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## THE PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER SEVEN IN ANCIENT FAITH AND MYTHOLOGY

**Abstract:** This article is devoted to the role and essence of the number seven in ancient beliefs and mythology. Pythagoras' views on the number seven revealed the role and significance of the number seven in the philosophical views of Egypt, Babylon, China, and other eastern peoples. The attitude towards this number in Islam, as well as the role of the number seven in Christianity and Buddhism, is highlighted.

**Key words:** number, number magic, religious mythology, seven planets, seven heavens, seven hells, The Holy Quran, Philosophy of Sufism.

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### Introduction

Many secrets from the history of mankind still remain hidden. One of them is the essence of numbers and their important aspects. Numbers have a special place in the spiritual life, mythology, religion, philosophical views of the peoples of the world. Because number is a philosophical category with logical, national-cultural, mythological and religious features. That is why the belief, attitude and appeal to numbers from the history of the ancient world to the present day is noticeable. In ancient Babylon, Egypt, and Greece, a variety of sacred number systems were developed. It was started in Greece by Pythagoras and his followers, which later led to the emergence of mystical-philosophical numerology. Their ideas about numbers were related to their views on the universe and the origin of everything in it. According to Pythagoras, the founder of such views, the universe was created through the power of numbers. His interpretation gave rise to the notion that "everything consists of numbers" because the number is manifested as both a material and a form of the Universe. It is known that Pythagoras did not write down his scientific works, which came down to us through the records of Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle writes: "Pythagoras recognized the beginning of the whole being as a mathematical beginning". This

philosophical truth connected him with number and music. Pythagoras considered the number as a source of power and advanced the view that the science of numbers could reveal the mysteries of the universe. As the scientist enters into the properties of numbers and describes their different meanings, he concludes that the science of numbers is the key to life.

Opinions about the numbers that first appeared in Europe were also beginning to take shape among the peoples of the East. It should be noted that although views on the number, its characteristics, its place and significance in human life have emerged and developed separately in the East and the West, they are often mutually exclusive, even very close to each other.

The attitude of the peoples of the East towards numbers and the question of their elucidation of their essence is related to the views on the origin of the universe. Usually, in the legends related to religious mythology, the appearance of nature and living beings and the beginning of the life process on this basis are interpreted on different bases. Reflecting on this, N. Nizomiddinov says: "In Chinese mythology, the emergence of the "whole being" took place in the following structure: that is, the light is created from the "Yan" and the darkness from the "In", which appeared after the division of the "chaos-fog" and the

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"abyss" of darkness into two elements, similar to the concept in ancient Greek mythology. In this case, the masculine origin of Yan is understood in the sense of sunshine, strength and positiveness in general, while the feminine origin of In is taken in the form of the moon and darkness, sadness and weakness" [8:138]. It is obvious that the main essence in this is illuminated by two numbers. In China, this number is considered a symbol of harmony between men and women. The number two, which is especially common in wedding ceremonies, signifies double happiness. The origin of the Chinese proverb "Happiness comes in twins" is probably related to this.

It is no secret that in China, numbers are given a great deal of meaning. Some of them are considered lucky numbers, while others are considered unlucky numbers. For example, the number eight is recognized as a good number and is considered a symbol of progress. It's hard to say the same about the number four. This number is synonymous with the word "death" in Chinese, which has created a negative attitude towards the number four. In the Pythagorean interpretation, it is recognized as a clear idea, quality, feature, symbol that surrounds the universe and man. The fact that the sum of numbers from one to four was equal to ten, and that the number four played an important role in this, was also interpreted by Pythagoras and his followers as the basis of all four beings, a symbol of power, equality, and justice<sup>1</sup>.

Numerical magic had a certain meaning, whether it was related to the calendar or to astronomical events. Among them, the number seven occupies a special place. Its magical power applies to all aspects of human life, and the participation of the number seven is much higher compared to other magical numbers.

