

MORYA FEDERATION  
ESOTERIC SCHOOLS OF MEDITATION



# Welcome to the Great Quest Student Webinar Series

## Webinar 10 - Esoteric Astrology

### The Labours of Hercules (Sagittarius to Pisces)

BASED ON ARTICLES BY ALICE A. BAILEY

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(*THE LABOURS OF HERCULES* BOOK WAS PUBLISHED IN 1974)

# Why Study the Hercules Myth?

*“The progress of a world disciple is illustrated in the heavens by the Labours of Hercules through the zodiacal signs. It is as though God had pictured in space his Plan for the working out of the evolution of the human spirit back to its source.”*



# The Final 4 Signs

- After the 4 preparatory signs & 4 signs of physical plane struggle
- The aspirant has worked out of the world of glamor and form, and in his consciousness is now free from their limitations
  - ✓ He can be the archer in Sagittarius, going straight for the goal
  - ✓ He can be the goat in Capricorn, scaling the mount of initiation
  - ✓ He can be the world worker in Aquarius
  - ✓ And the world savior in Pisces
- Thus he can sum up in himself all the gains of the preparatory period and of the fiercely fought battles in the four signs of strenuous activity;
- And in these four final signs demonstrate the gains achieved and the powers developed



# The Myth



# Hercules faces his Teacher for His Ninth Labor

"O son of God who art also a son of man," the Teacher said, "the time has come to tread another way. At Gate the ninth you stand. Pass through and find the marsh of Stymphalus where dwell the birds that havoc wreak. Discover, then, the way to flush them from their long secure abode."

He paused a moment. "The flame that gleams beyond the mind reveals direction sure." he added. "The task awaits. Through Gate the ninth you now must go."

Forward, then, went Hercules, the son of man who was also the son of God.



# Labor IX - Killing the Stymphalian Birds

- ✚ At Stymphalus the marsh was fetid and the birds cawing
  - They were huge, fierce, hideous, with iron beaks and sharp talons
  - Three birds swooped down on Hercules, but he warded them off
- ✚ He failed several times to remove the birds
  - Until he recalled the teacher's words
  - "The flame that gleams beyond the mind reveals direction sure."
  - And a method came to his mind
- ✚ At twilight he clashed cymbals to disturb the huge flock
  - The dissonance was awful, but it confused and scared the birds
  - They rose in a vast cloud and fled in frantic haste, never to return
  - Silence spread across the marsh
- ✚ The labor was successful



# Labor IX - Meaning of the Myth

- ✚ Marshes are a symbol of the mind, amplified by emotion
- ✚ Hercules discovers that he still has an emotional nature
  - Even though he triumphed in Scorpio, he still must control emotions
  - The birds that did the most damage were cruel gossip, selfish talk
  - Even talking about occult troubles when listeners aren't ready
- ✚ The more spirituality you achieve, the more potent you are
  - Thus the more harm you can do
  - The cymbals in the myth represent the mind & power of the Soul
  - The “monkey-mind” thoughts die down when focus is on the Soul
- ✚ Sagittarius is dual, half human/animal or human/Divine
  - Gemini on the same axis is duality; Sagittarius becomes unity
  - Becoming one-pointed, unified, a soul-infused personality



# Labor IX - The Journey

- ✚ One-pointedness is demonstrated
  - This is the consummation of the mental task begun in Aries
  - He demonstrates right use and control of thought and speech
- ✚ By slaying the man-eating birds of Stymphalos
  - He puts an end to all tendency to use thought destructively
  - No more gossip, criticism, or thoughts/words that harm
- ✚ Aspirants must weigh their thoughts carefully
  - Learn to speak kindly to minimize hurting others with words
  - Right use of thought, speech & harmlessness result in liberation
- ✚ We must also learn what not to say
  - Sagittarius is the spirit of Truth
  - Also the spirit of Right





