

The Spiritual Effects of the Zodiacal Signs: Libra to Sagittarius

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Abstract

This article examines the astrological signs of Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius for their spiritual and esoteric implications. In a format designed to help the student readily apply the concepts of esoteric astrology to his or her astrological birth chart, the text explores each sign according to seasonal analogy, associated element and modality in traditional astrology, general themes according to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey, portions of human anatomy and functions ruled, the associated Labor of Hercules, and the three levels of rulership as proposed by the Tibetan Master through Alice Bailey. In the final segment of each section, the author demonstrates the progression encountered from the earliest stages of evolution to the later more advanced stages. Thus, for each sign, the triple rulership system is discussed in tandem with progress on both the Wheel of Life and the symbolic crosses of evolution for mass humanity, disciples, and initiates.

Libra

September 22 – October 22

The day on which the Sun enters the tropical sign of Libra signifies the official arrival of autumn in the northern hemisphere. The onset of Libra announces its appearance with a dramatic astronomical phenomenon perfectly describing the nature of this zodiacal sign – the autumnal equinox. Daylight hours and dark precisely equal and balanced, the Autumnal Equinox embodies a moment symbolizing perfect proportion and embodies the archetype so ably represented by the Weighing Scales of Libra—the two halves of one whole, symmetry, right relationship, reciprocity, and fair representation. With day and night receiving equal emphasis at this unique point in the year, the autumn equinox (like the spring equinox)

establishes a point of psychic and spiritual calm when the busy tides of life temporarily rest in absolute equanimity. This is particularly true of the influence of Libra, a sign which connotes a sensitive adjustment of opposing forces such that they come to rest in a delicate static poise.

As a sign which instigates the processes of a new season, zodiacal Libra is considered a cardinal sign in traditional astrology. The implication is that even though Libra connotes rest and equanimity, it also contains the initiative to induce that condition. Libra is therefore a sign which inculcates and cultivates a certain amount of drive, particularly in regard to the themes for which it stands—ideal relationship, fairness, and aesthetic beauty. Libra therefore represents a dynamic force seeking out and creating the conditions in which its ideals can be realized. Considered an air sign in traditional astrology, Libra is also connected with the mind and with intellectual endeavors, whether of a personal or collective type. As a result, the cardinal air sign, Libra-influenced individual carries strong motivations to initiate developments in social and intellectual contexts. This same trend appears in society and world affairs whenever a major planet passes through this

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sign. Hence, Libra emerges as a powerful influence on the direction of human evolution, instigating action in the intellectual, social, and even political spheres.

Yet, the influence of Libra in the life of the individual spiritual seeker goes significantly beyond the social and intellectual characteristics for which this sign is known. At a deeper level, Libran influence sets up the condition in the spiritual career of the soul when a definite decision is made to either emphasize the temporary personality or the immortal soul. The mass of Humanity focuses on the first; a smaller subset of spiritual seekers trains its gaze on the second. The influence of Libra has the potential to set up the conditions which divide these two stages on the evolutionary path. In fact, the influence of Libra simply stages a conflict requiring a decision as to which of these two possibilities will win out. If the soul decides to shift its attention to valuing eternal verities rather than to pursuing passing thrills, it changes the trajectory of its evolution, symbolically reversing direction on the Wheel of Life as it opts to press against the tide of the masses and to seek spiritual alignment instead of momentary comforts. For this reason, Libra is esoterically said to represent the point on the path when there transpires “the reversal of the wheel,” or the reversal of the direction of life pursued by the evolving unit.¹

A sign thus of decision, Libra highlights the power to make choices. Shall it be this, or shall it be that, the Scales of Libra inquire. In order to produce a response, the influence of this archetype sets up life situations which make it obvious that the power of choice exists and must be enjoined. Libra even makes it evident that the proactive making of choice can be to spiritual advantage. As Alice Bailey has written, under Libra influence the individual comes to understand that the seeker who voluntarily shoulders the responsibility for making choice is significantly less likely to have such a choice foisted upon him or her by adverse life conditions.²

Hence, when the individual first contacts the ideals of Libra on the mental plane, he or she has the option to make choices at that level

rather than to have the matter played out in compelling yet unwanted circumstances. For example, perceiving the superiority of fairness, equanimity, and aesthetic upliftment over partiality, violent alterations of viewpoint, and cheap attractions, he or she is presented with a moment of spiritual opportunity. If this moment is acted upon in consciousness, then the influence of Libra has successfully generated a point of mental poise or balance, allowing the spiritual seeker to distinguish between material personal desire on one hand and intelligent spiritual love on the other.³ In any case, Libra as a force field of spiritual influence creates the conditions in which choice must be made. If the individual recognizes his or her responsibilities and chooses on the side of thoughtful engagement with life, then the Libran force field confers its gift in the form of the spiritual intuition, which when awakened allows the higher mind to become a prominent factor in the life of the seeker.⁴ To get there, the seeker must adopt the spiritual balance of Libra, which can't be upset or thrown off center by powerful personality attractions.

As can be seen, spiritual success under Libran influence hinges entirely on the act of making a choice. In the process of making a choice, the sorting of potential directions into opposing camps inevitably enters the picture. It is the function of Libra to bring to the individual the stark awareness of conflict or tension existing between potential choices. In other words, Libran influence entails a confrontation with the war between the pairs of opposites so frequently alluded to throughout esoteric philosophy.⁵ Common pairs of opposites confronted by spiritual seekers are these: benefit to self versus benefit to others, immediate benefit versus delayed gratification, truth versus falsity, personal versus universal, past versus present, present versus future, known versus unknown, and abstract values versus concrete values. Placing priority on one or the other in each pair produces a different life trajectory. Clear recognition that such is the case arrives under the influence of Libra, which symbolizes the sign of the Weighing Scales as they see-saw back and forth in the process of considering, comparing, and judging.

Just as the pans of the Weighing Scale rise and fall until equilibrium is reached, so also does the mind of the individual influenced by Libra fluctuate between the two poles as he or she struggles to determine on which of the polar opposites shall be placed the greatest emphasis. As a result, Libra is a sign in which marked alternation between opposed points of view frequently takes place. In some cases, the Libra-influenced individual acts much like a Weighing Scale gone mad, swinging wildly between extreme positions or points of view.⁶ As a result, the Libran ideal of equanimity is often nowhere to be found in the experience of those influenced by this sign, until at length and at last the process of deliberation has been fully ridden out. The strain consequent upon violent alternation from one extreme to the other serves to weaken the grip of non-essential, distorted, or even false perceptions related to any matter, ultimately bringing about a more stable and centered outlook as the disadvantages of over-reaction make themselves plain. As Alice Bailey summarizes it, Libra is a sign in which the seeker carefully considers and weighs one value against another, finally achieving right equilibrium through an inevitable tussle with the pairs the opposites.⁷ It isn't always a pleasant process while this internal warfare goes on, but it does ultimately serve to bring about right perspective.⁸

The development of right perspective is in fact a key theme associated with Libra-influenced experience. Such perspective can only be attained when the mind is capable of accurate judgment. According to the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey, one of the most important purposes of the sign of Libra is the inculcation of this very quality.⁹ In the acquisition of accurate or sound judgment, several skills are involved. The first of these is impartiality or objectivity. It is through the influence of Libra that the spiritual seeker learns to adopt an impersonal, unprejudiced state of mind. In this way, he or she stops making immediate assumptions in the course of life and instead develops the capacity to slow down, think, and understand all sides of any issue.¹⁰ As a result, the Libra-influenced individual contacts the archetype of fairness on the mental plane, and

this idea begins to color his or her speech and actions. Parallel to this unfoldment, the spiritual seeker operating from an impartial viewpoint begins to see through the warfare of all pairs of opposed ideas, quickly realizing that few truths are absolute and that context always matters.¹¹ Thus, the capacity for right perspective grows and unfolds to full flowering through the development of impartiality in the Libra-influenced individual.

The influence of Libra contributes yet another skill in the work of developing right perspective. Key to the spiritual success of the seeker who would be an agent or disciple of Planetary Hierarchy in its work to uplift and direct Humanity to a higher level of divine expression, this skill is right discrimination. In aiding Hierarchy in the Divine Plan, it is critical that the spiritual seeker be easily capable of discriminating between that which is moral, ethical, and wholesome and that which is not. According to Alice Bailey, the sign of Libra governs the development of this very skill—the power of discrimination, conveying the ability to distinguish right from wrong.¹² Hence, the Libra-influenced individual progresses in the use of the faculty of judgment, or the ability to weigh one notion against another and to determine which conforms most closely to the highest ideal.

According to the esoteric astrological doctrine, this is the true function of the sign of Libra, a zodiacal incubator for what Alice Bailey refers to as “the judicial mind,” a capacity for perception and thought process which allows the individual to select values and actions independent of pressures emanating from the mass mind of Humanity.¹³ Since the mass mind is frequently colored by materialistic concepts and notions far from the realm of the ideal, the ability to think independently of the mass thought stream is of utmost importance to the striving disciple, who is charged by Hierarchy to learn to think in terms of ideal beauty and harmony first, and to then translate the sensed vision into practical terms. The influence of Libra is pivotal in this development, prodding the seeker to lift his or her mind to the abstract levels where the ideal can be sensed. The influence of the sign of Libra is potent in this

regard, for it symbolizes and embodies ideal abstract relationships such as are found in mathematics, geometry, aesthetic considerations, all art forms, language, literature, and law.

