

## **Philosophic Encyclopedia**

### **The Ring Of The Niebelung**

### **The Rhine Maidens**

Repetition is the keynote of the vital body and the extract of the vital body is the intellectual soul, which is the pabulum of the Life Spirit, the true Christ principle in man. As it is the particular work of the Western World to evolve this Christ principle, to form the Christ within that it may shine through the material darkness of the present time, reiteration of ideas is absolutely essential. Unconsciously the whole world is obeying this law.

When newspapers start out to inculcate certain ideas into the public mind, they do not expect to accomplish this by a single editorial, no matter how powerfully written, but by articles of daily recurrence they gradually create the desired sentiment in the public mind. The Bible has been preaching the principle of love for two thousand years, Sunday after Sunday, day by day, from hundreds of thousands of pulpits. War has not yet been abolished, but the sentiment in favor of universal peace is growing stronger as time passes. These sermons have had but a very slight effect insofar as the world at large is concerned, no matter how powerfully a particular audience might be moved for the time being; for the desire body is that part of the composite man which was impressed at the time and was stirred thereby.

The desire body is a later acquisition than the vital body, hence not so crystallized, and , therefore, more impressionable. Because it is of a finer texture than the vital body, it is less retentive, and the emotions so easily generated are also easily dissipated. A very small impact is made upon the vital body when ideas and ideals filter into it through the auric envelope, but whatever it gets from study, sermons, lectures, or reading is of a more lasting nature, and many impacts in the same direction create impressions which are powerful for good or for ill according to their nature.

In order that we may benefit by this law of cumulative impacts, we take up for study, another of the great soul myths which throws light upon the mystery of life and being from a different angle, so that we may learn whence we have come, why we are here, and whether we are going more thoroughly than before.

As previously said, all myths are vehicles of spiritual truths veiled under allegory, symbol, and picture, and, therefore, capable of comprehension without reason. As fairy stories are a means of enlightenment to children, so these great myths were used to convey spiritual truth to infant humanity.

The Group Spirit works upon animals through their desire bodies, calling up pictures which give to the animal a feeling and a suggestion of what it must do. Likewise, the allegorical pictures, which are contained in myths, laid the foundation in man for his present and future development. Subconsciously these myths worked upon him and brought him to the stage where he is today. Without that preparation he would have been unable to accomplish that work which he is now doing.

Today these myths are yet working to prepare us for the future, but some are more under their spell than others. The path of

empire and civilization has followed the Sun's course from east to west, and in the etheric atmosphere of the Pacific coast these mythical pictures have almost faded away, and man is contacting spiritual realities more directly. Further east, particularly in Europe, we find still the atmosphere of mysticism brooding over the land. There, people love the ancient myths which speak to them in a manner incomprehensible to the westerner. The soul life of the people among the fjords and fjelds of Norway, on the heaths and moors of Scotland, and the deep recessed of the Black Forest of Germany, and among the Alpine Glaciers, is as deep and mystical today as a thousand years ago. They are in closer touch with Nature Spirits and other fabled realities by feeling than we who have gone ahead upon the path of aspiration by direct knowledge. If we recall this feeling and combine it with our knowledge, we shall have attained an enormous advantage. Let us, therefore, try to assimilate one of the deepest mystical stories of the past, The Ring of the Niebelung, the great epic poem of northern Europe. It relates the story of man, from the time when he dwelt in Atlantis, until this world shall have come to an end by a great conflagration and the Kingdom of the Heavens shall have been established, as foretold in the Bible.

The Bible tells us of the Garden of Eden where our first parents dwelt in close touch with God, pure and innocent as children. It tells us how that state of being was abrogated and how sorrow, sin, and death came into the world. In ancient myths, like The Ring of the Niebelung, we are also introduced to mankind living under similar conditions of childlike innocence. The opening scene in this drama of Wagner represents life under the waters of the Rhine where the Rhine maidens swim about with rhythmic motion and a song upon their lips, imitating and undulating swell of the dancing waves. The waters are lighted by a great lump of lustrous

gold and around this the Rhine daughters circle as planets move about the central Sun; for we have here the microcosmic replica of the macrocosm where the heavenly bodies move around the Central Light-giver in a majestic circle dance.

The Rhine maidens represent primitive humanity during the time when we dwelt at the bottom of the ocean in the dense, foggy atmosphere of Atlantis. The gold, which lighted the scene as the Sun illuminates the solar universe, is a representation of the Universal Spirit which then brooded over mankind. We did not then see everything in clear, sharp contours as we view objects around us today, but our internal perception of the soul qualities in others was much keener than it is now.

The individual Spirit feels itself an Ego and designates itself "I" in sharp contradistinction to all others, but this separative principle had not entered into the child men of early Atlantis. We had no feeling of "me" and "thee" we felt ourselves as one great family, as children of the divine Father. Neither were we troubled about what we should eat or drink any more than children now-a-days are burdened with the material necessities of life. Time was to us one grand play and frolic.