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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Sagittarius:</b>       | <b>the Archer</b>   |
| <b>Element:</b>           | Fire sign   |
| <b>Quality:</b>           | Focused direction. One-pointed activity. In the early stages, satisfaction of desire; in later stages aspiration for the goal of initiation.  |
| <b>Traits:</b>            | <b>Negative traits:</b> carelessness, tactless, superficiality, inconsistency, overconfidence. <b>Positive traits:</b> optimism, intelligence, philosophical outlook, generosity, adventurous spirit. |
| <b>Esoteric Concepts:</b> | Illumination of the spirit of truths (truth of the whole, rather than just a small part); refocusing and reorienting the personality to a higher goal.  |
| <b>Polar Opposite:</b>    | Gemini, an air sign (eventual control of fluidity and pairs of opposites; fusion, synthesis, at-one-ment).  |
| <b>Rulers:</b>            | Exoteric, Jupiter; Esoteric, Earth.   |
| <b>Keywords:</b>          |   |
| <b>form angle:</b>        | Let food be sought.   |
| <b>soul angle:</b>        | I reach that goal and then I see another.   |



# The Myth



# Hercules faces the Presiding One for His Tenth Labor

"The light of life must now shine forth within a world of dark," the great Presiding One declared. "The son of man who is also the son of God must pass through Gate the tenth", he said. "Within this very hour Hercules shall venture forth."

When Hercules stood face to face with him who was his guide, the latter spoke: "A thousand dangers you have braved, O Hercules," the Teacher said, "and much has been achieved. Wisdom and strength are yours. Will you make use of them to rescue one in agony, a prey to vast and unremitting suffering?"

The Teacher gently touched the forehead of Hercules. Before the latter's inner eye a vision rose. A man lay prone upon a rock, and groaned. Massive chains bound him. A vulture pecked at his liver. The man uplifted his manacled hands and cried out for help; but his words echoed vainly in the desolation, swallowed by the wind. The vision faded. Hercules stood, as before, at the side of his guide.

"The shackled one whom you have seen is called Prometheus," the Teacher said. "For ages has he suffered thus, and yet he cannot die, being immortal. From heaven he stole the fire; for this he has been punished. The place of his abode is known as Hell, the domain of Hades. Unto Prometheus, O Hercules, you are asked to be a savior."

Having heard and understood, the son of man who was also a son of God, embarked upon this quest, and passed through Gate the tenth.



# Labor X - Slaying of Cerberus, Guardian of Hades

- ♊ Hercules had to do 3 things before descending to hell
  - He had to purify himself,
  - Be initiated into the mysteries
  - He then had to perform an act of service
- ♊ Hercules passed downward, into the underworld
  - This was the binding world of form, stifling, dark, intense
  - He was supported by Athena and Hermes as he crossed the Styx
  - He eventually found Hades, who allowed Hercules to proceed
    - ✓ Provided Hercules only used his bare hands
- ♊ Hercules then sought and confronted Cerberus
  - When that battle was won, he was able to free Prometheus
  - The labor was complete, now light shines in the world of dark



# Labor X - Meaning of the Myth

♊ There are 2 gates of importance

- Cancer, the gate into life, incarnation
- Capricorn, the gate into the Spiritual Kingdom
  - ✓ Where consciousness is centered in the Soul, not form

♊ This myth has 2 areas of emphasis

- The descent into hell to free humanity
- Slaying Cerberus, the 3-headed dog, the 3 lower vehicles
  - ✓ Some variations say he carried Cerberus up to Earth

♊ The 3 heads symbolize sensation, desire, & good intentions

- The dog's tail, made of serpents, symbolized illusion and materiality
- These are problems all humanity faces, but must conquer alone



# Labor X - The Journey

- ♃ Carrying the 3-headed Cerberus up from Hades
  - Portrayal of the elevation of the personality into Heaven
  - The triple-matter aspect, 3-fold lower vehicles
- ♃ Demonstrating mastery of the strengthening tests
  - That enable him to take the 3<sup>rd</sup> initiation
  - He appears before the world as a liberated son of God
    - ✓ Free from the wheel of Rebirth
  - A world savior, able to work in Hell, on Earth, or in Heaven
- ♃ 9 Previous labors were of personal liberation
  - Last three concern world service
  - Important elements of this test are:
    - ✓ Developing a responsible attitude toward Humanity
    - ✓ Learning to kneel in humility before the Divine



