

seven, just in the same way as the moon became identified with the period of a lunation, which we still call a moon, or month.*

The names given to the days of the week in modern Arabic, answer to those of the Hebrew: *yom-ahad*, day one; *yom-thana*, day two; *yom-tullta*, day three; *yom-arba*, day four; *yom-hamsa*, day five; *Juma*, mosque-day, or day of the congregation (for the Mohammedans, like the Christians, have changed the original day of worship); and *Sabt*, seventh.† But in ancient Arabic, the names, as given by Mr. Prinsep, were *Bawal*, *Bahun*, *Jabar*, *Dabar*, *Femunes*, *Aruba*, and *Shiyar*.

The fact that the modern Arabic names of the days of the week do not correspond with the ancient, leads us to the conclusion that the Hebrew names are also of comparatively recent date; and the change probably took place when Moses altered the calendar, and commanded the Israelites to regard their Exodus from Egypt as the commencement of a new era.

"And the Lord spake to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, this month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year unto you."—Exod. xii. 1, 2.

The month referred to was *Abib*, or March, and was reckoned from the first new moon near the vernal equinox. The Egyptian year commenced in August, with the first appearance at sunrise of Sirius, the dog star.‡

In Persia, the days of the week are now called *Yak-shambe*, *Do-shambe*, *Si-shambe*, *Char-shambe*, *Panj-shambe*, that is, first day, second day, third day, fourth day, and fifth day. Friday is called *Juma* (Mosque day); and Saturday, *Hafta*, the seventh.§ But the ancient Persians are said not to have had the institution of weeks, but to have called every day in the month by a distinct name.

Pythagoras, who is said to have travelled in Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, and India, imported from the East into Greece the symbolical mode of illustrating the properties of numbers, and from his time (500 B. C.) we read in Greek authors of *seven* as the "venerable" or sacred number. But the number which the followers of Pythagoras revered the most was the *tetract* or *four*, as forming a square, and the root of an universal scale of numeration, the influence of which was shown in the *four* seasons, the *four* elements, the *four* intervals of the tetrachord, the *four* cardinal points, &c.; and in consequence of which it was proper to divide mathematics into *four* branches, and arrange every subject into *four* divisions. We may trace the same idea in the symbolical imagery of the prophets. Ezekiel describes *four* living creatures, with *four* sides, *four* wings, *four* faces, *four* horns, and altars of *four* cubits, *four* tables, &c.; and the term *forty* or *four* tens, presents itself throughout the Jewish records as a perfect number, rather than as a term used in a strictly arithmetical sense. The flood was upon the earth *forty* days. Moses was in the mount *forty* days. *Forty* days and Nineveh was overthrown. Christ was in the wilderness *forty* days. The Israelites were *forty* years in the wilderness. "The land had rest *forty* years," &c., &c. In modern times *forty* days composed the philosophical month of the Alchemists, and *forty* days was held to be the proper period for quarantine.

The *triad*, also, was a sacred number with the Pythagoreans. The *monad* was held to represent creative power, or the great first cause; the *duad*, matter; and the union of the two was regarded as the proper symbol of the beginning, middle, and end of all things, —the hidden meaning, perhaps, which they had discovered in the triune divinity of India, composed of *Brahma*, the creator, *Vishnou*, the preserver, and *Siva*, the destroyer.

Five, or the *pentad*, had also its mystical signification with the Pythagoreans, as composed of odd and even numbers, which they

symbolized as male and female; and it is curious that the Chinese adopt the same notion, and, in its application, carry it out further than the Pythagoreans. With the Chinese, *even* numbers partake of the feminine principle *yin*, and *odd* numbers of the masculine *yang*. The sum of the first five even numbers, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, which is 30, they call terrestrial numbers; the sum of the first five odd numbers, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, which is 25, celestial numbers. *Five* also represents the heart; and they reckon *five* planets, *five* viscera of the human body, *five* elements, *five* primary colours, and *five* tastes.* At their spring agricultural festivals they sow *five* sorts of grain. The new year commences with them, not on the 1st of January, but when the sun has entered *fifteen* degrees of Aquarius. They have a great public festival on the *fifth* day of the *fifth* moon, and they have *fifth* day markets. And this leads us to observe, that when we pass the Himalayan range, or in proportion as we recede in any direction from India and Egypt, and the countries lying between them, we lose all traces of Sabbaths.

