

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Flag Processional

Numbers 2:1,2

And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron saying, Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

The twelve tribes were assigned positions as follows: Judah, Isaachar and Zebulun on the east; Reuben, Simeon and Gad on the south; Dan, Asher and Naphtali on the north; and Joseph and Benjamin on the west.

The marching orders of the people were specific and detailed as to tribal positions. The Levites, the appointed custodians of sacred ceremonies, took up their position immediately around the Sanctuary on three sides (north, west, south); Moses, Aaron and his sons, on the east. These constituted the inner circle. Around them were the twelve tribes, three on each side.

When the silver trumpets sounded for the march to begin, the three tribes on the east led the way. Judah (Leo) came first, followed by Issachar (Taurus) and Zebulun (Pisces). Next came Reuben (Aquarius), Simeon (Gemini),

and Gad (Aries). The remaining six tribes passed into their places led by Ephraim (Virgo) and followed by Benjamin (Cancer), Manasseh (Sagittarius), Dan (Scorpio), Asher (Libra) and Naphtali (Capricorn).

The Torah gives the reason for these placements as follows:

From the east comes the light of the world, therefore Judah who represents sovereignty; Issachar, the pattern of learning; Zebulun who represents navigation and commerce dwelt with their flags on the east side and were leaders on the journey. The west sends forth snow, hail, heat and cold. On the west was placed Ephraim and Manasseh, Benjamin not being able to weather the snow and hail.

From the south comes beneficent dews and rains. On the south was Reuben who represents repentance bringing forth God's mercy and compassion; he was accompanied by Gad, the type of a troop which shall overcome, and Simeon was in their center, because Simeon requires great strength and mercy for his shelter, and that is obtainable by repentance. These three were second in the journey, showing that repentance is second to the Torah only.

From the north comes darkness. Dan, the followers of Jereboam who darkened Israel with the two golden calves which he erected, took his place in the north and was joined by Asher who was to bear light to Dan's darkness, and by Naphtali who was blessed with plenty. These were the last in the journey of the banners.

National flags were first introduced by Israel. Each tribe carried a banner, the color and symbol indicating its essential nature and mission. These flags symbolized attributes evolved through the vibratory power of the twelve signs. Each flag contained a definite description of the inner meanings of the sign to which it belongs. The following matter relative to the banners is drawn from the Torah.

The banner of Reuben was red (emblem of service); in the center was a painted mandrake (androgynous power).

The banner of Simeon was green (emblem of compassion); in the center was a picture of Shechem (a rough city-an undeveloped state of consciousness, important in the story of Dinah).

Levi's was tri-color: black, red and white; in the center was a picture of the Urim and Thummim (processes leading to the inner attainment of polarity).

Judah's banner was sky-blue; in the center a lion (symbol of transmutation).

Issachar's banner was black; in the center were pictures of the Sun and Moon (emblem of hidden mysteries that lead to the awakening of the feminine principle, the positively polarized intuitive faculty).

Zebulun had a white banner (attainment); a ship in the center (soul body) denoted the highest ideal of the Piscean dispensation. Dan's emblem was sapphire in color, a serpent in the center typifying the power and wisdom of Scorpio.

Gad's banner was a mixture of black and white; in the center a camp symbolized the two paths, black and white or positive and negative. ("A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.")

Naphtali's was a peculiar color of pale, reddish wine, and in the center a hind, signifying the transmutations which produce a new birth, the beginning of a new cycle.

Asher's flag bore the color of a precious pearl, the ornament of a woman, and an olive tree in the center. It points to the pearl of great price through regeneration (olive).

Joseph's flag, a deep black, bore two pictures: Egypt, with an ox representing Ephraim, and a unicorn to signify Manasseh. (The mystery of polarity as an ideal but not yet an attainment). Benjamin's banner contained the colors of all twelve tribes, with a wolf in the center. (Through the highest aspect of the twelve signs the lower nature is conquered.)

