

Chapter 6

Time, Space, and Process

The Utilization of Time and Numbers in Revelation as Metaphors for Psychospiritual Integration

The Year and the Zodiac

So far, we have seen how zodiacal symbolism provides the key to an understanding of some of the central concepts in Revelation. It is also possible to show how this same system of zodiacal symbolism has allowed the author of Revelation to represent certain states of consciousness relating to psychological and spiritual integration. These states of consciousness are discussed in terms of a drama of personalities, events, and durations of time. With this understanding, we can translate back from the events and personalities in the Revelation drama to processes dealing with psychospiritual integration. From this exercise, we obtain insights that might help us gain a perspective on our own transformational quest.

A key place to begin our task of uncovering the transformational psychology contained in Revelation is to show how space and time are related in it. There, time and space become interchangeable so that a discussion concerning a duration of time might also be discussing a certain psychological process. We are clued in to this time-space relationship from our discovery that the period of time it treats as a year is equivalent to the zodiacal wheel.

In Revelation, the year contains 360 days. The year is composed of twelve uniform months, each containing 30 days. This is comparable to the zodiacal wheel with its 360 degrees, broken down into twelve different signs of 30 degrees each. It is unlikely that the use of a 360-day year was due to ignorance on the part of John, since solar calendars assigning 365 days to the year had been in use in the Middle East for over a thousand years by that time. One can also find in the book of Jubilees, estimated to have been written about 105 B.C., a prescription for a 364-day year. S. J. De Vries writes:

It is fairly certain that in historical times the Israelites determined their year, not by the fluctuating agricultural and pastoral cycles, even though these natural phenomena must have influenced them deeply, but by observing the annual

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circuit of the stars and the sun. We have little evidence concerning the method they might have used for determining the completion of this circuit, but we do know that the new year began at one of the equinoxes, at the dividing point between winter and summer or between summer and winter.

He continues:

A purely solar reckoning is employed in the calendar promoted by the sectarian book of Jubilees (circa 105 B.C.). Throughout this remarkable book . . . a year of 364 days is prescribed, to be divided into four quarters, each of which contains thirteen weeks and three months of thirty or thirty-one days.¹

It is also not likely that John was using the 360-day year for the sake of convenience. This becomes obvious when we look at the attempts made to express time in equivalents of years, months, and days.

When the year and the zodiacal wheel are made to coincide, units of time such as years, months, and days become equivalent to zodiacal revolutions, signs, and degrees respectively. This means that references to events that are hinged upon a specific duration of time can be interpreted in terms of spatial concepts, i.e., degrees of the zodiac. In such a scheme, where space and time are interchangeable, the facility is created to discuss complex processes that would otherwise be outside of our frame of reference. It must be emphasized, however, that in Revelation's use of this scheme, it is the idea of process that is pre-eminent, with time represented by the year, and space represented by the zodiac, acting merely as support structures.

The evidence for attributing this time-space framework to Revelation is available from several scenes and references dealing with the passing of time. The context from which the following is taken finds John being given a rod and commanded by an angel to measure the temple of God:

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God; and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. [emphasis added]

II:1-2

This same period of forty-two months, though allotted in days, is mentioned again as that which is given to the Two Witnesses—we have already identified them as symbols for the Cardinal signs—to prophesy:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Rev. 11:3

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Both forty-two months and one thousand, two hundred and sixty days contain a factor of $3\frac{1}{2}$. They both represent $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. We find this factor of $3\frac{1}{2}$ being repeated in the length of time during which the bodies of the Witnesses would lie exposed after they were murdered.

And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. Rev. 11:9

The references to people, kindred, tongues, and nations show a widening circle of influence, indicating that we are not dealing with local events but processes involving localities (the people), communities (kindreds), races (tongues), and the human race (the nations).

The period of time mentioned as forty-two months is also repeated in a different setting. This time, it involves one of the most central dramas in Revelation:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. Rev. 12:1-6

As if to emphasize that we are not dealing with duration as much as with cycles and processes, the period of time during which the woman is protected and nourished is also referred to as a time and times, and half a time:

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where

she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. Rev. 12:14

There is yet another instance in Revelation where this period is used, this time given in months. It is the period of time allowed for the reign of the beast—not to be confused with the four Beasts “round about the throne.”

