

Harmony of Sacred Numbers Functions in the Works of Belles-Lettres from Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Since ancient times, numbers have played an important and multifaceted role in human life. In many cultures, especially in the Islamic one, individual numbers were given special significance. In this regard it is necessary to study the origin of so-called sacred numbers, which have been an important aspect of Islamic cultural heritage. The present research paper focuses on the semantics and meaning of “three,” “seven” and “forty” which have become sacred numbers due to objective and subjective factors. An analysis of the use of a group of sacred numbers in Islam was researched. Also, the meaning of sacred numbers in everyday life was investigated. As a result of the comprehensive study, we can admit that special properties of sacred numbers lies in the law of creation. Special attention was paid to show the role of sacred numbers in revealing the artistic merits of works of fiction, as well as the peculiarities of their use in religious heritage. It is obvious that the main scientific conclusions drawn by the authors will be a renewed impetus, particularly for young researchers to develop new ideas in this field.

Keywords: Spiritual Values, Epic Genre, Traditional Religions, Beliefs

Introduction

As is well known, there are common actions, uses, and concepts in the world that concern all of humanity.¹ One of them is a group of sacred numbers: in particular, three, seven, forty, one hundred, one thousand, one. It can be seen that these numbers are widely used in folklore and literature, as a result of which they significantly contribute to the artistic development of the work and increase its attractiveness. For example, in the Russian people there is a proverb: “God loves the Trinity.” Why three? Why is the number two or four not used? The Kazakh people say that “one of the Forty is Kydyr.” “Kydyr” here is considered a saint who brings good in the concept of the people. Well, why forty? Why is it not said that “one in Fifty is walking”? Or did he use a consonant sound, such as alliteration, assonance? Is there another reason? Also, in the poem “Kozy Korpesh – Bayan Sulu,” the Lamb, who is looking for Bayan, is given by his friend Aybas to bring three rings to three girls as a parcel.² Why not two or four? Three girls, three rings? It should be noted that the work “Kozy Korpesh – Bayan Sulu” is an epic work of Kazakh folklore, which is famous for the common Turkic peoples, dedicated to the love of two young people.³

This is how we see the use of folk heritage in the works of authors. For example, there is a work by W. Shakespeare, which is recognized in the world as “deep shadows of forty winters.” When the number forty appears here, in F. Schiller’s ballad “Cup,”⁴ the king who threw the cup into the water said: “who will take it?” he asks three times. Also, G. Nizami’s (1959)⁵ poem “seven beauties,” which is considered

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¹ Joshua, J. Spoelstra (2022), “Sanctuary Schematics and Temple Ideology in the Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea Scrolls: The Import of Numbers,” *HTS Theologise Studies/Theological Studies*, Vol. 78. No. 4, p. a7341.

² Kazakh epos (1958), *A Collection of Texts*, Almaty: Kazahskoj Gosuderstvennoi Literatry.

³ Leonard Cohen (2010), “The Book of Koran in Rabat and Casablanca,” *Archives De Sciences Sociales des Religions*, Vol. 150, No. 2, pp. 175-195.

⁴ Ahmed Shetel (1983), *Collection of Foreign Literature*, Almaty: Mektep.

⁵ Genjevi Nizami (1959), *Seven Beauties*, Moscow: Hudozhestvennaia Literature.

a classic of Eastern literature, is a world-famous work. It is known from history that the Kazakh people consist of a tribal community.⁶ This association is systematized into three hundred. In particular, The Elder zhuz, the Middle zhuz, and the younger zhuz. “I don’t know,” he said. Sh. Kudaiberdiuly, a student of Abai and a victim of repression during his brother: “The beginning of life is a child, the middle is a person, this is the first time I’ve ever been in a relationship with a woman. If this is what you praise, the end, which was with the mouth verse as three.”⁷ A person’s life is divided into three stages. It should be noted that such sacred numbers play a special role in the description and decoration of spiritual values. However, we can see that the group of numbers belonging to this group was used not only in works of art, but also in traditional religions.^{8,9}

The main purpose of the article is to identify the reasons why a group of numbers used in Religious Works and folk heritage have a special character called sacred, to show their influence on the development of religion and works of art. The main objectives are: to analyse the use of a group of sacred numbers in Islam; to explore the meaning of sacred numbers in everyday life.

