

# The Spiritual Effects of the Zodiacal Signs: Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces

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This article examines the astrological signs of Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces 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.

## Capricorn December 21 – January 19

In the northern hemisphere, daylight hours shrink to their least duration as the night force assumes dominion and leads all of nature to the point of greatest bleakness. The Winter Solstice arrives, bringing with it formal entry into the frigid time of year. Frozen forms lie deathly still under snow and ice as interminable bitter-cold nights wrap the streets, fields, and gardens in muffled silence. Even in the thin grey light of winter daytime, all life seems to have come to a halt, save for a few twittering sparrows hopping amongst the twinkling shards of rainbow light reflected from crystalline snow and pendant icicles. On closer inspection, the frozen forms of winter reveal the stunningly precise shapes of frost and snowflake, miniature worlds of breathtaking geometrical arrangement. The time of exacting

Capricorn has arrived with its emphasis on perfection of form, imposition of limits, and contraction of life energies into a concentrated focus.

A cardinal earth sign in traditional astrology, Capricorn connotes the condensation of free-flowing life energies into the restrictions of form. The brittle but temporary forms of ice and snow and the enduring solidity of rocks, stones, and minerals all epitomize the earth element associated with Capricorn. Densely packed at the atomic level, the crystalline forms of ice, snow, and minerals embody both compaction and geometric precision—two characteristics typical of Capricorn. The blazing heat and crushing geological pressure required to generate liquid igneous matter and to condense it into crystalline forms in the bowels of the Earth stand as allegories for the surprisingly stressful life conditions which test the true spiritual seeker who comes into contact with the forces of Capricorn. Yet, there's more to experience under the influence of Capricorn than even this daunting message. An active and directing sign by virtue of its cardinal modality, Capricorn stands as well for the capacity to establish momentum and drive trends into action. Represented in mythic symbology by

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### About the Author

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the wily sea goat who has emerged on dry land to become the scruffy but invincible mountain goat, Capricorn both emerges from and then ultimately dominates the rocky and inhospitable territory over which it presides.

In fact, the mythic Divine Goat embodies much in the way of allegorical symbol. Consider the unrelenting mountain goat as he diligently climbs the steep and stone-studded slope of life up to the frigid heights. He plods, head down, slowly picking his way through the boulder-strewn field of life, patiently negotiating the obstacles placed before him, all the while impervious to the rain, sleet, and snow coating his ragged fur with ice and rendering the footpath all the more perilous. Yet, he fears not, for the Divine Goat knows he walks on miraculous suction-cup hooves which will securely hold him on the twisting mountain path, no matter to what dizzying heights the path may lead.

As a result, Capricorn portrays the power to seize the initiative and drive progress forward in spite of obstacles, the key characteristic of the cardinal modality. Whether the Divine Goat in the human world encounters adverse material conditions, personal challenges, or political and professional threats, it lowers its head, fixes its gaze, and presses toward its objective. Hence, the sign of Capricorn as the earthy yet Divine Goat embodies the notions of endurance, persistence, determination, and protracted effort. Indeed, the Divine Goat stands for the power to withstand adversity and to forge ahead despite formidable impediments. It is this resolve when under pressure and trial which ultimately comes to characterize individuals influenced by Capricorn, whether the power of this sign reaches them through the Sun sign, Moon sign, Ascendant, Midheaven, planets, or one of the lunar nodes. Not surprisingly, it is true to say that the influence of Capricorn elicits maximum effort from those it touches.

This emerging power of persistence developed in Capricorn is necessary, for the influence of this sign brings with it the maximum testing of character and morals on the path of spiritual perfection. Just as the Winter Solstice in the

northern hemisphere equates to the point of greatest diurnal darkness in the annual cycle, so also does the sign of Capricorn connote a point of confrontation with the greatest possible degree of frustration and dismay, for Capricorn represents the point of greatest material density in the journey of the soul through the planes of evolution. Indeed, the earth sign Capricorn symbolizes matter itself, atomic vibration reaching its most dense and concrete manifestation under the influence of this sign.<sup>1</sup> In a general way, Capricorn therefore refers to the plane of systemic evolution vibrating at the slowest rate—the systemic physical plane. Accordingly, the influence of Capricorn is said in esoteric astrology to bring divine intelligent activity down to the physical plane, the plane of greatest solidity and density.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the divine creative process, it is the function of Capricorn to funnel ideas and energies from on high into embodiment in discrete, defined forms—a necessary phase in the cycle of manifestation.

Perhaps for this reason, Capricorn represents a turning point of great consequence. Like the rocky mountain summit toward which the Capricornian goat plods with undeviating purpose, Capricorn implies the reaching of an ultimate, either of profligacy or of attainment. Thus, Capricorn may be the epitome of either great self-serving or great self-sacrifice. For the striving seeker incarnated under this Sun sign or influenced by it through the Moon sign, planets in this sign, or either of the lunar nodes positioned in Capricorn, this sign can present the ultimate test, standing as it does for the region of most dense concretion, and therefore for restriction, limitation, and exposure to the distorting effects of experience in material form. In fact, Capricorn implies the most extreme point of concrete materialization and even that of rigid crystallization, a state which connotes death and finality as well as the inevitable shattering of the frozen and brittle forms associated with Capricorn.<sup>3</sup> As Alice Bailey has written, Capricorn is therefore a sign of conclusion, of reaching final stages beyond which there can be no further progress unless certain restrictions of the form nature are released.<sup>4</sup>

Such factors as time, severe obstacles, and the Law of Karma try the seeker's patience and endurance under this sign, as spiritual maturity is reached and karma exhausted. Thus, the sign of Capricorn is inexorably linked with decisive moments on the discipleship path, passages in which the striving seeker contends directly with fundamental impediments both within and without the self. In literal terms, the force of Capricorn exposes the evolving soul to the power of matter and links it powerfully to the lives of the mineral kingdom—the domain of underground geological formations, of soil, sand, and silt, of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rock, of crystalline mineral forms such as fluorite, precious metals such as gold, silver, and platinum, semi-precious stones such as amethyst and quartz crystal, and the jewel minerals such as ruby, sapphire, and diamond.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the sign of Capricorn connotes compaction into closely condensed atomic structure on one hand and high material and economic value on the other.

As demonstrated in fairy tales of old which portrayed the goblins of interior Earth as a race of curiously possessive creatures, contact with the mineral kingdom can evoke either the best or the worst in character. According to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey, human experience under the influence of earthy Capricorn can result in the same thing. Here is a sign of extremes; as a result, the Capricorn-influenced individual may end up expressing all the worst of which a human being is capable, or all the best.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, the Capricorn-influenced individual at his or her worst can be materialistic, greedy, insensitive, arrogant, cruel, and plainly egotistical.<sup>7</sup> For some, this sign leads to indulgence in overwhelming avarice, ruthless ambition, and to a desire for wealth, prestige, and material security above all things. For others, the influence of Capricorn simply instills a proper sense of duty to the requirements for provision on the physical plane. For the evolved, experience under the influence of Capricorn leads not to predatory pecuniary instinct but to profound concern with ethical and principled action.

Indeed, the influence of Capricorn brings the seeker either to the height of personal greed or

to the shining apex of spiritual effort.<sup>8</sup> The latter being the root of successful effort toward the summit of initiation, it is under the sign of the Divine Goat that initiation can be achieved.<sup>9</sup> For these reasons, Capricorn is both a sign of worldly achievement and of initiation.

According to the astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey, it is the esoteric purpose of the sign Capricorn to exert an occult pull on the soul, drawing it away from fixation on the matters of form life and toward the mountain summit of initiation.<sup>10</sup> For many, the resulting magnetic attraction to the life of spiritual discipline represents a powerful interest in higher standards for personal evolution on one hand and a painful yet necessary progressive relinquishment of personality focus on the other. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that the influence of Capricorn entails effort, strain, and struggle, up to and including a tremendous battle with the shadow or dark side of the self.<sup>11</sup>

This dark side of the self is constituted of all the subconscious and suppressed selfishness, animosity, resistance, and stubborn behavior carried over from previous lives. Under Capricorn, such latent tendencies gradually surface, that they may be recognized and eliminated. In fact, it is under Capricorn's influence that the striving seeker faces what Alice Bailey terms "the dweller on the threshold," thus understanding the extremes of evil and good present in self and Humanity.<sup>12</sup> As might be surmised, the process is anything but pleasant. The question whether an individual will be able to summon the necessary character strength to face his or her imperfections and weaknesses is thus one of the proving grounds of initiation encountered under the influence of Capricorn. Temptations in the form of pecuniary inducement, promises of prestige through association with celebrities, and access to power through privileged connections with powerful persons constitute some of the typical character tests which require the initiate to prove whether he or she can hold to high ethical values and resist the seductions of the material plane. Other tests applied under the influence of Capricorn can come in the form of seemingly adverse life events, such as financial setbacks, personal

loss, and many other enactments of Karmic Law, the so-called “blows of fate.”<sup>13</sup> The consequent inner struggle can be severe, leading some near to the limits of what can be endured. Truly, the tests associated with preparation for initiation can be temporarily overwhelming.<sup>14</sup>

