

The Hermetic Order Of The
GOLDEN DAWN^{Intl.}

**THE TWELVE TRIBES AND
THEIR ASTROLOGY**



PHILOSOPHUS 4=7

This particular document was put together by S.L. MacGregor Mathers. Some of the information in this particular lesson referred to information that was already acquired in the Zelator grade. Originally, this document was included in the 4=7 grade of Philosophus in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Later, faction Temples have removed this lesson, but we have chosen to keep it in the 4=7 grade of Philosophus. As you know, the twelve tribes allude to the twelve zodiacal signs as well as the various permutations of the great holy name of the Tetragrammaton and the various Angelic counterparts that relate to those permutations.

Sign	Permutation	Tribe	Angel
Aries	hwly	Gad	Melchidael
Taurus	whly	Ephraim	Asmodel
Gemini	hhwy	Manasseh	Ambriel
Cancer	yhwy	Issachar	Muriel
Leo	hywh	Judah	Verchiel
Virgo	ywhh	Naphthali	Hamaliel
Libra	hyhw	Asshur	Zuriel
Scorpio	yhhw	Dan	Barchiel
Sagittarius	hhwy	Benjamin	Advachiel
Capricorn	whyh	Zebulin	Hanael
Aquarius	hwyl	Reuben	Cambriel
Pisces	wyhh	Simeon	Amnitzel

Now, those of you who have studied the Bible scriptures will note that the Kerubics are mentioned both in Ezekiel and the Book of John, and thus, the Bull, Lion, the Scorpion, but in good symbolism the Eagle, and the Man are attributed to those Kerubic figures. To these signs we ascribe the tribes of Ephraim, Judah, Dan, and Reuben. Now, the signs of the Twins and the Fishes are referred to as bi-corporate or double body signs. These refer to primarily Gemini and Pisces, but also to the Centaur armed with a bow. Thus, we have Manasseh, Simeon and Benjamin. "To these refer Manasseh, Simeon and Benjamin. Manasseh was divided into two half tribes with separate possessions, (being the only tribe, thus divided), and thus answers to the equal division of the sign of the Twins, Castor and Pollux, the great Twin Brethren. Simeon and Levi are classed together like the two Fishes in the sign, but Levi is drawn later to form, as it were, the binding and connecting link of the tribes as the priestly cast. Benjamin is the younger brother of Joseph, for Rachel had only these two sons, and is the only one of the sons of Jacob who at his birth was called by two names. For Rachel called him 'Ben oni', but his father Benjamin, and in the sign the two natures of man and horse are bound together in one symbol." (Excerpts from MacGregor Mathers, *Twelve Tribes and Astrology*, Llewellyn Publications.)

There is much interesting information between the connecting links of the signs and the tribes. Some of it is highlighted by the blessings of Jacob and Moses. The former of which the bearing of the names or the Armorial as it is called, of the twelve

tribes are derived. When the tribes were travelling in the wilderness, the Tabernacle was set up in the midst of the twelve tribes, and immediately surrounding it, were the tents of Levi. Those tents were the inner tents that surrounded the Tabernacle. At a distance toward the four Cardinal points were the standards of the twelve tribes. In the east, was Judah, with the Kerubic sign of Leo, followed by Issachar and Zebulun. Then, in the south was Reuben, the Kerubic sign of Aquarius, followed by Simeon and Gad. In the west was the Kerubic sign of Taurus, Ephraim, with Manasseh and Benjamin. In the north was the Kerubic sign of Scorpio, the tribe of Dan, followed by Asshur and Naphthali.

East	South	West	North
Judah	Reuben	Ephraim	Dan
Issachar	Simeon	Manasseh	Asshur
Zebulun	Gad	Benjamin	Naphthali