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. Rev. 13:1-5

Most interestingly, this period of time, whether expressed as duration or periodicity, is not confined to Revelation. It is referred to elsewhere in the New Testament book of James and the Old Testament book of Daniel. In James, the reference has factual overtones:

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

James 5:17

In Daniel, the reference was wrapped up with the symbology of Daniel's own visions:

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. Daniel 7:25

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The idea of process, rather than duration, shines through as the central idea behind these references to three years and a half, forty-two months, one thousand two hundred and sixty days, three days and a half, a time (one) times (two) and half a time, or a time, and times, and the dividing of time (half). The variety of contexts in which these references occur suggests that the cyclic quality of this period is used as a symbol for a particular process of some cosmic significance. However, to penetrate the mystery as to what this process is, we need to look at another zodiacal concept utilized in astrology. This is the decanate, a ten-degree segment of the zodiac that Revelation utilizes in its manipulations.

The Decanate Concept as the Building Block for Revelation's Time-Space Creations

In the letter to the church at Smyrna—one of “the seven churches that are in Asia”—at the beginning of the Revelation document, there is a particular piece of encouragement given to the Smyrnians. The church is told:

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Rev. 2:10

This reference to tribulation for a ten-day period has completely defied commentators on Revelation. However, with the understanding that time and space have been used interchangeably, ten days can be translated as “ten units of space.” In terms of the zodiacal framework we have been using, these amount to ten degrees of the zodiacal wheel. Thus, to have tribulation for ten days can be interpreted as “having to undertake the task of integrating all the energies represented by the ten-degree segments into the consciousness.” Such a task can be regarded as “tribulation” in that it is extremely difficult to apply oneself to the task of becoming conscious in all aspects of life. Living consciously often involves breaking free from the conventional wisdom and social life of the day, an undertaking that is normally met with ridicule.

The ten-degree segment is the basic unit of space we are working with and that which becomes a symbol for one “unit” of experience. While experience is not usually divisible into individual units, we do know that specific life events do equip us with specific abilities to deal with future life contingencies. The astrological concept that relates to this ten days of tribulation is the *decanate*.

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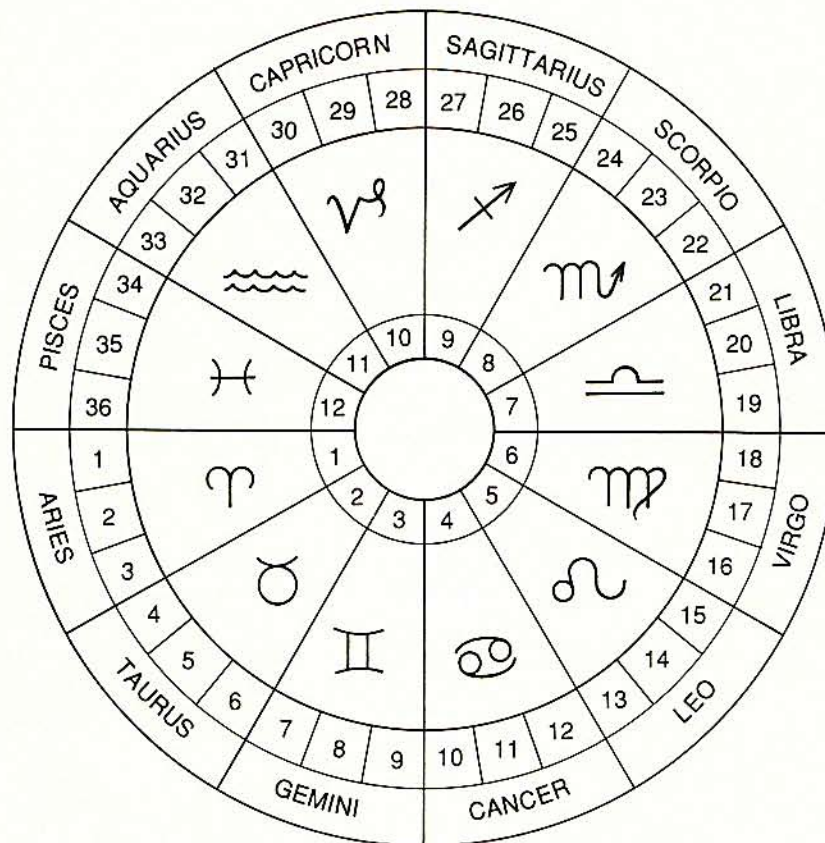


