

# Taming of the Mind

## The 1st labor of Hercules



The Greek mythological god Hercules was known for his strength and wild adventures. In the esoteric tradition, these adventures symbolize the “battles within self”. The battles are the trials we face to become a vessel of spirit from which our soul can soar. The challenges faced are the conflicts we encounter as we brave ourselves to merge soul and ego (personality).

There are 12 labors this journey takes us through. Each one is associated with one of the 12 signs of the zodiac. Each of us experiences all 12 labors regardless of whether we are born under a particular sign. But for those who are, there will be a deeper alignment with your personal path of self-development.

## **The Myth**

Hercules is assigned the task of reigning in wild horses who have the potential to kill him. He is aided by a trusted friend to help him. Confident and fiery Hercules captures the wild horses. He then prematurely relinquishes the task of bringing the horses in to his friend and leaves the task at hand. Unable to manage the fierce nature of the horses, he is unsuccessful and is killed and eaten. Hercules later returns and is heart broken by the death of his friend.

## **The Deeper Meaning**

The four horses symbolize aspects of our mind (monkey-mind, egoic mind). Hercules friend symbolizes how alone, the ego/personality cannot complete the task. And because Hercules had hubris and thought he did not need the joining of soul, he abandoned the task. The moral here is that the mind cannot complete the “task” alone, it **must** be reigned in properly.

## **The Spiritual Task**

We are asked to re-orient our consciousness so that the mind aspect can be harnessed to work on behalf of the soul. The personality tends to act rashly and with an ego-driven rush of bravado and impulse. This marks Hercules’s initial step upon the “path of transformation’. We are called to re-orient the mind aspect of our consciousness. Here we must begin to shift from the impulse of living enthusiastically in matter, to using it thoughtfully on behalf of spirit. The personality suffers, or in this case is destroyed, when it attempts to work without the guidance of the soul. Wild, unrestrained action can wreak destruction and devastation. When the soul and personality work in partnership, the mind can be harnessed so that new and transformative ideas can be brought forth.

## **Contemplative Questions:**

- **Do I find that there is more than a usual amount of struggle and strife when I am initiating something new?**
- **Do I strive for positions of leadership and authority over those around me?**
- **How attached am I to drama?**