Many are the individuals who find themselves ensnared in battling the appearances of such developments, failing to grasp the inner significance of such tests. From the perspective of the observing occult Teachers, the nature of the test or challenge itself is less important than the response of the one being tested. Thus, it is character strength and not power to wrest worldly success from adverse conditions which determines the passage of the initiatory tests encountered under Capricorn. Such tests are, when met with presence of mind and a refusal to compromise essential spiritual values, successfully passed, serving only to add momentum to the disciple’s initiatory striving. The uncanny truth about the influence of Capricorn is that the work of this sign can both beat the disciple down and lift the disciple up, for the influence of Capricorn not only tests but also stimulates enhanced effort toward the attainment of initiation.<sup>15</sup>

Reward comes eventually for those who follow the way of the Divine Goat straight up the steep mountain path of initiation, for this path, though daunting, leads to peak experiences of terrific visionary power.<sup>16</sup> Such experiences raise the initiate to a significantly heightened vibration and reveal to him or her a vastness of divine law and cosmic order not previously imagined. Indeed, stunning transcendent experiences are associated with this sign. Particularly connected with the taking of the Third or Transfiguration Initiation,<sup>17</sup> Capricorn represents the awe-inspiring occult revelations afforded at this initiation. Capricorn also connotes the higher standards required for the taking of the higher initiations, together with the greater responsibility conferred.<sup>18</sup> Specifically, the more stringent requirements for the taking of the Third Initiation mark the entrance to new territory for the striving seeker, for as Alice Bailey has written, Capricorn opens the door from Humanity into Hierarchy and “admits the soul into conscious participation in the

life of the world centre which we call Hierarchy.”<sup>19</sup> Capricorn as the gate into the world of divinity is not a concept newly coined in the twentieth century. In fact, this critical role for Capricorn has been sensed since the early fifth century C.E. when it was singled out as the Gate of the Gods by the Roman scholar Macrobius in his commentary on Cicero’s *The Dream of Scipio*.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it would appear that ancient initiatory tradition knew quite well of the august and discriminating character of Capricorn, truly representative of a point on the path at which the sweet but timid sheep are separated from the hardy and proven goats.

In keeping with the theme of unglamorous durability associated with the sign of Capricorn, this sign rules a most serviceable portion of the human anatomy, the hard and lasting structures of the body such as the bones, spine, skull, teeth, fingernails and toenails. The dense structures over and in which the musculature, nervous system, and vital organs are positioned, the skeletal system provides protection and a rigid framework for the human body. Of all these hard and enduring parts of the human anatomy, perhaps the most emblematic of Capricorn is the knees, those willing servants of the musculoskeletal system which make it possible to bend, climb, conquer the land, and rise above all challenges. Yet, it is also the power of the knees to kneel in submission which holds great relevance for the lessons of Capricorn, in which sign the striving seeker must learn to bow in humility and offer the self and soul in service to Humanity and the Divine Plan.<sup>21</sup> Thus, even though the Capricornian metaphor inevitably connotes attainment of a high prominence, it also implies the ability to set aside pride, rest down humbly on the earth element, and swear fealty to the service of the Divine through the symbolic and sacred kneeling posture.

Getting right down into the dirt, soil, and underground world as a path of service is precisely the message of the Herculean labor associated with this sign. Titled *The Slaying of Cerberus – The Guardian of Hades*, this labor begins when Hercules receives the divine call to depart the surface of the Earth and descend into Hades, there to liberate the suffering fig-

ure of Prometheus, who is unjustly bound in seemingly eternal punishment for the so-called crime of having brought fire to Humanity.

Hercules willingly responds to the call and finds his way through a crevasse to the region of compacted soil below, but as he penetrates deeper and deeper into the dense earth element and pitch-black caverns of the underworld, he discovers a serious obstacle to the successful completion of his quest: a vicious three-headed guard dog planted squarely in his way. Named Cerberus, the salivating canine snarls, growls, and snaps at Hercules, menacing dangerously at the hero's every move. To make matters worse, the King of Hades appears and taunts Hercules, challenging Hercules to subdue Cerberus using only bare hands. A moment of helpless dismay overcomes Hercules, but then, to the surprise of the Hadean King, Hercules summons the necessary inner strength and chokes the life out of all three heads of Cerberus. Having thus gained free passage through the realm of Hades, Hercules proceeds to locate Prometheus and free the god-like figure from his eons of misery. The two return to the upper Earth; Hercules reunites with his spiritual guide and receives the proper accolade.

Clearly a metaphor for the central challenge of the aspiring disciple, *The Slaying of Cerberus* dramatizes the situation of the inspired soul, which must project itself downward into physical plane matter, meet, contend with, and eventually overcome the threefold personality vehicles, and finally set free the immortal spark of divinity chained to the rock of embodiment. The choking of the monstrous heads of Cerberus depicts in dramatic and allegorical form the work of the soul-infused disciple to overcome and ultimately terminate the ancient dominion of the mental, astral, and physical vehicles in the personality equipment. Just as Hercules mastered the three-headed dog, so the disciple must master the tendencies of the lower vehicles, giving no further vital energy to the divisiveness of the undisciplined mental body, the unruliness of the astral body, and to the reluctance of the physical body. Once these three menacing heads of the personality are overpowered, the disciple is then free to move toward the central quest—freeing into un-

trammled expression the divine soul within. The Hercules in each disciple thus liberates his or her very own Prometheus from imprisonment in the physical vehicle, thus rightly re-establishing the rule of the divine being of light and wisdom who had originally brought inspiration as spiritual fire into the physical plane from the celestial realms.

It's worth noting that Hercules proved successful in his quest only because of his willingness to plunge himself right into the thick of materiality.<sup>22</sup> Remaining in the sanitary and serene upper realms of detached prayer and meditation would not suffice. Instead, it was incumbent on Hercules to penetrate to the depths of human experience, present himself at ground zero, and participate in the scene of action. Nothing short of direct involvement would serve the purpose at hand. In other words, Hercules found it necessary to get right down in the dirt and grime, which is where his presence was required. No doubt, the shining hero ended up with a few smudges on his divine tunic. Often, that's the style of redemptive work and karmic labor under the influence of Capricorn.

As a result, the seeker often finds it necessary to work out his or her spiritual salvation in the seemingly mundane circumstances of family duties, job, profession, and career. Here is the arena in which the striving disciple must prove his or her mettle, demonstrating capacity to manage real responsibilities on one hand while maintaining the balanced attitude of the one who knows the greater yet can be patient with the lesser on the other. It's a high calling, and one to which not all Capricorn-influenced individuals have the strength to respond. Yet for those who do, eventual initiation more than rewards the effort.

However, in the earliest stages of evolution under the impact of Capricorn, the individual senses nothing of the eventual reward. Evolving on the symbolic mutable cross along with the mass of Humanity, the early-stage Capricorn-influenced individual has his or her gaze fixed firmly on the matters of the earth element: material survival, the jockeying for position against family members and fellow employees at the job, and the ever-present de-

mand for the satisfaction of the senses. Following the direction of mass migration on the Wheel of Life and thus exerting little or no individual will in regard to his or her path of development, those on the beginning stages of the evolutionary path respond to the influence of Capricorn with a marked absence of imagination. Accepting without question the social norms and dominant beliefs of the society in which they live, those in the earliest stages of Capricornian experience seek nothing more than to be an effective cog in the great wheel of daily routine. Many elevate practicality to the level of the ideal, evaluating all ideas and possibilities against a yardstick made of the tried and true. Early stage Capricorn-influenced individuals are thus reluctant to think independently or to trust their own intuition.

Instead, many of the early stage Capricornians define themselves exclusively in material terms. In the more extreme cases, they cling to their possessions with a territorial defensiveness reminiscent of the mythic and legendary inner Earth goblins. Holding viciously to objects, roles, and persons they perceive as theirs and theirs alone, beginners on the path of Capricornian influence mistake the accumulation of holdings for the development of inner value. For these, the guiding notion is the exoteric seed thought associated with Capricorn: *Let ambition rule.*<sup>23</sup> Sensitive to naught but their own driving desires for power over others, recognition, and possessions, they lay waste to the surroundings and ruthlessly sweep aside anyone who might dare be in the way.

Whether it is the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, planetary groupings, or one of the lunar nodes positioned in Capricorn, individuals at the earliest stages of evolution thus often gravitate toward the low road of Capricornian influence. Thus

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focused in the personality, they come under the domain of the exoteric ruler of this sign, which is Saturn in its lesser manifestation as an emblem of limited perception, self-centered concern, deeply mercenary motives, hardened attitudes, bitter resistance to change, and an absence of empathy. As a result, Capricorn-influenced individuals just beginning to awaken tend to adopt a cynical view of life, espousing the dog-eat-dog mentality which proclaims *every man out for himself*. Life is envisioned as a vast competitive battle in which all are combatants, fighting against one another and therefore justified in any degree of ruthless maneuvering—as long as it leads to material and

personal advantage. Long and rocky is the path of those just beginning to understand spiritual law under Capricorn, for they learn only grudgingly the central spiritual lesson of life: what goes around comes back around to roost from whence it rose. Catching only a tiny glimpse of the Law of Karma, those under the influence of exoteric ruler Saturn thus inch along glacially toward a dawning realization of their own powers of choice. The First or Birth Initiation remains ahead of them yet, for the reality of soul and spirit mean nothing to those in the earliest stages of integrating Capricornian influence.