But this state could not continue, or there would have been no evolution. As the child grows up to become a man or woman to take its part in the battle of life, so also primitive mankind was destined to leave its natal home in the lowlands and ascent through the waters of Atlantis, when they condensed and flooded the basins of the Earth. Evolving humanity then entered the aerial conditions in which we live today as told of the ancient Israelites who went through the Red Sea to enter the Promised Land, and of Noah, who left his native place when flood waters descended.

The northern myths tells us the story in another way, but though the angle of vision is different the main points of the narrative bring out the same essential ideas. In the Garden of Eden our first parents did not think for themselves. They obeyed unquestioningly whatever commands were given them by their divine leaders, much as a child in early years does as its parents wish because it has no sense of self. It lacks individuality. This, according to the Bible story, was gained when Lucifer imbued them with the idea that they might become like the gods and know good and evil.

In the Teutonic myth we are told that Alberich, one of these children of the Mist (niebel is mist, ung is child—they were thus called because they lived in the foggy atmosphere of Atlantis), coveted the gold which shone with such luster in the Rhine. He had heard that whoever obtained the gold and formed it into a ring would thereby be enabled to conquer the world and master all others who did not possess the treasure. Accordingly, he swam up to the great rock where the gold lay, seized it and swam rapidly towards the surface, pursued by the Rhine daughters who were in great distress at the loss of this treasure.

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When Alberich, the thief, had reached the surface of the water he heard a voice telling him that no one could form the gold into a ring as required to master the world, save by forswearing love; this he did instantly and forthwith commenced to rob the Earth of its treasure and gratify his desire for wealth and power.

As said before, the gold, as it lay in its unformed state upon the rock of the Rhine, represents the Universal Spirit which is not the exclusive property of anyone, and Alberich represents the foremost among mankind who were impelled by the desire to

conquer new worlds. They first became ensouled by the indwelling Spirit and emigrated to the highlands above; but when once in the clear atmosphere of the Fifth Epoch, the world as we know it, they saw themselves clearly and distinctly as separate entities. Each realized that his interests were different from those of others; that to succeed and to win the world for himself, he must stand alone, he must look after his own interests regardless of others. Thus the Spirit drew a ring about itself and all inside that ring was "me" and "mine," a conception which made him antagonistic to others. Hence in order to form this ring and keep a separate center it was necessary for him to forswear love. Thus, and thus only, could he disregard the interests of others that he might thrive and master the world.

Alberich is not alone in his desire to draw a ring around himself for the purpose of gaining power, however. "As above so below" and vice versa, says the Hermetic axiom. The gods are also evolving. They also have aspirations for power—a desire to draw a ring around themselves—for there is war in heaven as well as upon Earth. Different cults seek to master the souls of men and their limitations are also symbolized by rings.

### **The Ring Of The Gods**

By appropriating a part of the Rhinegold, representing the Universal Spirit and forming it into a ring symbolical of the fact that it (the Spirit) has neither beginning nor end, the Ego came into existence as a separate entity. Within the confines of this auric ring it is supreme ruler, self-sufficient, and resents encroachment upon its domain. Thus, it placed itself beyond the pale of fellowship. Like the prodigal son, it wandered far from the Father, but even before it realized that it was feeding upon the husks of matter, religion stepped in to guide it back to its eternal

home, to free it from the illusion and delusion incidental to material existence, to redeem it from the death incurred in this phase of the dense embodiment, and to show it the way to truth and life eternal.

In the Teutonic myth, the warders of religion are represented as gods. Chief among them is Wotan, who is identical with the Latin Mercury, and Wotansday or Wednesday, is still named in his honor. Freya, the Venus of Norway, was goddess of beauty, who fed the other gods on the golden apples which preserved their youths. Friday is her day. Thor, the Jupiter of the Norsemen, is said to drive his car over the heavens and the noise then heard is the thunder, and the lightning sparks that fly from his hammer when he strikes at his enemies. Loge is the name of the god of Saturday. (Lorday in Scandinavian, a derivation from lue, the Scandinavian name for flame.) He is really not one of the gods, but related to the giants or nature forces. His flame is not only the physical flame, but is also a symbol of illusion, and he, himself, is the spirit of deceit, sometimes currying favor with the gods and betraying the giants, at other times deceiving the gods and helping the giants to further his own schemes. Like Lucifer, the fiery Mars Spirit, he is also a spirit of negation, but delights also in obstructing life like the cold Saturn.

There is in northern mythology a reference to the still earlier cult wherein the deities of the water were worshiped, but the gods we mentioned superseded them, and are said to ride to the judgment seat every day over a rainbow bridge, Bifrost. Thus, we see that this religion dates from the dawn of the present epoch, when mankind had emerged from the waters of Atlantis into the clear atmosphere of the Fifth Epoch—in which we are now living—and where they saw the rainbow for the first time.

