

LABOR II: The Capture of the Cretan Bull Taurus, April 21 - May 20

The Myth

The presiding One spoke to the Teacher of the man whose light shone forth among the sons of men, who are the sons of God. "Where is the man who stood with power before the Gods, received their gifts and entered through the first wide open Gate to labor at his task?"

"He rests, Oh, great presiding One, and ponders on his failure, and mourns for Abderis, and seeks for help within himself."

"It is well. The gifts of failure guarantee success, when rightly understood. Let him proceed to labor once again, enter the second Gate, returning with dispatch."

The second Gate stood open wide and, from the light which veiled the distant scene, a voice emerged and said: "Pass through the Gate. Proceed upon thy way. Perform thy labor and return to me, reporting on the deed."

Alone and sad, conscious of need and worn with deep distress, Hercules slowly passed between the pillars of the Gate into the light which shines where stands the sacred bull. On the horizon rose the island fair where dwelt the bull, and where adventurous men could enter that vast maze which lured them to bewilderment, the maze of Minos, King of Crete, the keeper of the bull.

Crossing the ocean to the sunlit isle (though how we are not told) Hercules entered on his task to seek and find the bull, and lead it to the Holy Place where dwell the one-eyed men. From place to place he chased the bull, led by the gleaming star which shone upon the forehead of the bull, a bright lamp in a dark place. This light, moving as moved the bull, led him from place to place. Alone, he sought the bull; alone he chased it to its lair; alone he captured it and mounted on its back. Around him stood the Sisters seven, urging him on his way and, in the shining light, he rode the bull across the glimmering water to the isle of Crete unto the land where dwelt the Cyclops three.

These three great sons of God awaited his return, watching his progress through the waves. He rode the bull as if it were a horse, and with the Sisters singing as he went, drew near unto the land.

"He comes with strength", said Brontes, and went to meet him on the shore.

"He rides in light," said Steropes, "his inner light will brighter be," then fanned the light to sudden flame.

"He comes with speed," said Arges, "he is riding through the waves."

Hercules nearer drew, urging the sacred bull upon the Way, throwing the light upon the trail which led from Crete unto the Temple of the Lord, within the city of the one-eyed men. Upon the mainland, at the water's edge, these three men stood and grasped the bull, taking it thus away from Hercules.

"What hast thou here?" said Brontes, arresting Hercules upon the Way.

"The sacred bull, Oh, Holy One."

"Who art thou? Tell us now thy name," said Steropes.

"I am the son of Hera, a son of man and yet a son of God. I have performed my task. Take now the bull into the Holy Place and save it from due death. Minos desired its sacrifice."

"Who told you thus to seek and save the bull?" said Arges, moving towards the Holy Place.

"Within myself I felt the urge and sought my Teacher. Told by the great Presiding One, He sent me on the Way, and with long search and many pains, I found the bull. Helped by its holy light, I rode it through the separating sea unto this Holy Place.

"Depart in peace, my son, your task is done."

The Teacher saw him coming and went forth to meet him on the Way. Across the waters came the voices of the Sisters seven, singing around the bull, and nearer still the chanting of the one-eyed men within the Temple of the Lord, high in the Holy Place.

"You came with empty hands, oh, Hercules," the Teacher said.

"I have these empty hands, because I have fulfilled the task to which I was assigned. The sacred bull is rescued, securely with the Three. What next?"

Within the light shall you see light; walk in that light and there see light. Your light must brighter shine. The bull is in the Holy Place."

And Hercules reposed upon the grass and rested from his labor. Later the Teacher turned to Hercules and said: "Labor the second is performed, and easy was the task. Learn from this task the lesson of proportion. Strength to perform the arduous task; a willingness to do the task which taxes not your powers; such are two lessons learnt. Rise soon and seek the country, guarded by Gate the third, and find the golden apples. Bring them here. - The Tibetan (Djwhal Khul)

The Meaning of the Labor

In spite of all initial partial failure, Hercules has made his start. In line with the universal law he has begun his work on the mental plane.