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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Capricorn:</b>         | <b>the Goat</b>   |
| <b>Element:</b>           | Earth sign  |
| <b>Quality:</b>           | Extreme characteristics of the worst and best type. Ambition. Crystallization. Struggle overcome. Transfiguration. Initiate consciousness. The Unicorn of God.          |
| <b>Traits:</b>            | <b>Negative traits:</b> too cautious, pessimism, stubbornness, self-centered, detached. <b>Positive traits:</b> practicality, ambition, prudence, discipline, patience. |
| <b>Esoteric Concepts:</b> | Spiritual attainment, spiraling up to a wider field of awareness; transfiguration, where the head and heart meet, and the soul finally controls the form.               |
| <b>Polar Opposite:</b>    | Cancer, a water sign (first door to incarnation).   |
| <b>Rulers:</b>            | Exoteric, Saturn; Esoteric, Saturn  |
| <b>Keywords:</b>          |   |
| <b>form angle:</b>        | Let ambition rule and let the door stand wide.  |
| <b>soul angle:</b>        | Lost am I in light supernal, yet on that light I turn my back.  |

# The Myth





# Hercules faces the Presiding One for His Eleventh Labor

Within the Place of Peace the Great Presiding One poured forth the radiance of his exalted thought. The Teacher drew nigh. "The single flame must light the other forty-nine," the Great Presiding One affirmed.

"So be it," the Teacher answered. "Having lit his own lamp Hercules now must bring the Light to others." Not long thereafter, the Teacher summoned Hercules.

"Eleven times the wheel has turned, and now you stand before another Gate. For long you have pursued the light which flickered first uncertainly, then waxed to a steady beacon, and now shines for you like a blazing sun. Turn now your back upon the brightness; reverse your steps; go back to those or whom the light is but a transient point, and help them make it grow. Direct your steps to Augeas whose kingdom must be cleansed of ancient evil. I have spoken."

Hercules went forth through the 11<sup>th</sup> Gate in search of Augeas the king.



# Labor XI - Cleansing the Augean Stables

⚡ The stables hadn't been cleaned in years

- Fields were fallow, as nothing could grow
- Noxious fumes were making the people ill

⚡ King Augeus eyed Hercules suspiciously

- But he welcomed Hercules to try and fulfill his boast
- Promising Hercules a reward of 1/10<sup>th</sup> the king's cattle if he succeeded
- Or his life and fortune if he failed

⚡ Standing by 2 nearby rivers, an idea inspired Hercules

- He diverted the rivers, letting them clean out the muck
- And in one day, accomplished his task

⚡ King Augeus claimed it was a trick, a plot against the king

- So he gave Hercules no reward and banished him from the realm



# Labor XI - Meaning of the Myth

⚡ As an initiate, endowed with a lot of common sense

- Hercules contemplated the problem at hand
  - ✓ The filth represents accumulated dross man had created
  - ✓ On the mind, emotional, and physical levels
  - ✓ This filth creates separateness
- He broke down barriers by using 2 rivers to clean the stables
  - ✓ The 2 rivers needed to be released to improve people's lives
  - ✓ They represent the water of life and the river of love

⚡ But there is no appreciation for the advanced worker

- People mistrust or fear things they don't understand
- Yet the advanced worker perseveres anyway

⚡ He can be a Master because he has learned to serve

- And can serve because he is a Master



# Labor XI - The Journey

## ⚡ Unselfish Service, Group Work, and Self- Sacrifice

- The hallmark of the Initiate
- Ready for universal tests, no longer personal or individual
- They demonstrate inclusiveness of the consciousness
- And vastness of the methods employed

## ⚡ By pouring out the cleansing waters

- He symbolically offered his service to humanity
- Via a menial labor
- Showing the importance of the service itself
  - ✓ Not the nature of that service