The great significance of the number seven is not in vain connected with the philosophy of Egypt and Babylon. This argues the view that there is a life of two numbers: three and four. While three people: father, mother, and son form the basis of an entire life, four are the four sides of this universe. Pythagoras also recognized the perfection of the number seven as the sum of the numbers three and four. In some religious beliefs, the number seven also served to denote the six sides of the universe - north, south, east, west, high, low, and Creator. The number seven also served to represent heaven and earth, water and fire, birth and death, and man. In ancient Greece, the number seven was considered a symbol of Appalon. Because he was born on the seventh day of the month and had seven strings in his lyre<sup>2</sup>.

While it is difficult to say exactly when this number has held such a high position in human life, we can see that in the Sumerians this number rose to

the level of a cult. The Sumerian legends about Gilgamesh contain the views of the seven most powerful and wise gods, the seven gates of the underworld, and the seven angels who interrogate the dead. It is noteworthy that in Babylon, with the advice of seven omniscient sages, seven-tiered temples dedicated to the greatest god were built. According to the priests, the underworld is surrounded by seven walls, and the dead who have passed away enter the palace through seven gates.

It can be said that the seven planets in the sky played an important role in the rise of the number seven to this level. The idea of sponsoring the seven planets every day of the week first originated in ancient Babylon. A. Borodin connects the tradition of dividing time into seven days with this view [3:112]. The naming of the days of the week is also associated with the names of the planets in many European languages. For example, in French Lundi (Monday) - Day of the Moon, Mardi (Tuesday) - Mars Day, Mercredi (Wednesday) - Mercury Day, Jeudi (Thursday) - Jupiter Day, Vendredi (Friday) - Venus Day, Samedi (Saturday) - Saturn day, Dimanche (Sunday) - Day of the Sun. The seven planets in the sky, the seven days of the week, and the seven famous metals associated with them, complemented each other in the eyes of astrologers and chemists, furthering mankind's confidence in the sevens. These are: gold - Sun - Sunday, silver - Moon - Monday, iron - Mars - Tuesday, mercury - Mirrix - Wednesday, fire - Jupiter - Thursday, copper - Venus - Friday, lead - Saturn - Saturday.

According to the beliefs of the Sumerians, the life cycle on Earth depends on the movement of the Moon. It is noteworthy that according to the lunar calendar, each month consists of four weeks, and each week consists of seven days. Another aspect of the lunar calendar is that in Babylon, the end of a cycle of seven days was considered dangerous, and it was believed that some misfortune would come on those days. That's why the seventh day of the week was declared a day off to avoid disappointments, and no one worked on that day.

The number seven was considered sacred in ancient Egypt, India, China, and even America. The magic of this number was also used in the construction of the Pyramids of Cheops in 2500 BC. In Egypt, the number seven was a symbol of eternal life, probably because the god Osiris was considered the number, and ancient Rome greatly enriched the essence of this number. There are speculations that the city itself was built on seven hills. It is noteworthy that the construction of ancient cities such as Bukhara, Tashkent, Istanbul and Kiev is also associated with the number seven. For example, according to Abu Bakr

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the Pythagoreans' conclusion was based on the fact that the sum of the numbers four and four formed the numbers in the top

ten, i.e.  $1 + 4 = 5$ ;  $2 + 4 = 6$ ;  $3 + 4 = 7$ ;  $1 + 3 + 4 = 8$ ;  $2 + 3 + 4 = 9$ ; Forms  $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$ .

<sup>2</sup> The lyre is a musical instrument.

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ibn Ja'far Narshahi, Bukhara was built in the form of seven pirate stars [4:80-81].

This number is very popular in the holy books of Christianity. They adopted magical views on the sevens that emerged based on the scientific observations of orientalist and Pythagoreans. It would not be a mistake to say that the "Apocalypse" or "Revelation", one of the earliest examples of Christian literature, contains a system of sevens. It depicts God sitting on a throne with a book in his hand. There are 7 seals in the book, and the unraveling of each of these seals works a miracle. When the 7th seal is opened, 7 angels come out holding trumpets in their hands. After 7 of them blow the trumpet, 7 more angels appear on the stage. Interestingly, in the hands of these angels there are 7 bowls filled with the wrath of God, and the wrath overflows from the bowl and begins to pour out on the Earth.