In fact, the esoteric view of the ideal realm goes even farther. In Bailey's esotericism, the Libran realm of the ideal connotes "...an ordered arrangement of energies directed and controlled by an over-arching will-to-good."¹⁴ Influence from the sign of Libra helps the striving seeker to contact such inspired thoughtforms, or ordered arrangements of energies powered by the will-to-good. Thus, it is apparent that Libran influence counts for much along the discipleship path. It's often thought of as a lightweight amongst heavies in the zodiac, but from the esoteric perspective, it is seen to contribute singularly useful capacities to those who would cooperate with Hierarchy and serve the Divine Plan.

Just as the spiritual influence of Libra in the zodiac teaches the striving seeker how to compose his or her point of view around fairness and mental balance, so also do the Libra-ruled portions of the physical body carry out functions which relate to physical balance and right proportion. Embodiments of Libra in the human anatomy, the lower back and kidneys serve the functions of gravitational and fluid balance respectively. The lower back works with the pelvic girdle to maintain the erect posture of the human form, managing and supporting the primary weight of the physical form. Like the scales of Libra, the lower back allows the weight of the body to shift from side to side while walking, thus facilitating an ongoing alternation of the center of gravity, as one side takes the main weight and then the other. The kidneys promote balance and right proportion of fluids in the body by filtering the liquid portions of the body and determining what shall be retained and what excreted. Both of these body functions ensure the internal balance of the physical body, the muscular-skeletal system in the case of the lower back and the interior liquid environment in the case of the kidneys. Right relationship of the parts to the whole is thus embodied in the Libra-ruled parts of the human anatomy.

Right relationship of the part to the whole is a theme also much in evidence in the labor of Hercules associated with this sign. Titled *The Capture of the Erymanthian Boar*, this episode of the Herculean adventures entails a scene in which Hercules and his centaur drinking companions fail to realize that they alone do not represent a larger group of centaurs to whom belongs a coveted cask of wine. This mistaken assumption on their part sets the stage for an unnecessary battle in which lives are lost, much to the chagrin of Hercules.

The labor begins when Hercules receives word from his higher voice that he is to track down and capture the much-feared Erymanthian Boar, a monstrous wild hog terrifying all on Mount Erymanthus. After an arduous climb on the steep slopes of the mountain in preparation for hunting the Erymanthian Boar, Hercules encounters a sociable centaur who chats him up and cordially extends an invitation to an afternoon of wine and conversation. Forgetting all about the pressing matter of the Erymanthian Boar, Hercules gaily accepts. Two more centaurs happen along and join in with the revelry. While boisterously trading jokes and nonsense, the four blithely consume the entirety of a cask of wine sacred to the entire clan of centaurs inhabiting the mountain. Shortly, the other centaurs catch drift of what's happening. Those left out of the party become enraged at the exhaustion of their collectively-owned wine, fly into battle and take revenge against Hercules and his three centaur drinking companions. In the resulting mayhem, Hercules ends up killing two of his erstwhile friends. Sobered and sorrowed, Hercules slowly realizes his mistake and presses on to find and capture the boar. In the end, Hercules brings the boar down the mountain to complete the labor.¹⁵

Pertinent to Libra, the sign associated with this labor, there's an obvious message conveyed by *The Capture of the Erymanthian Boar*. Giving in to frivolous social dalliances can constitute a grave misstep on the path of spiritual initiation, the story screams, for Hercules nearly failed his test by glibly indulging a spontaneous social whim. Further, the message of this labor concerns the proper use of collectively-owned

resources, the exclusive appropriation of which inevitably leads to conflict. By mindlessly allowing others to lead him astray into both superficial interaction and misuse of resources, Hercules committed two wrongs, and then added an even more grave offense by cutting short the lives of two largely harmless centaurs.

The lesson is clear: the disciple must think independently and take the spiritually advisable course of action even if social surroundings present enticements to do otherwise. Here is an admonishment much needed by the Libran-influenced individual, all too often drawn aside from the main labors of the spiritual path by prospects of pleasant but non-essential social interactions. While it's true that humans are a fundamentally social species with legitimate needs for interactions, it's also incumbent on the would-be disciple to make sure that spiritual purpose rather than fleeting pleasure figures prominently at critical junctures. That's precisely the message of *The Capture of the Erymanthian Boar*, the labor of Hercules associated by the Alice Bailey tradition with the sign of Libra.

The association of the sign of Libra with the boar comes not only from the Alice Bailey tradition, but in a round-about way, from ancient sources as well. As discussed previously, the esoteric astrological doctrine posits a direct relationship between the sign of Libra and Ursa Major, the constellation of the Great Bear. Interestingly, the constellation referred to by contemporary astronomy as the Great Bear was anciently referred to by Syrian astronomers as the Wild Boar.¹⁶ In other words, the names Great Bear and Wild Boar refer to the same group of stars. If the Great Bear is linked to Libra and the Great Bear equates to the Wild Boar, then the Wild Boar is linked with Libra, too. This linkage means that although the association of Libra with the story of the Erymanthian Boar might look arbitrary to some, it's actually grounded in known imagery of stellar mythology.

Thus, when the Alice Bailey tradition calls upon the Bear to elucidate the challenge faced by the striving disciple under the influence of

Libra, it invokes not only the classical narratives associated with the labors of Hercules, but also an ancient understanding of the themes associated with a powerful polar constellation. In this way, the esoteric astrological doctrine emphasizes the pivotal nature of the sign Libra, a sign associated not only on the lower end with the potential to weaken spiritual trajectory through needless social distraction but also on the higher end with the power to vastly enhance spiritual trajectory by doing as does a polar constellation and establishing an absolutely unchanging center around which the unfolding lives of the soul will revolve.

The absolute center around which the lives of the soul revolve is, of course, the reality of the infinite initiatory path. In Libra, this path leads through three domains or levels of development: 1) that of average humanity, the reversed wheel, and the symbolic mutable cross, 2) that of discipleship, the forward wheel, and the symbolic fixed cross, and 3) that of the initiate of the Third Degree and beyond through evolution on the symbolic cardinal cross. With each of these levels come characteristic experiences, tests, and attainments, all symbolized through the multiple rulership system unique to the esoteric astrological doctrine of the Alice Bailey writings.

In the early stages of experience within the field of Libran influence, the seeker responds to the basic and instinctive social impulses inherent in the personality level of the Libran influence, such as those which misled Hercules in his initial attempt to fulfill the Libra labor. Just as Hercules temporarily lost his way due to desire for the relief of tension to be gained from social plesantry, so also do Libran-influenced individuals evolving on the symbolic mutable cross lose themselves in appeals to social acceptance and popularity.

Coming under the dominion of archetypally pleasure-centered Venus as exoteric ruler, the Libra-influenced individual operating at the mutable cross level passionately seeks personality gratification, thus following the direction taken by average humanity on the Wheel of Life. The Libra-influenced individual at this level therefore follows a life path which could

be said to regress through the zodiac, as does the precession of the equinoxes. This is a symbolic way of saying that he or she is driven by the herd impulses which dominate in the early stages of evolution, the segment of the path which unfolds before true individuation has occurred. At this stage of evolutionary development, the individual accomplishes very little true independent thinking, falling instead under the power of the collective mind and the attractive lure of pleasure-centered Venus, exoteric ruler of Libra. The Libra-influenced individual thus listens attentively to mass thought as represented in advertising and popular entertainment. He or she therefore obligingly pursues indulgence and physical comfort, pleasure, bodily attractiveness, romantic interaction, sexual fulfillment, social acceptance, popularity, style, money as enticement for acceptance and association, and a relatively quiet attempt to control others through the legislative or law-making process.¹⁷

At the same time, the notion of money not as an instrument of service but as a personal possession exerts great power over the Libra-influenced individual on the personality-centered stage of the evolutionary path. Money is concretized energy and therefore a manifestation of the Third Aspect, the aspect governing experience at the personality level.¹⁸ Thus, the fact that money exerts such a grip on the Libra-influenced individual of the early evolutionary stages demonstrates that the influence of the third or material aspect at the mutable cross level is overwhelmingly powerful.

As a result, all is subordinated to the gaining of influence and dominance through the material means of money, sex, and law for the Libra-influenced individual at the mutable cross level.¹⁹ Looking stylish and presenting a sexually appealing exterior take a high priority, all the while the underlying motivation rests on an attempt to engineer a desired social outcome. Whether the individual works out his or her path in the sophistication of New York, London or Paris, or in the more humble environments of a million hamlets the world over, these themes pertain for the Libra-influenced individual at the mutable cross level. Such an

individual may have the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, or planets in Libra. Thus, the Libra-influenced individual at the mutable cross level of evolution is profoundly given to the positioning and manipulation of others in keeping with his or her desires, a problematic characteristic well known to be associated with the Third or Personality Aspect. All the powers of sexual attraction, fashion, and social connections are brought to bear on this objective, as can be seen daily in advertising and news reports.