Analysis of the Use of a Group of Sacred Numbers in Islam

The influence of a group of sacred numbers, which is firmly established in the minds of the people and is used in everyday life, has also had an impact on the religion of Islam.¹⁰ In particular, what manifestations can be observed depending on the number “three”?

Let’s take the examples:

- 1) one of the established traditions in Muslim countries is that at a mass dinner, special Surahs from the Qur’an are read to former deceased people. In most cases, the Surah (chapter) of the Qur’an “Al-Ihlas” is read three times. This action does not change who reads it or where;
- 2) in one of the hadiths delivered by the outstanding scholars of the Islamic religion, Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim (hadith is the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), we can see that there are three different variants of greeting in Islam.¹¹ In particular, “Assalamugaleykum!” “Assalamugalaykum O Rahmatullah!” and “Assalamugalaikum O rahmatullahi O barakatuhu!” This example also shows the use of the number three;
- 3) in the epic work “Dariga kyz,” published about Hazrat Ali, who was the commander-in-chief of Muslims, Ali, who was traveling, was the first person he met when he reached the city: It’s been three months since we left, this is the first time I’ve ever heard of it –¹² “what?” he asks. It is appropriate to return to the reader’s mind not one month, but two months, but three months. There are many such examples.¹³

If we pay attention to the order of arrangement of numbers in the concept of humanity, the number that accepts the concept of existence begins immediately. It is known that zero before one gives the concept of no. It is clear that the use of Zero is also behind all of them. “I don’t know,” he said: When the unicorn left, what happens to zero” (Abai, 1992). So, the order of arrangement of unit numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. if we pay attention to the heritage of the people, the Kazakh people have created poems of *tolgau*, consisting of ten parts for every ten years of a person’s life. In Islam, the creator is alone, he has no companion, all creation needs him.¹⁴ The expression of this belief is widely found in the epic poems of the Kazakh people,¹⁵ in the works of poets and *zhyrau*.¹⁶ Now let’s focus on the meaning of one number:

⁶ Gani Karasayev et al. (2021), “History of partnership relations of the Republic of Kazakhstan with far abroad countries (1990-2000),” *Journal of the National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine*, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 109-118. [https://doi.org/10.37635/jnalsu.28\(3\).2021.109-118](https://doi.org/10.37635/jnalsu.28(3).2021.109-118)

⁷ Jantemir Kudaiberdi (1988), *Collection of Poems, Epics, Obscenities*, Almaty: Jazushy.

⁸ Al Caplan (1974), *Obstetrics*, Moscow: Medical Literature.

⁹ Kang Hyun Kim (2021), *A Study on the Correlation Between the Movement of Bible Reading and the Growth of Church*, Gwangju City: Kwangshin University.

¹⁰ Chen Sanping (2021), “On the “Barbarian” Origin of the Sacred Number Three in Medieval China,” *Journal Asiatique*, Vol. 309. No. 1, pp. 131-140.

¹¹ Sahih Hadister (2006), *One of the Six Main Sunni Collections of Hadith*. <http://hadithcollection.com/>

¹² Hadister (2006), *One of the Six Main Sunni Collections of hadith*.

¹³ H. Zoubir Yahia (2002), *Banners in the Skies and on the Ground*, Istanbul: Culture.

¹⁴ Kaan Kuran (1991), *Kazakh Meaning and Concept*, Medine: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran.

¹⁵ Kazakh epos (1958), *A Collection of Texts*, Almaty: Kazahskoj Gosuderstvennoi Literaturny.

¹⁶ On gasyr zhyrlaidy (2006), *Works of Kazakh Folk Poets*, Almaty: Daur.

