

# An Introduction to Hermetic Astrology – Class I#

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- *“At the moment I am looking into astrology, which seems indispensable for a proper understanding of mythology. There are strange and wondrous things in these lands of darkness. Please, don't worry about my wanderings in these infinitudes. I shall return laden with rich booty for our knowledge of the human psyche.”*

• Carl Jung

## **Astrology**

- **Astrology** (from Greek: ἄστρον, ἄστρου{ástron, ástrou}, "star"; and λόγος, λόγου{lógos, lógu}, "word" or "speech")
- Star-Knowledge
- Astrology is the study of the influence of the heavens to life and events on earth
- Prior to the modern era, astronomy and astrology were synonymous
- Astronomy developed as a means to gain great skill with astrology

## **The Origins of Astrology are in Observation**

- A crescent shaped antler with thirteen notches, discovered in a cave in the Pyrenees, is perhaps, the earliest evidence of ancient humans observing the stellar/human interrelationship
- Around the world different systems of astrology developed in the ancient centers of civilization. Many forms of ancient architecture were actually used as observatories.
- The Egyptians developed the Decans or 10 degree sections of the Zodiac
- The origin of Western Astrology is in the Near-Eastern cultures of Sumer, Babylon, and Assyria
- Near Eastern astrology gave us:
- The sexagesimal system (units of 60) which we use for measuring time and dividing the heavens
- The 12 Signs of the Zodiac
- The 7 visible Planets

- The Egyptians contributed the Decans or 10-degree sections measured by heliacal rising of the constellations

## **Hermeticism**

- Hermes Trismegistus was an allegorical figure
- Identified with Egyptian Thoth
- Gave us all the Hermetic Sciences
- Astrology
- Alchemy
- Magic
- "as above, so below"
- The Macrocosm is reflected in the Microcosm

## **The Two Keys of Hermeticism**

- The Gold Key
- The Written Tradition
- Science
- Astrology
- The Sun
- The Silver Key
- The Oral Tradition
- Divination
- The Tarot
- The Moon

## **The Ancient Greeks**

- Under Alexander the Great the Greeks conquered Mesopotamia and his General Ptolemy conquered Egypt
- Over time the Greeks synthesized the astrological knowledge of the Babylonians and Egyptians and created a system that is at the basis of Western Astrology
- The Ancient Greeks considered astrology the “Queen” of the sciences

## **Urania**

- Urania was the ninth Muse who governed astrology/astronomy
- Her symbols were the globe and compass

# An Introduction to Hermetic Astrology – Class I#

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## Hipparchus

- (190 BC – 120 BC)
- Greek mathematician and astrologer born in Nicaea (modern Turkey)
- Discovered the precession of the equinoxes

## Aratus

- (315 BC/310 BC – 240 BC)
- Greek poet who wrote *The Phaenomena* a descriptive work of the constellations and their relationship to weather lore

## Ptolemy

- ( AD 90 – 168)
- Roman citizen living in Egypt and writing in Greek
- Wrote the *Almagest* and *Tetrabiblos*
- Among the first formal treatise on horoscopic astrology

## Hippocrates

- Hippocrates (c. 460 BC/380 BC), the Greek physician who is regarded as the father of medicine, insisted his students study astrology, saying, “*A physician without a knowledge of Astrology has no right to call himself a physician*”

## Astrology Has Permeated Our Language

- Disaster = Ill-starred
- Catastrophe = Against the Stars
- Influenza = Under astrological influences
- Mazel-tov = Under a good constellation
- Schlimazel = An ill-starred person

## Horoscope

- Our word Horoscope which has come to represent an astrological chart comes to us from the Latin horoscopus, meaning hour-view and referring to the ascendant in a chart which changes signs every 2 hours
- A modern horoscope is a two-dimensional diagrammatic

representation planetary position against a backdrop of the heavens in reference to a specific location on Earth at a given time.