## ⚡ No reward was forthcoming - it was an act of Service



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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Aquarius:</b>          | <b>the Water Carrier</b>  |
| <b>Element:</b>           | Air sign  |
| <b>Quality:</b>           | Will to serve, first the lower self, then the higher self. World service. Individual consciousness transmuted into group consciousness.                                       |
| <b>Traits:</b>            | <b>Negative traits:</b> unpredictable, inconsistent, detached, stubborn.<br><b>Positive traits:</b> friendliness, humanitarianism, intelligence, inventiveness, independence. |
| <b>Esoteric Concepts:</b> | Distributing the energies of life and love (group awareness, group responsibility, universal consciousness, universal relationships); unselfish service.                      |
| <b>Polar Opposite:</b>    | Leo, a fire sign (individual awareness, urge toward self-knowledge, eventual self-mastery preparatory to selfless service).   |
| <b>Rulers:</b>            | Exoteric, Uranus, Esoteric, Jupiter.  |
| <b>Keywords:</b>          |   |
| <b>form angle:</b>        | Let desire in form be the rule.   |
| <b>soul angle:</b>        | Water of life am I, poured forth for thirsty men.   |



# The Myth



# Hercules faces the Presiding One for His Twelfth Labor

Within the sacred Council Chamber, the great Presiding One revealed unto the Teacher the Will of What Must Be.

*"Lost he is, and found; dead, yet vibrant with Life. The server becomes the saviour, and homeward turns."*

The Teacher pondered; then he called for Hercules.

*"Before the last gate now you stand," the Teacher said, "One labor yet remains before the circle is complete, and liberation is attained. Proceed to that dark place called Erytheia where Great Illusion is enthroned where Geryon, the monster of three heads, three bodies and six hands, is lord and king. Unlawfully he holds a herd of dark red cattle. From Erytheia to our Sacred City must you drive this herd. Beware of Eurytion, the shepherd, and his two-headed dog, Orthrus." He paused. "One caution I can give," he added slowly. "Invoke the aid of Helius."*

Through Gate the Twelfth the son of man who was also the Son of God departed, in search of Geryon he went.



# Labor XII - Capture of the Red Cattle of Geryon

- ⌘ Hercules sets off to rescue the Red Cattle, held unlawfully
  - He heeds his Teacher's advice, and first stops at a Temple
  - Making offerings to Helios, the god of fire in the sun.
  - A golden chalice falls before his feet; he uses it to cross the seas
- ⌘ He finds the grazing cattle, guarded by the shepherd & dog
  - He kills the 2-headed dog Orthrus, but spares the shepherd's life
  - And then the monster Geryon appears, breathing fire from his 3 heads
  - Hercules attacks with an arrow to the side, piercing all 3 bodies
- ⌘ Then he finds himself a shepherd, driving the cattle
  - They stray over and over again, and he rounds them up
  - He defends them against raiders and monsters before he succeeds
- ⌘ Finally returning home, he faces his Teacher again
  - He's told by facing these 12 labors the "jewel of immortality" is his
  - The human labors ended, his cosmic tasks begin





# Labor XII - Meaning of the Myth

- ⌘ The 2-headed dog represents lower instincts & psychic nature
  - These are the matter aspect that must be slain
  - When deprived of power they no longer influence us
- ⌘ The red cattle represent the lower desires
  - Aspirants rise above them by driving them to the Sacred place
- ⌘ The monster Geryon represents the 3 personality aspects
  - They need to be rendered pure for the soul
  - This purified form is the golden cup or Holy Grail
  - Enables the Initiate to ascend into spiritual realms
- ⌘ The shepherd is the mind
  - The mind is spared and retrained to do right
  - This is what Christ did, shepherding his unruly flock
  - The World Savior, lifting up Humanity



# What Does it Mean to be a Savior?

- ⌘ From the angle of the soul, the keywords for Pisces:
  - I leave my Father's home and turning back, I save
- ⌘ Hercules sees humanity owned by a “monster”
  - The personality (mental, emotional, physical bodies united)
  - But not yet under the influence of the soul
- ⌘ Jesus, a human who is en rapport with his soul
  - Like Hercules, becomes that beacon of light to humanity
  - Both men holding their minds “steady in the light”
- ⌘ Even as aspirants, we redeem the lives of Elementals
  - Appropriation of our vehicles from certain elemental matter
  - As we flood our own consciousness with light, it transforms them too