- 1) if there is one number, then there are other numbers, if there is no one number, then there are no other numbers;
- 2) all numbers are dependent together; one number does not depend on any number;
- 3) all numbers have a beginning and an end (five, starting immediately and ending with five, etc.), and one number has no beginning and an end.¹⁷

This is the character of one. Whether there is harmony, of course there is. “I don’t know,” he said. In the book of the Koran, which is the main core of Islam, it is often said that creation consists of the law of mating.¹⁸ At the same time, people’s poets, perceiving the opposite phenomena of the World, Day and night, good and bad, all and all as twins, based on their poems.¹⁹ Human action is also twinned. Let’s say with a simple example. If you have a book in your hand, you should open its page, or not open it, and then read it or not. You have two options to choose from. In Islam, there is a verse that is regularly recited. He said, “Bismillah al – Rahman al-Rahim.” Before starting every case, action, or work, a Muslim must say this verse. If we analyze the first word of the verse – B-ismi-Allah – it consists of three parts. The name ismi means the name of Allah. The sound of B in the head has its own special use. In the Arabic alphabet, there is a scientific concept called abjad. It is the digital meaning of sounds.²⁰

Now let’s look at the three numbers that are considered sacred, which we have already mentioned above. It reflects development in creation. In particular, one is the creator, two is the creation, and three is the development. That is, after the creation, it must grow, reproduce. Prosperity and development belong to the third stage. With a simple example, a father is a child. The child here is proof of development. The main core of development is movement. Therefore, it is necessary to support and respect the living, the basis of intra-living development. This is the poem of Shakarim, which we have already mentioned above. In Kazakh fairy tales, the phrase “one jump saved me, two jumps saved me, and the third one eclipsed me” is often found. This phraseological use determines the regularity of life. The first jump is the period of childhood – the period of opportunity, the second jump is the period of youth – the period of prosperity, the third stage is old age – the time of despair, that is, the period of eclipse.²¹ The number three, therefore, is a sacred number, which distinguishes it as a quantitative character of development.²²

The next remarkable sacred number, which is widely reflected in the heritage of the people, is seven. From folk uses, you can give a variety of examples, depending on this number. In the winged words” measure seven times, cut one,”” as if you found seven rabbits on the ground,”” you did not know seven grandfathers,” there are many uses. Also, in the Kazakh language, the cumulative numeral name is limited to the number seven (one, two, three, four, five, six, seven). It is not said that eight, nine, and so on. According to the plot of religious legends, in the poem “Joseph-Ziliha,” published about the messenger of the creator Joseph (Yusuf), specially sent to humanity, Joseph passes through seven doors when he escapes from the palace.²³ He also sees seven fat and seven skinny cows in a dream.²⁴ The holy book Surah betashar of the Qur’an “Fatiha” consists of seven verses (parts). There are also prayers in the Islamic religion that are pronounced as supplications, pleas to the creator.²⁵ We see that the number seven is also used in them. Whatever the use of the number seven, it represents the very last point of a certain constraint. For example, seven times measurement is the last limit of size, seven rabbits is the last limit of wealth, seven parents are the last limit of the concept of generation, and so on.

The famous researcher, scientist A.E. Bertels, analyzing the poem “Seven Beauties” by Nizami in his work “fine image in the east of Iran,” says: “in addition, it is necessary to clarify the semantics and correspondingly correct the entire construction of Nizama, here we need to prevent some facts related to the “background of epos” (Bertels, 1997). Thus, Nizami focuses on the order of days and how they combine colors, planets, and crowds. One of the common beliefs in traditional religions is that the

¹⁷ Abai Kunanabayev (1992), *Book of Words, Collection*, Alma-ata: EL.

¹⁸ Kuran (1991), *Kazakh Meaning and Concept*.

¹⁹ On Gasyr Zhyrlaidy (2006), *Works of Kazakh Folk Poets*, Almaty: Dauir.

²⁰ Nurzh Ondasynov (1969), *Arabic-Kazakh Explanatory Dictionary*, Alma-ata: EL.

²¹ Moldir Amangazykyzy et al. (2021), “Existential motives in city prose,” *Astra Salvensis*, Vol. 2021, pp. 251-268.

²² Nadia Badawi and Kelsay J. Patel (2013), *Sunni Islam: Part I: Classical Sources: Part II: Contemporary Sources*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²³ Babalar Sozi (2005), *Romance Poems*, Astana: Foliant.

²⁴ Sozi (2005), *Romance Poems*.

²⁵ Hadister (2006), *One of the Six Main Sunni Collections of Hadith*.