## Different Branches of Astrology

- Natal Astrology = reveals the character of an individual and their life experiences
- Horary Astrology = is used to answer specific questions
- Electional Astrology = chose the best time to begin an undertaking
- Mundane Astrology = studies world trends and events
- Weather Predicting = studies the planetary positions to determine their impact on temperature, wind conditions, and moisture
- Spiritual Astrology = is a study of the relationship of Solar and Lunar calendars on religious holidays and folkloric traditions

## Hermetic Astrology

- Elbert Benjamine (aka C. C. Zain) was perhaps the most prolific astrological author in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Between the years 1914 – 1951 he wrote thousands of articles and numerous books such as:
- *Astrological Lore of All Ages*
- *Beginner's Horoscope Maker and Reader*
- *How to Select a Vocation*
- *Body Disease and its Stellar Treatment* and more.
- Under the aegis of The Brotherhood of Light/Church of Light and using the nom-de-plume of C. C. Zain, he authored the 24 books that comprise the 21 Brotherhood of Light Lessons
- His astrological system, for which he coined the term “Hermetic” combined ancient practice, contemporary

# An Introduction to Hermetic Astrology – Class I#

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mathematics, and an active research department

- His work would impact future generations of astrological notables

## **Elbert Benjamine**

- Elbert Benjamine was born Benjamin P. Williams to Dr. William J. Williams and Emma (Greene) Williams at 5:55 a.m. on December 12, 1882 near Adel, Iowa
- 94°W00'; 41°N37'.
- His family remembered this as the year the great comet flashed across the sky
- A natural seer, Benjamine had many psychic experiences in his youth
- In *The Next Life*, the penultimate book in the *Brotherhood of Light Lessons*, C. C. Zain describes an incident from his youth where he used his psychic abilities to help locate the missing bodies of two drowning victims
- In 1900 at age 17 he began studying astrology in an effort to debunk it
- He scoffed at the idea that planets could influence human affairs
- He calculated the charts of family and friends and discovered that astrology worked in spite of its apparent absurdity
- Certain authors who young Benjamine studied alluded to a Mystery School known as the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor
- In 1909 at age 28 he attended a meeting of The Brotherhood in Denver, Colorado
- In a surprising chain of events his life would be turned upside-down when he was commissioned by the Brothers to place their teachings in writing
- Benjamine had studied at Iowa State University, to become a naturalist
- He was instrumental in the founding of a bird sanctuary in Los Angeles County
- In an article written in 1940 by his wife Elizabeth Benjamine states;
  - “He was subjected to much ridicule by his relatives for believing in “such bunk,” or for trying to get them to believe in it. Here were people close to him, who were representatives of the well-educated, who scoffed at the thing which through rigorous experiment he found to be true. He decided that for all he knew, there might be whole continents of phenomena which as yet had not been explored. ....”
  - “He would still be a naturalist, but starting with that winter of 1898-99, the natural history in which he would specialize, and in which he would try to be useful to his fellowman, would be the natural history of realms and forces not commonly recognized.”
- Benjamine moved to Los Angeles in May 1915
- On November 11, 1918 The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor disbanded and The Brotherhood of Light opened its doors to the public
- Upon moving to Los Angeles, Benjamin P. Williams would later change his name to Elbert Benjamine, in order to protect his family
- His father was a doctor and a deacon in the Disciples of Christ Church and Benjamine’s interests in occultism and astrology were frowned upon in his community
- The Brotherhood of Light teachings were written between March 21, 1914 and February 20, 1934 by Elbert Benjamine under the penname of C. C. Zain
- Benjamine chose to use a pseudonym for any writings he did for the B. of L. in order to keep the work separately identified from the writings he published under his own name
- C. C. Zain saw himself as not so much the author of original thought, but rather as an amanuensis or scribe

# An Introduction to Hermetic Astrology – Class I#

---

writing down the information he received from the inner plane brethren

- He would subject his impressions to rigorous research and find comparisons available in the contemporary science of his day
- In 1932, anti-astrological ordinances were passed in Los Angeles County aimed at prohibiting both the teaching and practice of astrology
- It appeared as though political forces would once again drive the Brotherhood underground
- The Brotherhood of Light closed its membership roster and became the Church of Light, just prior to the passage of these ordinances
- The Church of Light was incorporated under the Laws of the State of California on November 2, 1932 in order to ‘teach, practice and disseminate the Religion of the Stars.’