Figure 6.1 *Thirty-six Decantes of the Zodiac*

Each of the twelve astrological signs has three decanates, for a total of thirty-six on the zodiacal wheel (see Figure 6-1). The significance of the decanate is that it gives the “energy” of a sign three characteristic hues. The “energy” of the first decanate of a sign is said to be of the nature of the sign itself; the second decanate, of the nature of the sign ahead and of the same Element—going counter-clockwise; and the third, the nature of the sign preceding of the same Element.

An analogy that may facilitate an understanding of the decanate is to consider each sign as a sovereign state and the decanates as embassies of foreign states, with the exception of the first decanate. An embassy is technically regarded as the property of the state it represents even though it is ultimately subject to the jurisdiction of the host country. For example, the first decanate of Aries will

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be purely Aries, meaning Aries in both consciousness—or mentality—and expression. The second decanate will still be Aries in consciousness, but Leo in expression—Leo being the sign ahead and of the same Element, which in this case is Fire. The third decanate will be Aries in mentality, but Sagittarius in expression—Sagittarius being the preceding sign of the Fire Element.

The decanate concept is one that suggests relationship and synthesis. It is this concept that is at the basis of some of the other symbols in Revelation, which have themselves become important points of focus. We shall next consider how the decanate concept helps in understanding the meaning of the twenty-four Elders observed “round about the throne” with the four Beasts, and then show how the concept is used to construct other symbols relating to the dynamic in consciousness that leads to full psychospiritual integration and the opposite dynamic that subverts this process.

The Twenty-four Elders

The twenty-four Elders mentioned with the four Beasts help to complete the picture of the fully rounded consciousness. The Lamb symbolizes psychospiritual integration and Balance with respect to all the energies of the zodiac, represented here by the four Beasts and twenty-four Elders. Again, this is the arrangement as it is reported by John:

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

Rev. 4:2-4

We have already seen that the four Beasts represent the four Fixed signs of the zodiac. The twenty-four Elders represent the decanates of the other eight signs belonging to the Cardinal and Mutable Qualities—i.e., eight times three.

The Elders represent the integration of our experiences, symbolized in this arrangement by their crowns of gold. The crowns symbolize achievement or spiritual realization in the synthesis and mastery of energies represented by the decanates of the Cardinal and Mutable signs. The Elders are therefore stand-ins for these signs

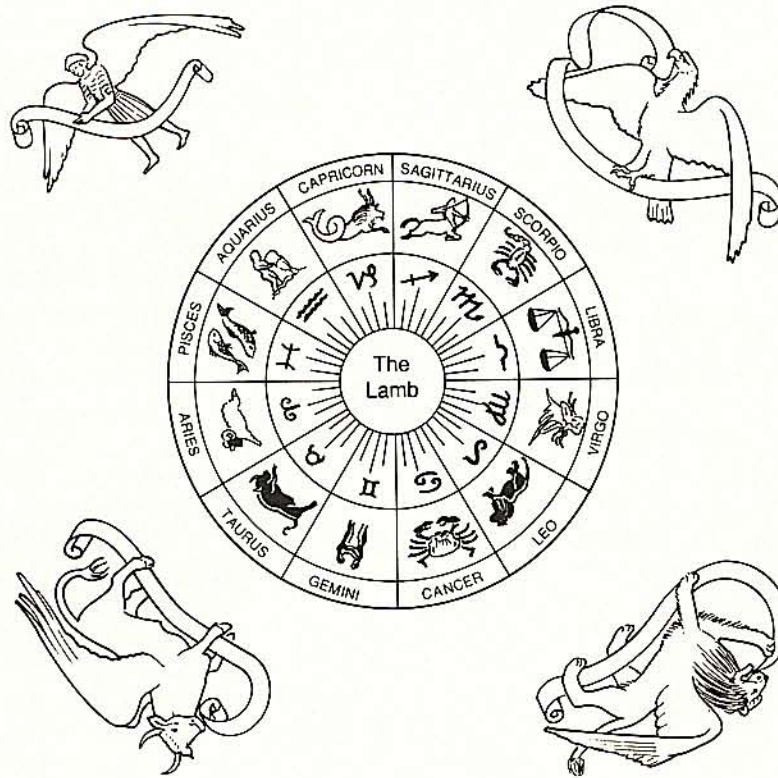


Figure 6.2 The Twenty-Four "Elders" and the Four Beasts

while the Fixed signs represent themselves in "heaven" where the throne was (see Figure 6-2).