It was said to Noah, when he led primitive mankind out of the Flood that so long as the sign of the rainbow remained in the clouds, the alternating cycles of summer and winter, night and day, should not cease, and the northern myth also shows us the gods gathered at the rainbow bridge in the beginning of this era. It and the gods remain until the moment when this phase of our evolution is ended, an event which will be shown to be identical with the description given in the Christian Apocalypse, which the Scandinavian myth will materially help to explain.

Truth is universal, and unlimited. It knows no boundaries, but when the Ego enveloped itself in a ring of separate vehicles which segregated it from others, this limitation made it incapable of understanding absolute truth. Therefore a religion embodying the fullness of pure truth would have been incomprehensible to mankind and unsuited to help them. Hence, as a child who goes to school and learns a few elementary lessons the first year to prepare it for more complicated problems later, so humanity were given religions of the most primitive nature to educate them to something higher by easy stages.

Thus the warders of religion, the gods, are represented as desirous of building a walled fortress so that they may entrench themselves behind that wall and focalize their powers against the other faith. The Spirit cannot be limited without enmeshing itself in materiality; therefore, the gods, on the advise of Loge, the spirit of deceit and delusion, make a bargain with the giants, Fafner, and Fasolt, (representing selfishness), to build the wall of limitation. When that wall surrounds the gods they have lost the universal light and knowledge; therefore, the myth tells us that part of their payment to the builders of Valhal was to be the Sun and Moon.

Furthermore, when religion has thus limited itself behind the wall of creed, the spirit of decay is introduced; it waxes old as a garment, and, therefore, it is also said that Wotan (wisdom or reason), agreed to give the giants, Freya, the goddess of beauty, who fed the gods and her golden apples to preserve their youth. Thus, by listening to advise from Loge, the spirit of deceit, the gods have sacrificed their light, their knowledge, and their hope of eternal youth and usefulness. Still, as already said, this was in a manner necessary, for mankind could not have grasped truth in its fullness then; we cannot understand it even now.

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The spiritual power of religion is symbolized by the magic wand of Aaron in the Bible, by the magic spear of Parsifal in the Grail myth, and by the spear of Wotan in the story of the Niebelung. To bind the bargain with the giants, magic characters were cut in the handle of the spear, which was thus weakened, and in that manner it is shown that religion loses in spiritual power what it gains in material ways when it makes a bargain with the world rulers and panders to the baser appetites.

According to the teaching of the Norsemen, those only who died in battle were entitled to be taken to Valhal. Wotan desires none but the strong and the mighty warriors. Those who died of illness or in peace upon their beds were condemned to the realm of hell, the underworld. In this also there is a great lesson, for none but the noble and the fearless who spend their days fighting the battle of life to the very last breath are worthy of advancement. The shirkers who love ease and peace, rather than the work of the world, are not entitled to promotion in the school of life. It does not matter where we work or what the line of our experience may be, so long as we faithfully battle with the problems of life as they

appear before us. Neither will it suffice if we do this for a year or two and then lapse into inactivity; we must keep on working and striving until the day of life is done.

Thus the old Norse religion teaches the same lesson as Paul taught when he counseled "patient persistence in well doing." Even if we realize that we have not all truth, that we are placed under limitations by separateness, the egoism symbolized by the Ring of Niebelung, and by creed and convention symbolized by the Ring of the Gods, still if we fill our appointed niche to the best of our ability throughout our whole life we shall be certain of advancement in a future age. We shall see more clearly through the veil of egoism when we willingly live the life where we have been placed, for the Recording Angels make no mistakes. They have put us in that place where we have been given the lessons needed to prepare us for a greater sphere of usefulness.

From what has been said, it is evident that the creed-bound condition of the various churches—the insistence on dogma and ritual—are not, unmitigated evils, as it may have appeared to many, but in reality the necessary outcome of the limitations incidental to the material existence through which the human Spirit is now passing, as thus each class is being properly taken care of. It receives as much truth as it can comprehend, and as is good for its present development. There is no need of worrying about anyone. No one can or will be lost, for, as in God we live, and move, and have our being, so, if one were lost, a part of the Divine Author of our system would be missing, an unthinkable proposition.

But while a great majority of mankind are thus being taken care of by the orthodox religions, there always a few pioneers—some whose faculty of intuition tells them of greater heights unscaled,

who see the sunlight of truth beyond the wall of creed. Their souls are starving on the husks of dogmas, and they long ardently for the apples of youth, and love sold by the gods to the giants. Even the gods are growing old rapidly, for no religion which is devoid of love can ever hope to hold mankind for any length of time.