Even so, all is not well in the interior world of the Libra-influenced individual evolving on the symbolic mutable cross, for conflict is in the making. In fact, the impact of Libra has just begun to make itself known. As the force field of experience under Libra continues to unfold, the individual slowly becomes aware that he or she is witnessing the emergence of a ferocious tension between the temporal self or personality self on the one hand, and the eternal self or soul on the other. The personality advises the manipulation and use of others, but the soul advises differently, suggesting a new spiritual freedom and beauty just beyond the edges of perception. Indeed, the influence of Libra eventually brings about a profound tug of war between the two polarities of the personality and the soul, as the values of the self-interested one on the exterior conflict with and clash against the values of the altruistic other within.²⁰ In this way, the sign of Libra initiates the process of testing the individual as to whether the pleasures of the personality or the intimations of the soul shall prove of greatest moment. These are the tests and trials associated with Libra, even at the exoteric or mutable cross level. Such tests and trials manifest as inner and outer situations which bring anxiety to the psychology of the personality-dominated individual under Libran influence, thus forcing him or her through painful ethical crises to realize there is more to life than superficial and temporary social advantage, whether that seeming advantage lies in the field of popularity, fashion, celebrity, or politics.

According to the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey, all this is so because any incarnation influenced by the sign of Libra con-

stitutes an interlude in which the personality and soul are drawn into a relationship such that neither dominates the other. In other words, although the balance has not yet been tipped toward the soul, the hegemony of the personality is brought to a close. As a result, an incarnation influenced by the sign of Libra may well appear to lack any marked emphasis on either the personality or the soul, but even in this state of stasis or equilibrium, an important development is taking place, for the soul in this way gathers strength for a later time in which it will assert its control over the personality.²¹ Absence of pronounced direction may appear to result as the individual hovers between the two possibilities – personality emphasis or soul emphasis. The Libra-influenced individual at the mutable cross level of evolution seems to do nothing but vacillate endlessly, but according to the esoteric doctrine, this trend holds not for long in the history of the soul.²² In the midst of the Libran-induced equivocation, a determination is in process, for as the esoteric astrological doctrine holds, the sign of Libra is “the place of judgment” in which a decision is made whether to tread the ordinary way of average humanity or the way of discipleship and initiation.²³ Libra is thus a sign of pivotal importance to the paths of discipleship and initiation. In fact, according to the esoteric astrological doctrine, Libra is the sign in which the first real vision of the spiritual path and the way to Planetary Hierarchy appears.²⁴ Once the vista of the infinite initiatory way is glimpsed, the Libra-influenced individual can never be the same. He or she shifts off the mutable cross and symbolically mounts the fixed cross of discipleship and initiation.

Once the decision to pursue the initiatory path has been firmly made and the seeking soul

symbolically mounts the fixed cross of discipleship and initiation, the forces of Uranus as the esoteric ruler of Libra come into play. Emblematic of the influence of the soul upon the personality, Uranus is the awakener and accelerator of evolution. The Libra-influenced individual at this level of evolution is thus propelled into a new dynamic. Rather than being

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lulled into blind obedience to the instincts of the herd, the individual is plagued instead by a sharp awareness of the contradictions to be found in life and experience, for Uranus as agent of the soul spurs the individual on to an increasing awareness of the pairs of opposites.²⁵ Whereas before the many pairs of opposites presented themselves as bewildering alterations in the nature of experi-

ence, now they assume clear shape as forces testing the soul in regard to its values and intentions. The electric activation of Uranus as the esoteric ruler of Libra jolts the individual into stark realization of the choices to be made. Further, he or she now grasps not only the nature of his or her own soul identity and unique personality characteristics, but also that of group affiliations. Making connection with like minds in environments conducive to understanding evolutionary ideas becomes a priority, and the previous personality methods for establishing relationships falls to the side.

At the same time, the Libra-influenced individual on the fixed cross level of evolution develops questions under the prodding of awakener Uranus and can no longer accept the simplistic premises accepted by the masses. Glaring contradictions capture his or her attention as life is viewed without the comfort of indulgence and oblivion. He or she therefore turns against the tide of average humanity and pursues a direction on the Wheel of Life which runs counter to the precession of the equinox-

es. No longer carried by the tide of mass instinct, the Libra-influenced individual at the fixed cross level of evolution hews out his or her own path, symbolically following the natural order of the zodiacal signs from Aries through Taurus and so on to Pisces. Whereas the unevolved individual under Libran influence has let others make choices for them, the evolved individual under the influence of Libra takes the initiative to make choices and decisions independently. His or her relationship with the contradictions of life and the pairs of opposites changes; instead of merely being pitched mindlessly between the polarities of life, he or she determines to stop being thrown about by strong emotions and popular ideas and to walk a mindful middle way.²⁶

In contrast to the Libra-influenced individual at the mutable cross level who schemes endlessly for social superiority, the Libra-influenced seeker at the fixed cross level of evolution cares nothing for the harsh, competitive ways of modern society, preferring instead to use the powers of Libra in a different way.²⁷ Now, he or she "...seeks to be a point of peace in a sea of clashing forces," as the esoteric astrological doctrine holds.²⁸ The ideals of courtesy, cooperation, unity, and world fellowship color the thinking of the Libra-influenced individual treading the path of the fixed cross level of evolution.²⁹ The basis of his or her group and personal relationships shifts from self-interest to the greater good, and the issue of physical sexuality is brought into a new perspective. Right relations between the genders becomes a top priority, replacing the immediate expectation of physical gratification typical of the earlier stages in evolution.³⁰ In the place of the fixation upon the physical body characteristic of the earlier stages of evolution, the Libra-influenced seeker at the fixed cross level of evolution lifts his or her attention to the mental plane where he or she uses the mind to understand the relation between the abstract and the concrete, the higher energies and lower manifestations, thought and manifestation.³¹ His or her whole domain of focus has shifted from the personal and particular to the universal and the inclusive. Thus, the Libra-influenced individual at the fixed cross level of

evolution becomes a societal force for refinement of thought and action, exerting a civilizing effect in whatever area of life he or she may serve.

The initiatory path stretches on, however, beyond even the relatively elevated expression of Libra to be found on the symbolic fixed cross of discipleship. Once the striving seeker has progressed sufficiently on the symbolic fixed cross of discipleship, bringing not only the astral body but also the mental body under the control of the soul, he or she arrives at the gate of the Third Initiation. At this point, the nature of Libran expression rises to an even more rarefied level as the disciple mounts the symbolic cardinal cross and thus comes under the influence of Saturn, hierarchical ruler of Libra. This is true whether such an individual has the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, or several planets in Libra.

At the level of the Third or Transfiguration Initiation, the Libra-influenced seeker begins to encounter the exacting demands of Saturn, the agent of discipleship opportunity appearing in the form of necessary intentional choices.³² Necessary intentional choices are those determinations made because the individual voluntarily confronts inner issues and, of his or her own volition, selects what appears to be the best path. Necessary intentional choices are not passive exercises in waiting to see what happens and then letting the force of circumstance do the deciding. Necessary intentional choices involve the Will aspect of the individual, requiring the determination and individual effort of the seeker to sort through matters, grasp the greater context, and proactively establish an inner position. When deliberations like this are made on the cardinal cross level of evolution, such choices carry with them far-reaching consequences not only for the individual seeker, but for many others as well, for at this level of spiritual evolution, the seeker enters into a more dynamic role in the outworking of the Divine Plan. As a result, the effects of his or her choices ripple out into the entire group of planetary co-workers seeking to bring the higher and sacred vibration to planet Earth. The effects of individual choice as exercised on the symbolic cardinal cross thus entail a new level of consequence to the matter of

weighing and balancing, as symbolized by the archetype of Libra, the Divine Scales. In this segment of the initiatory path, the Libran process of deliberation and decision-making becomes a Saturn-driven undertaking, with all the emphasis on the voluntary shouldering and management of responsibilities properly associated with that planet.

As is therefore apparent, for the seeker applying to the Third Initiation and beyond, the Libra influence under the hierarchical ruler of Saturn leads into new territory. Saturn as hierarchical ruler of Libra strenuously inculcates sound judgment in the seeker,³³ a profound prerequisite if he or she is to properly execute his or her role as an agent of justice and cosmic law, which fall under the influence of the Will or First Aspect of Deity.³⁴ Such a type of sound judgment penetrates into the mysteries of karma and cosmic intention far beyond what is required of the disciple on the symbolic fixed cross. The reason is not hard to see. As the individual takes the Third Initiation and progresses even beyond that point, it is the monad which comes to condition his or her life expression, thus bringing him or her into increasingly deep contact with the Will. It is this level of activation which flows to the Libra-influenced initiatory seeker under the hierarchical impression of Saturn. The way is then open to the higher reaches of spiritual evolution through the Seven Cosmic Paths into Infinity. But the gate into that awesome territory does not open until the seeker has willingly responded to the exacting call of Saturn as the hierarchical ruler of Libra.