The implication behind the four Beasts being in heaven is that they represent the energies of the Fixed signs. The four Fixed signs represent will (Leo), intuition as a higher level of intellectual functioning (Aquarius), contentment (Taurus), and transcendence (Scorpio). These energies are unfocused and therefore not manifest in the average human consciousness. Hence, they are in "heaven" as opposed to being on earth.

The four Horsemen and Two Witnesses are positioned on the earth to symbolize the energies of the Mutable and Cardinal signs. In order to get the message across that the energies that the Fixed signs represent are not yet fully integrated into our daily life, the writer of Revelation laments the lack of their proper expression by

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frequent reference to the results of their misuse—murder, idolatry, sorcery, and fornication.

The Number 1,260 as a Symbol for the Process of Psychospiritual Integration

The decanate idea will now enable us to show the zodiacal derivation of and the process implied by the period of time given as 1,260 days, forty-two months, or three years and a half. As was previously mentioned, the use of equivalent measures to express the same period of duration suggests that it is the process implied by the duration of time, rather than the passing of time itself, that is of importance. Furthermore, we have seen that this period of time can also be expressed spatially, as 1,260 degrees or three-and-a-half zodiacal wheel equivalents.

Within the context of Revelation, the number 1,260 implies the process of blending or synthesis using the decanate as the basic unit upon which the process operates. For a complete synthesis of the energies embodied in the zodiac, harmony must be established between every decanate and the thirty-five other decanates in the zodiac. In terms of behavior, when we are holding any one of these energies in our attention or our awareness—i.e., as a mental or emotional impulse—such an energy must not be expressed at the expense of any of the other energies. To represent the psychological process of combining energies the problem can be expressed in the following manner: *How can we gain mastery over thirty-six areas of awareness such that we can embody them all without conflict or animosity between them?* The solution is, for every one-on-one combination of these thirty-six areas of awareness, the opportunity and the capacity must be there to express the union in terms of each of the participants in the union.

As an example, if we are dealing with four objects, A, B, C, and D, and we want to combine them in pairs where the relative position of each one matters, the maximum expression of these unions, and therefore full synthesis, will be AB, AC, AD, BA, BC, BD, CA, CB, CD, DA, DB, and DC for a total of twelve combinations. Twelve, then, becomes the symbolic number representing the state of complete synthesis between four separate things.

The formal mathematical term for this relationship is that twelve is *the maximum number of ordered pairs* to be derived from four objects. Note that, in this example, the pairs AB and BA possess the same components, yet they are regarded as separate pairs when order of their arrangement is a consideration.

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In terms of expressing and synthesizing energies, a concept that captures what is involved is that of *reciprocity*. An example from the musical scale will assist us to better understand how reciprocity relates to psychospiritual integration. When two musical notes are combined, a different effect is created depending on which note is played first. For example, the effect achieved by playing “re” after “do” is different from that achieved from playing “do” after “re.” What makes their relationship different is the sequence of their expression in time.

Similarly, in order to achieve psychospiritual integration from the blending of the mental and emotional energies represented by the zodiac, it is necessary to have space-time reciprocity. Every combination, or blend of energies, must be expressed twice—first, spatially, i.e., as an idea or insight, and second, temporally, i.e., lived out at a practical level. Psychospiritual integration, therefore, involves much more than theoretical or cerebral learning: theory must be rounded out by a spiritual practice. Any approach used to reach psychospiritual integration that neglects practical application will lead to lopsided development.

