

An analysis on arithmomancy of multiple numbers in the Qur'an case study: The number thousand (1000)

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Using the history of numbers and their non-numerical connotations among the ancients, we can interpret numbers as familiar symbols used in daily life of people. There are some reports that people in various religions and cultures have paid attention to the symbols of numbers. Commentators have also referred to symbolic (non-numerical) connotations of numbers, for example the number seven in some verses of the holy Qur'an. Moreover, some numbers have been used in the Qur'an that are a multiplication of other numbers. In arithmomancy of these multiple numbers, their constitutive numbers and the context are also studied. This is done in addition to finding their independent symbolic meaning. In this study, based on the method of religio-cultural arithmomancy, the number thousand (1000) and its multiples in the Qur'an are analyzed. The findings of this study confirm that the multiple numbers show a comprehensive picture of the symbols of their constitutive numbers in the Qur'anic verses. For example, the connotations of big and centralized power, longevity, long survival, multiplicity, integrity, and so on can be regarded as comprehensive symbols for the multiple number of thousand (1000) and its higher orders in the Qur'an.

Keywords: Qur'an, multiple numbers, thousand, symbol, religio-cultural arithmomancy.

Introduction

“What we call a symbol is a term, name, or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning”¹. In the 1930s, Dantzig attempted to show that in human understanding of numbers, numerical sense as a commonality between humans and some animals, can go far beyond the conceptualization of number.

He addressed the differences in people's understanding of the numbers among various cultures, and made brief references to the relationship between

¹ Jung C. G., Franz M.-L. von, Henderson J. L., Jaffé A., Jacobi J. *Man and his symbols*. New York: Doubleday, 1964. P.20.

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language and number². In 1950, Spalding and Zangwill directed attentions to the phenomenon of the visual image of numbers that is perceived in the parieto-occipital region of the brain³. In this regard, subsequent research has come up with two competing general theories on this issue: The first theory states that a certain, specific part of the brain is responsible for number processing and numerical perception.

According to the second theory, the concept of number is mapped as a general abstract representation in the various parts of the human neuronal circuit (and not in a specific area nor in a certain part of it)⁴. In 1952 Piaget introduced the child's conception of number and from 1950 onwards this domain was further expanded in the field of cognitive science⁵. Every civilization had its own signs for numbers.

In ancient Egypt, the numbers were pictorial, while the Phoenicians and later the Romans used comparatively primitive forms of numbers. To perform more complicated mathematical operations, other systems proved more practical, such as that in which the letters of the alphabet also represented numbers. This method is found in early Greek and still exists in Hebrew and Arabic. In the latter case, the Arabic alphabet follows the old Semitic sequence of letters, called *abjad*, and since each letter has a twofold meaning, one can easily develop relations between names, meaningful words, and numbers (as has been done in the Cabala for centuries)⁶.

For Jung, numbers are related to the progressive stages of the inter psyche growth. In short, number one is related to the pre-separation or dissociation stage, two is related to polarization and conflict, three is related to the move toward problem solving, and four is related to the stability and integrity. Therefore, it can be concluded that numbers have long been symbolic and interpretative⁷. An example of the symbolic approach to numbers can be found in the Leibniz binary system.

Leibniz saw in his binary arithmetic the image of Creation. He imagined that Unity represents God, and Zero the Void, that the Supreme Being drew all beings from the void, just as unity and zero express all numbers in his system of numeration⁸.

² اعداد ۲-۵ پاكٽي ا. [Pakatchi A. Basic writings about numbers 2-5] // مجموعه مقالات اولين // همائش بين المللي سمانٽيڪ [Proceeding of the first national seminar on the semantics]. Tehran: Tehran University, 2016. P. 125.

³ Dehaene S. Number sense: How the mind creates mathematics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. P. 85-86.

⁴ Kadosh R. C., Walsh V. Numerical representation in the parietal lobes: abstract or not abstract? // Behavioral and brain sciences. 2009. Vol. 32, no. 3-4. P. 313; Buetti D., Walsh V. The parietal cortex and the representation of time, space, number and other magnitudes // Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, Biological Sciences. 2009. Vol. 364, no. 1525. P. 1831.

⁵ اعداد ۲-۵ پاكٽي ا. [Pakatchi A. Basic writings about numbers 2-5]. P. 125.

⁶ Schimmel A. The mystery of numbers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. P. 5.

⁷ Robertson R. Jungian archetypes: Jung, Gödel, and the history of archetypes. Boston: Red Wheel, Weiser, 1995. P. 269.

⁸ Dantzig T. Number: The language of science. New York: Pi Press, 2005. P. 15.

Leibniz believed that many errors in thinking, even in philosophical reasoning, are due to the deficiencies of human mental computing power, and if one could provide a symbolic representation of all mathematical and non-mathematical problems (in the format of numbers and numerical codes), eventually he would build a machine capable of detecting truth or falsehood (at least for mathematical propositions)⁹; and her approach can be considered as a branch of structural and constructivist approaches to the problems of philosophical-scientific analysis.

Given the cultural function of number symbols, these meanings can be considered as part of the language of all human beings who are the target audience of the scriptures. Given the cultural function of number symbols, these meanings can be considered as part of the language of all human beings who are the target audience of the scriptures. Hence, we can study the symbols while taking into account the context and other evidence. In the present study, focusing on Qur'anic applications the meanings expressed in the Qur'an, the Muslim's holy Book, are addressed.

Numbers have been used in a variety of positions in the Qur'an in base and multiple formats. Base numbers are those numbers that are independent and not a multiplication of other numbers. In contrast, multiple numbers are a multiplication of other base numbers. Since in the holy Quran, multiple numbers have various uses in different contexts and include base numbers, too, so they can connote more comprehensive meanings.