Therefore, the gods were forced to seek again the advice of Loge, the spirit of deceit, hoping through his wiles to extricate themselves from the dilemma. Loge tells then how Alberich, the Niebelung, has succeeded in hoarding up an immense treasure by enslaving his brothers. With the consent of the gods, he uses deceitful means to capture Alberich and forces him to disgorge all his treasures. He then plays upon the avaricious nature of the giants and finally succeeds in ransoming Freya.

Thus the curse of the Ring (egoism and selfishness) has tainted even the gods. For the sake of the Ring (power), Alberich, the Niebelung, forswore love. He oppressed his brothers and ruled them with an iron rod. Religion, on its side, forswore love by the sale of Freya. It also stooped to deceit to force the rulers of the world to pay tribute and when the Ring of the Niebelung passed into the hands of the giants the evil fate followed it, for one brother slays the other that he may be the sole possessor of the wealth of the world.

The gods have indeed regained Freya, but she is no longer the pure goddess of love. She has been prostituted; hence; she is but the semblance of her former self and fails to satisfy those whose intuition sees deeper than the surface; such are called Walsungs in the Scandinavian myth. The first syllable is the derivation of the German word, *walhlen*, to choose or the Scandinavian, *vaelge*. The last syllable means children. They are children of desire for free will and choice, who want to choose their own path and who seek to follow their own divine instinct.

## **The Valkuerie**

"The Valkuerie" is the name of the second part of Wagner's great musical drama, founded upon the northern myth of the Niebelungs, and the bearers of the name were children of Wotan, as were also the Walsungs.

The appropriateness of this name will be at once apparent when we understand that the mission of the Valkuerie was to go to battles whether fought between two or more, take the slain upon their horses, and carry them to Valhal. Therefore, a battle field or a place of combat was called Valplads, the place where Wotan, the god, chose the valiant ones who died fighting the battle for truth (as they saw it), to be his companions in the realm of bliss (as they conceived it). Brunhilde, the spirit of truth, was therefore chief among the Valkueries, the leader of her sisters, the other virtues. She was the favorite daughter of the god Wotan.

But when the gods had limited themselves and shut away the universality of truth by the Ring of Creed and dogma—symbolized by Valhal—the Walsungs, who are truth seekers first and foremost, rebelled. They manifest under different aspects as shown by the names given them in the northern myth. The root of their name is Sieg, a German word which means victory, and it is highly appropriate, for no matter what odds are against it, truth will win in the end.

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Siegmund, the courageous one, who is impelled to seek truth no matter what the consequences, may be slain as the result of his audacity. We shall hear how and why, presently. Sieglinda, his sister and later his wife, who has the same inward urge but dares not openly follow it, may die in despair. She transmits the hunger

for the truth to their offspring Siegfried, he, who through victory gains peace, so that what one generation of truth seekers fails to accomplish, will eventually be achieved by their descendants, and in the end truth will triumph over creed and stand supreme.

We are taking time by the forelock when relating or hinting at events which will be unfolded in the beautiful tale before us, but we cannot refrain from iterating and reiterating that glorious thought, "For now we see through a glass darkly." Though the walls and limitations of physical existence are about us in every direction, the time is coming when "we shall see and know even as we are known."

When Siegmund, impelled by the uncontrollable desire for truth, leaves Valhal, Wotan is enraged and in order to put a check on the independent spirit of the Walsungs, he orders the marriage of Sieglinda to Hunding, who is the spirit of convention. She swoons despairingly in his arms, for she has not the courage to leave her ancestors as her brother had done. Thus she is a fit symbol of those who, though they rebel in their innermost natures, are married to the conventions of the world and are afraid to make a radical change from the established code of the church, for fear of what people will think of them. Thus, though outraged in their innermost nature and thwarted in their holiest ambitions, they continue to bear the yoke of conventionality and go through the established church services for the sake of appearance.

In the course of time, Siegmund comes by chance to the house of Hunding and finds his sister whom at first he does not know, but when they have recognized each other, he induces her to flee with him. They both know that this act of theirs, this outrage against Hunding, the spirit of convention, will not be condoned by the gods, and to fortify themselves in the battle which they know is

before them, they take with them a magical sword called Nothung. Noth is need or distress, and ung as we have already seen, means child. Thus the sword is the child of distress, the courage of despair. This sword had been buried to the hilt in Yggdrasil by no less a person than Wotan, himself, against just such an emergency as this. In order that we may thoroughly understand this beautiful symbol and the seemingly paradoxical conduct of Wotan, it will be necessary to elucidate the meaning of Yggdrasil, the World Ash, the tree of life and being, as explained in the Scandinavian mythology.