Now, the Philosophus will immediately notice that there is something very odd about the description of these particular Kerubic signs in their position. The arrangement, indeed, seems rather confusing. But we have to take a look at the maternal ancestors of the tribes. As we study the maternal ancestors of the tribes, the confusion will then disappear, and we will notice that at the east are three tribes descended from Leah. These tribes are Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Across from the east in the opposite corner we have the west, and there we have three tribes that descend from Rachael, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. In the south we have two tribes that descend from Leah and one tribe that descends from Zilpah, and thus, those tribes are Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. In the north we have two tribes descending from Bilhah and one from Zilpah, and those tribes again are Dan, Naphthali, and Asshur. Now, take a blank piece of paper, and in the center of the paper, draw the Tabernacle. Around the Tabernacle on four sides you should have Levi drawn, and then, draw the four corners, north, east, south and west. Put the list of the tribes, starting with the Kerubics that go under them and then the accompanying tribes. You will see very clearly that the lineage plays a great deal of influence in where these tribes are ascribed. Incidentally, as an additional note, the two tribes descending from Zilpah which are Gad and Asshur are the only ones separated and placed opposite of each other. From these are derived the two signs of the Equinoxes.

If you go to Genesis, chapter 48, we see that Jacob blessed them, and that this blessing was prior to the general blessing of the tribes, stating that at the same time Ephraim, though he be younger, should take presidency over Manasseh. "And Jacob said unto Joseph, 'And now thy two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee into thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue which thou begetteth after them shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. Moreover... I have given unto thee, one portion of thy brethren.'"

Now we're going to take a brief look at the blessings of Jacob and Moses. Of Gad, Jacob says, "Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last." Moses said, "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: He dwelleth as the lioness and teareth the arm with the crown of the head, and he provideth the first part for himself because

there in a portion of the law giver was he sealed; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord and his judgment with Israel."

We see the correlation between Gad and Aries, the martian energy. For Gad, the Armorial was white and a troop of Calvary. This definitely fits with the martial, dominant, powerful, fiery nature of Aries where Mars is exalted, and here we have the exaltation of the Sun and the triplicity of the Sun and Jupiter. The symbolism of the Lion, although in a Kerubic sense applies to Leo, is also a proper symbolism to Aries in this situation because of its nature; that of early solar Fire and a martial nature.

Of Ephraim and Manasseh, which are Taurus and Gemini, Jacob says, "Joseph is a fruitful bough. Even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall; the archers have surely grieved him and shot at him and hated him. But his bow abides in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father who shall help thee and the Almighty shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under. Blessings of the breast and the womb. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brethren." Moses says, "Blessed of the Lord be his land for the precious things of heaven for the dew and for the deep that coucheth beneath and for the precious fruits brought forth by the Sun, and for the precious things put forth by the Moon and for the chief things of all the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the Earth and the fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwells in the bush. Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph and upon the top of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. His glory is like the firstlings of a bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns. With them he shall push the people together to the ends of the Earth and they are the ten thousands of Manasseh."

Again, we can look at the Amorial signs and the symbols of Ephraim which are green and an ox, and those of Manasseh are flesh color or the symbol would be a vine by a wall. Both of these refer to the nature of Taurus in Gemini, in that order.

Of Issachar and Cancer Jacob says, "Issachar is a strong ass couching down between the two burdens: And he saw the rest was good in the land that it was pleasant and he bowed his shoulder to bear and became a servant under the tribe." Moses says, "Rejoice, Issachar, in thy tents and they shall suck of the abundance of the seas."

The symbols of Amorial of the bearings of Issachar are blue, and the symbols are an ass crouching beneath its burden. This alludes to the peaceful nature and quietness of the watery sign of Cancer.

Of Judah, Leo, Jacob says, "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise. Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a Lion's wealth. To the prey my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a Lion and as an old Lion; who shall roost him up? The scepter shall not part from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall gather of the people be, binding his foliage unto the vine unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes should be red with wine, and his teeth white."

Moses goes on to say, "This is the blessing of Judah, and he said, 'Hear Lord, the voice of Judah and bring him unto his people, let his hands be sufficient for him and be thou help to him from his enemies.'"

The Armorial and symbolic bearings of Judah are scarlet, they are also a Lion that is rampant, a powerful Lion. All of this coincides very well with the nature of this sign, the sign of Leo.

Of Naphthali, Virgo, Jacob says, "Naphthali is a hind let loose that giveth godly words." Moses says, "Oh Naphthali, satisfied with flavor and full with the blessings of the Lord, possesseth thou the west and the south."

The Armorial and symbolic bearings of Naphthali are blue, a hind.