Therefore, in this study, the number thousand (1000) and its multiples, as an example of multiplicative numbers, have been studied first in different religions and cultures and then in the Quran. The main method of this research arithmomancy; in arithmomancy of the Quranic section, we have adopted structural approaches. The aforementioned approach is an attempt to answer the main question: what is the non-numerical (symbolic) signified of the number thousand (1000) and its multiples in the Qur'an?

1. Review of literature

In the field of numerology, research has been done on history, human's computation, numerical systems, and so on. And only some of them refer to non-numerical connotation of numbers. One of the most famous sources for such an approach to numbers is Dantzig's "Number: The language of science". In the early chapters of this book, a description of how symbolic meanings of numbers were used by humans in ancient times is presented, and some symbols such as "addition and multiplication" have been emphasized for the numbers three and above¹⁰.

The more detailed and complete compilation of symbolic general meanings in all areas such as numbers, colors, elements of nature, etc. has been done in

⁹ Mitchell M. Complexity: A guided tour. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. P. 59.

¹⁰ Dantzig T. Number. P. 4–5.

specialized encyclopedias and dictionaries. Among these sources we can refer to the five-volume “Dictionary of symbols” written by Chevalier, which extensively focuses on symbolic dimension of every number in cultures and religions.

Another encyclopedia in this field is Cooper’s “An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols”, which like Chevalier it is written in all areas. In this encyclopedia, too, under each number, an enormous variety of symbols in different religions are discussed and explained. Each religion is individually categorized and the symbolic meanings of a certain number are presented under the entry of the religion in question. Another example is Bruce-Mitford’s “The illustrated book of signs and symbols”. This book is also very similar to the Chevalier’s book, but it uses illustrations to better explain the symbols.

In addition to the encyclopedias, some works have also been published in contemporary era that have specifically addressed and examined the symbols of numbers. For example, in Schimel’s book “The mystery of numbers”, each number is analyzed symbolically in separate chapters, and after presenting some reports of these meanings, the symbols are analyzed adopting a predominantly mystical approach. Another example is the book “Number, symbol, myth” by Noor Aqai, which, like the aforementioned source, addresses each number in a separate chapter and lists its symbolic meanings. It should be noted that all sources of arithmomancy (numerology) are influenced by the Chevalier’s book and actually they have provided a summary of this five-volume series with comparatively recent chaptering.

In another slightly different study, Olsher et al., using computational tools (such as semantic ontological graphs and cognitive mappings) and with the aim of cultural modeling and simulation have studied the symbolic meaning of the number eight in Chinese culture¹¹. The above sources have examined and reported on the symbols of numbers in different religions and cultures but little attention has been paid to the symbolic meanings of numbers in the Qur’an. In Qur’anic studies we often see compilation and statistical approaches to numbers.

As an example, we can refer to the number entry in the Quran encyclopedia. In this entry, each number is considered separately in terms of number of uses, and then without any semantic analysis, the verses that contain that number are mentioned and they are categorized only by subject. Thus we couldn’t find an independent source that has systematically analyzed the non-numerical meanings of numbers in the verses of Creation or other verses of the Qur’an.

An investigation on the conceptual metaphors of numbers based on their etymology has been done by Pakatchi in a study titled as “Basic mappings of the numbers of two to five based on etymology” and also in a doctoral thesis entitled “Semantic relationships of numbers in creation verses” by Zahra Besharati in which Sami roots of the numbers and their *religio-cultural* symbols in Creation verses have been examined. Therefore, none of the above sources have inde-

¹¹ Olsher D.J., Toh Heng Guan. Novel methods for energy-based cultural modeling and simulation: Why eight is great in Chinese culture // Proceedings of IEEE Symposium Series on Computational Intelligence. 2013. P.74.

pendently examined the multiple numbers in the Qur'an and for this reason, the present study is innovative and has no literature¹².

2. Arithmomancy

Multiples of the number thousand (1000) are one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, five thousand, fifty thousand and hundreds of thousands. The numbers ten, two, three and five have been used in making the above multiple numerals, and in some of them the number ten has been powered, like fifty thousand which is the result of $5 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$.

Hence, the base numbers used in making the numerical combinations of thousand in the Quran include two, three, five and ten. Accordingly, the symbols of these numbers should first be analyzed in different religions and cultures and then focusing on the Qur'an, the Qur'anic symbols should be extracted based on the context of the verses. Finally, the commonalities between religio-cultural symbols and Qur'anic symbols should be addressed. In this section of the study, religio-cultural symbols of the base numbers are discussed.

2.1. Two

The two is one of the first and most severe divisions¹³. A division from which all other divisions derive. In binary images, the repetition of an image doubles its symbolic value and, on the contrary, a bisected (halved) image signals its internal division and weakens it. Division is the principle of multiplicity and addition and is the result of polarity¹⁴.

Therefore, two is also referred to as the symbol of polarity¹⁵.

Two came into existence only with creation, because without the polarity it expresses, material life would not exist. As the electric current needs a positive and a negative pole and animal life continues through inbreathing and out breathing and by the heartbeat with its systole and diastole, two is connected with all the manifestations in the world of creatures¹⁶.

Every multiplicity has opposite poles and depending on the sign that affects the number, it is added or subtracted. Thus, two should be regarded as a sign of competition and duality and may result from hatred or love¹⁷.

¹² [Besharati Z. Semantic relationships of numbers in creation verses]. Tehran: Allameh Tabataba'i University, 2020.

¹³ Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles: Mythes, rêves, coutumes, gestes, figures, couleurs, nombres. 11^{ème} ed. Paris: Jupiter, 1990. P.350–352.

¹⁴ Schimmel A. The mystery of numbers. P.46–54.