Not so for those evolving under Capricornian influence who, in previous lives, have resolved to bravely step beyond the purely personal frame of reference and to willingly embrace the oneness of all. Having freed themselves from the grip of the symbolic mutable cross, these individuals have profited spiritually from prior life experience under the sign of the Divine Goat. From Capricorn, they have in lives past learned the importance of self-discipline, accountability, and upright ethical conduct. Values matter to this group evolving under

Capricornian influence. As a result, they have their eyes fixed not on the ground below but on the mountaintop of spiritual experience ahead. Such individuals have shifted onto the symbolic fixed cross, where they painstakingly pursue the transformation of their natures in alignment with the values of the soul. Proceeding contrary to the direction followed by the mass of Humanity on the Wheel of Life, soul-centered individuals evolving under the influence of Capricorn thus apply the powers of this sign to advance through the First and Second Initiations, the Birth and the Baptism. They come under the esoteric ruler of Capricorn,<sup>24</sup> which is Saturn in its higher expression as maturity, wisdom, divine judgment, knowledge of Karmic Law, and capacity to enact the Divine Will.

Finally, the Capricorn-influenced individual masters the lessons of the soul on the fixed cross and mounts, triumphant, upon the symbolic cardinal cross. Prepared by long training to take the Third or Transfiguration Initiation, the individual now expresses the powers of Capricorn as the capacity to sense via the monad the will and purpose of logoc lives existing far beyond his own domain. Thus, the Capricorn-influenced initiate comes under the sway of the hierarchical ruler,<sup>25</sup> which is Venus, emblem of the esoteric origins of Humanity and the path to the higher mind.

## **Aquarius**

### **January 19 – February 18**

**T**hough winter still grips the northern hemisphere, the slowly increasing power of the Sun brings sparkle and scintillation to the frozen landscape, reflecting in snow and ice as dazzling rainbows of radiant light. Crisp, dry air circulates freely, invigorating hardy outdoor seekers and generating the pop, sizzle, and crackle characteristic of static electricity. Hair stands on end, wired stiff with the ambient voltage of free energy vibrating in the atmosphere. Brilliant star-lit nights reveal the heavens as an immense black velvet glove holding forth an infinite number of glittering and shimmering gems. The mind is alive with the surging vital energies of the unlimited uni-

verse, for the time of altruistic and cosmically-attuned Aquarius has arrived.

An air sign of the fixed modality in traditional astrology, Aquarius connotes the mental and intellectual polarization of the air element and the firm embrace of sovereign individuality associated with the fixed signs. Not given to welcoming any encroachment on the sacrosanct nature of its right to think for itself, Aquarius gives little ground to those who would abrogate its independence of thought, while at the same time, graciously and fully extending all rights of self-determination to any who would wish them. Aquarius is quintessentially the sign of the free-thinker, the iconoclast, the black sheep, the rebel who would rather do his or her thing than submit to the herd mentality. Centered in the world of thought associated with the air element, Aquarius is thus a sign profoundly involved with the definition of identity and the creation of personal and collective reality through the power of thought. It is a sign which would nod enthusiastically to the famous dictum formulated by seventeenth-century French philosopher Rene Descartes when he penned the words, *cogito ergo sum* - I think therefore I am.

In the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan Master, the intellectual focus of Aquarius is framed as a necessary condition for the evolutionary developments undergone by both individuals and groups under the influence of this sign. According to the esoteric doctrine, it is through the impersonal, mental polarization of Aquarius where individuals and groups arrive at fundamental realizations of the greater community of life in which they exist, moving from the limitations of self-interest to the more expanded awareness of group consciousness. It's a change of heart or mind not facilitated by the inherently self-centered emotional or astral body. Instead, the arrival at a more universal perspective must take place through the mind, which can see beyond the confines of the individual person to the diversity of perspectives represented in a group. In this sign, the individual learns to notice, inquire about, and assimilate the troubles and challenges of his or her fellowmen and to

find a way to render help.<sup>26</sup> Through the mind, the individual thus begins to recognize, study, and accept opinions, lifestyles, and needs which differ from his or her own. The influence of Aquarius plays a central role in this evolutionary development, promoting an objective, unemotional, open-minded stance. While remaining fiercely independent, the Aquarian equally embraces the independence and validity of others.

Specifically, the esoteric astrological doctrine holds that Aquarius complements and represents the opposite polarity to Leo, the sign in which individual self-awareness is raised to a fine art. Thus, while Leo begets a focus on self, personal well-being, and full self-actualization, Aquarius begets through the informed individual mind an active and outgoing interest in the larger group.<sup>27</sup> That larger group may be constituted of the family, the neighborhood, the region, the country, all of planet Earth, the solar system, the galaxy, or the vast cosmic infinity of which all units are a part. It is the function of Aquarius to progressively enlarge the intellectual frame of reference in which the individual or group perceives itself to exist. So much is this the case that it is under the sign of Aquarius that the individual is said to awaken to the greater group or life in which it finds place and to the resulting responsibilities.<sup>28</sup>

As a result, the influence of Aquarius sets the stage for a shift of fundamental importance in the evolution of human consciousness. It makes possible the leap from a focus on personal importance to an equal or greater importance placed on the entirety of life. Symbolized by two wavy lines one atop the other, Aquarius represents the pulsing energies of life flowing back and forth between two points, thus establishing relationship. Emblematic not of isolation but of interaction, the glyph for Aquarius thus implies connection and unification through the medium of unseen vibratory potencies. Through the two stylized wavy lines, Aquarius in fact symbolizes the free circulation and distribution of cosmic life energies.<sup>29</sup> Whether such energies are termed cosmic rays, prana, chi, the ethers of space, solar fire, electricity, magnetism, or vital life force,

these life energies exist throughout creation and are intended for the joyous use by all for health, happiness, and cosmic union. Similarly, the wavy lines of the glyph for Aquarius encompass and refer to all wave-like phenomena, including the electrical emanations of the human brain termed alpha, beta, delta, and theta waves, and the energies not yet recognized by science which facilitate mental telepathy.

The glyph for Aquarius thus refers to all energetic emanations of nature and cosmos, which are essentially the various vibrations of spirit expressing throughout the range of frequencies encompassed by the cosmic keyboard. It is the reality of this range of wavelengths and the fact of their free propagation throughout space which emerges steadily in the consciousness of evolving Aquarius-influenced individuals. Many Aquarius-influenced individuals are correspondingly drawn to astronomy, physics, and space aviation in the fields of conventional science, where they can study the ranges and sources of various vibrational emanations in cosmos. Other Aquarius-influenced individuals gravitate to the practice of esoteric healing arts which restore the free flow of electrical life energies in the body, and to metaphysical arts such as astrology which re-unite the individual with the greater systemic and stellar environment.

Indeed, it is under the influence of Aquarius that the individual conceptualizes the notion of the organic unity of all levels of being within planetary and cosmic life, whether through conventional science or progressive metaphysics, integrating the ideal of impersonal love for all in the process.<sup>30</sup> Just as is reported by many famous astronauts who have viewed Earth from space, with this expanded orientation in place, the earthly perceptions of those influenced by Aquarius take on new dimensions. The advancing children of Aquarius shed the self-centered and separative self and instead, identify with all of Humanity. An evolutionary movement takes hold of the Aquarius-influenced individual, moving him or her steadily away from preoccupation with personal advantage and increasingly toward the ideal of cooperation with others for the good of the greater group. Not a primitive, exclusive, and



cliquish form of group consciousness, the ideal for Aquarius transcends traditional borders.

Further, because Aquarius represents the passing of the tests associated with both the limitations of incarnation imposed in Cancer and the pull of matter encountered during initiation under Capricorn, the Aquarian-influenced server stands free from the entrapments of matter.<sup>31</sup> Thus, whether an individual has the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, planets, or one of the lunar nodes in the sign of Aquarius, it is under this influence that the personality based on ego-centrism and defiant separation from others is left behind, to be replaced by a growing sense of identification with the whole of Humanity.<sup>32</sup> This new sense of oneness with the entire family of Humanity leads the Aquarian-influenced seeker to the embrace of a new ideal: the concept of world service, or the notion of dedicating oneself and one's life to the advancement of the greater good under the inspiration of the Divine Plan as formulated by Hierarchy.<sup>33</sup> The zodiacal sign of Aquarius is so potent in this regard that Alice Bailey identified it as the key influence driving disciples to shift from emphasis on personal interests to the status of world server.<sup>34</sup>

Aquarius is thus pre-eminently the sign of world service, promoting into and through the consciousness of those it influences a moral and ethical guideline which foregrounds the importance of contributing to the solution of the world's problems and challenges. This angle of approach to life represents a critical and fundamental departure from the strictly personal interest widely thought to be the natural state of human existence. Instead, the evolved Aquarian mind embraces and lives by an altruistic and humanitarian paradigm which firmly holds that larger concerns than personal survival, home, family, comfort, and convenience must be taken into consideration and pursued. Thus, the Aquarius influence propels its natives into various forms of community service, participation in diverse nonprofit organizations, unselfish advancement of scientific knowledge, education, and a broad range of active programs for amelioration and eradication of group problems and world distress.