In the working out of the creative plan, thought-impulse is followed by desire. That state of consciousness, which we call mental, is succeeded by the state of sensitivity, and this second labor deals with the desire world and with the potency of desire. It is one of the most interesting labors and one that is told us in fullest detail. Some of the accounts given of the various tests to which Hercules was subjected are exceedingly sketchy and brief in outline, but the tests in Taurus and Gemini, in Scorpio and Pisces, are related at greater length. They were drastic in their application and tried out every part of the aspirant's nature.

The key to the labor in Taurus is the right understanding of the law of Attraction. This is the law that governs that magnetic force and that principle of coherence which builds the forms through which God, or the soul, manifests. It produces the stability which demonstrates in the persistence of the form throughout its cycle of existence, and concerns the interrelation between that which builds the form and the form itself; between the two poles, positive and negative; between spirit and matter; between the Self and the not-Self; between male and female, and thus between the opposites.

Four Symbolic Words

We find that this test concerns predominantly the problem of sex. There are four words in the English language which are ideographic and symbolic. They consist of three letters each and are as follows: God, Sex, Law and Sin. In these four words we find expressed the sum total of all that is.

God, the sum total of all forms, the sum total of all states of consciousness, and the energizing Life.

Sex, that Life in operation, attracting spirit and matter and instituting the interplay between the objective and the subjective and between the exoteric and the esoteric. Sex, desire, attraction, the instinctive urge to creation, the pull of the soul, the urge to divinity, desire of the male for the female, the lure of matter for spirit: all these phrases can be piled up to express some of the activities of Sex in its various relations.

Law, the thought-impelled response of God to form; the habits instituted by the timeless interplay between the polar opposites which have been recognized by humanity as the inevitable laws of nature; the imposition of the will of God and the impress of that will upon form and its recognition by man.

Sin, according to its connotation, signifies "the one who it is," the uprising of the unit against the whole, individuality versus the group, selfishness instead of universal interest.

Thus is the story of the universe written for us in these four words. God, the Whole; Sex, the attraction between the parts within that Whole; Law, the habit of the Whole; and Sin, the revolt of the unit in the Whole.

The Story of the Labour

Minos, King of Crete, possessed a sacred bull, which he kept on the island of Crete. Eurystheus sent for Hercules and told him that it was necessary to capture the bull and bring it from the island to the

mainland. No instructions were given as to how this was to be accomplished, and all that Hercules knew was that the bull was sacred, that it was born from the sea, and that its destiny was to be offered in sacrifice to Minos. Hercules, therefore, travelled to Crete and searched all over the island, pursuing the bull from place to place until at last he cornered it. Then, we are told, he rode the bull, like a horse, across the island and through the waters which separated Crete from the mainland, and so brought it into the city of the Cyclops. These Cyclops were peculiar beings of whom it was claimed that they possessed only one eye, set in the middle of the forehead. They were ruled over by three outstanding figures, whose names were Brontes, meaning thunder, Steropes, meaning lightning, and Arges, meaning whirling activity. When Hercules arrived with the bull at the gates of the city, he was met by the three Cyclops, who received the sacred bull from him and took charge of it. And thus ended the second labor.

The Theme of Illumination

Taurus is one of the most interesting of the zodiacal constellations, especially at this time. It is the **Fixed Cross** in the heavens, the Cross of the Disciple, and the following extract is of interest in this connection:

"The sky is mystically spoken of as the Temple, and the eternal consciousness of God. Its altar is the sun, whose four arms or rays typify the four corners of the cardinal cross of the universe, which have become the four fixed signs of the zodiac, and as the four powerful sacred animal signs are both cosmical and spiritual, they represent the basic elements resembling our human principles. The sign **Leo** represents fire or spirit; **Taurus**, earth or body; **Aquarius**, air or mind; and **Scorpio** represents water likened to the soul. **Leo**, as the lion, is the strength of the lower nature, and is the serpent of force which, if directed upward, overcomes. **Taurus**, the bull, is always the symbol of creative force. **Aquarius**, the man, is the light-bearer, or light-bringer. **Scorpio**, the scorpion, is often transmuted with **Aquila**, the eagle ... which rises at the same time with Scorpio; they are closely linked in symbolism. Scorpio is 'the monster of darkness', who stings to death, and yet preserves and reproduces, symbolizing not only generation but regeneration. As the latter it is **Aquila**, the eagle, the bird of the sun which has conquered the dark side of Scorpio (that adversary that can drag man down lower than the beasts), but when transmuted is the eagle of light, which can exalt above the gods." *The Celestial Ship of the North*. Vol. I. (E. V. Straiton).

The "eye of the bull" in Taurus, the magnificent fixed star, **Aldebaran**, is one of the reasons why this constellation is regarded as conferring illumination. In ancient days it was called the leading star of the heavens, and Taurus has always been connected with light and, therefore, with Christ, who proclaimed himself as the Light of the World. Light, illumination and sound, as an expression of the creative force: these are the three basic ideas connected with this constellation. The "interpreter of the divine voice", as Taurus was called in ancient Egypt, can be paraphrased into Christian terminology and called "the Word made flesh". It is an interesting sidelight on the power of the zodiacal influences to recall that the bull's-eye lantern can be traced back to the bull's eye in Taurus, and the pontifical bull, or the papal enunciations which were regarded as interpreters of God's voice, is a term in common usage today.

It might well be asked here, in what way does Taurus, the bull, become the bringer of illumination? We are told that in this sign the moon is exalted and Venus is the ruler. The moon has always, from the standpoint of the esotericist, and among primitive agricultural peoples, been regarded as the form-building aspect. The moon is the symbol, therefore, of matter and is seen in many of our churches, closely connected with the Virgin Mary.

The consummation of the work that is undertaken in Taurus, and the result of the Taurian influence, is the glorification of matter and subsequent illumination through its medium. All that at present prevents the glory, which is the soul, and the radiance which emanates from the God within the form, from shining forth in its full power, is the matter or form aspect. When that has been consecrated, purified and spiritualized, then the glory and the light can indeed shine through and the moon aspect can, therefore, be exalted in Taurus. This is done through the influence of **Venus**, the symbol of earthly and of heavenly love, of both spiritual aspiration and of carnal desire, and is fittingly, therefore, the ruler of this sign. She is, above everything else, love, the creator of beauty and rhythm and unity. The bull and the cow together represent creation, and so Taurus and Venus are closely linked. The following is of interest:

"The bull or cow is the symbol of this sign, and in the celestial chart it will be observed that the little group of stars called Pleiades are represented just at the shoulder of the bull. Now, in Egyptian sculpture, or painting, the Pleiades are sometimes represented by the figure of a dove with wings outspread over the bull's saddle. The dove as we remember, is the bird sacred to Venus, and as the Pleiades are part of the constellation Taurus and, as we shall see, more Taurian in nature, if possible, than Taurus itself, the dove becomes a specially appropriate symbol for this little star-group." (*The Zodiac: A Life Epitome*, Walter H. Sampson, p. 24).

The Theme of Sex

From this extract and many others which could be adduced, it is apparent how closely linked with sex, in its lower and in its higher aspects, is this important constellation of Taurus. This is why it has been called in some books, the "sign of generation", both earthly and heavenly. We have seen that the power of the sign Taurus is that of attraction, or of bringing together. It exerts a steady and continuous pull and in both the symbolical and the astronomical sense it attracts. We have seen that in this sign are to be found the Pleiades, among them **Alcyone**, called the central sun of our universe, and around it circles our sun, with its attendant planets. The words of Job when he said: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion?" thus become clear. The **Pleiades** are the symbol of the soul around which the wheel of life revolves.

It is interesting to discover again, in Taurus, the triplicity which is so constantly recurrent in astronomical lore and in mythology:

Taurus, representing form and the attractive pull of matter;
the Pleiades, representing soul and the vast recurring cycle of experience;
and, among the seven Pleiades,* the Lost Pleiad (for only six are visible) a symbol of the obscuration of spirit, whilst soul, through desire, takes a body.