¹⁵ Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles. P.350; Cooper J. C. An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols. London: Thames & Hudson, 1987. P.114; [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. 1000 symbols]. Tehran: Ney, 2021. P.360.

¹⁶ Schimmel A. The mystery of numbers. P.48.

¹⁷ Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles. P.350–352.

Some numerologists have considered two as the symbol of dual and opposing forces. A contradiction that may be reciprocal and incompatible or complementary and productive, and maintain the balance between the opposing poles.

Therefore, it can lead to twofold strength in a positive direction¹⁸. Double animals of the same symbolism even if of different species represent twofold strength. In alchemy, two symbolizes the opposites, sun and moon, king and queen, etc.¹⁹

Lévi-Strauss adopting a structural approach, examines some examples from the Indonesian and North American tribes, and then concludes that the paradoxes or contradictions can be considered as the criterion for defining identity for groups, concept classes, and, at the same time, the criterion for defining communicational dimensions between two poles²⁰. Hence the tangible meanings of wings, feet, eyes, etc. can be understood in relation to these symbolic meanings.

“Two wings, two eyes, two feet are pairs of opposites. The right eye and the left eye, the right wing and the left wing, are two interconnected forces that form a positive set and evoke the concept of dualism”²¹.

These familiar and pervasive contradictions between human minds have led to formation of similar structures in the East and West of the world between the early peoples and tribes²². In Pythagorean theory, two signifies the feminine principle and is in opposition to the male nature one²³. In Greece, this number was a symbol of feminine source and was attributed to motherhood²⁴.

Two has also been interpreted as the symbol of multiplicity²⁵. For example, in Persian language, the terms used with the digit two²⁶ are numerous, and generally connote double efficiency or tenfold efficacy; In Iranian symbolism, number two means increasing power to an infinite degree.

For example, ‘do taktakhtan’ meaning ‘high speed’, ‘otaq do dareh’ or ‘double-door room’ meaning very comfortable and luxurious²⁷. Two in religious symbols connotes duality; alternation; diversity; conflict; dependence; the static con-

¹⁸ اسطوره و سمبل عدد، نور آقایی [Noor Aghai A. Number, symbol, myth]. Tehran: Fekr, 1990. P. 34; Bruce-Mitford M. The illustrated book of signs and symbols. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2004. P. 24; Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles. P. 350–352.

¹⁹ اسطوره و سمبل عدد، نور آقایی [Noor Aghai A. Number, symbol, myth]. P. 34; Bruce-Mitford M. The illustrated book of signs and symbols. P. 24.

²⁰ Lévi-Strauss C. Structural anthropology. New York: Basic Books, 1974. P. 161.

²¹ ت روش فکر کردن [Laozi. Tao Te Ching. The way for thinking / ed. by Pashaei]. Tehran: Cheshmeh Publ., 1992. P. 65.

²² Ibid.

²³ شفردر؛ شفردر. 1000 و سمبول ها: اشکال چه معنایی در هنر و اسطوره دارند [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. 1000 symbols]. P. 358.

²⁴ اسطوره و سمبل عدد، نور آقایی [Noor Aghai A. Number, symbol, myth]. P. 34.

²⁵ Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles. P. 350–352.

²⁶ Persian equivalent of two is دو (do).

²⁷ Ibid.

dition; balance, and the opposite poles²⁸. Furthermore, in many cultures binary groups are considered very auspicious²⁹.

Thus in ancient cultures and religions, two symbolizes division, duality, balance, multiplicity and diversity, femininity and the state or quality of being *auspicious*.

2.2. Three

One of the main symbols signifying three is Trinity. Three represents an intellectual-spiritual system in connection with God, the universe and man. This number symbolizes the unity of man with heaven and earth (The Great Triad, i. e. Heaven — Man — Earth)³⁰.

Since a long time ago, thinkers have attempted to express the incorporation of unity in multiplicity, with particular reference to “three”. Laozi says: “It is yang, auspicious, and is also symbolic of multiplicity: ‘The One gave rise to the Two, the two gave rise to three; three gave rise to all numbers’”³¹.

For Dante the three, as he saw it incorporated in the Trinity, revealed the principle of love, that is, the synthetic power³². In the history of religions this role of three is a mysterious sign in some religions. For example, in various parts of the Avesta, there are many references to the number three, which is always a symbol of the three cryptic sentences of the Zoroastrianism.

The three was also a symbol of perfection. The Chinese say that three is a complete number expressing integrity and the whole presence. In some cultures, three symbolizes courage and gallantry. This number was related to the ritual of shooting arrows from a bow. The third arrow determined the intended person, place, treasure, and so on. This practice was common among Arabs just before Islam, with a slight difference between the Arab Bedouins and the Iranian nomads.

When a king wished to send a warrior to a dangerous mission, he would call out three times, then a valiant volunteer would come forward and thereby showed his courage over the others.

The number three symbolizes masculinity as well as the movement against the number four, and four is the symbol of femininity. Respect and reverence are other symbolic meanings of the number three. An ancient symbolic custom repeated in

²⁸ Cooper J. C. An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols. P. 114; Bruce-Mitford M. The illustrated book of signs and symbols. P. 24.

²⁹ [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. شرفدر؛ شرفدر. 1000 و سمبول ها: اشکال چه معنایی در هنر و اسطوره دارند. 1000 symbols]. P. 358.

³⁰ Guénon R. The great triad. Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001. P. 106–107; [Laozi. Tao Te Ching. The way for thinking / ed. by Pashaei]; ت روش فکر کردن [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. شرفدر؛ شرفدر. 1000 و سمبول ها: اشکال چه معنایی در هنر و اسطوره دارند. 1000 symbols]. P. 358.

