

Through the Gate of the Equinox

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As viewed from earth, the Sun is now reaching a point in the sky, called "Equinox". As human beings on this planet, we are not disconnected from this astronomical fact, this yearly crisis point. Some may object that it is an illusion, as it is the earth which moves around the sun, but this earthly realm is our present field of evolution, and we are immersed in this illusion caused by humanity's past experiences. So it is from this viewpoint that the celestial influences must be considered. They are real for us, and come to us as different types of energy that we must learn to wield.

This point of annual crisis, the passage of the Sun through the Equinox, the point in the sky which marks the beginning of the astrological year, is astronomically understood as the intersection between the Ecliptic or apparent path of the Sun, and the Equator. It is the beginning of the tropical sign Aries, a sign of beginnings and renewals. At this point, the sun, Hercules, the disciple, is emerging from the depths below the Ecliptic, the southern latitudes, being symbolically "crucified", to then rise, and begin his ascent towards the highest point of the Cancer Solstice. The energy of new beginnings brings hope, and hope is said to be a keynote of the sign Aries; it is at this point that we would profit by reviewing what we have learnt in the previous cycle, and also by formulating our plans for the coming spiritual year. We can imagine the entire network of triangles being infused with new energies and promises for a brighter future. In order to have a glimpse of the importance and the quality of these energies, we can recall what the great occultist H. P. Blavatsky said about it: "The equinoxes and solstices, the phases of the solar course, astronomically and numerically expressed, although they seem abstract ideas for the uninitiated mortal, are the concrete symbols of the eternally living verity". In other words, the equinox stands for happenings at certain levels, which we hardly can imagine.

So, as we enter the Higher Interlude of this year, let us resume our reflections on Hercules as the symbol of the spiritual disciple.

If the great occultist H. P. Blavatsky confessed that the study of myths and their meaning had occupied the greater portion of her life, thus devoting many pages of her SD to the interpretation of myths and legends; and if the Tibetan through Alice Bailey, has left for us the story of one of the greatest Greek myths, Hercules, so that we may ponder upon it, we must conclude that much wisdom is hidden behind the apparently funny and naive stories of these ancient anonymous oral traditions we

call “myths and legends”. In other words, they have a hidden meaning, and must be treated as symbols. Their most important feature is *their exemplary nature*: this implies that all the events of Hercules’ dramatic and often amusing story are guidelines for the modern disciple on his path of spiritual unfoldment. They sum up the needed recognitions, challenges and outline his path to becoming an outpost of the Great Ones.

For those not so familiar with the story, let me recall who Hercules, or Herakles was. Classical heroes are born from a male god, and a female human, symbol of the essential duality of Spirit and matter, life in form, soul in body, that it is their challenge to synthesize. Hercules’ father was Zeus himself, his mother, a mortal woman called Alcmene. According to the sources, Hercules travels long distances and bridges the gap between cultures. He even ventured into lands unknown by any living being, such as the land of the dead. The mythical figure of Hercules travelling around killing monsters which devastate the lands, or twisting the course of rivers or building altars, is in some way the collective remembrance of an ancient disciple who brought peace and civilization to the people, solved world problems and was able to heal, since he is also associated with hot springs with healing powers. In other words, a symbol of the world disciple whose field of service embraces the whole planet and his mind bridges into unknown realms of consciousness. As Hercules, many advanced beings have left an echo of their world service in popular myths and legends.

Their lives are full of challenges, mostly imposed by their own souls. In the story of Hercules, it is the goddess Hera, Zeus’s wife, who is out to make life difficult for the hero. In a fit of madness caused by the goddess, the hero kills his own children. Hera stands for the soul, and his madness, for that burning aspiration which drives a beginner on the Path to madly sacrifice everything for his ideals and goals. It was as atonement for this crime that the Oracle tells him that he must serve king Eurystheus for twelve years, who sets him twelve labors, each of them corresponding to one of the zodiacal signs.

Hercules’ relationship with his soul is contained in his name: Herakles means “the glory of Hera”. His birth name was Alkeides, but he adopted Herakles as he recognized his mission of expressing the soul, that is, when he became a soul-infused personality. The name of the soul then became his name. And we know the soul imposes all kinds of tests on the personality, until it can manifest forth its innate divinity. It reminds me of an old eastern story about a disciple who prayed for

wisdom, and God as a response dramatically increased his obstacles. The disciple must learn to stand on his own feet. The stories about Hercules killing snakes and monsters with his bare hands, and the very episode of killing his own music teacher, are metaphors of reaching that stage of being on his own, and trusting his own capacities.