Returning to the problem posed by the synthesis of the thirty-six decanates, it is necessary to use the mathematical formula for computing permutations to discover the maximum number of *ordered pairs* possible from thirty-six objects. In its general expression, this formula is given as $n!/(n-r)!$, where “n” is the number of objects to be organized, “r” the desired relationship between the number of objects, which in our case is two since we are dealing with the relationship of pairing, and the expression “!” is used to signify the product of “n” and all consecutive numbers below it.

In solving our problem, $n = 36$, $r = 2$. These values are placed in the formula $n!/(n-r)!$:

$$36!/(36-2)! = 36!/34! = 36 \times 35 \times (34!)/(34!) = 36 \times 35$$

The result is 1,260.

The number 1,260 is symbolic of a state of consciousness that is fully comprehensive and reiterative. It represents full psychospiritual integration. In the context of the mathematical operation performed on 36 to arrive at it, 1,260 is symbolic of the consciousness which achieves spiritual realization by taking full advantage of the opportunities that earth life provides for experiencing space-time reciprocity. This spiritual realization is achieved by the individual living his or her insights, no matter how difficult this might be. It is this effort that is called “suffering” in the Smyrnian letter. As a matter of course, through the medium of earth-life experiences,

the consciousness that is integrated in the psychospiritual sense also discovers the limits of the applicability of what it knows. Paradoxically, herein lies its completion.²

The Number 666 as Symbolic of Aborted Psychospiritual Integration

The opposite condition to the state of completion in time-space, characterized by a rounding out of theoretical with practical knowledge, also exists. This condition can also be numerically expressed; it is the number “666,” described in Revelation as “the number of the beast.” With regard to the significance of this number and its connection with the beast, John says:

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And that no man may buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. Rev. 13:16–18

Here, as in all other instances in Revelation where we encounter unusual characters, we need to look for the principle behind the characterization. By attributing a number to the “beast,” the point is emphasized that the principle contained in its characterization does not belong to a person of history but can be possessed by everyone across the march of time. The “beast” is therefore a principle in consciousness.

Many attempts have been made to relate the number “666” to the sum of the letters in the names of well-known historical figures. This has been done by finding the numerical equivalents to the letters in the names and finding their sum. Such exercises miss the thrust of Revelation as a behind-the-scenes look at the factors that configure the psyche of man and thus presage human history. When John says that “666” is the number of a man, he is saying that it is a human characteristic. The Revised Standard Version confirms this interpretation. It says, “. . . for it is a human number” instead of “it is the number of a man” as is found in the King James Version.

We shall now demonstrate how this number also can be arrived at with the aid of a zodiacal framework. This framework begins with the decanate concept, the same one that was used to allow

us to see the psychological reality behind the process symbolized by 1,260.

In contrast to the state of consciousness that is fully comprehensive and reiterative, a type of mastery can be produced by a short-circuiting of the process of psychospiritual integration of the thirty-six zodiacal energies. This is the type of mastery that is gained in the realm of pure theory. Here, application of the insight gained is neglected, and the consciousness so versed is lopsided. This state has its culmination in what may be called the linear mind—the mind dedicated solely to the mastery of technique rather than wisdom. We have here then, the consciousness of the fragmented genius, the individual whose mind—capacity for rational thought and analysis—has developed out of synchronization with his heart—capacity to feel. In terms of the zodiacal framework we are using, a short-circuit in the process of psychospiritual integration results from combining the energies of the thirty-six decanates, in pairs, without allowing for space-time reciprocity in their expressions.

In terms of mathematics, the operation that patterns this process is that where one is “sampling with replacement” for unique or novel combinations. This can be illustrated in the following manner: If we are seeking to make pairs out of four objects—A, B, C, and D—in such a manner that we are concerned with unique combinations, and therefore with novelty, the combinations that would satisfy us are AA, AB, AC, AD, BB, BC, BD, CC, CD, and DD, for a total of ten. No repeats are permitted, e.g., BA or CA, since we do not consider the order of arrangement important. The mathematical result from “sampling with replacement” for unique sets is called the *triangular number* of the number of things we are combining. Thus, with four objects, the solution could also have been derived by the following operation: $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10$.