Thus the idea of the relation of the Self and the not-Self, in order to produce the ultimate revelation of the spirit, underlies all mythological teaching and the scriptures and symbols of all time, and thus we have also the emergence of the idea of the great illusion and glamor. Spirit or God is "lost", or veiled, and disappears in the attractiveness of the outer form and in the glamor which the soul attracts around itself.

It should be remembered here that the opposite sign to Taurus is that of Scorpio, and these two signs constitute the field of a stupendous effort on the part of Hercules; for in one he wrestles with the problem of sex, and in the other, he overcomes the great illusion.

Significance of the Constellations

The three constellations connected with this sign are **Orion, Eridanus, Auriga**; and the nature of the work in Taurus is beautifully foretold by the three pictures in the heavens which they present to us. The ancient name of Orion was "the three Kings", because of the three beautiful stars found in Orion's Belt. The Three Kings represent the three divine aspects of Will, Love and Intelligence, and Orion, therefore, symbolizes the spirit. The name Orion literally means "the breaking forth of light."

Again and again, as we circle around the zodiac, shall we find appearing what might be called "the spiritual prototype" of Hercules; Perseus, the Coming Prince, who slew the Medusa, symbol of the great illusion. He is found in Aries; Orion, whose name means "light", is found in Taurus; in Scorpio, Hercules himself, triumphant and victorious, appears. Then we have Sagittarius, the Archer on the Horse, going straight for his goal, and in Pisces we find the King. The more closely we study this heavenly picture book, the more we realize that ever before us is held the symbol of our divinity, the symbol of the soul in incarnation, and the story of matter, as it receives purification and glorification through the laborious work of the soul.

The second constellation connected with this sign is an immense river of stars, which streams forth from under the feet of Orion. It is called **Eridanus**, or the "River of the Judge", and is a symbol of the river of life, carrying souls into incarnation, where they learn the meaning of the words, "as a man sows, so shall he reap", and where they undertake the stupendous task of working out their own salvation.

just as Orion symbolizes the spirit aspect, so Eridanus concerns itself with the form-taking aspect and holds before its the thought of incarnation; whilst the third constellation, **Auriga**, is the charioteer, leading forth to new lands and so symbolizing the soul.

Nature of the Tests

The broad lesson to be learned in this sign is to achieve right understanding of the law of attraction and right use and control of matter. In this way matter is raised up into heaven, figuratively speaking, and can enter upon its right function; which is, to constitute a medium of expression and a field of endeavor for the indwelling Christ or soul. The aspirant, therefore, is tested in two ways:

first as to the caliber of his animal nature and the motives underlying its utilization;

second, he is tested as to the attraction which the great illusion can exert over him. Maya, or the great illusion, and sex are but two aspects of the same force, that of attraction: one, as it manifests on the physical plane, and the other, as it expresses itself in the field of the emotional-desire nature.

The Disciple and Sex

An aspirant to discipleship has in sex a real problem with which to contend. Self-indulgence and the control of the human being by any part of his organism are always inevitably wrong. When a man's entire mind is occupied with the thought of women, or vice versa; when he lives mainly to satisfy an animal craving; when he finds himself unable to resist the lure of his polar opposite, then he is a victim of and is controlled by the lowest part of his nature, the animal.

But when man recognizes his physical functions as a divine heritage, and his equipment as having been given him for the good of the group and to be rightly used for the benefit of the human family, then we shall see a new motivating impulse underlying human conduct where sex is concerned. We shall see the elimination of promiscuity, with its attendant evil, disease. We shall see the solution of the problem of too many children and, incidentally, easement of the economic problem. Through right control of the sex function and its relegation to the purpose for which it exists (the carrying onward of the human family and the providing of bodies whereby souls call gain experience) then right use will be made of sex. Then, passion, Lust, self-gratification, disease, and over-population will die out in the world. Matter will no longer be prostituted to selfish desire, and the relation between the sexes will be governed by understanding of divine purpose and skill-in-action.