³¹ [Laozi. Tao Te Ching. The way for thinking / ed. by Pashaei]. P. 88.

³² Schimmel A. The mystery of numbers. P. 60.

the stories is to stand up and sit down three times (threefold repetition) to show respect and reverence³³.

Also among the symbolic meanings of the number three in the semiotic studies of different cultures and religions we can refer to multiplicity³⁴.

Three symbolizes multiplicity; creative power; growth; and “three is the first number to which the word ‘all’ has been appropriated” and “The Triad is the number of the whole, inasmuch as it contains a beginning, a middle and an end”³⁵. The “power of three” is universal and is the tripartite nature of the world as heaven, earth and waters; in many traditions, the three meant abundance, that is, beyond duality. That’s why Aristotle says, “Three is the first number to which the word ‘all’ applies”³⁶.

In ancient Egypt three was, at some point, the upper limit of exact counting and at the same time an expression of indefinite multiplicity; the Egyptian sign for the plural, moreover, is three strokes. As a number of perfection and completion, three also played a role in the sacrificial rites of ancient Greece and Rome³⁷. Symbol of sanctity for the number three is seen in some cultures such as Chinese; this number is sacred and *auspicious for them*³⁸.

Accordingly, in different religions and cultures the number three signifies the symbolic meanings of the number of the whole, sanctity, multiplicity and growth, respect and reverence and masculinity. The symbolic concept of creator for the number three is also manifested in the form of Christian Trinity and Hindu Divine Trinity.

2.3. Five

Five has usually been connected with human life and with the five senses; it is the number of love and, sometimes, of marriage, as an indivisible combination of the masculine three and the feminine two, five appears. There are five women named as Mary in the New Testament. The number five is also a central number in Manicheism, where the five sons of the primordial man appear.

In China, the upper point of the pentagram was inscribed with “earth”, followed by “water”, “fire”, “metal” and “wood”. It was also a key number for the Maya, who considered it to be at the center of the four cardinal directions-an

³³ Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles. P.972–976; و سمیل عدد، نورآقایی [Noor Aghai A. Number, symbol, myth]. P.39–41.

³⁴ Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles. P.972–976; Cooper J.C. An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols. P.114; و سمیل عدد، نورآقایی [Noor Aghai A. Number, symbol, myth]. P.39; Schimmel A. The mystery of numbers. P.60; Bruce-Mitford M. The illustrated book of signs and symbols. P.25.

³⁵ ت روش فکر کردن [Laozi. Tao Te Ching. The way for thinking / ed. by Pashaei]. P.99.

³⁶ Cit. on: Ibid. P.117.

³⁷ Schimmel A. The mystery of numbers. P.69.

³⁸ Cooper J.C. An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols. P.114; Bruce-Mitford M. The illustrated book of signs and symbols. P.25.

idea that later occurs in many European and Asian concepts of the cross with its center. There are Maya deities who are fivefold in form³⁹.

Five is the number of balance, harmony and center. Ancient Chinese authors emphasize that under the sky, there are five universal laws:

Five colors, five tastes, five planets, five directions, five senses, etc. Allende believes that the number five has objective and materialistic existence. The five symbols of life are evident and tangible⁴⁰.

Five is the most complete Pythagorean number for a human being with five senses and five fingers in each hand and foot. In Christian Arithmomancy (symbolism), this number represents the five wounds of the crucified Christ, one on each hand and foot and one on his flank. It also signifies the five pillars of religion in Islam.

In the Indian calendar, there are five sacred signs that bridge between earth and heaven, past and future, and the material and spiritual worlds⁴¹.

Five is the symbol of the human world, man, and the power of the circle; as five is a circular number, thus, like a circle, it symbolizes power.

The five-pointed star, like the pentagram, depicts integral individuality when it points upwards; pointing downwards it is a witchcraft and black magic symbol. In Hebrew, it symbolizes strength and severity. In Christianity, five depicts man after the Fall; the five books of Moses, and five points of the cross. In Roman, five is the symbol of omnipotence; infinite knowledge; and eternity⁴².

Thus in various religions and cultures, the five symbolizes human life, power, love, marriage, infinite knowledge, eternity, balance, harmony, center, and sanctity.

2.4. Ten

The number of the cosmos; the paradigm of creation. The decad contains all numbers and therefore all things and possibilities; it is the all-inclusive; law; order; dominion. Ten is the perfect number, the return to unity. It is completeness and the foundation of all counting. For Pythagoreans, ten is the symbol of infinite expansion, perfection and integrity⁴³. Ten is the radix of decimal systems, and signifies the completion and return to unity.

As the sum of the first four natural numbers equals ten ($1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$), Pythagoreans associated it (the number ten) with the numeric form of the fifth element and possessing divine power. Ten was the number of commandments given to Moses by God. The Native Indians of America considered this number

³⁹ Schimmel A. The mystery of numbers. P. 113.

⁴⁰ Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A. Dictionnaire des symboles. P. 254–258.

⁴¹ شرفرد ر؛ شرفرد ر. 1000 و سمبول ها: اشكال چه معنایی در هنر و اسطوره دارند [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. 1000 symbols]. P. 358.

⁴² Cooper J. C. An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols. P. 116.

⁴³ Ibid. P. 119.

as a sign of collective wisdom⁴⁴. In Roman, the number is represented by X and signifies interesting connotations. In the old images of the celestial sphere, there are two crossed orbits on the sphere.

One of these two orbits, shows the ecliptic and the other represents the celestial equator. That is why Plato explains in his dialogues: “The Creator of the Universe created the universe from two x-shaped orbits”⁴⁵. So ten symbolizes the whole of manifestation. As W. Hartner put it, most counting systems in ancient times were based on the “ten”. In ancient Egypt, for example, the lotus flower connotes thousand and the boat symbol signifies ten thousand⁴⁶.