Of Asshur, Libra, Jacob says, "Out of Asshur his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." Moses said, "Let Asshur be blessed with children, let him be acceptable to his brethren and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be of iron and brass, as the days so shall be thy strength."

The Armorial bearings and symbols of Asshur are purple and a cup. This definitely alludes and works very well with the nature of Venus and of Libra. The feet refer to the sign of Pisces which rules the feet and in which Venus is exalted. Iron and brass are both the symbolic metals of Mars and Venus on a magical level.

Of Dan, Scorpio, Jacob says, "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel, Dan shall be a serpent by the way and addert in the path that biteth the horses heels so that his rider shall fall backwards. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Moses says, "Dan is a Lion's welp, he shall leap from Basshan."

The Armorial and symbolic bearings of Dan are green and are attributed to the Eagle. Again, these symbols fit well with the martial and fierce nature of the sign in which Mars is the primary energy. Remember that the Egyptians, as well as the Greeks, attributed the serpent to the slayer of Osiris. On this account, this sign by the Greeks and the Egyptians was called "The Accursed Sign." In positive symbolism, it is generally represented by the Kerubic sign of the Eagle.

Of Benjamin, Sagittarius, Jacob says, "Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: In the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." Moses says, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in the safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long."

The Armorial and symbolic bearing of the tribe of Benjamin are green and the symbol is a wolf. This may seem odd, but in many ways, this fits well with the nature and the character of Sagittarius, for Sagittarius is partly very keen and sharp and is partly the nature of Jupiter, which is benevolent and somewhat brutal.

Of Zebulin, Capricorn, Jacob says, "Zebulin shall dwell at the haven of the sea, and he shall be for a haven of ships and his border shall be unto Sidon." Moses says, "Rejoice, Zebulin, in thy going out and Issachar in thy tents, they shall call the people unto the mountain, they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness, and for they shall suck of the abundance of the sea, and the treasures hid in the sands."

This fits very well with the tropical and southern nature of the watery signs of Cancer, in the earthy sign of Capricorn. The Armorial bearings of Zebulin are purple and a ship.

Of Reuben, Aquarius, Jacob says, "Reuben, thou art my first born, my might, the beginning of my strength and excellency of dignity and the excellency of power."

Unstable as Water, thou shalt not excel for thou wentest up to thy father's bed, then defilest thou it; he went up to my couch." Moses says, "Let Reuben live and not die and let not his men be few."

The Armorial and symbolic bearings of Reuben are red and a man. We see in the blessing that Reuben is called unstable as Water which is symbolic of Aquarius being the Water Bearer.