In Buddhism, the number seven comes as a symbol of ascension, aspiration, and focus on the center. The seven steps of the Buddha represent the seven spatial steps set out into space, beyond the boundaries of space and time. The Buddha sits under a tree with seven fruits. They had the custom of gifting seven happy elephants made of bone, wood, or other material. In Hinduism, this number is more firmly rooted in concepts such as the seven sages, the seven worlds, the seven holy cities, the seven holy islands, the seven holy seas, the seven holy mountains, the seven sacred trees, and the seven deserts.

The peoples of the East emphasized that a person is spiritually renewed and changed at every age of seven, and divided human life into seven, that is, up to seven years - childhood, 14 years - adolescence, 21 years - youth, 28 years - maturity, 35 years - high maturity, 42 years - full of life force, 49 years - is considered a period of wisdom, 56 years is recognized as the onset of autumn in human life, 63 years - a period of powerlessness, 70 years - a return to childhood, 77 years - a period of return to infancy. This evidence was not accidental, but also reflected some mysterious aspects of human life.

Just as it is impossible to imagine the fourteen-century history of our national spirituality without Islam, it is very difficult to analyze the attitude towards numbers based on religious views without relying on the Qur'an. Because there are 30 types of numbers in the Qur'an, Professor Klaus Shedlya, who conducted a special study on them, notes that there is an inexplicable mysterious divine connection between words and numbers in the Holy Qur'an using computer technology in the 70s and 80s of the twentieth century.

Harun Yahya, another scholar who has studied such situations in the Qur'an, based his observations in his book, "The Miracles of Allah in the Qur'an",

states: The Qur'an ... also has "mathematical miracles". There are many examples of such a remarkable aspect of the Qur'an. An example of these miracles is the repetition of some words in the Qur'an. Some words are surprisingly repeated in the same amount" [11:148]. Giving a number of examples of the same number of repetitions of words or concepts in the Qur'an, the scholar points out that the number of heavens and the creation of the heavens have been used seven times, and the words "heaven" and "hell" seventy-seven times. In fact, one of the reasons for the special attitude towards the number 7 in the Islamic world, and the most important, is that the first surah of the Qur'an, Surat al-Fatiha, consists of seven verses. "We have given you the great Qur'an in seven parts", the Qur'an says (18/77). The scholars say that the fact that the Qur'an, which is the word of Allah, consists of a total of 77,000 words, means a lot.

The seven rounds of the Ka'bah during the Haj, the seven runs between Safa and Marwa, the seven years of imprisonment of the Prophet Yusuf, and the seven nights and eight days of the terrible storm sent to the people of 'Ad prove that this number has a special place in the Qur'an. One of the facts reported in the verses about the universe and its structure is that the sky was created in seven layers. He is the One who created everything on earth for you. Then he "stood up" to the sky and made it into 7 heavens. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise" [12:5]. According to the verse, the sky consists of 7 floors. Such information about the heavens and their number can be found in several places in the Qur'an. In several verses of the Qur'an, the word "heavens" is used to refer to the heavens above the earth and the entire universe. From this given meaning of the word, it can be understood that the sky or atmosphere of the Earth is created in 7 layers. Indeed, it has already been proven in astronomical science that the atmosphere is made up of different layers lying on top of each other [5:5]. It has also been proven that the seven layers of the Earth's atmosphere differ in chemical composition [1:3/7].

According to modern geological definitions, the atmosphere consists of seven layers called the troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere, exosphere, ionosphere, and magnetosphere. The Qur'an states, "So He created the seven heavens in two days, and revealed to each heaven a task" [12:477].