Scorpio **October 23 – November 21**

A month past Autumn Equinox, the time of Scorpio in the northern hemisphere sees daylight dramatically shorten and darkness portentously lengthen. As the night force gains ascendancy over the day force, the light-driven plant kingdom ceases its annual show of jubilant expression in leaf and flower, sheds its cover of verdure, and withdraws its vital life forces to the inner structures of trunk, root, and seed. As it departs, the plant kingdom signals one last burst of joyous self-giving in the au-

tumnal riot of crimson, gold, and copper—a final flourish in tribute to the source of life in all forms. Then, in a growing silence, all of nature vanishes to turn within. Disappearing from outward display to seek its own inner core, the vital life force of nature rests unseen as it broods in private on the ever-renewing power of eternal life.

A season of apparent death and dying, Scorpio in fact connotes the continuity of spiritual life, for even though the active outward growth of much vegetation terminates during this segment of the year, another cycle of life expression is soon to come in the spring. Though all looks still and barren, there is activity within. Inside trunk and stalk, the plant kingdom circulates life-giving fluids to strengthen bark and branch. Out of the fallen leaves of the autumn, rich soil will result from the decay of last season's greenery. Humanity knows that inside the dry husks and bare stalks of trees, crops, herbs, and flowers, the life principle persists and will arise to flourish another day.

Emblematic of this truth is one of the autumn season's favorite images—the carved Halloween pumpkin cleared free of pith, a lone candle shining from within its empty skull-like cavity. A symbol of death and eternal life all at once, the carved Halloween pumpkin represents the head or consciousness of the human person, with the lighted candle standing for the spark of the eternal soul, very much alive and sentient even past the “growing season” of active incarnation.

Perhaps the Halloween pumpkin of Scorpio time might be understood as a modern continuation of an ancient legend. Concerning a magical severed head which lives on after its separation from the body to sing sacred songs and utter prophecy, this legend is resurrected and re-worked in the late fourteenth-century Arthurian text, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. In the Arthurian version of the severed head legend, there appears a mysterious knight clad in green and thus reminiscent of the power of nature itself. The Green Knight arrives unannounced at the Arthurian court and challenges all to a mutual beheading contest, offering himself as first victim. None of the knights

accept the ordeal, until youthful Gawain impulsively rises to the challenge. He dutifully lops off the Green Knight's head, which rolls off to the side. To the surprise of the Arthurian court, the Green Knight merely gathers up his disjoined head, leaps back on his waiting horse, and continues laughing and joking as he gallops away. Of course, by the rules of the game, Gawain must meet the Green Knight another day. Gawain's trepidation is great, but in the end, the Green Knight appears with his head grown miraculously back in place, perhaps a nod to the restorative powers of verdant nature, while Gawain emerges unscathed at the conclusion of the ordeal.

According to scholar of medieval literature George Kittredge, this Arthurian incident revives the theme of a beheading game from the Middle Irish or Old French period.³⁵ According to famed fantasy novelist and medieval scholar J.R.R. Tolkien, the legend of the beheading game hails specifically from a Middle Irish prose narrative composed around 1100 C.E.³⁶ In the ancient Irish legends of this period, the severed head possessed the dual mystic powers of music and prophecy, singing and telling the future.³⁷ Yet, the legend of the severed head may be older still, and unabashedly Celtic.³⁸ Mythologist H.R.E. Davidson explores what he calls a Celtic fascination with the severed head which dates all the way back to 200 B.C.E.³⁹ Davidson reports that in pre-Christian times, the human head was venerated as a sacred seat of deity; as a result, the severed head appears to have been regarded as a power talisman, bringing fortune and strength.⁴⁰

Perhaps it is this very legend of the sacred head singing mystical songs, uttering prophecy, and conferring good fortune which is commemorated and perpetuated in the image of the Halloween pumpkin of Scorpio time. If so, it would be all too apropos, for Scorpio is a sign which embodies just these very powers of consciousness which operate outside of physical existence and speak of the eternal life of the spirit.

A water sign of the fixed modality in traditional astrology, Scorpio concerns the emotional or psychic constituent of existence and the persis-

tent patterns of feeling and response which sometimes reside at that level. Such patterns may include the defensive and aggressive emotional states of anger, jealousy, envy, desire for revenge, spite, and resentment. Reflective of the sting and torment of turbulent emotion, the scorpion creature as emblem of Scorpio alludes to the poisonous bite inflicted by negative emotions. Psychic poisons of the astral body, these torments of human emotional experience are symbolized by the scorpion creature, its ever-threatening stinger poised high and ready to strike at any moment. Yet, Scorpio is not only emblematic of threat, but also of healing and restoration, for Scorpio contains within itself the antidote for its own poison. Consistent with the water element, the process enjoined under the influence of Scorpio concerns the purification or washing clean of the emotional or psychic nature and the freeing of its life from the clutching claws of painful and destructive emotional states.

Under the influence of the fixed water sign Scorpio, the potential sting of toxic emotional content is transformed through the agency of healing spiritual waters, which dilute and dissolve any resistant habit patterns found in the astral body. Hence Scorpio claims its place as a sign profoundly concerned with psychic and emotional transformation, as the cleansing process of water slowly erodes, undermines, and eliminates the deadly power of bitter feelings vying to establish themselves as permanent residents in the sentient astral vehicle. Indeed the work of psychic and emotional purification emerges as central to the drama characteristic of Scorpio. It's a drama that unfolds in the concealed world of the psyche and which often spills out into the surrounding human relations. The relentless process of fixed sign Scorpio penetrates beneath the surface of the personality to search out and confront the content of the deep subconscious, purging from its hidden recesses any images and tendencies of an unwholesome nature.⁴¹

Affecting all levels of the personality, Scorpio goes to work confronting the striving seeker with ingrained patterns operating at the three levels of personality functioning—the physical, emotional, and mental.⁴² At the physical

level, the Scorpio influence dredges up deep attachments to sexuality as gratification and manipulative power, exposes the tendency toward laziness and sloth, and reveals the temptation to hoard money rather than circulate it for the good. At the emotional level, the Scorpio influence dramatizes the ways in which fear, hatred, and desire for power twist the psyche and lead the seeker along regressive paths. At the mental level, the Scorpio influence demonstrates the damaging nature of intellectual pride, dishonesty, and intentional cruelty.

In so doing, the influence of Scorpio stirs up the waters of the psyche, fomenting a battle with ancient psychological patterns which have persisted in the personality through many incarnations, to the detriment of the seeker. Such psychological patterns as pride, self-justification, blame, resentment, evasion, avoidance, self-indulgence, and hardened self-interest feel the unrelenting probing power of Scorpio, as it searches out and brings to consciousness the psychic pollution which needs must be purged if the seeker is to progress.

As a result, an interior struggle arises between the hegemony of personality control and the freedom represented by the soul. Though the personality does not want to relinquish the position of superiority it has held for aeons, the persistent revelations of Scorpio overpower even the stubborn lower self. Eventually, the unrelenting purification exerted by Scorpio commands the re-orientation of the seeker as he or she learns to place the life and values of the soul first, and the pressures of the personality far second. This re-ordering of priorities positions the seeker to apply for and successfully undergo the first three initiations – the Birth, the Baptism, and the Transfiguration.⁴³ The role of Scorpio in the process of initiation is critical, for it sets up conditions in which the watching Teachers can discern if the seeker is truly oriented toward the soul, if he or she can demonstrate the strength of character required for initiation, and whether he or she is sensitive to the Plan as sensed and formulated by Hierarchy.⁴⁴

In the process of preparing the seeker for initiation, Scorpio stirs up and revives past life memories. Such memories emerge from deep soul memory and swirl around in the mental and astral bodies in an attempt to seduce the seeker into perpetuating the same self-serving patterns which riddled and hobbled previous embodiments.⁴⁵ Some call this phenomenon the Dweller on the Threshold. The influence of Scorpio sets the stage for the all-encompassing struggle with this agglomerated influence of past tendency, the dreaded “Dweller on the Threshold” of Theosophical tradition.⁴⁶

This conflict constitutes a severe test of spiritual courage, earning Scorpio the esoteric keynotes of test, trial, and triumph.⁴⁷ Along the way, Scorpio escorts the striving seeker into a confrontation with death, both metaphorical and literal. Just as Scorpio time in the northern hemisphere witnesses the apparent death of nature, so also does the psychospiritual effect of this sign usher the seeker into the bowels of time and the experience of release from the grip of form identification. Hence, Scorpio symbolizes the end of life and consequent descent into the depths of burial in order to be resurrected and brought again to spiritual heights.⁴⁸ As is apparent, Scorpio symbolizes both death and rebirth, two sides of one coin in the spiritual universe. Still, Scorpio remains one of the most important zodiacal representatives of endings, terminations, and the death experience in general.⁴⁹

In the metaphorical sense, the death which occurs under Scorpio is a long and protracted psychological experience which persists throughout the physical lifetime of the seeker. Under the influence of this sign, the seeker continually runs up against the pain of passion-driven existence and the futility of attempting to control the actions and attitudes of others for the seeker's own physical or emotional comfort and gratification. After enough such experiences, it dawns on the seeker's mind that perhaps the attempt to maintain a controlling grip on surrounding conditions is doomed to failure.