Creator created creation in six days. This is also accepted in Islam. On the seventh day, the tired creature was given rest (because the creator is not tired, only the creation is tired).²⁶

The Meaning of Sacred Numbers in Everyday Life

The next one, taken from the creature, is the time of reflection of the satellite of the moon.²⁷ That is, the moon is visible for 28 days (fourteen days slowly fill up, fourteen days gradually decrease), two days are not visible, so in total thirty days appear. Half of the visible 28 days are 14, and the quarter is seven days. It was used to connect the seven days of the week and the moon, and put the image of a quarter of the moon on the roofs of mosques. It is said that it is a building where the worship of Allah, who created the world in seven days, is performed. In addition, the image of the quarter moon was put on the face of the deceased person in order to understand that he is the most intelligent, dignified creature in the world.^{28, 29} Indeed, under such harmony, one can see that there is a connection with the law of creation. It is also based on the fact that the week consists of seven days. In the same way, the color is seven, as other colors are made from a mixture of them.³⁰ Six of the seven colors are paired with each other: black – white, yellow – brown, green – blue. Well, the red color is a personalization or coordination medium (for example, the red color of blood in a person connects the soul and body). “I don’t know,” he said. But there is no law of creation. If so: black – no, White – has; yellow – energy (+ charge), Brown – weight (- mass); Green – Life, blue – layer of air. If we systematize and link it with the calendar of the peoples of the East, we get the following picture:

Black, Saturday-White, Friday;
Yellow, Sunday-Brown, Thursday;
Green, Monday-Blue, Wednesday;

Red, Tuesday is the coordinating color and sun. The green color in this system falls on Monday. This day is the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), the messenger of Allah.³¹ This is due to the fact that most of the flags in Muslim countries are green. The next problem is that the number of notes that give rise to different melodies is also seven (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Si). The note of the tuning of musical instruments, such as Piano, Piano, is Lya. That is, La coordinator is perceived as a note. If this is the case, this Coordinator will match the red color. Let’s systematize it:

Black-Saturday-Mi;
Yellow-Sunday-FA;
Green-Monday-Sol;
Red-Tuesday-La;
Blue-Wednesday-Cee;
Brown-Thursday-do;
White Friday-re.

For example, the state of musical instruments of two extremes: Sol – re, as the sun: Monday – Friday, at noon: green – white.

One of the proven phenomena in nature is that the air layer also consists of seven parts (troposphere, stratosphere, ozonosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere, ionosphere, esosphere).³² The number of the number seven in the universe is the number of the number seven in the universe, and the number seven in the universe is the number seven in the universe. If so, it is not difficult to see that the use of the

²⁶ Kuran Hikailary (1992), *Legends from the Lives of Prophets*, Almaty: Jalyn; Kang Hyun Kim (2017), *A Study on the Role of Colporteurs in the Growth of Early Korean Church*, Gwangju City: Kwangshin University.

²⁷ Ann Bertals (1997), *The Artistic Image in the Art of Iran in the IX-XV Centuries*, Moscow: Vostochnaia Literature.

²⁸ Nizar Becheikh (2021), “Political stability and economic growth in developing economies: lessons from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt ten years after the Arab Spring,” *Insights into Regional Development*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 229-251. [https://doi.org/10.9770/IRD.2021.3.2\(5\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/IRD.2021.3.2(5))

²⁹ Yuliana Terletska (2020), “Fundamentals of psychic and emotional human deprivation,” *Astra Salvensis*, pp. 751-771.

³⁰ Assan Amangeldiyev et al. (2021), “Christian Number Symbolism in the Hierotopy of Orthodox Cathedrals,” *European Journal of Science and Theology*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 125-137.

³¹ Nate Robinson (1994), “Varieties of Pronouncement Stories in Sahīh Muslim: A Gospel Genre in the Hadīth Literature,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 123-146.