When Hercules undertakes the first task, which we guess is related to the first sign of the Zodiac, Aries, he little realizes what it would really entail. He is told that the Thracian king Diomedes possesses a number of mares which were devastating the countryside and subsisting on human flesh. Hercules was told to capture them. Having succeeded, he gave the horses to a friend, Abderis, to hold while he strutted ahead, not realizing that those horses would trample Abderis to death. The mares escaped and Hercules had to start all over again. He finally succeeded, though not without an initial failure.

Aries is ruled exoterically by Mars, and esoterically by Mercury. During the Wheel of incarnation, it is Mars, desire, which prompts to action. For the disciple, it is the mind and thought, ruled by the planet Mercury. Aries governs the head, and is the sign of the thinker. This is where Hercules, the newly-thinking disciple, begins his effort. The horse stands for thoughts and intellectual activity. Plato, in his dialogue *Phaedrus* (sections 246a–254e), tells us about a Charioteer who drives a chariot pulled by two winged horses. The Charioteer represents the soul, just as Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita; one horse representing the higher mind, and the other, the lower nature. The Charioteer tries to stop the horses from going different ways, and forces them to proceed upwards into the light. Isn't it beautiful to see all the same symbols evoked once and again by those who could tap the universal mind?

The lesson Aries brings becomes increasingly relevant as the years go by. Hercules' first lesson was *to gain mental control*, as is the first lesson of every aspirant. For ages the mares of thought, wrong ideas and useless speech have been devastating our countryside, our environment. In a way, this swarm of uncontrolled thoughts feed on the lower nature, just as the mares in Hercules' story subsisted on human flesh. This, until the disciple can say: *"I come forth, and from the plane of the mind, I rule"*. It is said that one of the first lessons we all have to learn is the tremendous power we mentally wield, and the amount of both good and harm we can cause through the horses of our mind. Hercules at first failed to realize the potency of thought, so he gave Abderis, symbol of the lower self, the mares to hold. But the lower nature by

itself cannot cope with this task, and the horses escaped into the wilder lands of Diomedes, son of Mars. In other words, the swarm of uncontrolled thoughts rushed into the realm of desire. From the response of the Teacher, who said that the task was done, though badly done, we may infer that we need more than one attempt to succeed in controlling the mind.

So the entry of the Sun into Aries prompts a series of questions: How do we use our mind? Are my thoughts contributing to uplift? Are they truly creative, affirming hope, or, on the contrary, thoughts of separateness and fear? We can thus see how closely related this first task is, with the work of Triangles, where we use the power of thought with the purpose of helping to build the triangular network of light, and thereby allowing the inflow of higher energies.

So this moment calls for a renewed intention to control our minds and contribute thoughts of peace and good-will. We know that humanity is going through a great crisis, and our work with Triangles could be our mental contribution to allow the energies of love and goodwill to be poured into a suffering humanity. It is our choice, whether we contribute to increase the mental chaos and heavy forces today at work, or we decide to stand on the side of those who consciously aid the Plan and bring comfort to our fellowmen, standing as an irradiating point of love and goodwill, and learning thereby. A very occult statement can be said to be in connection with Aries: *"The Disciple knows because he works"*, and not the other way round. As H. P. Blavatsky said when explaining the ancient mystery of the equinox: "Truly, our destiny is written in the stars. The closer the union between the mortal reflection, the human being, and its celestial prototype (we could add, the soul) the less dangerous the external conditions".

So, let us once more project our path of light and service for this coming year, not forgetting that, as we are told, "hope" is the keynote of Aries. "The most insignificant thought creates a tiny action", proclaims the Agni Yoga. "Thought is the power and co-creator of existence". Through our minds, we, as members of the NGWS help in giving concrete manifestation to spiritual ideals, and we can contribute to advance the principles of the New Age.

As we participate in the distribution of the powerful energies of this moment – and this is not an esoteric platitude, but these energies are real - I send you all warm greetings in hopes that this time may really be a conscious beginning, full of hope, for all humanity.
