

AQUARIUS Water of Life Poured Forth

By Jan van der Linden

When the sun is in Aquarius, we are able to understand, receive and utilize the Aquarian energies more easily and more purely than during the other months of the year. But as we know, we are also entering the new *world cycle* of Aquarius, the period of about 2500 years that is now beginning its influence. Therefore from January 20 to February 20 we have a double opportunity to align ourselves with the essential qualities and energies of the “Water Carrier.” This can help us deepen and purify our response to the new ways of the incoming New Age.

Let us begin by considering the labor that Hercules performed in Aquarius. Hercules is the aspirant and disciple, and his eleventh labor, the cleansing of the stables of King Augeas, gives us a dramatic example of *how the true disciple serves*. We must of course consider that labor symbolically. The following is a poetic and deeply esoteric description of the myth as rendered by Dr. Francis Merchant.¹

Within the Place of Peace the Great Presiding One poured forth the radiance of his exalted thought. The Teacher drew nigh.

“The single flame must light the other forty-nine,” the Great Presiding One affirmed.

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

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

Forth went Hercules through Gate the eleventh in search of Augeas the king.

When Hercules approached the realm where Augeas was the ruler, a horrid stench that made him faint and weak assailed his nostrils. For years, he learned, King Augeas had never cleared away the dung his cattle left within the royal stables. Then, too, the pastures were so amply dunged, no crops would grow. In consequence, a blighting pestilence was sweeping through the land, wreaking havoc with human lives.

To the palace then went Hercules and sought out Augeas. Informed that Hercules would cleanse the stenchy stables, Augeas displayed distrust and disbelief.

“You say that you will do this mighty task without reward?” the King declared suspiciously. “I have no faith in those who make such boasts. Some cunning plan you have contrived, O Hercules, to take my throne from me. Of men who seek to serve the world without a recompense, I have not heard. At this point, though, I’d welcome any fool who sought to help. But a bargain must be struck, lest I be chided as a foolish king. If you, within a single day, shall do what you have promised, one tenth of my great flock of cattle shall be yours; but if you fail, your life and fortune will be in my hands. Of course, I do not think you can fulfil your boast, but try you may.”

Hercules then left the King. He wandered through the blighted place, and saw a cart go by piled high with dead, the victims of the pestilence.

Two rivers, he observed, the Alpheus and the Peneus, flowed quietly nearby. Standing on the banks of one, the answer to his problem flashed upon his mind.

With might and main he laboured. By great exertions he succeeded in diverting both these streams from courses they had followed for decades. The Alpheus and the Peneus were made to pour their waters through the dung-filled stables of King Augeas. The rushing torrents swept away the long-accumulated filth. The realm was purged of all its fetid murk. Within a single day the task impossible had been performed.

When Hercules, quite satisfied with this result, returned to Augeas, the latter scowled.

“You have succeeded by a trick,” King Augeas cried out in rage. “The rivers did the work, not you. It was a ruse to take from me my cattle, a plot against my throne. Rewards you shall not have. Go, get you hence ere I cut down your stature by a head.”

The angry king thus banished Hercules, and bade him nevermore set foot within his realm on penalty of sudden death.

Having performed the task assigned, the son of man who was also a Son of God went back to him from whom he came.

“A server of the world you have become,” the Teacher said when Hercules drew nigh. “You have gone on by going back; you have come to the House of Light by yet another path; you have spent your light that the light of others might shine. The jewel that the eleventh labour gives is yours forever more.”

Thus ends the myth. This eleventh labor of Hercules gives us a clear demonstration of the Aquarian *Law of Service*. The two great rivers, the Alpheus and the Peneus, are symbolic of the river of life and the river of love. The Aquarian disciple is aware of these inner sources of power and also of the great need that exists for them in his environment, the befouled stables and the areas of death and darkness all around him. What he, the disciple, has to do, like Hercules, is bend these streams of life and love in such a way that they can reach the area of death, which is closed off from them, and give them *life*. Thus he demonstrates the keyword of the disciple in Aquarius:

“Water of life I am, poured forth for thirsty men.”

Serving your fellow humans is a very *deep* concept; it is letting Soul energy pour through. It is more than the concretely rendered services themselves; it is responding to the urge of the heart, of the Soul. King Augeas was right when he said to Hercules: “The rivers did the work, not you!” Indeed, the disciple has nothing to boast about. It is the rivers of life and love that do the work. That living Soul energy, therefore, must be released to pour forth *freely*; there should be no obstruction or contamination, no “little I” standing in the way. The personal life must enable the Soul radiance to pass through purely.

A Dutch author, Aart van der Leeuw, wrote as his motto in one of his books, “not through *me*, but *through me* — let that be my device.” This motto reflects well what is meant here.

The hindrance for true service is, above all, the attitude of separateness: not just between people but also between the outer world on the one side and the inner world of the Soul (or spiritual energies) on the other. Hercules demonstrates to us the importance of breaking down the walls of separation and isolation so that the available, waiting energies can pour forth and be applied to meet the needs of the world.

This is the possibility of service offered to us: to give our hearts to all and everything in the world around us that may be thirsty for inspiration, support and help, and to direct the spiritual energy (which we contact) toward it and let it pour forth.

Training for service as a way of life is given by the School for Esoteric Studies.

¹ In: *The Labours of Hercules*, Alice A. Bailey, pp. 180–182