For the Pythagoreans, the importance of ten was beyond doubt, for it was regarded as the all-embracing, all-limiting “mother”. As the sum of the first four natural numbers ($1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$) it was associated with the primordial one existence, the polarity of manifestation, the threefold activity of the spirit, and the fourfold existence of matter as seen in the four elements. Thus the ten contained everything. Ten is the first step toward a new multiplicity that leads to yet another step that begins with 100.

Tenfold categories are reflected in many traditions by grouping books or words of wisdom in tens: the early *Rigveda* in India with its ten books, for example, or the Ten Commandments given to Moses. Buddhism, too, has ten commandments. Jewish tradition has always been aware of the central role of ten. It is said in Genesis that there are ten generations between Adam and Noah. On ten Tishri, the Jewish Day of Atonement, the confession of sins is repeated ten times, and on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, ten biblical verses are read in groups of ten⁴⁷.

Its higher ranges of completeness, 100 and 1000, are the basis of all Hindu cosmology, and in China the Ten Thousand Things, i. e. the uncountable, symbolize the whole of manifestation⁴⁸. The number thousand has a heavenly theme and means eternal bliss. The days of the tree of life were a thousand years and the life of the righteous was a thousand years. In “The Book of Psalms” we read: One day in your courts is better than a thousand spent elsewhere (84:10). Adam should have lived for a thousand years but died earlier because of his sin.

In the Asian tradition, in the “Millennium Theory”, i. e. Christians’ belief that that Jesus Christ would re-emerge after a millennium AD, a heavenly life is a thousand years⁴⁹.

Millennium believers often refer to Christ’s reign in his second coming, namely the return of Christ accompanied by the righteous, and his rule before

⁴⁴ Shepherd R., *Shepherd R.* [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. 1000 symbols]. P. 359. و سمبول ها: اشکال چه معنایی در هنر و اسطوره دارند 1000 symbols]. P. 359.

⁴⁵ Ulansey D. *The origins of the Mithraic mysteries: Cosmology and salvation in the Ancient world.* London: Oxford University Press. P. 78.

⁴⁶ Cit. on: Shepherd R., *Shepherd R.* [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. 1000 symbols]. P. 358. و سمبول ها: اشکال چه معنایی در هنر و اسطوره دارند 1000 symbols]. P. 358.

⁴⁷ Schimmel A. *The mystery of numbers.* P. 182.

⁴⁸ Cooper J. C. *An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols.* P. 119.

⁴⁹ Daniélou J. *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme.* Paris: Desclée et Cie, 1958. P. 254–255.

the destruction of the world. Justinian (martyr Christian saint 100–165), when referring to the resurrection of Christ's body, says that Christ will reign in the renewed and enlarged Jerusalem for a thousand years⁵⁰. Saint Augustine (one of the Latin Fathers of the Church 354–430) and the other fathers of the Church believed that the sum of generations and the perfection of Universe exist in the number of thousand⁵¹.

The Japanese slogan 'banzai' means ten thousand years or a long life wish for the emperor. In Tao Te Ching, 'ten thousand' means 'all'⁵². In primitive cultures, one hundred thousand was thought of as a very large numerical symbol beyond human thinking. Hence, it turned into the conventional term of "infinite"⁵³.

Accordingly, the number ten symbolizes creation, the whole universe, integrity, the return to unity, sanctity and divinity, collective wisdom, all-embracing, all-limiting "mother", the first step toward multiplicity (the basis of all multiplicity). The higher ranges of this number i. e. one hundred, one thousand and so on are the symbol of the whole universe, Paradise, sanctity, eternal bliss, eternity, life, long life, the resurrection of Christ, the sum of generations and the perfection of universe, all, very great and

The number thousand and its multiples like one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, five thousand, fifty thousand and hundreds of thousands have been used in the Qur'an in a multiplicative manner.

3. The Qur'an and symbols of thousand

The number thousand has been used eight times in the Qur'an. Thousand should be considered as a multiple number with the base of ten ($10 \times 10 \times 10$).

This number has been used in the verse "And thou wilt find them greediest of mankind for life and (greedier) than the idolaters. (Each) one of them would like to be allowed to live a thousand years" (surah Al-Baqarah, 96) in order to describe the Jewish people. In this verse, it is mentioned that the Jews are greedy for the life in the world; even greedier than the polytheists. So they wish to live a thousand years. In this verse, Jewish worldliness is accompanied by the irony of "living for a thousand".

It is as if they do not believe in death and the afterlife, and on the contrary, tend to live long in this world and never die. Hence, it seems that in the verse above, the thousand connotes long and permanent.

Such a concept of thousand has been put forward by the commentators: a thousand years means the longest life, and the word "thousand" connotes 'many' because in Arabic it is the last range of numbers in terms of numerical unit and

⁵⁰ *Justine Martyr*. Dialogue with Trypho. Beloved Publishing, 2015. P. 35.

⁵¹ *Chevalier J., Gheerbrant A.* Dictionnaire des symboles. P. 634.

⁵² شفردر؛ شفردر. 1000 و سمبول ها: اشکال چه معنایی در هنر و اسطوره دارند [Shepherd R., Shepherd R. 1000 symbols]. P. 360.

⁵³ Ibid.

there is no word for a number more than that it but rather they use a repetition (thousand thousand) or a combination (ten thousand and one hundred thousand)⁵⁴.

Some commentators have interpreted “Alf: thousand” in this verse as “longevity”⁵⁵. Some others have understood “thousand” as the maximum time that the Persian people wish for the long life of their king⁵⁶.

On this basis, in this verse, the thousand symbolizes longevity, durability and survival, and it has been associated with the concept of life. This Qur’anic symbol is consistent with the aforementioned symbolic meanings of the number thousand.