Because of the increasingly humanitarian and cosmic perspective inculcated by the influence of Aquarius, it is under the rays of this sign that advancing seekers achieve the necessary development of the mental body to consummate the Third or Transfiguration Initiation.<sup>35</sup> Fundamentally involved with the objective study of technical matters and the requisite powers of concentration to do so, the Third Initiation demands of the candidate a curiosity about, interest in, and mastery of matters of the mind fully supported by the potencies of fixed air sign Aquarius. Under the influence of this sign, seekers learn to focus and discipline the mind, master meditation, develop skills in the direction of energies through visualization, and to maintain a concentration steady enough to allow for the successful activation of the higher mind. Such a process inevitably manifests in the carrying forward of an active program of abstract intellectual inquiry in some defined field of life, such as science, mathematics, statistics, music, linguistics, esoteric occultism (a highly technical study), general metaphysics, or the science of astrology. All of these lines of study require the individual to think in the abstract, using symbols such as numerals, letters, musical note values, and geometrical figures to embody both discrete quantities and comprehensive concepts.

A specific example of the intellectual attainments made under the influence of Aquarius is the study and mastery of cyclic phenomena. According to the esoteric astrological doctrine, Aquarius is a sign in which "...the significance of cycles is mastered and understood by the initiate."<sup>36</sup> The glyph for Aquarius itself suggests this theme, with the two wavy lines often stylized as sharply defined peaks and troughs such as might be seen in any graphic display of a periodically fluctuating trend line. The ups and downs of the jagged Aquarian glyph thus stand for and describe the alternating and mutating phases of experience which come to all, but which on the discipleship path assume much greater clarity and meaning. It is under the sign of Aquarius that the striving disciple comprehends as never before the fact that the spiritual path reveals a definite structure in

time, moving from the inauguration and inception of a trend, to its full expression, and then tailing off toward the dissolution of a particular phase of experience, thus embodying and implying the principle of cyclicity. According to Alice Bailey and the Tibetan, the sign of Aquarius is behind this phenomenon, being itself an influence which generates huge alterations, plunging the disciple to the depths at one point only to raise him or her to the heights at another.<sup>37</sup> Through it all, the Aquarius-influenced individual gathers experience, growth, comprehension, and the capacity to remain spiritually centered no matter the gyrations of surrounding conditions.

Yet another manifestation of the Aquarian emphasis upon the mastery of cycles is to be found in the field of astrology, a metaphysical science based on orbital periods and repeating geometrical relationships in the zodiac. Astrology comprises a study of periodicities ranging from the approximately 26,000 year precessional cycle on the far end to the momentary influences brought about by the rotation of the Earth and the movements of the Moon on the other. The student of astrology thus encounters the notion of cyclicity in the greater context and in the minute, exposing his or her mind to the notion of complex layerings of periodic phenomena as the basis for the various pulses of life. Such an angle of approach encourages the contemplation of life and experience from an abstract perspective completely in keeping with the objectives of the Third Initiation, which requires the development and mastery of the higher mind. In this effort, the energies of Aquarius help the individual lift his or her focus from the attractions and distractions of the personality world to the world of ideas, where he or she must demonstrate focus and facility in order to take the Third Initiation. For this reason, the sign of Aquarius and hence the study of astrology are particularly associated with potential for taking the Third Initiation.<sup>38</sup>

As the influence of Aquarius enlarges the mental horizons of the disciple and helps establish mental polarization, it brings about the state known as mental poise, a state of consciousness in which snap judgments and immediate emotional reactions do not occur. For this rea-

son, the mentally poised position of the Aquarius-influenced mind is less vulnerable to the push and pull of the pairs of opposites. The individual is thus enabled to stand free of the turbulent astral zone occupied by most of humanity and therefore to see issues both worldly and spiritual more clearly.<sup>39</sup>

Here is a critical stage in the development of the advancing initiate, constituting a plateau of mental balance from which to deal with the complexities of life and karma. The energies of Aquarius are thus essential to the process of discovering and implementing solutions for the multitude of problems facing Humanity. Such problems can't be solved at the level of consciousness from which they were generated. Instead, to envision new and effective solutions for persistent global problems, it's necessary to view situations from a higher perspective. The mind-centered, objective, poised, and abstract capacities of Aquarius grant this perspective and are therefore essential in the pursuit of world service.

World service is so quintessentially the theme of Aquarius that it is in this sign that the disciple is said to advance in initiatory status and to become the master who serves.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, service as a theme is firmly rooted in the ancient constellational myth associated with the sign of Aquarius. This myth draws on the story of Ganymede, a mortal raised from earthly existence to life among the gods and goddesses of Olympus by Zeus, overlord of the Greek pantheon. To Ganymede, Zeus allotted the task and privilege of serving the gods and goddesses during their assemblies and banquets, toting a cup or vessel filled with the Elixir of Immortal Life, and dispensing it freely to all. Ganymede was thus a glorified table server, but a server nonetheless. He was charged with the all-important task of distributing the waters of eternal life to the assembled deities, that they might carry forth their missions in perpetuity by drinking of the cup of life. Reminiscent of the Cup of Communion, the vessel, vase, or chalice which Ganymede carried is a symbol of transcendent grace and healing power featured in the sacred ceremonies of many religious traditions. It was Ganymede's role in this rite of administering the common cup of divine

life which earned him the title of Cup Bearer. In modern astrology, Aquarius is referred to as the Water Bearer, the servant of the divine who administers the elixir of divine healing life to all. Hence, the esoteric seed thought associated with Aquarius: *Waters of Life am I, poured forth for thirsty Humanity.*

In keeping with the emphasis on the concept of free distribution of the waters of life, as portrayed in the ancient myth associated with Aquarius, one of the anatomical functions in the human body under the rulership of Aquarius is that of the circulatory system.<sup>41</sup> The circulatory system relies on the fluid principle to transport all the nutrients required for right functioning of the vital organs, organs of perception, nerves, muscles, and bones, through the distribution of nutrient-rich blood throughout the body. Thus, the circulatory system reenacts the work of mythic Ganymede, carrying the substances necessary to support life to all the cells of the body, just as Ganymede of Olympus carried the golden cup containing the Elixir of Eternal Life to the assembled gods and goddesses. Aquarius also rules the calves and ankles, portions of the body which facilitate locomotion and the free movement of the human body in and through the physical environment. Thus, as in Olympus, Aquarius in the human body expresses as functions related to free-flowing movement and distribution.

The free flow of life energies and their unimpeded distribution to all points of need also figures as the central theme in the labor of Hercules associated with the sign of Aquarius. Titled *Cleansing the Augean Stables*, this episode in the story of Hercules casts the heroic disciple of light in a situation graphically depictive of everything anathema to the ideals of Aquarius—stagnation, blockage, and putrefaction. Indeed, Hercules is called to inspect and correct a dire situation at a complex of animal stables owned by King Augeas, Son of Neptune (who is God of the Waters). For decades, Augeas has failed to remove the waste products eliminated by his herds. As a result, the entire area surrounding his compound has become infected with deadly bacterial contamination. The situation flies in the face of everything ideal to the sign of Aquarius.

Commanded to respond by the voice of higher truth coming from his spiritual master, Hercules arrives on the scene. He offers to King Augeas his freely-given help in righting the situation. Untrusting, Augeas grudgingly agrees, but with no positive expectations. Still, Hercules accepts the challenge. Knowing full well that an effective method for removing vast amounts of accumulated and decomposing waste had not been found by many before him, Hercules goes forward nonetheless with faith that a solution will be found.

Once arrived at the stabling compounds, Hercules is overwhelmed by the stench of rotting manure and the sight of dead bodies, animal and human. Even so, he steps back and contemplates. Soon, Hercules notices two nearby rivers, gifts no doubt from Neptune, God of Waters. Immediately, the thought pops into the mind of Hercules that if he can direct the flowing waters of the rivers through the stabling compound, the accumulated waste will be quickly washed away. With terrific physical determination, Hercules sets about to dig enormous ditches connecting the rivers, the stables, and the drainage pattern beyond. Astoundingly, with superhuman spiritual strength Hercules completes the excavation in less than one workday, opens the irrigation ditches to the coursing river waters, and stands back to watch his miracle achieved. Indeed, the waters rush through the compound, washing it clean and scouring every corner as they pass. Augeas is impressed, but ever mistrustful, he banishes the successful Hercules from the kingdom. Unperturbed, Hercules reports to his spiritual master and finds that his efforts have been good and sufficient.