# Labor XII - The Journey

- ⌘ Pisces rules the feet, a symbol of the Path
  - Also death or transformation of various aspects
    - ✓ Like the personality and the illusions that veil the soul
- ⌘ Three signs are those of salvation
  - Leo - work out your own salvation
  - Sagittarius - losing self by silently serving
  - Pisces - the World Savior
- ⌘ We find the most exalted symbol in this last labor
  - He placed the cattle in the cup, the Holy Grail, in offering
  - Showing that all of his animal nature had been transcended
- ⌘ The character and nature of the disciple
  - Has been tested and tried until qualities have been redeemed
  - His personality has been transformed to reveal the Soul
  - He becomes a member of the New Group of World Servers



|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Pisces:</b>            | <b>the Fish</b>   |
| <b>Element:</b>           | Water sign  |
| <b>Quality:</b>           | Duality. Fluidity endowed with instinctual consciousness. Mediumistic. Polarized mind unawakened. Intuition dormant. Death of the personality. Release of the soul from captivity. Christ, the World Savior.                                  |
| <b>Traits:</b>            | <b>Negative traits:</b> escapism, idealism, over-sensitivity, pessimism, laziness. <b>Positive traits:</b> imagination, kindness, compassion, intuition, a sensitive nature.  |
| <b>Esoteric Concepts:</b> | Lower psychic powers transmuted into higher spiritual faculties (mediumship into mediatorship, clairvoyance into spiritual perception, clairaudience into mental telepathy); death of all attachments and liberation of the soul for service. |
| <b>Polar Opposite:</b>    | Virgo, an earth sign (matter; Christ in the cave of the heart).   |
| <b>Rulers:</b>            | Exoteric, Neptune/Jupiter; Esoteric, Pluto.   |
| <b>Keywords:</b>          |   |
| <b>form angle:</b>        | Go forth into matter.   |
| <b>soul angle:</b>        | I leave my Father's home and turning back, I save.  |



# Recap of Why we Study the Hercules Myth

*The progress of Hercules from the mental plane, through the emotional plane, and out into physical plane manifestation shows us a synthetic picture of the work done by every disciple who is a son of man and a son of God.*

*It is a work that can be arduous, slow, and carried forward under great difficulties. Often it is done in blind ignorance of the forces released and of the results to be achieved. But step by step the aspirant is led along the path of self-knowledge and development.*

*His character and nature are tested and tried until the qualities which characterize the form can be transmuted into those which reveal the soul.*



# Recap of Progress through the Signs

- The 4 preparatory signs:
  - he is equipped with the faculty of mind in **Aries**
  - with desire in **Taurus**
  - arrives at his essential duality in **Gemini**
  - enters the Human Kingdom in **Cancer**
- The 4 signs of physical plane struggle:
  - self-consciousness & individualism emerge in **Leo**
  - nurturing of the Christ within in **Virgo**
  - trying to balance the pairs of opposites in **Libra**
  - overcoming illusion in **Scorpio**
- The 4 signs of achievement:
  - going straight for the goal in **Sagittarius**
  - scaling the mount of initiation in **Capricorn**
  - becoming the world server in **Aquarius**
  - and the world savior in **Pisces**



# Recap of Hercules on the Path

- He sets out confident
  - ✓ little realizing the magnitude of his task
  - ✓ unprepared for failure
- He's not only impulsive, but is not always successful
  - ✓ he fails and has to redo some labors
  - ✓ or in some cases finishes, but badly
- He is still susceptible to glamor and illusion
  - ✓ but he is solidly on the Path of Discipleship
  - ✓ set on performing 12 acts of service for Humanity



# Recap of the Link between the Myth & Sign

- By combining the astrological and symbolic story
  - ✓ the tests of everyday life of a disciple are shown
  - ✓ via the sign in which the myth takes place
- Each sign subjects the disciple to
  - ✓ influences of certain distinctive forces
  - ✓ and provides him with certain tendencies
- When understood, the meaning of the test emerges
  - ✓ How the Moon sign labor describes the lessons of our past patterns that encompass the prison of our soul
  - ✓ How the Sun sign labor describes the challenges our personality is meant to work on this lifetime
  - ✓ How the Ascendant sign labor points to the soul qualities we are to cultivate
- And its implications for all of us in our journey