It should be noted that the symbol of longevity mentioned for the number thousand is derived from the symbolic notion of multiplicity in the base number ten. The result of multiplying multiples by multiples is the symbol of longevity and greatness and consequently it will result in an infinite number for the number thousand and its higher levels (its multiples). This concept of “Alf: thousand” also applies to other Qur’anic uses of this word. In the verse “When ye sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): I will help you with a thousand of the angels, rank on rank” (surah Al-Anfal, 9), “Alf: thousand” means a great number of angels who have descended to earth in order to help the believers. Or in the verse “but lo! a Day with Allah is as a thousand years of what ye reckon” (surah Hajj, 47), God addresses the unbelievers who mockingly demanded haste in punishment, and promises that surely Divine Chastisement will happen and He says that when the Day of Judgment comes, a single *day* with your God will equate *1000 years* long. Some commentators say that the number thousand signifies ‘long’ and believe that in the Resurrection, the punishment of the disbelievers is very long⁵⁷.

Some commentators even believe that the number of the days of creation of the heavens and the earth equal a thousand days, and this again signifies the length of days with God⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ ريسفتة م يوارعشد [Shaaravi M. M. Sharavi commentary]. In 12 vols. Vol. 1. Beirut: Akhbar al-yavn, 1991. P. 478; نابطابط ح م ي نابطابط [TabaTabaie M. H. Almizan fi Tafseer al-Quran]. In 20 vols. Vol. 1. Qom, jamee-ye-modaresin, 1997 (1390 AH). P. 228.

⁵⁵ طبرانى س. التفسير الكبير [Tabarani S. bin A. Al-Tafseer al-Kabir]. In 6 vols. Vol. 1. Jordan: Dar al-Ketab Alsefafi, 2008. P. 210; اسرار التنزيل و اسرار التاويل [Beyzavi A. bin O. Anvar al Tanzil ve Asrar al Tavil]. In 6 vols. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar al-Ehya Altoras al-Arabi, 1998 (1418 AH). P. 95.

⁵⁶ زمخشرى م، الكشاف عن حقائق غوامض التنزيل [Zamakhshari M. bin O. Alkashaf]. In 4 vols. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar al-Ketab al-Arabi, 1987 (1407 AH). P. 167; مجمع البيان فى تفسير القرآن [Tabarsi F. bin H. Majma al-Bayan fi Tafseer al-Quran]. In 6 vols. Vol. 1. Tehran: Naserkhsro, 1993. P. 323.

⁵⁷ سمرقندى، نصرين محمد بن احمد، بحر العلوم [Samargandi N. bin M. bin A. Bahr al-olom / ed. by O. bin G. H. Omravi]. In 3 vols. Vol. 2. Beirut: Dar al-fekr, 1986 (1416 AH). P. 464; الواحدى ع الوجيز [Vahedi A. bin M. Alvajiz fi Tafseer al-Ketab al-Aziz]. In 2 vols. Vol. 2. Beirut: Daral-qalam Vahedi, 1995 (1415 AH). P. 737; ابو الفتوح رازى، حسين بن على. روض الجنان و روح الجنان في تفسير القرآن [Abu l-Futuh al-Razi. The Garden of Heaven and the Spirit of Heaven in the Interpretation of the Qur’an]. Mashhad, Reaserch foundation of Astan Quds Razavi, 1988. P. 342.

⁵⁸ ميطعلا نارقلا ريسفتة، دمحم بن دمحم لادبع، مناحى بانبا [Ibn abi Hatam A. bin M. Tafseer al-Quran Alazim / ed. by M. T. Asaad]. In 13 vols. Vol. 8. Saudi Arabia: Nazar al-mostafa al-baz Publ, 1999 (1419 AH). P. 2499; م ي سوط [Toosi Mohamad bin Hassan. Al-Tebyan fi Tafseer al-Quran]. In 13 vols. Vol. 7. Beirut, Dar al-Ehya Altoras al-Arabi Publ., 2010. P. 327.

Therefore, in this verse, “Alf: thousand” is also used to symbolize ‘being long’. Commentators have also referred to the same meaning for “Alf: thousand” in the verse: “Then it ascendeth unto Him in a Day, whereof the measure is a thousand years of that ye reckon” (surah As-Sajda, 5) and believe that the Divine Commandment ascends to God on the very long Day of Resurrection⁵⁹.

Accordingly, the symbol of “long” has been also considered for “Alf: thousand” here. In the verse: “The Night of Power is better than a thousand months” (surah Al-Qadr, 3); while some other commentators have not limited “Alf: thousand” to the number of thousand and believe it to mean multiplicity and longevity⁶⁰. It means that the reward for good deeds (and worship) on Qadr night is better than worshipping for a long time.

In the verse “O Prophet! Exhort the believers to fight. If there be of you twenty steadfast they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a hundred (steadfast) they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intelligence” (surah Al-Anfal, 65) at first, twenty believers overcome one hundred unbelievers and then a hundred believers defeated a thousand unbelievers.

The reason for this conquest is stated in the last verse: “because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intelligence”. That is to say, lack of understanding in unbelievers and conversely, the believers’ intelligence has made their power far greater than unbelievers’ power⁶¹. Accordingly, in the above verse, “Alf: thousand” and “m’a: one hundred” are used in one context to express the intensity of the believers’ power.

Symbols such as “multiplicity”, “collective wisdom” and “integrity” were seen among the religio-cultural symbols of the number ten which is semantically closely related to the functions of the number “Alf: thousand” in the afore-said verse. According to this verse, “one hundred” believers will triumph over “a thousand” unbelievers.