Applying the same principle to thirty-six gives us the sum of all the whole numbers from one to thirty-six. Thus:

$$36 + 35 + 34 + \text{etc} + 2 + 1$$

The result is “666,” the number of the beast. We can also use the following formula for deriving the triangular number of a given number:

$$(n + 1)/2 \times n$$

where “n” is the number to be operated on. When “n” is 36, the formula becomes:

$$(36 + 1)/2 \times 36 = 18.5 \times 36 = 666.$$

It occurred to me that a skeptical reader might consider the deriva-

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tion of “666” contrived unless it could be shown that the Apostle John had the opportunity to become acquainted with the concept of triangular numbers. A year or so after I had first related the number of the beast—666—to the decanate concept, I stumbled upon a passage in one of the books of Clement of Alexandria that showed that he was acquainted with the concept of triangular numbers about a hundred years or so after the estimated time of the writing of Revelation. Clement, who lived from A.D. 153 to 217, not only showed that he had knowledge of the concept, he also revealed his dexterity at deriving mystical significance from it. In this book, he gives a discourse on, as he calls it, “The Mystical Meanings in the Proportions of Numbers, Geometric Ratios, and Music.” He discusses the concept of triangular numbers, using the number 120 to illustrate his point. He shows that 120 is a triangular number of 15:

“The days of men shall be,” it is said, “120 years.” And the sum is made up of the numbers from one to fifteen added together On another principle, 120 is a triangular number . . .⁵

It does not seem unreasonable to expect that John, whose mystical insights were probably deeper than Clement’s, could have been acquainted with triangular numbers and numerology just a hundred years previously.

To grasp the full psychological importance of the “beast” and its number, we must study its genesis and the context surrounding the part it plays in the overall Revelation drama. The genesis of the “beast” is to be found in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of Revelation. Their contents are so important to the core message John has for us that we must digress from pursuing zodiacal associations for a while to undertake an in-depth analysis. This exercise will take place in the upcoming chapter. But first, we can take another look at the meaning of “666” from a totally different perspective.

The Similarity Between the Concept of Psychospiritual Integration and the Process of Kundalini Awakening

While we are on the subject of psychospiritual integration and synthesis of zodiacal energies, it must be mentioned that concepts do exist for expressing this idea of integration and synthesis at the physical-mental or neurological level of being. The engagement and operation of the process of psychospiritual integration is called *kundalini* in the tradition of the East. Basically, *kundalini* is described

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as a primordial energy common to all life, and is given as the source of manifestation of all living and nonliving things.⁴ Its special significance for human beings is that it exists as a reserve of energy that lies dormant at the base of the spine. The energy becomes active with the proper spiritual observances. Upon activation, it is said to open up new faculties of perception, which may include mystical experiences, spiritual insights, and psychic abilities.

In the colorful language of the East, *kundalini* is described as a sleeping serpent coiled three-and-a-half times around the lower pole of the spinal axis. It is said that when the "serpent" awakens, it uncoils itself and makes its ascent to the brain through a passageway in the center of the spinal column. Upon reaching the brain, it produces illumination. The idea of a serpent is, of course, metaphorical. If we make allowances for differences in conceptualizations and terminologies, we see that the *kundalini* concept bears a great deal more than a passing resemblance to the process in Revelation that is represented by a duration of time with a periodicity of three-and-a-half.

Let us consider the basic difference in the ways transformation is viewed in the East and the West. Eastern concepts are expressed in terms of spatial adjustments, that is, of shifting from one state of nature to another. For example, the adjustments that are required to facilitate the transformational process are symbolically viewed in terms of the uncoiling of the *kundalini* serpent and its ascent to the brain. This imagery suggests a reorganization of one's perception of the universe—a reorganization that can be compared to the writhing of a serpent in its movements.

In the Western view, as typified by Revelation, transformation is presented in terms of temporal adjustments or endurance. Thus, time is the central feature in this system as it is assumed that time and change are inseparable. When Revelation talks about 1,260 days, or 42 months, or 3½ years, or "a time and times and half a time," it is touching bases with the East where instead of duration, adjustment is the point of focus. The idea of "666," when viewed in this context, suggests an incomplete awakening of this *kundalini* energy such that it is functioning just enough to cause pride, and perhaps genius, but not enough for full psychospiritual synthesis and surrender to the will of God.

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