## **The Religion of the Stars**

- *“Astrology is the science of finding and utilizing the natural potentialities as indicated in the planetary chart at birth. It becomes a religion when it shows the individual how these natural tendencies can and should be utilized for the benefit of all mankind and the furtherance of the purposes of Deity.”*  
- Edward Doane
- In the late 30’s the Church of Light Quarterly was being mailed to 16,000 students free of charge. Church of Light classes were open to the public on a free-will offering basis
- During the Great Depression many persons benefited from this policy who would otherwise be unable to afford classes
- Astrology comprised 7 of the 21 Brotherhood of Light Lessons

- There are 7 courses devoted to Alchemy (transmuting planetary energies)
- There are 7 courses devoted to Magic (extra-sensory perception)
- C. C. Zain was a unique leader, he opposed hero worship and cult-like behavior
- He discouraged members from taking any of his writings on blind belief, but rather to subject them to rigorous testing of their own
- Church of Light members were given freedom of conscience and encouraged to study as many things about religion, science and the mysteries as they could and then draw their own conclusions.
- Within the first half of the 20th century these teachings were distributed around the world
- Like the writings of Bailey, Blavatsky, Steiner and Heindl, the works of C. C. Zain have impacted the lives of thousands of students of Western Occultism
- Elbert had been informed by the Brothers that he should have everything completed by 1950
- Elbert Benjamine passed from the physical plane on November 18, 1951
- In accordance with his instructions he was cremated and there was no public funeral
- His legacy is a body of work that is certain to hold a place in the history of Western Spiritual Tradition

## **Hermetic Astrology**

- Over the next 6 weeks of class we will be exploring the building block essential to the Hermetic System of Astrology
- Hermetic Astrology works with the “Four Factors” of Astrology
  - 1) The 12 Signs of the Zodiac
  - 2) The 10 Planets
  - 3) The 12 Mundane Houses

# An Introduction to Hermetic Astrology – Class I#

---

- 4) The 10 Aspects
- In addition to the Four Factors, Hermetic Astrology uses the system of Astrodynes and the Hermetic System of Progressions

## **The Astrological Chart**

- A map of our consciousness at the time of birth
- Our Spiritual DNA
- “Blueprint” of our Soul
- Maps our dominant trends in thinking
- The astrological chart is a map of our character
- Change your character – change your destiny
- Our thought cells operate in a 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional realm to impact our dominant trends of thinking and thus attract events and experiences of a specific nature
- The specific nature is determined by the planetary thought series
- Harmonious Thought Cells attract pleasurable experiences
- Discordant Thought Cells attract painful experiences

## **Inner/Outer Plane Interrelationship**

- The Inner Plane interpenetrates and has a molding effect over the physical
- Astrology works through events happening in the Soul (Inner Plane) before filtering down to the slower moving physical substance (Outer Plane)

## **The Law of Attraction**

- “Like Attracts Like”
- We draw events and experiences into our lives which mirror our states of consciousness

## **Signs – Sounding Boards**

- Just as the tone of “C” sounds differently on a Piccolo than on a Cello - The “tones” of the Planets express

differently according to the Sign in which they are located

## **Planets – Musical Tones**

- Each Planet expresses a distinct vibration just as each musical note is distinct in its frequency

## **Houses – The Auditorium**

The houses function as the auditorium; however the music is being played outside the auditorium. The volume registers differently Depending on whether you sit by a door, window or solid wall

## **Aspects – The Composition**

The aspects add idiosyncrasies and conditioning energy to the chart. They help to determine whether or not it is a dissonant or harmonious composition

## **Class Text**

- Astrology and It’s Psychological Correspondences – Dennis Sutton
- Horoscope Reader – Elbert Benjamine

## **Recommended Reading**

- Astrological Signatures – C. C. Zain
- Horary Astrology – C. C. Zain
- Delineating the Horoscope – C. C. Zain