According to their concept, this wonderful tree reached from Earth to heaven. One of its roots was in the underworld with Hel, a terrible hag who ruled over those who had died of disease and were not, therefore, qualified to dwell with Wotan in Valhal. They represent the class of people who are indolent and neglect to fight the battle of life to the last. Hel has three children, who are closely akin to her and are always fighting the gods. who have the welfare of man at heart. They are symbols of the elements which make up the material world where death alone reigns. One is the Midgaard Serpent, a prodigious monster encircling the Earth and biting its own tail: it is the ocean. The other is the wolf Fenris, which is so subtle, yet so strong, that nothing can hold him: He represents the atmosphere surrounding the Earth and the winds which cannot be controlled. Loge, with whom we have already become acquainted, is the spirit of fire, deceit, and illusion. The other root of Yggdrasil is with the Frost Giants in chaos, whence this whole universe originated. The third root is with the gods.

Under the roof, which is with Hel, the Serpent, Nidhog, lies gnawing. It is the spirit of envy and malice which is subversive of good: nid means envy, and hog, to fell. Because Yggdrasil, the tree of life in manifestation, lives by love, envy and malice would

fell the tree and bring it down to death and Hel. But under the root that is with the gods, is the fountain, Urd, whence the three Norns, or Fates, fetch the water of life—the spiritual impetus wherewith to water the tree and keep its leaves fresh and green. The names of these three Norns are Urd, Skuld, and Verdande. Urd is from the German, *ur*, the past, primordial, or virgin state in relation to man and the universe. She spins upon her wheel the thread of fate generated by us in the past; and Skuld, a name signifying debt, is the second Norn, who represents the present. To her, Urd delivers the thread of fate of past lives which we must expiate in this embodiment. It is then given to Verdande, the third Norn, whose name is a derivation of *werdende*, the German word for becoming. She represents the future, and when the thread of fate symbolizing the debt paid at the present time is handed to her, she breaks it off piece by piece. Thus this wonderful symbol tells just that when the causation generated in past lives has worked itself into effects in this life, the debt is cancelled for all time to come.

The northern mythology further tells us that besides these three chief Norms, there were many others, and that one officiated at each birth and took charge of the destiny of the child then born. We are also told that these Norns, or Fates, did not work according to their own will but were subject to the dictates of the invisible Orlog. The name is a corruption of the word *ur*, meaning primordial, and *log*, law. Thus we see the northern symbol teaches that the Norns were not subject to the gods, and that our destiny is not ruled by caprice but by an inexorable law of Nature, the Law of Cause and Effect.

Under the third root, which was with the Frost Giants, was the well of Mime. The Frost Giants, or nature forces, had existed prior to the establishment of the Earth. They had helped its formation and,

therefore, knew many things which were hidden from the gods. Therefore, even Wotan, the god of wisdom, was wont to go to the well of Mime to drink therefore, that he might receive a knowledge of the past. He also had to drink from the fountain of Urd that he might renew his life.

Thus we see that the Hierarchies, who help us to evolve, are themselves living to learn; and the very fact that they are learning shows their liability to err, and, also the reason why Wotan, their chief, should provide the sword, Nothung—the courage of despair—so that in an emergency those against whom he erred might have a weapon wherewith to defend themselves. Much more might be said about this wonderful World Ash, the Yggdrasil, but the student has now sufficient information to enable him to understand the relation of the sword to that which follows.

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When Siegmund and Sieglinda, fortified with the magic sword—the courage of despair—leave the house of Hunding, the spirit of convention, to seek truth in the wide world, the outraged Hunding needs not the command of Wotan to pursue them with intent to kill. Wotan bids Brunhilde, the Valkuerie, to be invisibly present at the expected battle and fight for Hunding, the spirit of conventionality. But the spirit of truth cannot fight against the truth seeker, so Brunhilde sorrowfully refuses to comply with Wotan's orders. When Siegmund meets Hunding in deadly combat and is about to vanquish him, Wotan interposes his spear, and upon that the sword, Nothung, is shattered and Siegmund, defenseless, is killed by a blow from Hunding.

Thus truth is ever upon the side of the truth seeker in his battle against the conventionalities of the church and social customs. But

when the power of religion, which furnished him the courage of despair necessary to stand up for his convictions, is pitted against the power of creed symbolized by the spear of Wotan, many an earnest soul has been vanquished, though not convinced.

Siegmond may die, and Sieglinda may follow him to the grave, broken-hearted, when, assisted by Brunhilde she has given birth to Siegfried, the victor; for, as already said, the thirst for truth once felt can never be quenched until it has gained satisfaction.

In the meantime, Wotan powerless to abandon Valhal, the Ring of Creed, is forced to put away from himself Brunhilde, the spirit of truth, who has disobeyed him; for it is a condition of creed that it be autocratic and brook no gainsaying. But as all religions are inherently imbued by a spirit of love and a sincere desire to benefit and uplift mankind, Wotan feels an overwhelming sorrow at the step which is necessary for the continuance of the policy he had adopted, and which he adheres to despite the heart-rending pleadings of Brunhilde. It is a terrible thing to part company with truth, and both feel this more keenly than words can express, when the poor creed bound Wotan must perforce put Brunhilde to sleep, as he says:

"Never to be wakened, until one shall come who is more free than I." And in that saying he discloses the principal requirement in the quest of truth. "Unless a man leave father and mother," said Christ, "He cannot become my disciple." All limitations must have been swept away before we can hope for success in the quest of truth.