Here is a straight-forward enactment of the principles associated with Aquarius, a sign the ideals of which concern the right or free circulation of the waters of life. Just as Ganymede of ancient myth freely supplied the Olympian gods and goddesses with as much of the Elixir of Life as they might desire, so the sign of Aquarius embodies the idea of the unimpeded distribution of the waters of life, symbolically contained within and poured forth from the vessel, vase, or cup carried by the Water-

Bearer. When these waters do not flow freely, everyone suffers. This indeed was the situation at the Augean stables. The flow of life had congealed into hardened matter, concretized versions of material which might be useful in other contexts and conditions; manure in proper texture and proportions enhances soil fertility for the growth of crops, but in the form of compressed, rock-like substance covered with newly excreted and yet-uncomposted material, it's a blight on the surroundings. To correct the situation, stagnation had to be converted to movement and flow, and the whole natural cycle reinstated on a better basis.

The problematic accumulation of potentially useful material in the Augean stables parallels much of what ails modern society, strangled as it is with the result of excess production of consumable goods, resulting in the littering of the landscape with plastic bottles, the creation of smoldering, toxic land-fills the size of small cities, and the pollution of waterways and oceans with vast islands of water-borne plastic bags, vinyl, and other materials which either do not bio-degrade or do so very slowly. Further, many private homes are packed to the gills with heaping collections of unneeded possessions and materials, while in other neighborhoods, whole groups of persons lack the necessities. Here, too, the nightmare of the Augean stables is enacted, for there is far too much in some places and almost none in others.

The cure is right distribution, the ideal promulgated by the sign of Aquarius and the instructive labor of Hercules with which it is associated. As is evident from both, it's patently absurd to concentrate resources and assets in one small location, densely packing valuable material in a confined area and thereby choking off its potential use in other areas where it may be needed. For example, the hoarding of material and financial wealth by the privileged contrasts with and stands as a glaring counterpoint to the starvation and impoverishment of the remaining population. Where these contrasts exist in large measure, there the stables of Augeas are filled with impacted manure, and the life of the whole is thereby threatened.

What's the solution? Just as Hercules realized that a simple solution called for the use of an easily available natural method, so does the problem of concentrated wealth claim an obvious cure: right sharing, a concept embodied by the sign of Aquarius. Just as did Ganymede, the prototype of Aquarius amongst the assembled deities, this sign teaches that the notion of freely passing along and sharing the good is a natural expression of Humanity's divine nature. The Aquarius-inspired individual is thus not controlled by the notions of possession and ownership. He or she would rather see all benefit than just a few, knowing that in this direction lies the happiness and cooperation of Humanity, whereas the path of stingy refusal to share surely leads to interpersonal tension, resentment, division between groups, and yes, even war. Like Hercules stopping to contemplate the problem of hydrological engineering before him, mentally-polarized Aquarius pauses and asks how the doors of opportunity can be opened for everyone. The simple act of raising the appropriate question sets in motion the process which will clean out the stables of Augeas through right distribution and sharing.

The Aquarian notion of right sharing does not, however, imply that wealth is spiritually unacceptable, but merely adds that sufficient wealth experienced by all is far better than extreme wealth experienced by only a few. Aquarius is fundamentally a group-conscious sign, inclining individuals who come under its influence to take into account the condition of the surrounding lives, not just that of his or her own. Here is the basis for the attribute of altruism traditionally associated with Aquarius, a sign which is concerned with the good of all. Indeed, the Water-Bearer represents an ideal to which all of Humanity would do well to aspire—the vision of the divinely gifted higher self distributing its inspiration, ideas, substance, and kindly care for each and all.

However, souls newly in contact with the energies of Aquarius cast their attention elsewhere. Evolving on the symbolic mutable cross and following the direction of herd Humanity as it is pulled along with precession on the zodiacal Wheel of Life, early-stage

Aquarians apply the essentially social nature of this sign to the passing interests of the personality. As a result, beginners on the path of Aquarius wander in the fields of human experience, all the while demonstrating a superficial version of this sign.<sup>42</sup> Expressing the group orientation of Aquarius as an avid interest in fads, fashions, trends, the doings of the in-group, and the ever-changing dynamics of personal interaction in social networks, they are drawn to the notion of popular trends. Yet at the same time, these individuals come under the influence of exoteric ruler Uranus, a planetary energy known for its eccentric, furiously independent, and head-strong ways. Thus, new Aquarians often spend their time and energy in revolt against all that interferes with what they see as perfect individual liberty, resenting the necessary rules and regulations of collective existence, while at the very same time seeking social approval and inclusion. With intense Uranus in control, this segment of Aquarius-influenced individuals thus encounters the dramatic conflict staged by the pairs of opposites,<sup>43</sup> in this case, the conflict between the desire for popularity and acceptance on one hand and the raging desire for unimpeded personal autonomy on the other. The First or Birth Initiation has not yet been taken, for the rebellious and self-centered individual has not agreed to the necessary constraints on individuality required for peaceful group existence. Focused on personal wants and wishes, this beginning level of Aquarian influence is reflected in the exoteric seed thought for this sign: *Let desire in form be ruler.*<sup>44</sup>

After much time and evolution carried on through many embodiments under the energies of Aquarius, the individual awakens from his or her long sleep in the hall of spiritual ignorance, hears the pained and urgent cries of his fellow beings, registers the group nature of existence, and finds that his or her hard shell of self-interest cracks and falls to the side. At this stage, the Aquarius-influenced individual undergoes a fundamental change as he or she gradually assimilates the troubles and concerns of fellow beings and eventually resolves to be of aid.<sup>45</sup> The impact of Aquarius penetrates deeply into the consciousness of the evolving

individual, encouraging him or her to withhold immediate judgment upon others while according to others the right to experience life and gather wisdom on their own terms and in their own ways. Prejudice against groups and individuals is broken down and discarded.<sup>46</sup> Instead of devoting mental energy to irritation, criticism, and condemnation, the evolving Aquarian looks within and examines his or her inner attitudes, seeking to eradicate suspicion, mistrust, and unfounded harsh judgments of others. Instead, he or she makes a concerted effort to think well of others and to be a true friend to Humanity. All this takes place under the continuing stimulation of energies emanated by the altruistic and idealistic sign of Aquarius.<sup>47</sup>

At this point, the individual evolving under the influence of Aquarius departs the symbolic mutable cross populated by mass Humanity as it wanders in the field of diverse experiences improperly digested. The advancing seeker mounts instead the disciplined and purposeful symbolic fixed cross, there to deliberately guide his or her continuing unfoldment in keeping with the specific guidelines for effective service, affiliation with Hierarchy, and eventual initiation. In the process, he or she develops clear intentions to transform self-interest into concern for all of Humanity and to shift from an attraction to superficial social entertainments to engagement with targeted and purposeful activity on behalf of Hierarchy and under the Divine Plan.<sup>48</sup> The evolving Aquarius-influenced individual on the symbolic fixed cross thus shifts his or her direction on the Wheel of Life, turns and proceeds opposite to the direction of mass Humanity, and establishes his or her own purposeful direction in keeping with the natural order of the zodiacal signs.

In so doing, the evolving Aquarius-influenced individual arrives at the stage in which he or she can be trusted to circulate the energies of goodwill through the carefully managed lower self.<sup>49</sup> Key to the work of circulating the energies of good will is the radiation of intentional love through the agency of the mental body. Hence, it is under the influence of mentally-polarized Aquarius that the disciple develops

facility in the higher forms of telepathy and group or soul consciousness. Thus poised in the radiation of love and good will to all, the evolving Aquarius-influenced individual on the symbolic cross embodies both the esoteric and traditionally mythic meaning of the higher seed thought associated with this sign: *Water of life am I, poured forth for thirsty Humanity.*<sup>50</sup> In this way, he or she expresses the energies of Jupiter, esoteric or soul ruler of Aquarius, the characteristics of which impart the power to pour out love and wisdom on Earth.<sup>51</sup> Through the continued expression of spiritual beneficence under the esoteric ruler, the Aquarius-influenced individual is thus enabled to pass the First and Second Initiations and to arrive at the gate of the Third or Transfiguration Initiation.<sup>52</sup>

At the very gate of the Third Initiation, the Aquarius-influenced individual comes under the influence of the hierarchical ruler,<sup>53</sup> the Moon.<sup>54</sup> However, the Moon belongs to a group of celestial bodies classified in the esoteric astrological doctrine as non-sacred, for they stimulate the form or personality and not so much the soul or spirit aspects of the individual. It is therefore not likely that a non-sacred body would function as inspiration or even as challenge for the disciple advancing into initiations which loosen the ancient hegemony of the personality vehicles and press beyond to states of consciousness ruled by the soul and the monad. Thus, it would seem that in the case of the hierarchical ruler of Aquarius, the Moon is but the veil for another planet, since the Moon is known to veil Uranus in some contexts.<sup>55</sup> In fact, this is the case, for the Moon as hierarchical ruler of Aquarius is said specifically by the Tibetan Master to veil or represent Uranus.<sup>56</sup>

***Thus, the individual evolving under Pisces influence permanently leaves behind the nebulosity and lack of commitment typical of the first level of this sign, builds on compassion and readiness to release unwise attachments typical of the second, and rises to the status of a working world disciple on this the third, to become at last the initiate advancing toward mastery and world redemption.***

Thus, as the individual evolving under the influence of Aquarius profits spiritually from the disciplined and purposeful method characteristic of progress on the symbolic fixed cross, he or she eventually ascends to the symbolic cardinal cross. Here, he or she comes yet again under the influence of Uranus as before at the exoteric level, but this time the advancing initiate experiences Uranus as the hierarchical ruler of Aquarius. Uranus as hierarchical ruler actuates and activates the advancing disciple with powerful energies of the Divine Will, transforming him or her into a powerful change agent working in behalf of the drive for

better conditions of life on planet Earth.<sup>57</sup> Such an Aquarius-influenced individual may as a result become a leader in any field of life, setting the agenda for progress, raising the bar for acceptable performance, advocating enhanced freedom of the human soul, and instituting a more direct reflection of divine principles in earthly matters.