Jacob, the Sun, dies in Egypt, the land of darkness symbolizing midwinter. According to the Torah, Jacob commanded that when he be carried to burial, his sons should accompany him in the following order:

Judah, Issachar and Zebulun were assigned to the east, the point of the Sun's rising, and led the procession. Judah (Leo-Sun) came first. Issachar represents learning and Zebulun, navigation and commerce.

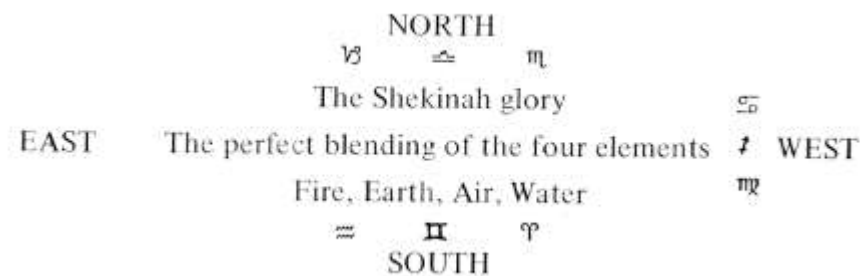
Reuben, Simeon and Gad were on the south, whence came the beneficent dews and rains. Reuben represents repentance, which calls forth God's mercy and compassion. Gad is one who "overcomes." Simeon is placed in the middle because he has need of the strength and the mercy afforded by the other two.

Dan, Asher and Naphtali were on the north (darkness). Dan and the followers of Jereboam had darkened Israel with the two golden calves. Asher on the one side was a

bearer of light and Naphtali on the other was blessed with plenty.

Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, and Benjamin were on the west. This direction sends forth snow, hail, and cold. The three young sons occupied this position because they represent the light of the soul which though born in the east, travels ever towards the west.

"As I arrange you for my burial," said Jacob to his sons, "so shall it be arranged for you when the Lord causes his Shekinah to dwell in the midst of you in your journey with your flags."



The Shekinah symbolizes the body of an Initiate, the glorified soul body that every aspirant on the Path is endeavoring to bring to perfection.

Powers by which the new body is built come from all sides. On the east are Judah (Leo), the power of love which must become central to all of life's activities: Issachar (Taurus), symbolized by a white bull with the Sun between its horns, indicating polarity, and a blooming rose in the

larynx, denoting power to speak the creative word; and Zebulun (Pisces) represented by two fishes, symbol of the mystic marriage.

To the south are Reuben, Simeon and Gad. Reuben (Aquarius) pours the water of life from a golden urn into one of silver, expressing a poise no externalities can disturb; Simeon (Gemini) represents the forces of duality resolved into unity; and Gad (Aries) is the "Star of Fortune" that points the way of attainment through service, sacrifice and transmutation.

On the north are Dan, Asher and Naphtali. Dan (Scorpio) symbolizes the creative fires, the principal factor in the regenerative process; Asher (Libra), according to Jacob's admonition, bears a light unto Dan's darkness; Libra, the trial-gate of the ancients, betokens the parting of the ways between flesh and the spirit, the right choice leading to the birth of the Christ consciousness; Asher, meaning to be happy, was an early name for the Moon and comes from a root meaning the wandering one. Naphtali (Capricorn) is the power of truth and wisdom attained only through controlling the inner fires. A goat was an ancient symbol representing the hidden powers of generation.

On the west are Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph (Sagittarius) is the multiplier; he soars on the wings of aspiration; Benjamin (Cancer) is the doorway to Initiation.

Joseph, the Fire of Sagittarius, and Benjamin, the Water of Cancer, must blend to provide powers for the completion of the body of the Shekinah.

The Sun's path is from the east, the source of light, by the way of the south, to the west. (There is reflected light only in the north.) So is it, symbolically, with a spiritual traveler. Toward the west he meets Virgo, the virgin of the skies, where she broods over the birth of the Christ Child in man.

— ***Corinne Heline***