Hence, each heaven has its own duty and is entrusted to them by Allah. Each of these layers plays a very important role in the survival of humanity and living things on Earth. Each layer has its own functions, from the formation of rain to the prevention of harmful rays, from the reflection of radio waves to the catastrophic consequences of meteorites<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the troposphere, which is 13-15 km above the Earth, liquefies water vapor rising from the Earth and sends it back as rain. The ozone layer, which is the lower layer of the stratosphere at an

altitude of 25 km above the Earth, reflects harmful radiation and ultraviolet rays coming from space into space. The ionosphere reflects radio waves transmitted from Earth just like satellites with

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It is well known that in Eastern literature, when it comes to Sky or Space, they are recorded together with the numbers seven or nine: seven Skies, seven heavens, seven Spaces. But when our classical poets speak of the celestial universe, including the seven Skies, they always draw attention not only to physical beings, but also to ideas aimed at illuminating the essence of the perfect man through the symbols and metaphors attributed to man. This is due to the fact that everything in the universe is in man, and that the perfect man has not only everything on earth, but also everything in heaven. According to al-Qurtubi, the ancients applied and interpreted the terms "seven heavens" and "seven layers of earth" not only for the earth and the layers of the sky, but also for the world of angels, demons, devils, mines, plants, animals and humans [2:85].

In order to understand the coverage of the problem of the perfect man in mystical literature, the most widely used in classical literature are "7 celestial bodies", "7 planets", "7 climates", "7 rivers", "7 types", "7 spirits", "7 targets". It is required to know the symbolic-figurative meaning of dozens of phrases.

"And We have built above you seven strong (heavens). We have created a shining lamp (the sun)" [12:582], it is said in the Qur'an. "We know that the only light source in the solar system is the Sun itself. In honor of advances in technology, astronomers have discovered that the Moon is not a source of light, but merely a reflector of light that reaches it from the Sun. The word "lamp" used in the above verse is a translation of the Arabic word "sirooj". This word in Arabic fully describes the Sun, which is the source of light and heat. Various verses have appeared in the Qur'an to refer to celestial bodies such as the moon, sun and stars. "Do you not see how Allah created the seven heavens one on top of the other? He made the moon a light in them, and made the sun a lamp" [12:571]. In the above verse, the word "light" (Arabic for "light") is used for the Moon and the word "lamp" (Arabic for "sirooj") for the Sun. The word used for the moon refers to light, motionless bodies that reflect light. The word used for the sun refers to a celestial body that is always burning, a constant source of heat and light" [11:19]. According to mystical views based on Islamic concepts, the Sun is Allah and the Moon is its caliph on earth.

The full moon is the divine caliph who appears in the most perfect form in the universe with all the names of Allah and the rulings of these names. Just as the light of the sun is reflected on the moon, so can its manifestations be seen in the caliph of Allah on earth.

Another piece of information related to the number seven in Islam is that the Earth was created in seven layers. One of the verses says, "Allah created

the seven heavens and the same number of earths" [12:559]. As a result of scientific research, the water that forms the Earth's crust and the Earth's lithosphere; the asthenosphere, which is thinner and more mobile than the lithosphere; upper and inner mantle, containing iron, magnesium, and calcium; the outer core in the liquid state and the inner core in the dark state, consisting of an iron-nickel alloy, were found to consist of a total of seven layers. This is yet another proof of the divinity of this holy book while proving that the Earth is made up of seven layers, as stated in the Qur'an. Such views, of course, led to the creation of such verses as to occupy a special place in literature as well.