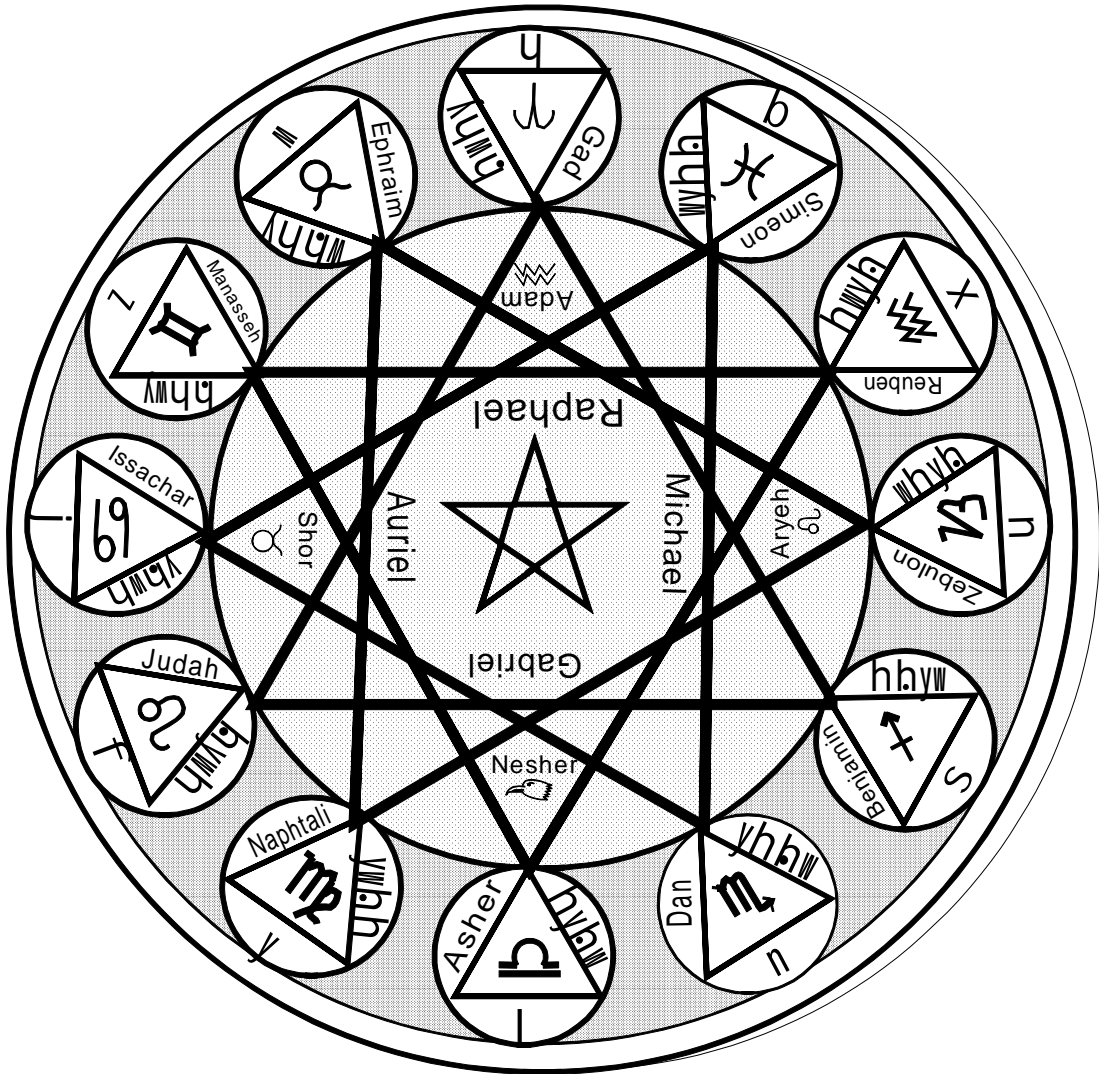
Of Simeon and Levi, Pisces, Jacob says, "Simeon and Levi are brethren, instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul come not thou into their secret unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united, for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self will they dig down a wall. Cursed be their anger for it was fierce and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in his reel."

In many ways, this above paragraph alludes to their smiting of Schalem which is the city of Hemor and Shechem. They did this because of the slaying of the latter, because they have carried off Dina, the daughter of Leah. Moses says, "Let the Thummin and the Urn be with the Holy One, whom thou didst prove at Manasseh, and with whom thou didst strive at the water of Meribah; who said unto his father and mother, 'I have not seen them.' Neither did he acknowledge his brethren nor knew his children; for they have observed thy word and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgment and Israel thy law. They shall put incense before thee and hold burnt sacrifices upon thine altar. Blessed, Lord, his substance and accept the works of his hands; smite through the Lions of them that rise against them and of them that hate him, that they rise not again."

The Armorial and symbolic bearings of Simeon are yellow and a sword.

These are the symbolic blessings of the twelve tribes of Israel, and as you have read, they fit very neatly in with the zodiacal signs. These names of the twelve tribes were engraved upon stones of the High Priest who wore a breastplate in which the stones fit into. Some traditions hold that certain flashes of light appeared and seem to dance on certain letters. Thus, there was the symbology here that is highlighted in the answer of diety to the consulter of the Oracle of Urim. One could sit down and compare these blessings with the nature of the signs attributed to the particular tribes. This is just a general overview. One would need to consult the Torah and the Old Testament and spend a lot more time to really understand some of the deep symbolical meaning in the blessings and the surrounding writings and symbolism. Some of these Armorial blessings are part of what Mathers called "The royal art of free masonry."

It is not necessary for the Philosophus to memorize each tribe and each blessing, but he or she should be familiar with the conceptual knowledge of the lesson above. For in the conceptual knowledge, you will have a deeper understanding of the Mysteries, particularly as it related to the ancient Hebrew tradition.



TWELVE TRIBES & THEIR ASTROLOGY