The fact that the number of unbelievers is tenfold (i. e. ten times more than the number of believers) indicates multiplicity of unbelievers, who were defeated in spite of their greater number.

So, “tenfold” (i. e. to be ten times more than the believers in number) may symbolize multiplicity and not necessarily a certain number of unbelievers. Therefore, it is possible to apply the symbolic meaning of multiplicity to ten and consequently to thousand which is its multiple. Moreover, according to the last sentence of the verse “because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intel-

⁵⁹ طالقانی م پرتوی از قرآن [Talegani M. Partovi az Quran]. Tehran: Enteshar, 1983. (1424 AH). P.6, 178; مراغی ا تفسیر المراغی [Maraghi A. bin M. Tafseer-e-almaraghi]. Beirut: Dar al-Ehya Altoras al-Arabi, s. a. P.21, 105 غوامض التنزیل [Zamakhshari M. bin O. Alkashaf]. In 4 vols. Vol. 2. Beirut: Dar al-Ketab al-Arabi, 1987 (1407 AH). P. 507.

⁶⁰ فضل الله، سیدمحمدحسین، من وحي القرآن [Fazlallah M.H. Min vahy al-Quran]. Beirut, Dar al-melak le al-tabaaat va al-nashr, 1999 (1419 AH). P.351; طالقانی م پرتوی از قرآن [Talegani M. Partovi az Quran]. P.6, 178; مراغی ا تفسیر المراغی [Maraghi A. bin M. Tafseer-e-almaraghi]. P. 198.

⁶¹ طباطبائی م ح المیزان فی تفسیر القرآن [Tabatabaie M.H. Almizan fi Tafseer al-Quran]. In 20 vols. Vol. 9. P. 122.

ligence” there is also a semantic relationship between the power of ‘Tafaqquh’ (intelligence) and predominance of the believers.

‘Tafaqquh’ is a profound understanding associated with the concept of collective wisdom and it is as if in the above verse, the believers’ triumph over the unbelievers has been realized through the collective wisdom of the believers.

In other words, believers’ understanding and collective wisdom are ten times more than that of unbelievers. Therefore, the multiple thousand has been used against hundred so that a tenfold difference denote intensity of the believers’ “collective wisdom” which was the cause of their victory.

In addition, the attribute ‘patient’, which is used for believers in the beginning of the verse, may represent avoiding haste and taking the opportunity to reflect and think in confrontation with the enemy. The concept of ‘integrity’ is also evident in the verse.

We read in the Qur’an: “and if there be of you a hundred (steadfast) they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve” (surah Al-Anfal, 65) and it means that a hundred believers is enough for standing against a thousand unbelievers. Therefore, in this context, the equivalence of the values of hundred and thousand as well as twenty and two hundred in the verse can be explained by considering the tenfold difference, that is, the difference in the symbol of integrity for the number ten and not its value. It is as though faith, which is together with understanding and rationality, is a perfect power that overcomes blasphemy, not that necessarily a “tenfold” numerical value is intended.

4. Multiples of thousand

Multiples of thousand (1000) — ‘two thousand’, ‘three thousand’, ‘five thousand’, ‘fifty thousand’ and ‘hundred thousand’ — have been used in the Qur’an. ‘Two thousand’ has been used in the verse: “and if there be of you a thousand (steadfast) they shall overcome two thousand by permission of Allah” (surah Al-Anfal, 66) which is continuation of the former verse.

“Alfin: two thousand”, a multiplication of $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 2$, possesses the number two in addition to the number of thousand. The predominance of a thousand believers over two thousand unbelievers in the verse in question can be examined by relying on the symbolism of two. In different religions and cultures the symbols such as ‘polarity’, ‘division’, ‘femininity’ and ‘multiplicity’ have been commonly used for the number two.

Since polarity and division result in the multiplication of various beings and abundance, and also femininity is linked to the birth and reproduction of the generation, ‘multiplicity’ should be regarded as a symbol derived from the symbols of ‘polarity’, ‘division’ and ‘femininity’.

In the above verse, the difference between the believer and the unbeliever is expressed by the coefficient two, so that by reference to the intelligence in the last sentence of the verse, show the great number of unbelievers against the division and multiplication of understanding, rationality and patience of the believers,

and not to limit it to the numbers nor to refer to the victory of exactly two thousand believers over one thousand unbelievers.

According to many commentators, the number three thousand in the verse “When thou didst say unto the believers: Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should support you with three thousand angels sent down (to your help)?” (surah Al-’Imran, 124), is the number of angels who ascended to the earth to help the believers in the battle of Badr. “Is it not sufficient” insists the fact that the number of angels was sufficient to defeat the enemy and that with the help of them Muslims won the battle against the unbelievers.

Three thousand is a multiplication of $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 3$. The result of the semi-otic examination of the base numbers of three and ten used in this number, imply the symbols of integrity (to be perfect) for the number three and multiplicity and all things and all possibilities for the number ten. Hence, the multiplication of these symbols together which makes up 3000 implies multiplicity and fullness.

In the verse in question, God, taking into account the conditions of the war sent a great and complete number of angels to help believers. The full number of angels in this verse means that they were complete, perfect and sufficient to overcome the enemy.

In the next verse, God refers to sending five thousand angels to help the believers: “Nay, but if ye persevere, and keep from evil, and (the enemy) attack you suddenly, your Lord will help you with five thousand angels sweeping on” (surah Al-’Imran, 125); some commentators believe that the promise of sending five thousand angels in this verse was made to strengthen the morale of Muslims after their defeat⁶². In the above verse, God sends the angels in order to strengthen the power of the Muslims and to create a strong morale to confront the enemy by whom they were defeated in the former war.