At the same time, the Third or Transfiguration Initiation with its emphasis on the development of the intuition becomes the goal, and the disciple correspondingly turns to the discipline and development of the mental body. Turbulent emotional and mental responses to other individuals and groups having been long ago shed, the evolving Aquarius-influenced individual at this level departs even the issues and labors of the symbolic fixed cross and mounts the symbolic cardinal cross, there to evolve alongside other initiates who through the Transformation Initiation have moved into the field of monadic contact with the spiritual will. Thus, the Aquarius-influenced individual evolving on the symbolic cardinal cross proceeds on the Wheel of Life in the direction he

or she established while on the symbolic fixed cross. He or she moves contrary to the unconscious and passive tendency of mass Humanity as it merely drifts along with the herd influence caused by the steady migration of the equinoxes backward through the zodiac. Instead, the ascending seeker sets his or her own direction, pressing forward on the Wheel of Life in the normal order of the zodiacal signs, and is thus positioned to pursue the higher initiations. Spiritually nurtured by the mental, altruistic, and cosmic vibrations of Aquarius, he or she rises to intuitional cooperation with other servers under the Divine Plan,<sup>58</sup> tuning in telepathically to the inspired group mind and to even higher planes, from which emanate logic thoughts concerning the Divine Plan.

In this way, the Aquarius-influenced individual on the symbolic cardinal cross accelerates in evolutionary pace and status. Breaking away from the restrictive belief systems of the lower mind, the Aquarius-influenced individual evolving on the symbolic cardinal cross ultimately experiences the dissolution of the apparent barriers between the past, present, and future.<sup>59</sup> Illusory in the first place, such artificial barriers erected by the lower mind within the flow of time now crumble. As a result, the initiate dwells at will in the eternal divine present and touches the realm of the infinite. Far less affected by the pairs of opposites than is the bulk of Humanity, the Aquarius-influenced individual evolving on the symbolic cardinal cross thus operates as a spiritual agent free to receive and distribute to all the uplifting and healing energies of infinite cosmic life.<sup>60</sup>

## Pisces

### February 19 – March 19

In the northern hemisphere, the black of night shortens ever so slightly as the hours of precious daylight imperceptibly lengthen, ushering into view hints of returning life. Temperatures creep tentatively above freezing, melting snow and ice into rivulets of freely flowing water. Heavy bluish clouds laden with moisture blanket the landscape as shy warming trends shroud city and country alike with a mantle of swirling fog and mist. Patches of remaining snow and ice sublimate eerily into

vaporous plumes, setting the stage for the seeming appearance of half-formed wraiths, ghosts returned from the spirit world, and anonymous disembodied visitors hailing from distant realms. Under the dissolving action of gentle warming rains, one thing melts into another as the enveloping moisture of earliest spring soaks nature and humans in a purifying bath of life-restoring waters. Floods cover the land, reminiscent of the endtimes of yore. Indeed, the conclusion of the annual seasonal cycle has arrived, and with it the time of the Divine Fishes, Pisces, sign of mystical perception, connection with the world of spirit, empathy with all, grace, forgiveness, release, and universal union.

A water sign of the mutable modality in conventional astrology, Pisces combines the flexibility and fluidity of the water element with the capacity for transformation characteristic of the mutable signs. Both the water element and the mutable modality fulfill the function of alteration and transformation, the first washing away impediments and the second conferring a willingness to let go of experience in one form to embrace experience in another. As a result, mutable water sign Pisces connotes the capacity to relinquish attachments, disengage from rigid identification with any particular temporary form, and to merge into the homogeneity of eternal spirit.

For the spiritual seeker engaged in active incarnation, Pisces expresses as the capacity to temporarily let go of the physical body in order to ascend into the higher vehicles for meditation, psychic perception, projection, telepathy, or other adventures of consciousness in the subtle realm. Then at the end of an incarnation, whether of a human or of a solar system, Pisces makes it possible for the indwelling consciousness to relinquish identification with the form nature and to return to the state of spirit from which it originally emanated. For this reason, the sign of Pisces is associated with the completion of incarnational duties, endings, exhaustion of karma, death, separation of the higher vehicles from the lower, abstraction of the consciousness principle, and the return of the self to the infinite reservoir of spirit.

Death as the great transition from bodily incarnation to spirit form is perhaps one of the most dramatic manifestations of Pisces. Yet, under Pisces, such a momentous spiritual step comes with ease, for Pisces confers the ability to let go gracefully. In Pisces, the soul learns to trust the wisdom of the universe. Allowing itself to be safely guided to the next destination, the soul under Pisces embraces the great journey. Many individuals conditioned by Pisces therefore find their avenues of service and soul expression in the field of transition counseling or death facilitation. Spending time with those in process of withdrawing from physical incarnation in a peaceful celebration of the lifetime just passed and in anticipation of the spiritual experiences ahead, these servers share their spiritual composure even in the midst of what mainstream Humanity considers an extremely disturbing event. Thus, the gentle forces of Pisces are brought to bear in dispelling the fear of physical death, one of the major objectives of Hierarchy under the Divine Plan.<sup>61</sup> In this, Pisces promotes a trusting relationship with the Divine Intelligence of Creation, a belief that all is well in the Divine Order, and a conviction that each stage of experience is of value.

In fact, Pisces is the pre-eminent astrological sign of trust or faith in providence. The children of the Divine Fishes are content to go with the flow of the river of life, implicitly believing that a greater wisdom directs all things. To the living seeker influenced by this sign through his or her Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Midheaven, planets, north or south lunar node, or other significant features of the astrological chart, Pisces imparts a willingness to submit to divine process. Hence, the Pisces orientation often seems inscrutably accepting, if not downright naïve or gullible. Yet not always is the Pisces temperament misguided. Last of the twelve signs of the zodiac, Pisces symbolizes the accumulated wisdom of comprehensive soul experience. Thus, Pisces constitutes a stage on the evolutionary path which may seem childlike or passive in its willingness to cooperate peacefully with the unfolding of fate, destiny, or karma, but which in fact is often possessed of a profound, veiled wisdom. Like the obscuring mists of the Pisces time of

year, this sign is thus emblematic of secret or esoteric knowledge, guarded from profane view yet maintained in sacrosanct condition for those who have the strength of spirit to place themselves humbly before the altar of wisdom. Pisces thus represents an adaptation which transcends everyday attitudes, instead espousing a deeply mystical belief system which values the transcendent perspective, sees beyond the present moment in time, and allows for the hand of greater good even in the most trying events.

The domain of Pisces thus extends all the way from simple conventional religious faith to the willing pursuit of a right relationship with the transcendent forces of the universe. Emblematic of hidden or less obvious truths, Pisces covers and includes situations and places of retreat and solitude where the seeker may abandon self to the hidden longings of the soul for divine contact. This sign therefore rules religion, mysticism, secret initiatory societies, and the locations or buildings where believers in these traditions convene. These include secluded and enclosed sacred spaces such as churches, temples, monasteries, nunneries, funeral homes, cemeteries, intentional spiritual communities, and formal ritual lodges such as those of the Masonic and Rosicrucian traditions, as well as outdoor sacred sites, wilderness retreats, meditation caves, and informal gathering spots hidden in wood and vale. Here the sincere spiritual seeker invites a greater spiritual presence to enter the soul, direct the personality, and transform existence through the Piscean agency of divine grace. In such contexts and places of worship and communion, the influence of Pisces nurtures aspiration toward higher consciousness, gives free rein to the mystical sentiment, and encourages spiritual practices such as prayer, chanting, sacred singing, drumming, silent meditation, trance, communion, keeping silence, intentional sacrifice, fasting, and ritual celebration, for each of these is an attempt to set aside the mundane, loosen the grip of the temporal, and dwell for a time in the eternal.

Designing a stage on which individual and group seekers may defer concerns, anxieties and fears, Pisces thus creates a sanctuary for



the soul in which healing of both mind and body may transpire. For this reason, Pisces is known as a sign deeply connected with the seemingly miraculous and spontaneous healing of physical disease and psychic distress through intangible spiritual means. Faith healings of all types and kinds therefore come under the rulership of the Pisces archetype, all seemingly facilitated by the sudden connection of the individual with the powerful force field of divine being. So also do the less dramatic healings brought about by non-invasive holistic methods which soothe the psyche and body, restoring it to inherent balance. Likewise, the alleviation of pain and suffering, whether caused by physical, emotional, social, financial, or cultural factors is of central moment to individuals conditioned by the sign of Pisces. For this reason, individuals with the influence of Pisces pronounced in their astrological charts often find their fields of service and soul expression in the practices of holistic, medical, or psychological healing as well as in social work, nonprofit administration, and relief agencies.

