

The Number 13 and The New Age

Contributed by Bill LeBon
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So here we are, 2013. What does it all mean? It means different things to different people. I've had a special relationship with the number 13. It keeps popping up in my life to such an extent I can no longer consider it coincidental. I happen to find a wad of cash: \$13. The total at the grocery store: \$13.13. I hop on a cross country freight train, what car am I on: the 13th. It just keeps going on and on. This started to happen to me in the '90s after a friend of mine told me there were really 13 months in the year. "28 times 13 is 364, almost perfect," he said. So I started researching the subject, and over the years this is what I've found out.

It turns out that most indigenous calendars are based on 13 months, like the Mayans'. This is most likely because of the two different ways to measure the Moon's orbit around the Earth: sidereal and synodic. Using the sidereal method, one counts thirteen Moons in the year, and using the synodic method one counts twelve Moons in the year. Sidereal measures the Moon's orbit relative to the background stars and constellations of the Zodiac, and synodic measures the Moon's orbit relative to the Sun. The Zodiac -- the band of stars in the sky that the Sun, Moon and planets travel through -- is like a giant clock in the sky with which one can track the movement of the heavenly bodies. So it makes sense to measure the Moon's orbit based on the background stars and not just how it is oriented to the sun (the phases - full, etc.). So a calendar based on 13 orbits of the Moon in one year is more accurate in the larger sense of the stars and Zodiac.

Why did we switch to a 12-month calendar? The best theory I've heard is the one of how patriarchy came to dominate "civilized" societies. Before someone in our past (maybe Adam) decided Man should have dominion over the Earth, most people lived in smallish groups and had learned to live in relative peace with each other and nature. The societies were fairly egalitarian and women as well as men were healers and leaders.

Since the calendar was based on 13 and most women have a 13-periods-per-year cycle (28 day cycle times 13 is 364), women had an extra "magic." If men were to dominate they would have to destroy women's magic. So, by getting rid of the 13th month, the 13th Moon, the 13th sign of the Zodiac, they could diminish the power of the native healer and the woman. So the calendar changed to 12, and 13 was demonized and still is to this day. "What is the missing 13th sign?" you may wonder. That would be Ophiuchus: the snake bearer and "healer," of course.

So what does this have to do with 2012 and 2013 you may wonder? This has to do with the Ages. The Ages are a marking of time of something called "axial precession." The Earth's axis has a wobble like a spinning top and one full cycle of the wobble takes 26,000 years. Such a period is known as The Great Year. Ancient astronomers learned to measure the wobble by how it shifted through the Zodiac. "Precession of the Equinoxes" means we measure where we are in the Great Year by where the Sun is during the spring equinox. Currently, during the spring equinox, the Sun is between the constellations Pisces and Aquarius. If the 26,000 year cycle is divided by 13 signs instead of 12, you have exactly thirteen 2,000-year ages. It is said that Christ was born at the beginning of the Piscean Age and that was now 2,000 years ago. So if we would go by a 13 sign Zodiac, the Age of Aquarius should start right about now.

The Mayans had a base 13 and possibly more accurate calendar than our base 12. For them 2013 represented the beginning of a new age. If we use a base 13 we see that it would be the beginning of our new age of Aquarius. Does that mean anything? Not much, just the turning over of the calendar. But there is an interesting prophecy that comes with the Age of Aquarius. And that is that the new age is supposed to be an age of enlightenment. With the crisis that the world is in, we could sure use an age of enlightenment.

But what does enlightenment mean? It would seem to me, at a minimum, that would be learning to live in harmony with each other and our Earth. Our current system pits us against each other and the Earth. Our current system is based on economic growth and money. Fortunately, society is beginning to measure well-being and happiness, which for the most part has nothing to do with money -- thankfully! Bhutan has adopted the concept of "Gross National Happiness" or GNH instead of GNP. This mindshift may seem minor but it could be the difference between life and death for us and life on Earth. As Americans, we can reclaim our right to pursue happiness with a clear new understanding of what happiness is: the new science of happiness is showing us that community, health, nature and creativity are more important to our happiness and well-being than money.

May 2013 be the year that we achieve a critical mass of collective consciousness. May 2013 be the "Year of the Awakening": An awakening to oneness, an awakening to direct our collective energies to the pursuit of individual and planetary happiness and well-being, and diminish our economic pursuits.

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Bill LeBon's previous article in Culture Change was three poems: Universal Mind Meditation versus Cars

Further reading:

Ophiuchus: What All Sagittarians and Capricorns Need to Know About Their New Zodiac - Time magazine

Korten, Daniel, The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community. Barrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 2007 second edition

Ricard, Matthieu, Happiness. Little, Brown and Co., San Francisco, 2003

"Happy" the Movie. www.thehappymovie.com