Schuré wrote about The Life of Buddha, Rama, Hermes Trismegistus, Socrates, Jesus, Orpheus, Pythagoras and the Delphic mysteries, from which I have drawn information about Pythagoras.

# Schuré meets Steiner

- In 1900, the actress Marie von Sivers came into contact with him because she intended to translate his works into German (**The Great Initiates** 1889, The Sacred Drama of Eleusis and The Children of Lucifer).
- In 1906, she brought about a meeting between Schuré and Steiner at the German Section of the Theosophical Society.
- Schuré was deeply impressed and thought of Steiner as an authentic 'initiate' in line with his **The Great Initiates**.

# Schuré meets Steiner

- After hearing Steiner lecture in Paris for the first time in 1906, Schuré in an ecstatic state ran home and wrote down the entirety of the lecture from memory.
- This first lecture, and the other lectures in the series (which Schuré wrote down) were published as “Esoteric Cosmology”.
- Subsequently, Steiner and von Sivers staged Schuré's esoteric dramas at the following Theosophical Congresses in Berlin and Munich.
- Schuré's **The Children of Lucifer**, served as a precursor of Rudolf Steiner's own esoteric Mystery dramas.

# Pythagoras of Samos (570 to 495 BC)



- Pythagoras was born to a wealthy family on the Greek island of Samos early in the 4<sup>th</sup> Post-Atlantean Epoch centred around the Greek and Roman civilisations when the human Comprehension Soul was to be further developed.

# Philosopher – ‘lover of wisdom’

- He travelled widely in his youth, visiting Egypt and other places seeking knowledge of earlier Epochs:
- 1<sup>st</sup> PA Epoch – Indian civilisation when human Etheric body was being further developed.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> PA Epoch – Persian civilisation (Zarathustra) when human Astral body further developed.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> PA Epoch – Egyptian & Chaldean civilisations when the human Sentient Soul further developed.