Indeed it is, and the seeker begins as a result to intuit the important notion that there must be another way to live. When this realization emerges, there has already set in the end or death of attempted personality control over and on the self and environment. In time, the seeker understands that it is the better part of soul wisdom to allow the ancient hegemony of personality gratification to disintegrate and die. In this way, he or she invites and allows the death of personality control.⁵⁰ The influence of Scorpio brings about this death of personality dominion through painful experience after painful experience, in which it is shown repeatedly to the seeker that the competitions and machinations of the personality self can bring no lasting peace.

In time, the desire for personality gratification weakens and dies under the relentless revealing power of Scorpio influence. As a result, the seeker eventually ceases to vivify his or her isolated personality dynamics, and thus the separative personality unenlivened by soul light slowly ceases to have any independent existence. This is why it is esoterically stated that in Scorpio, “the personality is entirely vanquished and defeated.”⁵¹ This dramatic defeat occurs not because a spiritual seeker is esoterically forbidden to develop a colorful expression of individuality, but rather because there arises a shift of motivation from personal gratification to other values and motivations powered by the soul. Scorpio presides over this shift like an immense spiritual vulture, mercilessly draining the vitality out of the compulsive need for attention, possessiveness, and power over others so often seen in the unmitigated personality-driven dynamics of the human world. Scorpio as the great zodiacal angel of death thus does its work, rather forcefully liberating the seeker from his or her own subconscious habits, laying these to rest in the grave of time, and re-birthing the seeker to rise, phoenix-like, from the ashes of its own tears, lamentations, and destruction.

However, the reward is potentially great, for as the purification of the subconscious begin to clear the mind and emotions, the individual for the first time begins to clearly sense the inspiring influence of the occult Hierarchy,⁵² a great

step in soul evolution to which not all of Humanity has yet attained. Ultimately, the sting and bite of the intense Scorpio experience serve to complete the seeker’s experience on the symbolic fixed cross of existence, making it possible to shift from the cross of discipleship and testing and onto the symbolic cardinal cross, emblematic of initiation and mastery.⁵³

Just as the process of Scorpio entails the purging of the subconscious and re-alignment of the sensual or sexual nature with the objectives of the soul, so also the part of human anatomy associated with this sign concerns the processes of elimination and reproduction. Ruling the genitals, urinary system, bowel, rectum, and anus, the Scorpio function in the human body removes waste and ensures the continuity of human life. Through the agency of fluid, the urinary system cleanses the interior environment of the body, reflecting the association of the water element with Scorpio. The organs of elimination serve to unburden the body of debris generated by the processes of digestion and cellular metabolism, echoing the Scorpionic theme of inner cleansing and purification. Mirroring the purview of Scorpio over the continuity of consciousness beyond the duration of physical existence, the reproductive system of the human body provides the substance and motivation for the perpetuation of the human species. The correspondence is exact; just as the influence of Scorpio drives processes of purification and resurrection in the psyche, in the physical body it accomplishes much the same, clearing away unneeded substance and ensuring the survival of the human race.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the theme of eliminating toxins and poisons appears as the central metaphor in the labor of Hercules associated with Scorpio. Titled *Destroying the Lernaean Hydra*, the labor of Scorpio concerns the capture and removal of a noxious nine-headed serpent from a pool serving as the community water supply for a settlement of families living in the ancient Greek province of Lerna.

As with the other labors enjoined under signs previously discussed, this one begins when the voice of a higher spiritual agency informs Hercules that a dangerous situation has arisen and

requires his immediate attention. As Hercules learns, the residents of Lernaea are threatened with disease and death if the pernicious water pollution affecting their drinking supply continues unabated. Hercules understands that he must travel to the affected region, locate the pool wherein an offending water monster has taken up residence, and extract the creature from its lair. After much seeking about, Hercules positions himself at the proper pool and begins battle. Soon, he discovers that the nine-headed water monster sprouts a new head every time an old one is severed. Seeing that straightforward sword battle suffices to accomplish nothing with the hydra, Hercules crouches right down in the turgid, stench-filled water and roots around with his hands to find the submerged serpent. At last Hercules lays hold of the slippery, poisonous viper. Intuiting that the monster draws strength only from dark and decay, Hercules takes the ultimate action and lifts the writhing serpent out of the fetid water into the fresh air above. With that, the hydra droops. Hercules lops off all nine heads for good measure, and the dire situation morphs into jubilation as the people of Lernaea reclaim their beloved community reservoir.

In this Herculean adventure, it is the water hydra itself which stands for and symbolizes the processes of Scorpio. Just as the problematic contents of the psyche can only perpetuate their existence by lurking in the dark recesses of the deep subconscious, so also the Lernaeon hydra can only survive when submerged in the blackened rot-filled water. In other words, the hydra derives its power from hiding where no one can see it. The mere act of lifting the hydra up and out of the water and well beyond its hiding place deprives the creature of its power, just as the clear light of objective mental attention exposes primitive emotions for what they are. Thus, the victory over the water-monster is obtained simply by removing it from its element and raising it into the air.⁵⁴ Here is the work of Scorpio written large, for Scorpio is a sign which locates and exposes the hidden aspects of the psyche.

In this work, there are essentially nine confrontations to be experienced, according to the esoteric doctrine articulated by the Tibetan Master

through Alice Bailey. These nine confrontations derive from a triple test applied at all three levels of personality expression – the physical, astral or emotional, and the mental. Thus, three tests at each of three levels yields the nine of initiatory testing in this sign. It is precisely these nine tests which are symbolized by the nine heads of the water-monster in the Herculean labor associated with Scorpio.⁵⁵

Both symbolic and literal, the nine heads of the spiritual menace in Scorpio are as follows: at the physical level, the tests of seduction by appeals to sexuality, physical comfort, and financial inducement; at the emotional level, the tests of invitation to fear, hatred, and lust for power; and at the mental level, the tests of temptations toward pride, separatism, and cruelty.⁵⁶ Just as in the labor, these “heads of the hydra” stubbornly persist in their efforts to claim the time and attention of the striving seeker, such that the moment one head is dealt with conclusively, yet another appears in its place. The striving disciple may thus be hard-pressed to truly escape the grip of the Scorpionic water-snake, caught in the coils and spirals of its ever-increasing demands for sacrifices and offerings to its voracious appetites.

Yet, the dedicated disciple persists in eradicating any tendencies toward unnecessary physical indulgence, turbulent emotions, and the sense of superiority. The battle against these untoward personality manifestations continues until the seeker pulls them out by their roots, thus freeing himself from the strident demands of the personality. The process is long, strenuous, and arduous, for the influence of Scorpio above all things tests out the disciple to determine just how much persistence and endurance he or she can mount when the spiritual stakes are high.⁵⁷ Such is the case whether an individual has the Sun in Scorpio, or the Ascendant, Moon, lunar nodes, or planets placed in this sign. With all Scorpio influence, there comes the dictum to examine and overcome the many-headed monster of selfishness. For some, this learning may require many incarnations to master; for others, the pain to self and others consequent upon appeasing the nine heads of the hungry hydra is quite enough to argue for mastery now.

Thus, experience under the influence of Scorpio becomes the field for spiritual transformation. No matter how low or high a character the individual may have upon entering the field of Scorpio, he or she will see all issues intensified under the pressure and force of this sign. The scorpion's sting in the form of painful experience leading to detachment and relinquishment of old personality dynamics is assured.

In the beginning, the individual encounters the field of Scorpio influence from the angle of mass humanity, as it travels upon the Wheel of Life in the direction established by the precession of the equinoxes. Movement in the direction of the precession implies a simple drifting with the current of mass evolution, rather than the exertion of effort to carve out an individual response to the challenges of existence. Thus proceeding on the reversed wheel and hence carried by the current of instinctual progress, the beginner on the path of evolution is overcome by the powerful desire energies flooding into his or her experience through the exoteric rulers of Scorpio. Impulsive and passionate Mars together with compulsive Pluto rule this sign at the personality level, Mars being the ancient and Pluto the modern ruler of the emotionally intense sign of Scorpio. As a result, extremes of feeling drive the Scorpio-influenced individual evolving as part of mass Humanity and hence progressing upon the symbolic mutable cross.

At this level of experience in Scorpio, the metaphorical nine heads of the hydra do the thinking and call the shots. Thus, the individual puts up no resistance to the lure of physical indulgence, association with financial power, prestige, and influence, or to the seductive promises of luxury. He or she affords the self permission to engage in any and all toxic emotional states, including lust, anger, resentment, jealousy, envy, and desire for revenge, feeling completely justified in so doing. At the same time, the mind generates endless reasons why he or she can legitimately claim superiority over others, thus powering and perpetuating an exclusivist perspective. At this point, the nine heads of the hydra are in complete control of the personality, lulling the seeker into the be-

lief that his or her self-absorbed perspective is justified and merited. Many lifetimes may be spent operating from this position, until the searing sting of the scorpion's bite finally registers deep enough that the individual realizes he or she is causing pain to self and others through a poisonous emotional atmosphere.

At this point, the individual resolves to eject the destructive personality patterns of the past, cultivate a new sense of self-restraint, and embrace a dedication to the greater good. He or she then steps off the symbolic mutable cross and enters the stream of Scorpic evolution on the symbolic fixed cross. On the Wheel of Life, he or she no longer follows the direction of the precession and the mass of Humanity, but strikes out instead on an individual path, instituting progress through the signs in the symbolic forward order from Aries to Taurus and so on around the wheel. On this new path, the scourges of Scorpio transform from self-inflicted pain to a determined purification of the self.