Two points of view are equally wrong: in the one case we have practices taught which lead eventually to sexual orgies. These have been dignified by the name of sex magic, and in the sexual orgasm, deliberately induced, a man is led to believe that the physical sex act is his highest point of spiritual opportunity and that, at such a moment, he can touch, if he will, the kingdom of Heaven.

The other attitude, which makes marriage and all expression of the sex life a sin for a disciple and which says that a man cannot be pure in the truly spiritual aspect if he marries and raises a family, is as devastatingly dangerous. There is no state of consciousness and no condition of life in which it is impossible for a man to function as a son of God. If it is not possible for a man to live the life of discipleship and the life of initiation and, with due self-control and understanding, live a normal, balanced sex life; then there is a department of human expression in which divinity is helpless, and this I refuse to recognize. There is no department of life, no field of expression, no meeting of obligation, no use of the physical apparatus, in which the soul cannot fulfil the part of the dominating factor and all things be done truly to the glory of God. But the soul must control, and not the lower nature. People forget that some of the greatest of the world initiates married; that the Buddha married and had a son, and must have been an initiate of high degree when he entered into the married state. They forget that Moses, David the Psalmist, and many of the outstanding figures in the world of mysticism in both hemispheres, were married and raised families.

Disciples belong to all races, both in the occident and in the orient, and the attitude of different races towards sex is widely diversified. Standards of conduct differ. The legality or the illegality of relations varies. Different epochs and different civilizations have seen relationships that were legal at one time, and illegal at another. Some races are monogamous and some races are polygamous. In some

civilizations the woman is regarded as the dominant factor, and in others the man. Down the ages sex perverts, homosexuals, true and spurious, have been with us, and today is probably no worse than 5,000 years ago, except that everything is now dragged out into the light, which is good. Everybody talks about the problem; and the rising generation are asking in no uncertain tones: "What about sex? What is right and what is wrong?" How can they be expected to deal with a question which has been discussed, seemingly in the most futile manner, down the ages?

Here it is pertinent to note that Minos, King of Crete, who owned the sacred bull also possessed the maze in which the Minotaur lived, and the maze has ever been the symbol of the great illusion. The word "maze" comes from an old English word, meaning to bewilder, to confuse, to puzzle. The island of Crete with its maze and its bull is an outstanding symbol of the great illusion. It was separated from the mainland, and illusion and bewilderment are characteristics of the separated self, but not of the soul on its own plane, where group realities and universal truths constitute its kingdom. The bull, to Hercules, typified animal desire, and the many aspects of desire in the world of form which, in their totality, constitute the great illusion. The disciple, like Hercules, is a separated unit, divided from the mainland, the symbol of the group, by the world of illusion and the maze in which he lives. **The bull of desire has to be caught and mastered and chased from one point to another in the life of the separated self, until the time comes when the aspirant can do what Hercules succeeded in doing: ride the bull.** To ride an animal, in the ancient myths, signifies control. *The bull is not slaughtered, it is ridden and guided, and under the mastery of the man.*

There are potencies and faculties hidden in the human being that, when developed and unfolded, may bring new powers to bear upon this problem. But, in the meantime, what shall the aspirant do? Certain suggestions may be made:

1. *Ride, control and master the bull*, and let the aspirant remember that the bull has to be ridden across the waters to the mainland; which means that the solution of the whole sex problem will come when the disciple subordinates his separated personal island self to group purpose and endeavor, and begins to rule his life by the question, "What is best for the group with which I am associated?" It is by doing this that the bull is ridden to the mainland.