*Birligingga o'n sakkiz ming olam muqir,  
Yeti qat yer, yeti qat ko'k tasbeh o'qur* [6:378],

*Meaning: 18000 universe (the whole word) prove that you are the only one, Seven layers Earth, seven Heavens pray for you.*

The word land is referred to as arz. Sufi dictionaries define arz as follows: "Arz is a) a creation, and its adornment is the Truth; b) The qualities of truth are called Samo (Sky), the qualities of people are called Arz; c) Arz - the world of corruption. Samo (Sky) is the world of the sublime, the world of the righteous. The essence of knowledge is the human qualities in itself, and the heavens are the divine qualities of the Truth in it" [9:54]. This means that the earth and all the creatures in it are meant, and the sky is blue. Opinions about heaven and hell predominate among Muslims. If heaven is imagined in the Sky, above, then hell is understood to be below, below earth. According to Islam, hell, like heaven, consists of seven layers. In Eastern literature, in general, in mystical literature, the idea of the seven *tamug's*, that is, the seven hells, is quite stable. The great poet Alisher Navoi, in one of his hymns of praise, asks Allah to make the seven hells ashes:

*Elga maxlas istasang, yeti tamug'ni ayla kul,  
Aylabon bir shu'la bu ohi duraxshondin judo* [7:10].

*Meaning: if you wish goodness for your people, make the seven hells ashes and make them loose that pain*

However, the members of the Tariqah sect were not content with religious considerations in the belief in hell and hell, but sought hell and its torments from man himself, or more precisely, from his lusts and wrong doings. For this reason, throughout the history of literature, lusts have been strongly condemned and criticized. The most acceptable and reliable way to get rid of them or surrender them completely has been found to be a way called "*sayri suluq*", which also consists of 7 steps.

an inactive communication system and sends them back to different corners of the world. In this way, it provides the ability to transmit wireless communications, radio and television broadcasts over very

long distances. The magnetosphere sends harmful radioactive particles from the Sun and other stars back into space before they reach Earth.

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In general, in mystical philosophy, a number of sevens have emerged that have emerged under the influence of Islam and are related to the creation of the world. Seven climates - means the whole world, habitat. Seven rivers - seven seas. These are: the Sea of China, the Sea of Azar, the Sea of Oman, the Gulzum or Ahmar Sea, the Barbarian or Oceanic Sea, the Greek Sea, and the Black Sea [10:73]. These are the largest and most vast seas on earth. But in mysticism it is the quality and status of the Allah, and all beings in the world are innumerable tributaries of the seas. Sometimes the word sea means unity, and the rivers of the sea mean kasrat (plurality). Sufis, in general, use the sea as an example to fully imagine that the Creator is one, and that existence is many and varied. The name of the seas is used in mysticism under the following names: Bahri ayon - open sea: manifest rays; Bahri hasta - the sea of being: holy and divine manifestations; Bahri otash- sea of fire: sea of love; Bahri Muwaddat is a sea of friendship: endless love for the Truth, divine love; Bahri ato - the sea of grace: the constant grace of the Truth; Bahri muhit- The sea is the ocean: the infinite light of Allah, according to Aziz al-Nasafi, is perfect; The sea is a landless sea: the Sufi's continuous and uninterrupted

state with Allah. These seven seas, called Sabati abhur, also served to express the seven ways of the Arifs: sakr, vajd, berk, hayrat, shuhud, nuri qurb, valayati vujud [9:453]. Seven pens - 7 notes. 7 different Arabic letters: suls, muhaqiq, tavqe', basil, riqa, nasx, taliq [10:738]; haft andom - 7 organs of a person, i.e. head, chest, abdomen, two arms, two legs [9:234]; 7 different colors - 7 colors attributed to the seven planets [10:738]; 7 valleys - demand, love, enlightenment, warmth, monotheism, wonder, poverty and death.

While it is not known which of the above ideas led to the popularity of the number seven, each has played an important role in the mysterious and magical power of this number. Later, rainbow colors, musical notes, and the fact that the number of cervical vertebrae in almost all human and other mammals was seven, served to strengthen the relationship to the number seven. "The world is made up of numbers and sounds, solve everything with numbers, enter the world of mysteries and meditate", says one ancient book. As you enter the wisdom of numbers, you will become wiser yourself. And the number continues to attract like a magical force.

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