Again the influence of Mars makes itself felt, but this time as esoteric ruler of Scorpio. Operating at this higher level, the energies of Mars instigate a devotion to higher causes and values, thus sparking a lively sense of aspiration toward the higher essence of the self. The self-transformation associated with the influence of Scorpio is now under way. Whereas the Scorpio individual on the mutable cross simply followed the magnetic pull of sexual attraction and desire for power over others into profligacy and opportunism, the Scorpio-influenced individual on the symbolic fixed cross determines to live instead by a code of self-discipline, eschewing unnecessary sexual seductions and willing the emotions to swing into alignment with the purposes of the soul. The new orientation toward greater personal responsibility allows for the taking of the First and Second Initiations, the Birth and the Baptism, bringing physical and emotional bodies under the dominion of the soul.

After many lifetimes of self-imposed discipline, the seeker brings the personality under complete dominion of the soul and prepares to take the Third Initiation. At this point, the

seeker mounts the symbolic cardinal cross and comes under the tutelage of Mercury, hierarchical ruler of Scorpio. The powers of Scorpio are then elevated to their highest level, releasing the intuition and healing powers of the soul and of the monad into the mental body, from where they radiate outward to do their intended work in the salvaging of Humanity and the healing of the planet.

The Scorpio-influenced individual has thus made the complete transition from the instinct-driven agent of turmoil and upheaval to the magnetic healer who understands the deepest pains of Humanity. Knowing death in all its phases, the Scorpio-influenced server on the symbolic cardinal cross aids in disabusing Humanity of its fear of physical death, replacing that dread and terror with a reasoned explanation of the psychic survival of consciousness in the immortal soul. The resurrection promised in the symbolism of this sign thus becomes a living reality in the work and ways of the initiated and Scorpio-influenced seeker. Whether such an initiate serves in the fields of holistic healing, conventional medicine, psychiatry, psychology, resource management, or of finance, it is his or her earned privilege to do so from the confidence that even cataclysmic endings are only beginnings in another form. The liberated Scorpio acts thus as a therapeutic radiance within Humanity, helping it to weather its crises and to see resurrection even in the midst of death.

Sagittarius

November 22 – December 20

With the glorious display of autumn long gone, bare trees point their naked limbs toward the increasingly visible sky like quivered arrows buried tip-first in the ground. In the crisp winter air, long nights and an absence of leafy cover reveal the star-studded heavens as never before. A vision of the cosmic expanse greets the sky-viewing seeker as twinkling horizons lost in infinity punctuate the night. The season of the Archer has arrived, and like the mythic centaur of old who aimed his arrows high and wide, the time of Sagittarius points to vast new territories and inspires the mind with thoughts of higher worlds.

It's just this tantalizing view of distant possibilities which simmers in the soul of the Sagittarius-influenced individual. A fire sign of the mutable modality, Sagittarius connotes the restless search for greater potential associated with the fire element, plus the willingness to alter course typical of the mutable signs. Souls gravitate to the influence of Sagittarius to experience and benefit from just these characteristics, opening themselves to the boundless curiosity and voracious appetite for knowledge the Archer always inspires. Whether an individual incarnates with the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, many planets, or other significant factors in the sign of Sagittarius, he or she comes under the influence of the Divine Archer, ever aiming at a distant goal and more than prepared to cast all else aside in the sacred quest for the desired objective. No matter if the Sagittarian person expresses the impelling drive of this sign by merely wandering about the neighborhood, or by engaging in international travel, pursuing intellectual challenge, studying foreign languages, inquiring into philosophy or religion, expanding consciousness through meditation, or by mounting a spiritual pilgrimage, still there emerges the pattern of the eternal seeker passionately chasing an ever-expanding experience.

As a result, the desire for dramatic movement toward a distant vision characterizes the psyche influenced by Sagittarius. Ruling the hips, upper legs, thighs and powerful quadriceps muscle grouping in the human anatomy, Sagittarius connotes the power to stride forward and make significant progress on the way of life.⁵⁸ As a result, Sagittarius-influenced individuals are distinguished by their love of vigorous outdoor exercise and for their propensity to cover much ground in their time on Earth, whether literally or metaphorically. Driven by the desire to explore the possibilities and to match physical prowess with nature, the children of the Archer find it difficult to settle down to domestic labors.

With all that mobile power looking for somewhere to go, the central question which arises under the influence of this sign therefore concerns the point toward which such motion should be directed. The underlying purpose of

the sign Sagittarius thus swings into view, for just as the Archer emblematic of this sign aims his or her arrow at a distinct point on the horizon, the individual Sagittarian finds that he or she must develop direction or focus if life is to result in something more than a sequence of wild hunts impulsively carried out. Indeed, the power to identify a worthy aim and to stay oriented toward that objective is the very purpose of the sign Sagittarius.⁵⁹

Yet, attaining to a neatly-oriented life direction rarely proves a simple matter under the influence of Sagittarius, for this double-bodied sign contains within its symbolism a diversity of drives. This diversity is symbolized by the startling contrast between the lower and upper portions of the Sagittarian centaur. The half-horse, half-human centaur represents a divine yet conflicted being who registers both the demands of the lower animal self, as symbolized by the muscular rump and powerful legs of the horse, and those of the higher thinking principle, as symbolized by the head and human upper body. The horse portion urges the Sagittarian onward into worldly adventures, including conquest through sexuality, flirtation with danger, love of speed and thrill, and in general a wild, unrestrained gallop through the fields of sensual experience. The human portion counsels quite differently, reminding the Sagittarius-influenced individual of his or her emerging mind nature, with all its incipient powers of intellect and intuition. Thus, in the image of the Sagittarian centaur is encapsulated the deep-seated conflict which comes to all who are influenced by this sign.⁶⁰ The horse-self wants to dash about in an impulsive, undisciplined and fun-filled exploration of life, but the human-self wants to delve into the pivotal questions of existence, thereby to satisfy its craving for mental development and higher knowledge. Pulled and torn by these competing inner drives, the Sagittarius-influenced

Sagittarius symbolized simply by the arrow connotes the action of thought and its projection onward and upward into regions of consciousness not yet entirely known. In this sense, the arrow of Sagittarius embodies the quest for union with the higher levels of the mind.

person struggles with an interior conflict of interests. As a result, the Sagittarius-influenced individual comes right up against the very decisions the making of which separate committed disciples from average humanity.

In spite of this conflict or perhaps precisely because of it, a miraculous transformation from sensuous beast to inspired thinker takes place under the influence of Sagittarius. Indeed, the power to make progress so characteristic of this highly mobile sign virtually propels the individual to the next level of evolution. This next stage of Sagittarius finds expression in the notion of the human archer mounted astride a white horse. No longer merged with the animal component in the form of the carnal centaur, the evolving Sagittarian morphs into the independent rider on the horse. He or she quits the role of the hapless human propelled willy-nilly into random life experiences by the lusty appetites of the horse, instead assuming command in the composed manner of the equestrian. When the Sagittarian thus assumes the role of guiding intelligence instead of being pitched about by the whims of bodily passion, he or she becomes capable of establishing orientation toward a definite goal. In fact, as the Sagittarius-influenced individual responds to the elevating potential of the inspired archer mounted upon the horse, he or she finds it possible to shift the line of sight from a focus on the satisfaction of transient desires to initiation as the targeted goal.⁶¹ No longer the appetite-driven centaur, the disciple is now the rider and archer.

Transcending either the image of the centaur or that of the archer, the simplified symbol of the archer's arrow is even more indicative of the inner spiritual significance of Sagittarius. With its straight shaft, pointed tip, and tail-feathers designed to facilitate rapid forward trajectory, the arrow embodies the essential process enjoined under Sagittarius. An emblem of flight and forward motion, the Sagittarian arrow thus

depicts the concept of perfectly targeted trajectory, the very type of one-pointed progress the disciple knows he or she must accomplish under the inspiration of this sign. Observing the wasteful consequences of the false starts, unnecessary gestures, and profligate exuberance typical of the undisciplined mutable fire sign, the emerging disciple under Sagittarius gleams that he or she would fare far better to instead cultivate a coherent and intentional life aim, thus directing his or her life energies toward meaningful goals. The solitary arrow in flight symbolizes this level of realization within the field of Sagittarian experience.

Similarly, Sagittarius symbolized simply by the arrow connotes the action of thought and its projection onward and upward into regions of consciousness not yet entirely known.⁶² In this sense, the arrow of Sagittarius embodies the quest for union with the higher levels of mind. As an embodiment of the Sagittarian arrow itself, the disciple keenly desires a greater knowledge of the wisdom on high which he or she intuitively exists; it is this burning need to know which catapults perception into distant ranges of thought. Indeed, under the influence of Sagittarius, the aspiration to attain higher knowledge becomes so strong that it sets the stage for the understanding of cosmic laws and principles. This evolution of mind was summed up by Alice Bailey when she wrote that in Sagittarius, the intellect develops and becomes sensitive to a still higher type of mental experience known as the intuition.⁶³ Thus, Sagittarius is pre-eminently a force conducing to the development of both intellect and intuition, two functions of mind of great importance to the striving seeker who would pursue and attain to initiation.