³² Jun Ki Chung (1987), *Social Criticism of Non-Church Christianity in Japan and Korea*, Chicago: The University of Chicago. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/2739d364bcf9969fae37a6e4a46fd789/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

number seven is directly derived from the laws of creation. One of the researchers of the Islamic religion, the Turkish scientist H. Yahia, in his study “knowledge in heaven and on Earth,” says: “it is understood that the memory of this detail in Korana with an invisible, unconvincing eye serves as a confirmation of the fact of the divine origin of Korana. The atmosphere in Korane says: “Blessed rust,... this video is unavailable.”³³ Thus, in the course of its application to the consciousness of the people, we can see that the number seven, which has become a tradition, has absorbed the individual knowledge of the sacred in any environment.^{34, 35}

In the poem “Joseph and Zilikha,” which we mentioned above, it is described that Joseph has the power of forty people.³⁶ Also, in the peoples of Central Asia, it has become a tradition to give forty days to the deceased. In the poem “Dariga kyz,” published about the hero of Islam Ali, it is said that Ali came to a city and taught Islam for forty days.³⁷ In our opinion, we can say that the number forty is also derived from the law of creation. In the legends that are told in connection with the Islamic religion, the soil is kneaded for forty days to make a human body.^{38, 39} To fully mature, forty years of rain and binding the body. Thirty-nine years command a rain of sorrow, one year a rain of joy. In this regard, there will be more joy and sadness in a person’s life.⁴⁰ Now let’s analyze it. The total creation is 360 degrees. The residual divisible number of 360 degrees is 12.

360:1=360, 360:2=180, 360:3=120, 360:4=90, 360:5=72, 360:6=60, 360:8=45, 360:9=40, 360:10=36,
360:12=30, 360:15=24, 360:18=20.

If we divide further, the reverse process begins. For example, 360:20=18.

In this report, we see that the result divided by three hundred and sixty by Nine is forty. Here it shows the period of creation of man in the womb of the mother (Kaplan, 1974). Nine months, ten days, or forty weeks. That is, we can say that on the basis of the period of creation of man in creation, forty has become a sacred number. One thing that should be noted in this regard is that the Nine also have sanctity, because they are related to the creation of man.⁴¹ For example, if we multiply nine by any number and add the resulting result to the number of units, we get Nine itself. $9*3=27$ ($2+7=9$), $9*14=126$ ($1+2+6=9$). Now let’s multiply 360 by 40. $360*40=14400$. Now let’s add this result together. $1+4+4+0+0=9$. If we multiply nine by forty, we get 360, if we add each other $3+6+0=9$. Let’s look at it from a different angle. Let’s multiply three hundred and sixty by 280 days (9 months and 10 days). $360*280=100800$. Let’s add each other $1+0+0+8+0+0=9$. It is believed that the essence of creation lies in man. Thus, in the course of its use, sacred numbers are found both in the autological form and in the form of variable epithets and metaphors.

Conclusion

It is believed that each number has its own special character, property. Dualistic cognition is formed due to the number two. On the basis of sacred numbers, winged words, proverbs and sayings, and ideomic phrases were born. It cannot be denied that the typological connection in various works also contributed to the comprehensive development and widespread distribution of biblical numbers. We can claim that a group of numbers called sacred was formed on the basis of the laws of creation. The above-mentioned numbers should not be considered as the result of mere life experience, but rather a phenomenon that has a solid scientific foundation being the outcome of painstaking research and activities of our wise ancestors.

³³ Yahia (2002), *Banners in the Skies and on the Ground*.

³⁴ Yevhen Prychepii (2022), “Structures of the cosmos and sacred sets on the artefact of the paleolithic,” *Interdisciplinary Cultural and Humanities Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 30-39.

³⁵ Jun-ki Chung et al. (2021), “UBF Sogam and Its Spiritual and Social Implications,” *Review of International Geographical Education Online (RIGEO)*, Vol. 11, No. 10, pp. 851-861. <https://rigeo.org/article-view/?id=1464>

³⁶ Sozi (2005), *Romance Poems*.

³⁷ Sozi (2005), *Romance Poems*.

³⁸ Osman Topbash (2008), *The Story of the Prophets*. https://archive.org/stream/mercy_201506/mercy_djvu.txt.

³⁹ Aurika Temirkhanovna Serubayeva et al. (2015), “Shokhan, explorer of the history of people in central Asia,” *Anthropologist*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 504-509. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2015.11891908>

⁴⁰ Topbash (2008), *The Story of the Prophets*.

⁴¹ Yilmaz Şimşek (2016), “Some Notes on the Vocabulary of Interlinear Koran Translation into Old Anatolian Turkish,” *Turkbilig*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 153-170.

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