

For the first time in history, Armistice Day has an extra 11 in its well-known time/date group: 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month - and this time, the 11th year.

All these elevens remind me of a rather unusual book I read many years ago, called, "Spiritual Arithmetic." It seemed to be a Christian take (from the 1920s) on the mystic Judaism, Kabbalah, which seeks to find deeper meaning in number related indicators in the Bible (obviously, just the Old Testament for Kabbalists).

In such a system, number 12 represents perfect governance: eg, 12 tribes of Israel (and, by the way, 12 princes begat to Ishmael - traditionally the patriarch of the Arabic peoples), 12 apostles of Jesus, 12 types of fruit from the tree of life, the leaves of which would bring healing to the nations (Revelation).

However, every major spiritual number, less one, is marked as imperfection of some sort. 7, which is spiritual perfection, when one less, ie 6, is spiritual imperfection (and, incidentally, indicates man). In all significant numbers, emphasis is given by multiples (yes, 666 is the greatest of imperfection).

So, what of eleven? Well, it doesn't quite make twelve, does it? In the system above, 11 relates to governance that falls short. (Well, it would if God is not in it.) So, irrespective of how fanciful, or not, are all the ponderings of the mystics and their search for the truth in numbers, the fact remains that this year's extra emphasis of 11s is an indictment of human government; still adding names afresh to the already-too-long list of sacrifices of our young people.

A funny number, 11: it's simply one to one.