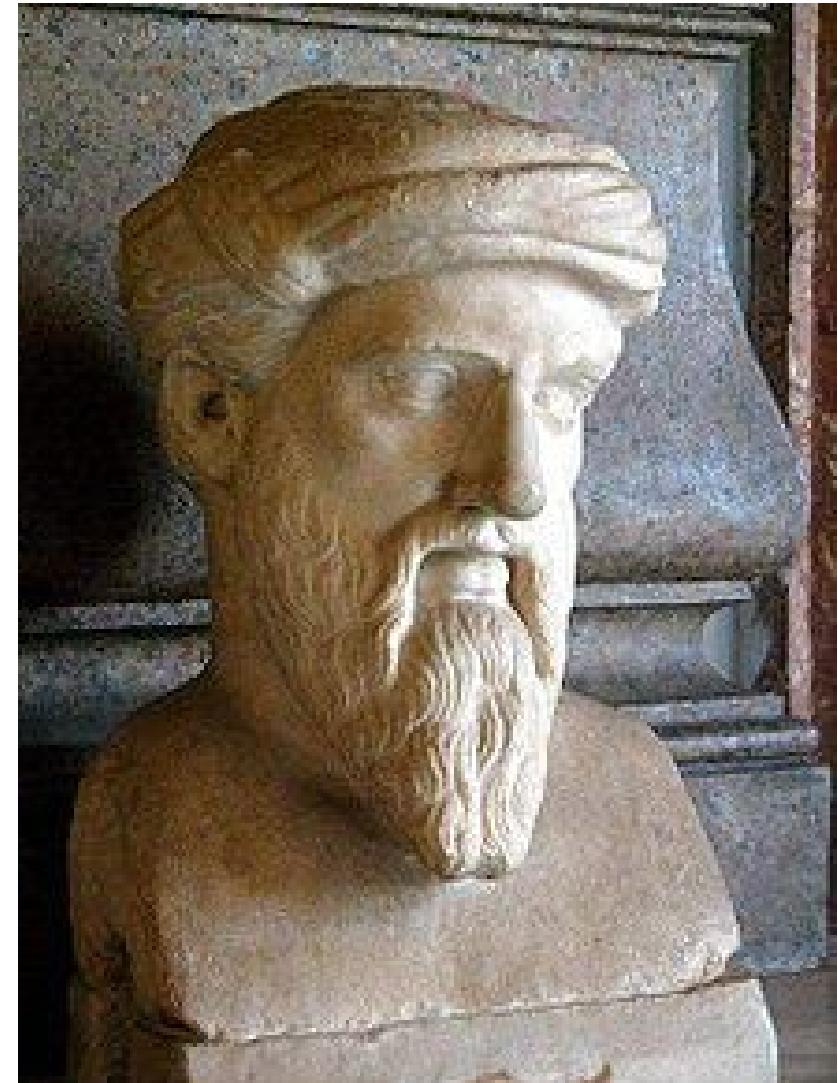
# Long preparation

- From the age of 20, he spent 22 years in the Temples of Memphis and Thebes mastering sacred mathematics and geometry from the **Egyptians** until he was taken prisoner by the Babylonians;
- He learnt arithmetic from the **Phoenicians**; astronomy from the **Chaldeans**; the principles of religion and practical maxims for the conduct of life from the Magi (**Persia** - Zarathustra), when he was a prisoner (but given freedom of the city) in Babylon, **Mesopotamia** from the age of 42 to 54.
- When he was released, he briefly returned to Samos to see his parents before going to Croton in southern Italy where he established a mystery school and spent the most significant portion of his teaching life. The school was sacked by a man whom Pythagoras would not admit as a student as he did not meet Pythagoras's stringent requirements (in particular 'humility').



# Pythagoras's School

- When he was about 50 he moved to Croton, a Greek colony in southern Italy, and there set up his famous academy or school with a sign over the gate “Eskato Babeloi”, which means: “No entrance for the profane! ”
- For the first year, novices in the school were required to be silent – just listen to what others had to say!



# **Golden Verses attributed to Pythagoras**

- Nothing remains of anything Pythagoras wrote down.
- His main teachings were given to the pupils in his school orally, who passed them on orally.
- It was only centuries after Pythagoras' death were any of his sayings written.
- The 71 “Golden Verses” are attributed to him.