### **Siegfried, The Truth Seeker**

We have seen that it is necessary to set aside all limitations of religion, family, environment, and whatever else hinders in order

to be able to grasp truth, but there is still another great requirement, or one which perhaps is comprehended in the first. We cling to our religion, our friends, and our families through fear of standing alone. We obey conventions because we fear to follow the dictates of the inner voice that urges us on toward the higher things which are incomprehensible to the majority; and therefore in reality, fear is the chief obstacle which prevents us from getting at truth and living it.

This is also shown in the Ring of the Niebelung. Wotan decrees that Brunhilde, the spirit of truth, is to be put to sleep, because he fears the loss of his power if he retains her after she has rebelled against his limitations and refuses to shield Hunding, the spirit of convention. He pronounces her doom in sorrow, saying that she must remain asleep until one more free than he, the god, shall waken her. "Perfect love casteth out all fear," and only the fearless are free to love and to live truth. Therefore, Brunhilde is put to sleep on a desolate rock, and around her burns forever a circle of flame kindled by loge, the spirit of delusion. No one but the free—the unfettered and fearless soul—can ever hope to penetrate that circle of hallucination (conventionality) and live to love the re-awakened spirit of truth, ever lovely and young.

Thus the second part of the mystic drama ends with the abandonment of truth, and the triumph of convention. Creed is firmly established on Earth. Siegmund, the truth seeker, lies vanquished and dead. His sister-wife, Sieglinda, also has paid with her life for entering the quest and it would seem as if Brunhilde must sleep forever. Now the Walsungs have only one representative, the orphan child Siegfried, who was left in the cave of Mime, the Niebelung, by the dying mother, Sieglinda.

In time, however, the child grows up in youthful vigor, developing the strength of a giant. Beautiful as a god, he is a strange contrast to Mime, the ugly Niebelung, a dwarf who claims to be his father. This Siegfried can scarcely believe, for when he looks about him in the forest, he sees that the nestlings resemble their parents, that the young of all animals have the same characteristics which are found in their parents. He alone is different from the one who claims him as a son.

When with prodigious strength he has caught a bear, and leads it into the cave of Mime, the latter is almost paralyzed with fear, an emotion utterly unknown to Siegfried. Mime, one of the most cunning smiths among the Niebelung, has forged sword after sword for the use of this young giant, but each in turn has been shattered by the powerful arm that wielded it. Mime has indeed tried to weld the sword Nothung, the child of distress, which was shattered upon the spear of Wotan in the fatal fray between Siegmund and Hunding. The fragments of this sword were brought by Sieglinda to the cave of Mime, but no one who is a coward can either forge or wield the sword, Nothung, the courage of despair; therefore, Mime, despite all his skill, has failed every time he has tried. One day when Siegfried taunts him because of his inability to make a sword that will stand, Mime brings out the fragments of Nothung, and tells him that if he can weld it, it will serve him well. Possessing that cardinal qualification of the trust seeker, fearlessness, Siegfried accomplishes with unskilled hand what Mime has failed to do. He forges anew the magic sword and is thus prepared for the quest of truth and knowledge.

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Though ages have passed since Alberich, the Niebelung, was forced to part with the Ring as ransom to the gods, neither he nor

his tribe have forgotten the power wielded by its possessor. And the longing to regain the lost treasure is still rife among all of them. For mankind, being inherently spiritual and free, will never be reconciled to the loss of individuality insisted upon under the regime of the church. Though, like Mime, they may be imbued with an uncontrollable fear; though they may cringe and fawn before the higher powers, as Alberich fawned before Wotan, they always, whether subconsciously or otherwise, remember their spiritual heritage and seek to recover their estate as free agents, unbound by creed or other limitations.

To this end they scheme and plot in the most subtle manner, as symbolized by the aid Mime gives Siegfried to forge anew the sword once shattered by Wotan. He sees that the young truth seeker is fearless. He knows that Fafner, one of the giants, who obtained the Ring from the gods, broods over his treasure in the form of a huge dragon, awe inspiring in the extreme. He can scarcely believe it possible for anyone to vanquish this monster, but he believes that if it can be done, this fearless young giant, Siegfried, is the only one able to accomplish the feat. It has, indeed, been said that the one who forges Nothung, will slay him; and Mime trusts to his cunning and hopes that if Siegfried kills the dragon, he, Mime, may be able to obtain possession of the Ring of the Niebelung and become the master of the world.