Key to the workings of the Pisces constitution is the capacity for empathy, fellow-feeling, and compassion. According to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey, it is precisely the profound sensitivity conferred by Pisces which is at once the strength and the weakness of this sign. Permeable and absorptive as if born of the water element itself, the Pisces psychological constitution is prone to gather up psychic impressions, energies, and impacts from its environment often without filter or discrimination. Just as all rivers empty into the ocean, all currents of emotional and mental matter circulate in the aura of Pisces and find free admission there. For this reason, wise management of extreme psychic sensitivity rates as one of the major problems of right development under the influence of Pisces.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the Pisces influenced individual must learn to establish and preserve his or her psychological balance by refusing to identify with every passing wave of sentiment. In this way, the seeker influenced by Pisces eventually learns to shift attention from the content of the lower psychic powers to the spiritual faculties.<sup>63</sup>

A sign conferring an experience of gradual ascension, Pisces thus slowly and secretly transforms the lower nature into the higher.<sup>64</sup> Without the light of the soul to guide it, the lower or personality expression of Pisces suffers from a proclivity toward introversion, depression, perceived powerlessness, and the sense of personal victimization. It's as if the extreme pliability borne of the water element and mutable modality has manifested as a mass of jelly, with no spine or center of strength to propel it on its way. Yet, when the higher forces of Pisces set to work, these personality-based patterns begin to lose their grip. In fact, a comprehensive and thorough-going overhaul of the personality and psyche transpires under the touch of Pisces.

Over the course of an embodiment conditioned by this sign, the individual thus evolves from a psychic sensitivity focused on the self and its emotional dramas to a compassion for all of humanity which admits of inspirational streams of consciousness dedicated to the work of the Divine Plan. The process begins when the waters of Pisces dissolve the seeming barriers between the individual and his or her environment, causing the individual to sense and see the sufferings and situations of others. The dissolving action of Pisces is so effective that this sign is said to bring about death of separative tendency by water and the release into awareness of the greater group.<sup>65</sup> Thus, a right response to the needs of Humanity unfolds within the Pisces-influenced psyche, causing the individual to shed his or her disabling preoccupation with personal matters.<sup>66</sup> In the light of this greater perspective, self-pity morphs into true spiritual compassion for others. The individual finds that when he or she no longer invests time and energy in lamenting the small hurts of personal life, time and resources miraculously manifest for the serving of the Divine Plan.

So profound is the shift from personal to universal under the influence of Pisces that this sign is said by the esoteric astrological doctrine to bring about the very death of the personality.<sup>67</sup> Though this statement seems ominous, it isn't. Referring only to the termination of habit

patterns in thought and action in which the lower or personality vehicles control the life of the seeker, this statement is to be taken not literally, but metaphorically. It means that under the influence of the sign of Pisces, the hindering of soul purpose by the stubborn and self-centered personality vehicles is brought to an end. In this way, the soul is allowed greater expression and is therefore essentially freed from captivity to matter.<sup>68</sup> In fact, the esoteric astrological doctrine holds that Pisces promotes the demise of all karmic tendencies holding the individual to the wheel of rebirth in physical form.<sup>69</sup> Such a process is a prerequisite for the release of the full spiritual purpose contained within the sign of Pisces, which leads the individual far beyond personality to glimpse, envision, and share in the task of the World Savior.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, the sign of Pisces encompasses a spectrum of expressions ranging from painful personal psychic sensitivity on the low side to the universality of the savior on the high. As implied by the savior figure as apotheosis of the Pisces archetype, service to the whole is the underlying theme of Pisces, a sign which inculcates in its children the realization that the temporary self with its upsets and turbulence holds not a candle's worth of importance compared to the bigger picture. The same notion of service of the whole is mirrored in the physical body by the feet, the portion of human anatomy traditionally ruled by Pisces. Standing under and giving support to the greater bulk of the body, the feet humbly carry the burden of the body's total weight. Not only sturdy and obliging, the feet are also extremely sensitive, detecting temperature and pressure with perfect accuracy and speed. Flexible, willing, and responsive servants, the feet may be used to wander the fields of life aimlessly or to purposely tread the paths of discipleship and initiation. To say that an individual is following in the footsteps of an inspiring figure is a time-honored figure of speech showcasing the critical role of the often-unsung feet in establishing right life direction.

Right direction of life force as opposed to aimless wandering constitutes the theme underlying the labor of Hercules esoterically associat-

ed with Pisces. Titled *The Capture of the Red Cattle of Geryon*, this labor begins, as do all the others, with a summons from the Master or higher self. The voice of the Master informs Hercules that a three-headed monster named Geryon has laid unlawful claim to a herd of blood-red cattle. The monster must be subdued and the cattle returned to the sacred city if Hercules is to pass his twelfth and final test, and thereby win the boon of immortality. For success in the quest, the Master provides one hint: Hercules must seek the aid of the Sun God, Helios.

Obediently accepting the challenge, Hercules sets forth. His first stop is the Temple of the Sun, where he meditates for seven days. Solemnly invoking what esotericists would call the Solar Logos, Hercules succeeds in making contact with that great intelligence. Out of the sky drops a magical golden chalice which expands to form a sailing vessel sufficient to carry Hercules to the land where Geryon holds the cattle. Hercules rides in the golden chalice across a great expanse of water, arriving safely in Geryon's land. Not long after, Hercules locates the cattle, who freely roam the land. A vicious two-headed guard dog falls upon Hercules hungrily the moment the hero approaches the herd, but with one stroke, Hercules defeats the dog. Hercules rounds up the cattle and points the herd in the direction of the sacred city. Soon enough, the three-headed and six-handed monster Geryon arrives to halt the exodus of Hercules with the cattle. A battle ensues, but Hercules fires off one sure arrow which pierces all three bodies of Geryon, killing the monster on the spot.

Hercules then resumes his quest to herd the cattle back to the sacred city. Often the blood-red animals wander, and the hero must repeatedly return the wayward to the proper path. Righting wrongs all along the lengthy route back to the sacred city, Hercules overcomes evil at every opportunity. At length, the hero arrives in the sacred city, delivers the cattle to their proper destination, and receives his reward from the Master. Hercules learns that he has passed all twelve tests of the zodiac, has attained immortality, and will be memorialized as a constellation in the starry night sky.

In this final labor, Hercules is directed to accomplish two essential tasks: invoke the Solar Logos and return the cattle stolen by Geryon to their rightful location. The act of invoking the Solar Logos is symbolic, a reference to the calling in of a greater light to dispel the fogs and mists associated with the water sign, Pisces. In this case, the greater light is not only that of the soul, but also that of the entity indwelling the solar system as its body of manifestation. Thus, Hercules procures from higher levels a sense of right direction, a necessary armament when dealing with the miasmas and illusions promulgated by the astral plane as embodied in the water element. Augmented and bolstered by this power of the greater light, Hercules is competent to sail in the solar chalice over the waters of the astral body with its turbulent emotions and lower psychic nature so prone to wild imaginings, fears, and hesitation. Immune to such distractions while safely positioned in his solar boat, Hercules confidently makes the sea-faring journey, for his consciousness is centered in the Divine Plan as registered by the deity of the annual cycle.

Returning the cattle to the sacred city is also a symbolic act, emblematic of the effort to re-dedicate the substance of the lower vehicles to the spiritual quest. By leading the red cattle to a sacred altar where they may be handed over to the Divine Plan, Hercules signals his intention to link matter back to spirit. Hercules undertakes this effort on behalf of himself and all Humanity willingly, only to be violently attacked as a result by the tenacious personality vehicles as symbolized by the two-headed guard dog and the three-headed monster Geryon. Furiously attempting to maintain their grip on the materials of existence as symbolized by the cattle, the dog and the monster stand for the entrenched habits of the mental, astral, and physical bodies. Comfortable in their hegemony, they have no intention of surrendering without a fight. But Hercules as an emerging Sun God himself is more than equal to the match, dispatching both with ease.

Finally, Hercules is called to rein in the wandering impulses inherent to the mutable water sign of Pisces. Time and time again he must round up the cattle who have strayed from the

true path which leads back to the sacred city, each time re-affirming right purpose and intention. In this way, the story demonstrates one of the great challenges to be encountered under Pisces influence, which is the temptation to amble aimlessly through life. Under the influence of the mutable water sign Pisces, many children of the Divine Fishes blithely swim this way and that, chasing after half-sensed enticements, thereby losing the central way as they succumb to the various distractions encountered on the path. Hercules puts a stop to that pattern by simply persisting in his labor to assure right direction. The individual disciple must do the same in his or her place.