The role of thought as prelude to the intuition thus dominates the mind of the Sagittarius-influenced seeker, who is ever on the alert to find the right method for lifting the mind to higher truths and greater realities. Indeed, it is the very purpose of Sagittarius to achieve precisely this effect, for this sign is designed to awaken its children to the power of thought. According to the esoteric philosophy of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan Master, there's a good reason. Thought, these esoteric sources say, is

itself the major agency by which energy and activity are directed within manifestation.⁶⁴ In other words, within cosmic process, the role of thought is immense. When directed by higher intelligences, thought drives the evolution of worlds, solar systems, galaxies, and beyond. Here on Earth, human thought correspondingly sets in motion the conditions of life. As a result, it is often said in esoteric circles that "Where attention goes, energy flows." The implication is obvious: whatever becomes the object of intensive thought is thereby fed and nurtured with streams of vital energies. Therefore, right direction and control of thought are critical for all who would collaborate with the Forces of Light in the redemptive work of planetary upliftment.

In this regard, experience under the sign of Sagittarius plays a key role, for it drives home the message that thought is a power which must be harnessed through right mental focus. Likewise, the key theme for the sign of Sagittarius is the control of thought that it may be trained specifically upon the desired objective and not allowed to wander all over creation. Stated simply, this means that the core attainment under the influence of Sagittarius is the power to maintain an unfaltering direction of thought, whether in formal meditation or during daily activities, aiming attention accurately toward the powers of mind and intellectual content associated with progress toward initiation.

As is evident, under the influence of Sagittarius, the seeker develops skill in focusing the mind and aiming thought toward worthy objectives. In this effort, it is primarily the higher mind or intuition to which the arrow of Sagittarius should point, ever attuning the individual to the realm of meaning, divine love, and spiritual revelation. As Alice Bailey wrote, under the influence of Sagittarius, it is the mission of the seeker to heed and follow where the arrows of the intuition lead.⁶⁵ Though the seeker may not yet know the precise nature of the terrain he or she must thus traverse, still the indicated direction must be pursued in order to test the accuracy of the sensed vision. Distant realities beckoning from the edges of awareness thus figure prominently in the unfolding disciple-

ship experience within the domain of Sagittarius. The intuition flashes into sight and becomes an intimation of things sensed but not yet entirely grasped.

Imitating the arrow-like influence of Sagittarius, the unfoldment of the intuition requires the formation of a reasonable hypothesis, the projection of the sensed possibility into the higher world in meditation, the registration of the returning response, and the launching forth on the indicated path of life. Following this method, the Sagittarius-influenced individual gradually learns through first-hand experience to connect with and to trust his or her inner guidance. However, registering and following inner intuitive guidance remains an uncertain undertaking at first, for a leap of faith of necessity comes both before and after an experience of the intuition.

Yet, no matter the stumbles and missteps in the beginning stages, the Sagittarian seeker is equal to the challenge, ever keen for the next great adventure in consciousness. Under the symbolism of the lone arrow in flight, the excitement inherent in the Sagittarian soul journey moves from the thrill of flirting with physical danger or testing the body in vigorous outdoor enterprise to the spiritually exhilarating experiment of telepathic communication with infinity. This change of focus is an important effect worked by the sign of Sagittarius, said by Alice Bailey to have as its objective the orienting of the self toward a higher purpose.⁶⁶

The work of shifting the seeker's aim from low to high demands certain skills, however. As is apparent, one of the most critical skills to be developed under Sagittarius is control of the arrow of thought and attention. In fact, training in the right use of thought scores as one of the key developments to be had under the influence of the Divine Archer.⁶⁷ Right use of thought comes from daily practice of structured meditation, in which the seeker learns to mentally focus on a carefully chosen seed thought or visualization. No matter how many times the restless mind leaps away from the chosen subject of meditation, the dedicated seeker must bring it back to the main point. Attention focused in this manner builds the

momentum necessary to project or shoot the arrow of awareness into more abstract planes and to dwell for a time in the heightened vibration found there. The sign of Sagittarius imparts this lesson of focus, concentration, and the power of mental projection to those under its influence, inculcating such a hunger for higher realization that the necessary meditative discipline is willingly enjoined.

In addition to learning the meditative skills of focus, concentration, and elimination of distractions, the individual undergoing Sagittarian experience embarks upon another major metaphysical lesson underlying the power to think aright: the control of speech. Words are nothing but thought made audible – or visible in the case of written communication. In either case, word as speech or written text simply reveals the content of the mind. Thus, in the effort to bring the tendencies of the mind under the control of the higher self, an effective method for so doing is the curtailment of all forms of communication not strictly in line with the purposes of the soul or higher self. Hurtful, condemnatory, or vulgar speech has its roots not in the values of the higher self, but in the irritations of the personality. Thus, these manners of expression can be safely set aside. When unruly thoughts discover they have no channel of expression, they often slink away and cease to perturb the seeker. Thus, control of speech supplements all meditative work, further enforcing the direction of attention to the matters of spiritual significance.

It is precisely the effect of sound or speech with which the labor of Hercules associated with this sign is concerned. Titled *Killing the Stymphalian Birds*, this labor pits Hercules as the striving seeker against a raucous flock of metallic birds raising a stentorian commotion sufficient to disrupt and repel surrounding life. As in the previous labors, this one begins when the voice of the Master or higher self speaks directly into the mind of Hercules, describing the intolerable situation at the Stymphalian marsh and cryptically counseling that the solution to the problem at hand would be revealed by “the flame that gleams beyond the mind.”⁶⁸ Hercules gets the point, or at least most of it, perhaps little suspecting that the method for

removing the flock of pernicious birds from the proverbial swamp would require a bit of unconventional thinking.

Proceeding to the indicated location, Hercules catches sight and sound of the cacophonous flock. Swooping and screeching, the predatory birds present a spectacle disheartening enough, but to worsen matters, the wailing harpies sport pointed metallic quills for feathers, thus threatening man and beast with immediate decapitation should one of their brutal avian shafts fall and pierce a skull. Mindful of the Master's admonition, Hercules nonetheless knows it is his duty and obligation to gain control of the situation and to eradicate the danger visited on the Stymphalian marsh by these uncommonly menacing birds. Relying on normal life experience, Hercules attempts the usual methods for ridding an area of unwanted wildlife: arrows he shoots and traps he considers. Yet, the flock of murderous creatures proves so immense and the swamp so impassable that these conventional means collapse into insignificance against the threat.

Apparently facing imminent failure, Hercules wracks his brain for a method sufficient to clear the swamp. In a dramatic flash of insight, Hercules recalls the advice of his Master that the solution to the problem would be revealed by "the flame that gleams beyond the mind." That mysterious hint sets Hercules to thinking. In fact, it sets him to thinking outside of his usual problem-solving capacity. As his mind wanders above and beyond the known set of solutions to a higher level of awareness, Hercules ceases mentating about the situation for one brief moment, and in that space of time, a radical new solution appears fully formed in his mind. "I know exactly what to do," he says to himself. "I'll silence the wretched cackling of these birds and drive them from this marsh with a sound so superior it will startle these demonic creatures and end their dominion now." After locating a pair of massive cymbals, Hercules stands at the edge of the swamp and authoritatively clangs the cymbals to the amazed distress of the Stymphalian birds. Frightened and disoriented, the flock rises as one and soars away, never to return. Thus, without actually killing a single bird, Hercules

clears the swamp and restores order in Stymphalus.

Embedded within this allegory are two points centrally relevant to the spiritual learning which occurs under the sign of Sagittarius. The first concerns the management of sound, thought, and speech, and the second concerns the role of the intuition.

As is made evident by the narrative of the labor, it was the shrieks of the predatory birds which constituted fully half of the danger which Hercules was tasked to eliminate. Symbolic of abrasive human speech, the cawing and cackling of the flock grated on the nerves and unsettled the souls of all passersby. The same effect results from thoughtless speech uttered in the human community, where words spewed forth in spite and impatience can wound beyond what might be imagined. He or she who would live by the principle of harmlessness must therefore eliminate the verbal barbs of intentionally vicious speech. It is this very process of controlling sound and speech which is dramatized in the labor of Hercules associated with Sagittarius.⁶⁹

Emblematic of the disciple, Hercules is summoned by the Master or Higher Self to terminate the ongoing damage wrought by sound or utterance gone awry. Just so is the aspirant to initiation tasked with bringing under control his or her words, calling to a halt the flow of potentially hurtful speech by examining the underlying motive which prompts it. Even idle and unnecessary speech must be recognized and relinquished by those who would progress toward initiation. Thus, to master speech, the striving seeker must also regulate the thinking process, refusing to indulge lines of thought and emotion which lead on one hand to caustic statements directed at self and others, and on the other to idle gossip and conversation which achieve nothing other than to spread trivia, dissipate focus, and waste valuable time. In the Stymphalian labor, Hercules shuts down the offensive racket generated by the flock of unruly words and wayward thoughts through the use of a sound far more powerful than that of their distracting noise. The crashing cymbals which cleared the swamp find their parallel in

the sounds or vibrations emitted by the soul and monad, frequencies of refined natures strong enough to overcome and subdue that which is lesser. Thus, the OM of eternal life overrides and cancels out the personality vibration. Here is one of the two central messages of *Killing the Stymphalian Birds*, the title of which refers directly to the work of silencing the raucous clamor conjured up by the impulses of the lower self.