There is a very deep spiritual significance in this tale, namely, that of the lower nature, plotting to use the higher self for its own vile purposes. Siegfried (he, who through victory gains peace), is the higher self at that stage of its pilgrimage where it has been left all alone, without kith or kin, where it sees that the shape of clay symbolized by Mime is not part of it, but of an entirely different race and breed, where it is ready to continue its search for truth, attempted in previous lives as did Siegmund and Sieglinda, from

whom the indomitable courage, that knows neither fear nor defeat, has been inherited.

But though the seeking soul may forsake the world, as did Herzleide, the mother of Parsifal, who gave birth to the truth seeker in a dense forest, and as Sieglinda who bore the child, Siegfried, in the cave of Mime, the lower nature follows, scheming to use the power of spirit for worldly ends. Alas! how many have left the churches in despair because of creed, as Siegmund left Wotan; who have gained a certain knowledge of the higher things and have then misused their heavenly powers of hypnotism and mental suggestion, to attract to themselves the goods of this world, seeking rather the things of Earth which fetter than the treasures of heaven which free the soul.

There has never been an age on Earth when this part of the great myth was so generally enacted as it is today. There are many thousands of people who represent in themselves, Siegfried and Mime—Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. They are roused to a greater or lesser realization of the powers of the spirit, of their divine nature and attributes as Siegfried was, but the lower phase of their nature, Mime, keeps on scheming for material benefit.

And whether we call this use of the divine powers, Christian, or by an other name, it is not the science of the soul. We should be honest with ourselves and recognize the fact, that He, who had not a place whereon to lay His head, and who was the very embodiment of the attracting Christ power, refused to use that power for His own benefit. Even at the point of death He refrained, and it was said of Him that others He saved, but Himself, He could not (would not) save because the Law of Sacrifice is greater than the law of Self-preservation: "For what shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The moment we set out upon the path in earnest, the lower nature is doomed despite all its efforts of cunning to save itself. And when Mime plans to send Siegfried against the dragon, Fafner, the spirit of desire, he has in fact sealed his own fate; for when the soul has conquered the desire for worldly possessions, we are dead to the world, even though we may still live here and perform our work in the world. We are then in the world, but not of it.

Led by Mime, Siegfried finds the giant Fafner guarding the cave where he has hidden the hoard of the Niebelungs. The lower nature always urges the higher to seek the material wealth of the world, seeking, thereby, to obtain standing and power in society. It is, alas, all too common, this desire and thirst for wealth and power! We are all like Mime, ready to risk our lives in the quest of gold. And though Mime quakes at the very thought of being near the dreadful dragon, he keeps on plotting, for he knows that when the Ego, represented by the Ring of the Niebelung, is so enmeshed in the snares of materiality that the body may be said to own it, when all its energies are directed by the lower nature, there is no limit to the power it may attain. But Siegfried, the fearless truth seeker, when he has vanquished the dragon, representing the desire nature, also slays Mime who is emblematic of the dense body.

Freed from the mortal coil, the Spirit is able to understand the language of Nature. Intuitively it senses where truth, represented by Brunhilde, the Valkuerie, is hidden, and following this intuition, represented in the myth by a bird, he starts for the fire girt rock, to wake and to woo the sleeping beauty. But though we may, by laying aside the physical body, enter the realm where truth is to be found, the pathway is not by any means clear; for Wotan, the warder of creed, stretches his spear across the path of Siegfried, endeavoring to the last to dissuade or discourage the independent

searcher for truth. However, the power of creed, represented by the spear of Wotan, was weakened when he bargained with the giants; in other words when it appealed to the lower side of man's nature. And in token of this weakening, magic characters were cut upon the shaft of the spear. This is therefore, easily broken in twain at the first blow from Nothung, the courage of despair.

When the truth seeker has come to the point here described, he will no longer allow himself to be thwarted in his quest, whether the opposing power be devils like Fafner or gods like Wotan. Every obstacle he removes with ruthless hand for he has only one desire in the world, an overweening craving to know truth. Therefore, after shattering the spear of Wotan, he presses onward, led by the bird of intuition, until he comes to the circle of flame hiding Brunhilde, the sleeping spirit of truth. Neither is he daunted at sight of Loge's flames of illusion and hallucination. He plunges boldly through, and behold! there lies that for which he has panted during many lives. He stoops, gathers Brunhilde in his strong, yet tender arms, and with a fervent kiss he awakens the spirit of truth from her age long sleep.

### **The Battle Of Truth And Error**

There are no words adequate to convey a conception of what the soul feels when it stands in that presence, far above this world (where the veil of flesh hides the living realities under a mask) also, beyond the world of desire and illusion where fantastic and illusory shapes mislead us into believing that they are something very different from what they are in reality. Only in the Region of Concrete Thought, where the archetypes of all things unite in that grand celestial choir which Pythagoras spoke of as "the harmony of the spheres," do we find truth revealed in all its beauty.