Just as the Pisces labor concludes with the repeated efforts of Hercules to establish and maintain right direction, the theme of attaining right direction also weaves through the story of the evolving soul as it traverses the levels of evolution symbolized by the triple rulership system. Pisces as a mutable water sign is an astrological influence well-known for its tendencies to erode distinctions, blur boundaries, shape-shift, and vaporize into insubstantiality. Although these Piscean characteristics are valuable and necessary in the context of universal dissolution at the end of an age or in the context of destroying barriers to spiritual union, in the practical life of the disciple the Piscean proclivity toward the amorphous and ambiguous presents a distinct obstacle. The Pisces seeker almost always needs to learn how to clearly define his or her objectives, even while maintaining the open heart which accepts into its loving embrace all creation and makes no exclusive distinctions.

In the beginning of experience under the influence of Pisces, the individual proceeds in the direction of mass Humanity on the Wheel of Life. Swept along with the precession of the equinoxes as it retrogresses through the zodiacal constellations, the seeking soul new to the Pisces influence merely rides the tides of the surrounding ocean of instinctual life.<sup>71</sup> Not yet distinct from the mass, the early-stage Piscean thus comes under the rulership of Neptune, ancient God of the Waters and modern exoteric ruler of Pisces. In this way, the seeker on the beginning stages of the evolutionary path

learns to connect with the environment. Yet, this connection proves to be problematic for those who are as yet unaware of their indwelling divinity. Instead, those on the beginning steps of evolution find under Pisces an irresistible attraction to identify with matter, with materiality, with appearances, and that which fades with time. They merge with material appearances and identify with their vehicles, reveling in sensation, indulgence, and even addiction.

Trapped in this mistaken belief about what constitutes reality, early-stage Pisceans experience the influence of this sign as a sense of bondage or captivity to form from which there appears to be no escape.<sup>72</sup> Seekers not yet aware of their internal divinity thus frequently succumb in the early stages of Pisces influence to a sense of powerlessness or helplessness. As they melt and blend into the indistinct mass of matter and emotion surrounding them, they forfeit personal power and abdicate the power of choice. Feeling as if they are helpless victims, the early stage seekers of Pisces often truly believe they lack any capacity to affect the direction of their lives. Evolving on the symbolic mutable cross, they wander in the fields of experience without any definite plan, driven by the winds and rains of physical existence, gathering impressions, and tasting of different situations. They are conditioned by the currents of thought and emotion generated by the collective fears, insecurities, and brutalities of mass Humanity. In this way and through repeated experiences on the symbolic mutable cross and under the influence of Pisces, less-evolved seekers experience suffering and eventually develop the first inklings of true compassion, which attainment leads to the next evolutionary stage.

As true compassion takes root, the Pisces-influenced seeker rises to the next level of evolutionary functioning and so comes under the esoteric ruler, purposeful Pluto. No longer randomly and violently whipped about by the storms of existence on the mutable cross, the evolving soul begins to guide his or her life path on the basis of clearly defined spiritual principles and so mounts the symbolic fixed cross. Intentional self-discipline now shapes

his or her path, causing the evolving soul to travel on the Wheel of Life in a direction contrary to that of mass Humanity. Instead, he or she now adopts the direction of evolution which follows the normal order of the zodiacal signs as they unfold in chronological sequence. Proceeding with purpose and plan, the seeker undergoes spiritual transformation in earnest as the energies of Pisces promote renunciation of and detachment from the nonessentials.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, the powerful purgative energies of Pluto as esoteric ruler of Pisces bring about the dramatic death of desires and attachments which formerly held the soul cemented to the pairs of opposites.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the individual evolving under Pisces at the second level learns to let go of emotional upheaval and moods. Under the cleansing function of Pluto as esoteric ruler, the seeker now embarks upon the necessary changes in astral and mental habits which make possible the taking of the First and Second Initiations.<sup>75</sup> As a result, he or she eliminates unnecessary habits of emotion and thought, gains depth of compassion, and advances toward fuller development of the intuition.<sup>76</sup>

In time, the spiritual gains of evolution on the fixed cross result in the stabilization and deepening of spiritual purpose. Pluto continues its work, stripping away those infatuations and illusions which no longer serve the higher evolution of the individual. The seeker experiences profound episodes of sacrifice and relinquishment, leading to the death of any remaining form or personality focus.<sup>77</sup> In its place emerges the spiritual will, focused and sharpened into a laser-like beam by Pluto as hierarchical ruler of Pisces. Thus, the seeker finds self on the symbolic cardinal cross, domain of advanced evolution. Now upon the symbolic cardinal cross, the individual faces, prepares for, and consummates the Third Initiation,<sup>78</sup> powered by Pluto's stimulation of the spiritual will. Through the illumined mental body of the Pisces-influenced seeker streams the pure intuition, higher gift of the Divine Fishes.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the individual evolving under Pisces influence permanently leaves behind the nebulosity and lack of commitment typical of the first level of this sign, builds on the compassion and readi-

ness to release unwise attachments typical of the second, and rises to the status of a working world disciple on this the third, to become at last the initiate advancing toward mastery and world redemption.

## Conclusion

As has been demonstrated, the zodiacal signs of Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces each represent a distinctive set of experiences, abilities, and challenges.

In the earth sign Capricorn, the striving seeker surveys the earth plane, is tempted by power, influence, and riches, and yet senses the call to the towering Mount of Initiation. Decision is made under the influence of Capricorn and the resulting path goes either upward toward the severe challenges of initiation, or downward toward identification with materiality. In the air sign Aquarius, the soul surveys the mental plane and observes that intelligence may be used either to entertain a superficial social structure or to uplift Humanity. A choice is made and the resulting path goes either outward toward identification with the needed inclusive service or inward to the service of the separated self and its identification with exclusive groups. In the water sign Pisces, the evolving unit surveys the psychic plane, experiences enhanced emotional and intuitive sensitivity, is tested by the tendency to evade and avoid, learns to distinguish between the false and the real, and chooses either to go upward toward world saviorship or downward into the spineless collapse of unquestioned victimhood. In each of these three signs, spiritual progress builds on the experiences, assets, and challenges typical of each astrological 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 Capricorn, Aquarius, or Pisces thus stands better oriented to understand and embody the grander purposes behind each of these astrological influences.

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- 1 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 169.
  - 2 Ibid., 156.
  - 3 Ibid., 158.
  - 4 Ibid.
  - 5 Ibid., 153.
  - 6 Ibid., 169.
  - 7 Ibid.
  - 8 Ibid., 93, 158.
  - 9 Ibid., 169.
  - 10 Ibid., 336, 337.
  - 11 Ibid., 159.
  - 12 Ibid., 164.
  - 13 Ibid., 158.
  - 14 Ibid., 159.
  - 15 Ibid.
  - 16 Ibid., 167.
  - 17 Ibid., 162, 165.
  - 18 M. Temple Richmond, *Sirius* (Raleigh: Manasadeva Press, 2000), 89 – 141.
  - 19 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* 157, 168.
  - 20 Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma* (Washington, D.C.: Supreme Council, Thirty Third Degree, Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, 1872), 293.
  - 21 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 169.
  - 22 Alice A. Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1974), 160 – 170.
  - 23 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 173 – 174.
  - 24 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 163. In this passage, the Tibetan Master confirms that the esoteric rulers apply to disciples and initiates up to the gate of the Third Initiation.
  - 25 Ibid. In this passage, the Tibetan Master confirms that the hierarchical rulers apply to disciples and initiates at and beyond the Third or Transfiguration Initiation.
  - 26 Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules*, 185 – 186.
  - 27 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 142.
  - 28 Ibid., 145.
  - 29 Ibid., 147.
  - 30 Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules*, 188.
  - 31 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 147.
  - 32 Ibid., 136.
  - 33 Ibid.
  - 34 Ibid., 141.
  - 35 Ibid., 144.
  - 36 Ibid., 141.
  - 37 Ibid., 141, 142.
  - 38 Ibid., 144, 147.
  - 39 Ibid., 146, 147.
  - 40 Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules*, 185.
  - 41 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 142.
  - 42 Ibid., 135.

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43 Ibid., 137.  
44 Ibid., 150.  
45 Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules*, 185 – 186.  
46 Ibid., 192.  
47 Ibid., 193.  
48 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 135.  
49 Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules*, 185, 186.  
50 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 150.  
51 Ibid., 137.  
52 Ibid., 163.  
53 Ibid.  
54 Ibid., 137.  
55 Ibid., 99, 219.  
56 Ibid., 138.  
57 Ibid., 139.  
58 Bailey, *The Labors of Hercules*, 185, 186.  
59 Ibid., 192.  
60 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 142, 146, 147.  
61 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1953), 390.

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62 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 125.  
63 Ibid., 123, 124.  
64 Ibid.  
65 Ibid., 97, 98.  
66 Ibid., 123, 124.  
67 Ibid., 121.  
68 Ibid.  
69 Ibid., 96.  
70 Ibid., 121.  
71 Ibid., 118.  
72 Ibid., 115.  
73 Ibid.  
74 Ibid., 127.  
75 Ibid., 163.  
76 Ibid., 118.  
77 Ibid., 115.  
78 Ibid., 163.  
79 Ibid., 118.