

Notes on the Number Seven

The number seven is regarded as special all over the world. Sevens are all around us: days of the week, colors in the spectrum, notes of the scale, and planets in Ptolemaic astronomy. Our lives are sectioned by sevens: seven is the age of reason, at fourteen we reach puberty, at twenty-one we come of age, and later there is a seven-year itch. There are seven directions (up, down, front, back, right, left, and here).

The Japanese have seven Gods of Luck. The Zoroastrians have seven Ameshaspentas, who are like the Judeo-Christian seven Spirits before the Throne. There are seven liberal arts, and seven virtues. The Big Dipper has seven stars, and so does the Pleiades.

Greek mythology was full of sevens. Apollo's lyre had seven strings, and his feast day was the seventh of the month. Hercules fetched golden apples from the seven Hesperides, daughters of the West Wind. Thebes had seven gates and seven champions. Niobe had seven sons and seven daughters.

Hebrew lore likewise is heptadic (occurring in groups of seven). Joshua's army marched around Jericho for seven days, on the last day seven times, with seven priests sounding their ram's horns. Delilah learned the secret of Samson's strength on the seventh day of their wedding feast, snipped seven locks from his hair, and bound him with seven cords. Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles are celebrated for seven days. The High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) are in the seventh Jewish month.

Christianity followed right along. The Lord's Prayer has seven petitions in it. Mary had seven sorrows, seven joys, and seven glories. Christ spoke seven last words on the cross and appeared after the Resurrection to seven disciples. The Holy Spirit has seven gifts.

Theosophically, seven is very big. Humans, like the cosmos, have seven principles. The major chakras are seven. There are seven rays. Our