2. *Use commonsense.* The ancient meaning of the word "common sense" was that there was a sense which synthesized and unified the five senses and so constituted a "common sense", literally, the mind. Let the aspirant use his mind, and through the medium of intelligent perception, guide and control the bull of desire. If common sense is used, certain dangers will be avoided. There is a danger in the method of many aspirants in inhibiting or shutting off all sex expression. Physiologically they may succeed, but the experience of psychologists and teachers is that where inhibition and a drastic suppression is imposed upon the organism, the result is some form of nervous or mental complex. Many physically clean people have unclean minds. Many who would scorn the practise of any of the sex perversions and who hold that marriage is not for the disciple, have mental apparatuses which will not bear investigation. Their minds and their interpretations of other people's actions are so salacious and their capacity to think evil so great, that, dangerous as this may sound, one feels that it would be better for them to be ridden by the bull of desire than to continue their present practice of substituting mental indulgence for outer sin. **A clean mind and a pure heart, a rightly organized and rightly used physical body, conformity to the laws of the land in which his destiny is cast, utter consideration for the welfare of those with whom he is associated, and a life of loving service: these constitute the ideals of the aspirant.**

3. *A right understanding of the meaning of celibacy.* The word means "single" and the meaning usually given to the word is, to refrain from the marriage relation. Many young men and women, driven by spiritual desire and under the influence of the thought-form of the church during the Middle Ages, with its many monasteries and convents, believe that for them the celibate state is essential and right, and are puzzled when they find that complexes result. But may it not be that the true celibacy has been expressed for us in the words of Christ, when he said, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light"? May it not be that true celibacy is

the refusal of the soul any longer to identify itself with the form? May not the real marriage relation, of which the physical plane relation is but the symbol, be that of the union of the soul and the form, the positive spirit aspect and the negative mother-matter?

Let the soul be single in its purpose and freed from the thralldom of matter, and then right action and a right point of view will inevitably be the characteristics of the physical plane life. Let the soul ride the form, controlling and mastering it, and then it will surely know its right obligations. It will recognize the relation that it should hold to other human beings, whether its destiny is to be that of husband or wife, father or mother, brother or sister, friend or companion. Through right use of the form and right understanding of purpose, through right orientation to reality and right use of spiritual energy, the soul will act as the controlling factor and the whole body will be full of light. Through control, through the use of common sense, by a right understanding of celibacy, and by identification with group purpose, the disciple will arrive at liberation from the control of sex. He will succeed in following the example of Hercules and will ride the bull of desire over to the mainland where, in the Temple of God, he will hand it over into the care of the Cyclops who were early initiates, having the single eye about which we have been speaking, the eye of Shiva, the Bull's eye in the constellation Taurus. For Hercules himself was not only the disciple, but he was, in his lower nature, the bull, and in his higher nature the Cyclops.

When the bull of desire has been handed over to the Cyclops, to the initiate with the single eye, **which is himself, the soul**, the three divine aspects, will begin to manifest: Brontes, Steropes and Arges will guard the sacred bull, and Hercules, the disciple, will no longer have any responsibility. Brontes is the symbol of the first aspect of God, the Father who spoke and is the creative sound. Steropes means lightning, or light, and is the second aspect, the soul. Arges means whirling activity, the third aspect of divinity, expressing itself in the intense activity of physical plane life. These divine aspects constitute the controlling factor and once they have gained possession of the sacred bull, the problem of Hercules is solved.

* Note the "seven Sisters" singing about Hercules, in the statement of the Myth- *The Labours of Hercules* An Astrological Interpretation, Alice A. Bailey p. 39–53

Taurus:	the Bull
Element:	Earth sign (as are Virgo and Capricorn)
Quality:	Desire, for the mass of men; will or directed purpose, for the disciple.
Polar Opposite:	Scorpio, a water sign (conflict of duality, desire overcome; triumphant discipleship).
Rulers:	Exoteric, Venus; Esoteric Vulcan.
Keywords:	
From the form angle:	Let struggle be undismayed.
From the soul angle:	I see and when the Eye is opened, all is illumined.
The Lesson:	Hercules has to learn the nature of desire, to transmute it into aspiration, to dominate sex, and use it rightly, and thus capture the Cretan Bull. This strong urge, and the potency of attraction, is that, as we shall see, which produces the great illusion, but which can, eventually, become the cause of illumination.