The second central message concerns the role and function of the intuition, for it's the intuition which comes to the aid of Hercules at just the right moment. As the arrow symbolism connected with the sign of Sagittarius implies, accessing the intuition requires a trajectory of thought or a leap of faith. Hercules discovers this truth for himself when he stumbles onto the solution for his problem. However, his stunning moment of insight might never have occurred had the Master not dropped a vital hint at the time of charging Hercules with the labor. At that point in the narrative, the Master planted a seed thought in the disciple's mind, indicating that the solution to the problem would be found just beyond the limits of the conscious mind. Hercules projected himself to that frontier when he exhausted his lower mental resources, inducing an interval of openness to that which lay beyond. In that moment of receptivity, the way around the difficulty revealed itself with ease. Here is the second central message of the Sagittarian labor, which concerns not only the method by which the intuition can be reached and brought into play, but also the necessity for drawing inspiration from this level when attempting to solve the perplexing problems of humanity.

As is evident, the process of gaining control of the personality and shifting the life focus to the objectives of the soul or higher self is a long one, waged over the course of many incarnations. To this process, incarnation under the influence of Sagittarius contributes several key developments. Each of these falls under one of the three stages of evolution encountered under this sign, as symbolized by the three stages of Sagittarius, together with the implications of the triple rulership system advocated by the Tibetan Master.

In the beginning, the Sagittarius-influenced individual storms forth onto the plain of life as the rambunctious centaur, half-horse and half-human, the desire-driven hunter on the prowl for food, satisfaction, and gratification.⁷⁰ "Let food be sought," the hungry hunter proclaims as he plunges headlong into the pursuit of every impulse by which he is seized. If born with Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Midheaven, planetary bodies, or a lunar node in the sign of the robust and acquisitive centaur, the Sagittarius influenced individual in the early stages of the evolutionary path devotes the power of the muscular horse-half to the fulfillment of its wants, whether physical, financial, or social. Ambitious and self-aggrandizing, the unevolved Sagittarius type boldly reveals his or her rough edges, profusely exaggerating, pridefully boasting, and smugly sharing a blatantly opinionated life view. His or her perspective, while broad and expansive, still suffers from inflation by the excesses of Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system and the exoteric ruler of this sign. Such a Sagittarius-influenced individual, though inebriated by a false sense of personal omnipotence, can do no more than blindly follow the direction pursued by the mass of humanity on the Wheel of Life. Evolving upon the symbolic mutable cross, the early-stage Sagittarian gallops and gambols through the field of experience, a merry self-absorbed centaur oblivious to the littered field of bodies toppled and trampled in his or her wild career through the course of an embodiment.

At length, the voice of the soul or higher self reaches the inner consciousness of the Sagittarius-influenced individual; gradually dawns the realization that purposes higher than personal gratification exist. Then begins the second stage of Sagittarius, that of the rider upon the horse. The individual puts the self in right perspective, observes the deleterious effect of uncontrolled thought and word, and commits to gain control of his or her mind and speech. Normally one of the most loquacious of signs, Sagittarius in the evolving mode learns to stem the flow of incessant mental and verbal chatter, cease manufacturing conversational distractions, speak instead in terms of factual honesty,

and begin the serious work of focusing the mind while learning to use the mantric capability of right speech for its soul-inspired occult effects.

In this new light of the soul, the energy field of the Archer commences its higher work, bringing clarity of perception to the Sagittarius-influenced individual.⁷¹ As the seeker steadily contacts the region of the higher mind during periods of study, aspiration, and structured meditation, he or she begins to intuit the whole expanse of truth, with powerful consequences for the lower mind. In a blaze of realization, he or she suddenly understands the partial and hence provisional character of all doctrinal formulations. Consequently, the evolving Sagittarius-influenced seeker understands that no longer can any particular philosophical, religious, or scientific notion be fanatically advanced as the single standard of veracity.⁷² He or she thus discards all versions of sectarianism and embraces the much greater spirit of cosmic truth sweeping into view from the reaches of the higher mind.

In this way, the evolving Sagittarius-influenced individual embarks on the path of gradual detachment from the personality world,⁷³ reverses direction on the Wheel of Life to proceed contrary to the motion of average Humanity, shifts to the symbolic fixed cross, and prepares for the Birth and Baptism, or the First and Second Initiations. He or she thus comes under the influence of Earth, esoteric ruler of Sagittarius and guide of the soul up to the gate of the Third Initiation. Moored to the sacred ground of the planet on which he or she stands, the seeker abandons the stratosphere of egotistical Jupiterian excess and returns to Earth, where service and suffering Humanity cry urgently for attention. The striving seeker loses interest in the adventures of the personality and begins to sense soul-inspired activity as the spiritual objective; he or she adopts "I vision" or "I see the goal" as his or her motto.⁷⁴ Instead of ambitious desire, one-pointed spiritual aspiration becomes the motive force,⁷⁵ and the Archer's sense of right direction replaces the Centaur's spasmodic lurching after desire.⁷⁶ The magical Sagittarian transformation has thus transpired; no longer

the carnal centaur, the evolving Sagittarian has emerged from the chrysalis of the former self as the composed rider on the white horse of the intuition, poised and prepared for the journey ahead.

Having shed the narrow confines of both personal opinion and fanatical sectarian zeal, the Sagittarius-influenced individual at the third level strips down to the simplicity of an arrow in flight as he or she speeds toward the cosmic perspective which constitutes the next spiritual objective. "I reach the goal and then I see another" characterizes the rapid expansion of consciousness now unfolding.⁷⁷ No longer the hunter in search of satisfaction for the appetites or even the distinguished equestrian out to prove expertise in spiritual horsemanship, the Sagittarius-influenced individual as flying arrow vastly accelerates his or her progress on the Wheel of Life. Long past the stage of the faltering student of meditation and self-discipline, the seeker as arrow automatically follows the higher path of esoteric contact, building momentum along the way. As a result, he or she proceeds contrary to the direction of mass Humanity on the Wheel of Life and goes against the direction in the zodiac taken by the precession of the equinoxes. Instead, the initiate as flying arrow adopts an evolutionary momentum which propels him or her through the zodiac in the order of the annual zodiacal cycle, moving from Aries to Taurus, and so on around the circle.

Steadily facing the greater light, he or she arrives at or beyond the gate of the Third Initiation, mounts the symbolic cardinal cross, receives high octane spiritual fuel from unflagging Mars as the hierarchical ruler of Sagittarius, and becomes the streamlined arrow in flaming flight headed straight for the monad and the fixed stars as sources of the Seven Cosmic Paths. Through the sign of Sagittarius, the initiate as speeding arrow thus connects with the energy of the star Betelgeuse,⁷⁸ representative of the Third Cosmic Path, the Path of Training for Planetary Logoi. A distant spiritual source which ultimately confers transcendent powers such as cosmic etheric vision, deva hearing, and septenary clairvoyance, or the power to see on all seven planes of the solar

system,⁷⁹ Betelgeuse is suggestive of the sublime territory ahead for all initiates beyond the Third Degree, whether ultimately to find their way on to the Third Cosmic Path or another. Inspired on high by contact with the energies of the stars, the advanced Sagittarian seeker turns his or her service on Earth toward the formulation of theoretical or doctrinal revelations designed to facilitate the next step ahead in the evolution of human consciousness. The sign of Sagittarius has thus done its work, re-directing the attention of the seeker from the human realm to the celestial, pointing the arrow of thought toward those supernal destinies yet to be encountered on the infinite initiatory path.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated, the zodiacal signs of Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius each represent a distinctive set of experiences, abilities, and challenges. In Libra, the individual registers the draw of social impulses, then tangles with the competing impulses generated by the pairs of opposites, and finally learns to apply objectivity and composure in the process of rendering wise judgment. In Scorpio, the individual feels the turbulent intensity of the astral plane, slowly understands that destructive emotional habits must be released, and eventually transforms self into a magnetic healer who understands and embraces the continuity of psychic life. In Sagittarius, the individual responds with enthusiasm to the exciting call of the wild, then tires of the carnal chase and begins to sense the path to the development of the higher mind, and at length visions and embraces the cosmic span of spiritual evolution. In each of these three signs, spiritual progress builds on the experiences, assets, and challenges typical of each archetype while leading up the ladder of the triple rulership system, all the while ushering the seeker around the Wheel of Life and through the symbolic crosses of evolution. With the stages of spiritual refinement thus made plain for each of these signs, the spiritual seeker with the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Midheaven, lunar south or north node, or planetary groupings in Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius thus

stands better oriented to understand and embody the grander purposes behind each of these astrological influences.

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 - 3 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 244.
 - 4 *Ibid.*, 227.
 - 5 Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules*, 128, 132.
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 - 11 *Ibid.*, 131.
 - 12 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 236.
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 47 Ibid., 206.
 48 Ibid., 96.
 49 Ibid., 212.
 50 Ibid., 96.
 51 Ibid., 225.
 52 Ibid., 319.
 53 Ibid., 96.
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