# First 7 (of 71) Golden Verses

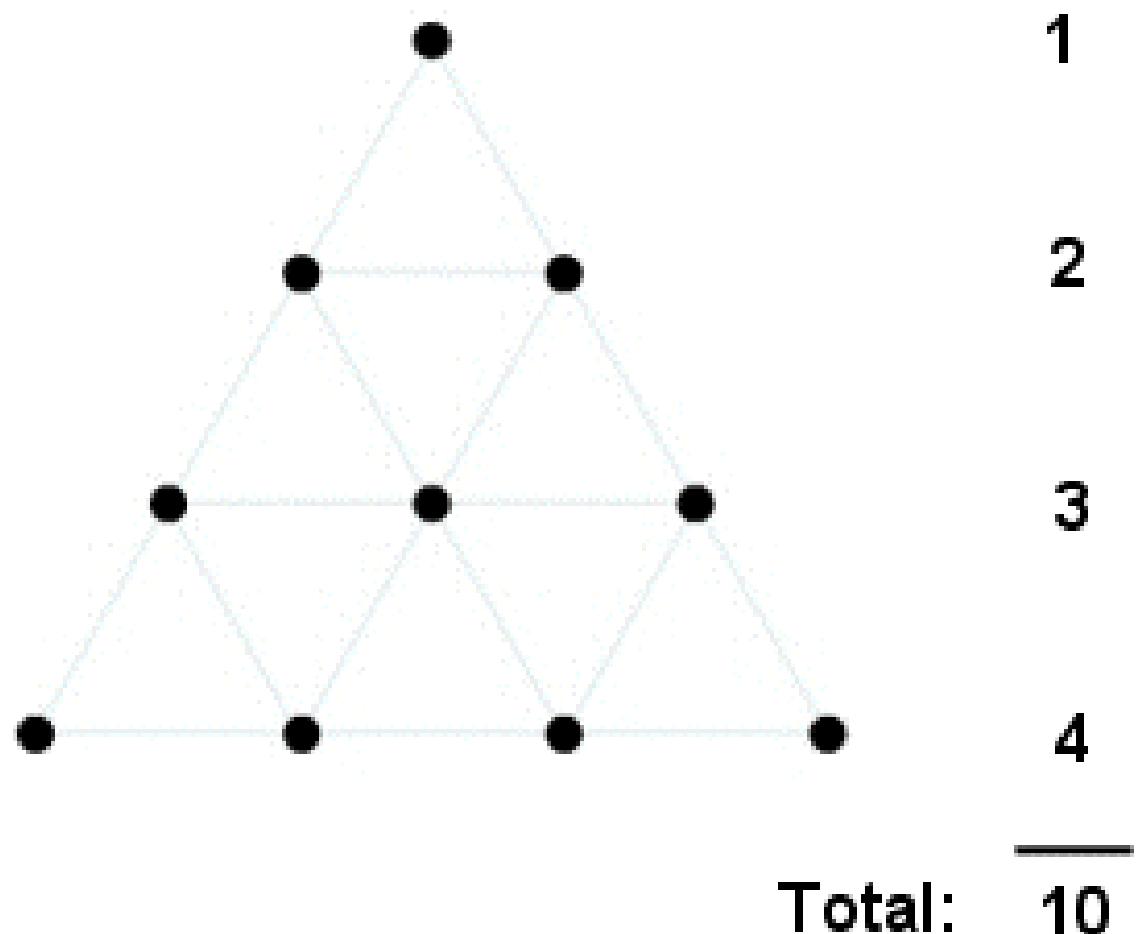
- First worship the Immortal gods, as they are established and ordained by the Law.
- Reverence the Oath, and next the Heroes, full of goodness and light.
- Honour likewise the Terrestrial Daemons by rendering them the worship lawfully due to them.
- Honour likewise your parents, and those most nearly related to you.
- Of all the rest of mankind, make him your friend who distinguishes himself by his virtue.
- Always give ear to his mild exhortations, and take example from his virtuous and useful actions.
- Avoid as much as possible hating your friend for a slight fault.

# Pythagoras of Samos

- He was a mathematician, mystic and scientist, best known for the theorem which bears his name and his study of music. He was the first man to call himself a 'philosopher', or lover of wisdom.



The tetractys, an equilateral triangular figure consisting of 10 points arranged in four rows of 1, 2, 3 and 4, was both a mathematical idea and a metaphysical symbol for the Pythagoreans.



# Tetractys or 10-point Triangle

At a very basic level of interpretation we have the top point of the triangle as the Monad, or the grand unifying principle from which the entire cosmos emanates,

the next layer representing the Dyad or the grand opposing forces of nature within which the natural world comes into being,

the third layer represents the great Triad of principles which culminates in later Hellenic philosophical development as the One, the Intellect and the Soul,

and then at the base the Tetrad, or foundation of the world as represented by the four basic elements that the ancient Greek believed underpinned the entire physical world – earth, air, water and fire.

# Greek Numbers

- The Greek people of Pythagoras's time did not have separate written numerals for counting – they used the first 9 letters of their alphabet for the digits 1 to 9. But each numeral had a special or unique quality.
- Romans used letter symbols: I=1, V=5, X=10, L=50, C=100, D=500. M=1000. So 2026 would be written MMXXVI
- They did not have a symbol for zero, nil or nothing. The zero symbol that we use, 0, arose as a place holder or empty space, It came to Europe from Indian mathematicians in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. It is a picture of a dent in the sand where a countable stone had lain. 0.
- Nor did they have negative numbers! They did not envisage having less than nothing! However, when we consider money, negative numbers are good for expressing DEBT.
- They did have fractions or ratios, such as  $\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $\frac{5}{8}$ . They were called Rational Numbers – thinkable numbers.
- **Irrational** Numbers like Pi ( $\pi$ ),  $\sqrt{2}$  which could not be expressed as ratios or decimal fractions were “unthinkable”.