The Chinese not only consider *five* a more perfect number than seven (with the exception of the followers of the Indian Buddhists, who, in China, are only a tolerated sect), but they have no weeks or weeks of only five days, if the customary interval between one market day and another in country districts may be so called. The year, with the Chinese, is divided into two descriptions of months—lunar months, and short solar months—the latter dividing the solar year into twenty-four periods, which may be called half months, each having a distinct name, and comprising an average of about fifteen days.

Passing from the Old World to the New, we discover a curious, and it must have been at one time, a most unlooked-for coincidence, between the customs, in this respect, of Western Asia and the aboriginal population of Central America. The ancient Mexicans, conquered by Hernando Cortes, had a week of five days, and a corresponding cycle of years to that of the Tartars and Chinese, but of 52 years, instead of 60. Their months were composed of periods of 20 days; and they reckoned eighteen months in the year, with five supplementary days. They had also, astrological months of 13 days, 1461 of which composed their cycle of 52 years; and it is remarkable that this number should be the same with that which composed the great Sothic period of the Egyptians,—of 1461 years, when the annual seasons and festivals returned precisely to the same point of time.

The antiquarian is sometimes perplexed by the ancient druidical names of places in the British Isles, showing an eastern origin, such as the islands of *Arran*, *Ila*, *Bute*, *Skye*, *Iona*, and the rivers *Isis*, and *Cam*, or *Granta*;† but there are ample reasons for concluding that, not only England, Scotland, and Ireland, but even countries as far north as Iceland, have been many times visited and overrun by numerous primitive tribes, strangers to each other, but swarms from the same parent hive; the original seat of which, in many cases, but not in all, appears to have been the high table lands of the tropical regions.

Passing from America to the numerous groups of islands in the Pacific, comprised in the term Polynesia, we still search in vain among their aboriginal inhabitants for septenary institutions. Everywhere has been found a calendar of months, commencing with the first visible new moon, but nowhere the Hindu and modern European week of seven days. The days are reckoned from sunset to sunset, and every day has a distinct name. In the Feejee Islands a solemn festival is held in the month of November, which lasts four nights and three days, during which time the whole population remain shut up in their houses, and no work is performed; and throughout the Polynesian chain there are festivals connected with the seasons, corresponding more or less with those of the Western hemisphere, but no Sabbaths nor seven-day weeks. New Zealand and Australia, as far as the customs of the tribes of these countries have yet been examined, have been found equally destitute of these institutions.

* The Greek $\mu\eta\nu$, *men*, and $\mu\eta\nu\eta$, *mene*, a month, and the moon, —the Latin *mensis*, and Sanscrit *mās*, month, *mās* or *māsa*, moon, are from the same origin. See Plut. Tim. p. 498, transl. Taylor.

† In Hebrew, moon and month are both expressed by the same word, יָרֵחַ *irah*, commonly called *jerah*.

‡ Corrupted into *yasumul' ahadi*; *yasumul' ienayn*; *yasumul' salaso*; *yasumul' arbad*; *yasumul' khamis*; *yasumul' jumaz*; *yasumul' sabi*.

§ The Egyptians, in watching for the annual overflowing of the Nile, had noticed it to be preceded by the rising of Sirius just before the sun; whence Sirius obtained the name of *Thoth* or the watch-dog, and the month of August came to be called the *Thoth* month, or *Thoth* days; whence also the English term of the dog days.

¶ The Turkish names for the week have principally the same derivation. They are *Bazar-gunt*, market day; *Bazar-artasi*, day after market; *Sali*, Tuesday (its etymology unknown); *Char-shambah*, fourth day; *Panj-shambah*, fifth day; *Jama*, Mosque day; *Jama-artasi*, day after Mosque day.

* 1.—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury. 2.—Stomach, liver, heart, lungs, kidneys. 3.—Earth, wood, fire, metal, water. 4.—Yellow, green, red, white, black. 5.—Sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, salt.—*Davis's Chinese*, p. 285.

† *Bute* is supposed to be derived from Buddha; *Arran* and *Ila* were the names of the consort of Buddha; *Skye* is probably from *Sakya*; *Man* from *Man-arran*, *Mahi-man*, or *Manu*; *Iona* (Hebrew for a dove) from the *Io* and *Isis* of Egypt and the *Venus* of Cyprus, one of whose symbols was the dove, whence the island is also called *Columba*; The river *Isis* at Oxford, and its coat of arms, a Bull, or Ox, show the very close connexion of Druidical and ancient Eastern mythology. *Cam* and *Granta* of Cambridge are both Indian names of gods.—*Anacalypsis*, vol. ii., p. 287 and 285.