Thus, He talks about sending 5000 angels. Five thousand is a multiplication of $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 5$. Accordingly, the symbols of five and ten as the base numbers of this number should be considered. In religio-cultural symbols, five was the symbol of power which has been used alongside symbols such as “centrality” and “harmony and balance”. Therefore, the five should be regarded as the symbol of central power and coordinating and balancing power in different religions and cultures. The symbol of multiplicity and greatness was also mentioned for the number thousand earlier. Thus the result of the multiplication of the above symbols implies the symbolic meaning of centralized great power.

By reflecting on verse 125 of surah Al-’Imran, we can acknowledge the fact that the defeated forces of believers required rearrangement and renewal, and in this respect a large, centralized, and coordinating power that balances the believers’ strength and enhances the morale of the army that has suffered the defeat; and this will be helpful and effective. It seems that such power has been promised

⁶² سمرقندی، نصرین محمدین احمد، بحر العلوم [Samargandi N. bin M. bin A. Bahr al-olom]. Vol. 1. P.243; طوسی م. التبیان فی عن حقائق غوامض التنزیل [Zamakshari M. bin O. Alkashaf]. Vol. 2. P.411; شعر اوی م تفسیر [Tabarsi F. bin H. Majma al-Bayan fi Tafseer al-Quran]. Vol. 2. P.828; [Shaaravi M. M. Sharavi commentary]. Vol. 3. P. 1735.

in the verse above by referring to the angels and five thousand in order to restore the believers' power.

Therefore, it is possible that the above number signify the symbol of great and centralized power in verse 125 of surah Al-'Imran. The number five is also used in the form of fifty thousand which is a multiplication of $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 5$ with two base numbers of five and ten.

In this Qur'anic usage the Day of Judgment equates to five thousand years: "(Whereby) the angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years" (surah Ma'arij, 4). As mentioned before, among the five religio-cultural symbols we see 'eternity' and 'being alive'. This symbol together with multiple of 10, symbolizing multiplicity and longevity, symbolizes the long and eternal life in the format of the multiple number of fifty thousand.

It seems that in the above verse, which is about the Resurrection Day, God has talked about the soul's and the angels' life with God and their ascend toward Him at a time equivalent to fifty thousand years, in order to depict the length of that long day and consequently, the eternal life afterwards. Therefore, in the above verse it is probable that the meaning of 'multiplicity' for the aforesaid number imply the concept of eternity and the Hereafter life.

The last verse in which the use of the greater multiples of thousand can be seen is: "And We sent him to a hundred thousand (folk) or more" (surah Safat, 147). The verse mentions the mission of Jonah the prophet, and the number of the folk to whom Jonah the prophet was sent i. e. a hundred thousand or more. A hundred thousand is a multiplication of $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$. This number is the result of the base number ten. Therefore, the religio-cultural symbols of ten are more strongly manifested in the number a hundred thousand. For example, if ten is the symbol of multiplicity, then, a hundred thousand signifies very large values. Given the word "more" at the end of the verse in question, it seems that the number of a hundred thousand connotes the very large population of the Jonah's people.

Conclusions

In different religions and cultures, multiple numbers can represent comprehensive concepts of the symbols of their constitutive base numbers, as they are multiples of these numbers. Therefore, in the case study of the number thousand and its higher orders, more comprehensive symbolic meanings and connotations were obtained by combining various religio-cultural symbols of its constative base numbers. For example, in different religions and cultures, ten is the symbol of greatness and multiplicity and five symbolizes power. So, the multiplication of these numbers, which is five thousand, can be seen as a symbol of great centralized power. Adopting this approach, the multiples of the number thousand in the holy Qur'an were examined and analyzed.

Accordingly, it is possible that the functions of the symbols of 'longevity', 'durability and survival', 'very large' and consequently 'infinite' apply to the number of thousand in the Qur'an. In addition, the symbols of 'integrity', 'great cen-

tralized power', multiplicity with the implicit meaning of eternity and 'very large', respectively, are perceived for the numbers of three thousand, five thousand, fifty thousand and a hundred thousand, which are higher-order multiples (more than thousand and the heterogeneous base numbers) in the holy Qur'an.

Moreover, in some verses where the comparison between the multiples of thousand with lower orders (the order of the hundredths) is made, the aforementioned tenfold difference in the verse can be explained by the symbols such as 'collective wisdom' and wholeness for the base number of ten in these verses. For example, the collective wisdom of the believers together with their faith may be considered an effective factor in their victory over the unbelievers, or the wholeness of the number ten may be interpreted as the full and complete understanding of faith than blasphemy.

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Анализ арифмомантии множественных чисел в Коране на примере числа тысяча (1000)

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Опираясь на историю чисел и их нечисловые коннотации у древних, можно интерпретировать числа как знакомые символы, которые использовались

в повседневной жизни людей. Имеются сведения о том, что люди в различных религиях и культурах обращали внимание на числовую символику. Комментаторы также ссылались на символические (нечисловые) коннотации чисел, например числа семь в некоторых стихах Священного Корана. Кроме того, в Коране используются некоторые числа, которые являются произведением других чисел. В арифмомантии этих кратных чисел также изучаются составляющие их числа и контекст вне нахождения их самостоятельного символического значения. В данном исследовании на основе метода религиозно-культурной арифмомантии анализируются число тысяча (1000) и кратные ему числа в Коране. Результаты исследования подтверждают, что эти числа дают исчерпывающую картину символики составляющих их чисел в стихах Корана. Например, коннотации большой и централизованной власти, долголетия, длительного выживания, множественности, целостности и т. д. можно рассматривать как исчерпывающие символы для числа тысяча (1000) и кратных чисел более высокого порядка в Коране.

Ключевые слова: Коран, кратные числа, тысяча, символ, религиозно-культурная арифмомантия.

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