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But the Spirit cannot stay there forever. This truth and reality—so ardently desired by everyone who has been driven to enter the quest by an inward urge stronger than the ties of friendship, relationship, or any other consideration—is but a means to an end. Truth must be brought down to this realm of physical form, in order that it may be of real value in the world's work. Therefore Siegfried, the truth seeker, must of a necessity leave the rock of Brunhilde, return through the fire of illusion and re-enter the material world to be tempted and tried, to prove whether he will be true to the vows of love which pass between himself and the re-awakened Valkuerie.

It is a hard battle that is before him. The world is not ready for truth, and however vehemently it may protest its desire in that direction, it schemes and plots, by all means within its great power, to down anyone who brings the truth to its doors; for there are few institutions that can bear the dazzling brightness of its light.

Not even the gods can endure it, as Brunhilde knows to her sorrow, for was she not exiled by Wotan, because she refused to use her power on the side of convention! Anyone who steps upon conventionalities, to uphold truth, will find that the whole world is against him and that he must stand alone. Wotan was her father and he professed to love her dearly. Yes, he did love her in his way, but he loved the power symbolized by Valhal more. The Ring of Creed, whereby he dominated humanity, was more desirable, in his eyes, than Brunhilde, the spirit of truth; so he put her to sleep behind the circle flame of illusion.

If such be the attitude of the gods, what then may be expected from men who do not profess such high and noble ideals as the gods, the keepers of religion, were supposed to inculcate into them? All this and more than we can put into words—much that it will do the student good to meditate upon—flashed upon the mind of Brunhilde in the moment of her parting from Siegfried, and, in order to give him at least a chance in the battle of life, she magnetizes, as it were, his whole body to make him invulnerable. Every place is thus protected save one point on the back between the shoulders. Here we have a case analogous to that of Achilles, whose body was made invulnerable in all places save one of his heels. There is a great significance in this fact; for as long as the soldier of truth wears this armor, of which Paul speaks, in the battle of life, and boldly faces his enemies, it is certain that, however hard he is beset, eventually he will win. Because, by facing the world and baring his breast to the arrows of antagonism, calumny, and slander, he shows that he has the courage of his convictions, and a power higher than he, the power that is always working for good, protects him no matter how great the onslaught he faces. But woe be unto him, if at any time he turns his back! Then, when he is not watching the onslaught of the enemies of truth, they will find the vulnerable spot be it in the heel or between the shoulders. Therefore, it behooves us and everyone else who loves truth, to take a lesson from this wonderful symbology, and to realize our responsibility to always love truth above everything. Friendship, relationship, and all other considerations should have no weight with us compared with this one great work with truth and for truth. Christ, who was the very embodiment of truth, said to His disciples, "They have hated me, and they will hate you."

So let us not deceive ourselves: The path of principle is a rugged road, and strenuous is the labor of climbing. On the way we shall probably lose caste with everyone near and dear to us. Though the world now professes to grant religious freedom, the day of persecution has not yet ended. Creed and dogmatism are still in power, ready to prosecute and persecute anyone who does not go along the conventional lines. But so long as we face them and pursue our path regardless of criticism truth will always come out unscathed from the battle. It is only when we show ourselves to be cowards and cravens, that these inimical forces can give us our death blow through this vulnerable spot.

Another point: when Siegfried starts out from the rock of the Valkuerie to re-enter the world, he gives to Brunhilde the Ring of the Niebelung. This Ring, as you remember, was formed from the Rhinegold, representing the Universal Spirit, by Alberich the Niebelung. And we also remember that he could not shape this nugget until he had forsworn love; for friendship and love ceased when the Universal Spirit was surrounded by the ring of egoism. From that time the battle of life has been waged in all its fierceness: every man's hand being against his brother because of his egoism, which impels each to seek his own, regardless of the welfare of others.

But when the Spirit has found truth and has come in contact with the divine realities, when it has entered the Region of Concrete Thought, which is heaven, and has seen that one great verity—that all things are one and that though they may seem separate here, there is an invisible thread uniting each with all, when the Spirit has thus regained universality and love, it cannot be separate any longer. So, when it leaves the realm of truth, it leaves behind the feeling of separateness and self, symbolized by the Ring. Thus it becomes universal in its nature. It knows neither

kin nor country, but feels like the much misunderstood Thomas Paine, when he said, "The world is my country; to do good is my religion." This attitude of mind is allegorically represented when Siegfried gives to Brunhilde the Ring of the Niebelung.

As you will remember, the Valkueries were daughters of Wotan, the chief god of the Norse mythology. They rode through the air on horses at great speed, to any place where deadly combat, whether between two or a greater number, was in progress. As soon as a warrior fell dead they lifted him tenderly to their saddles and carried him to Valhal, an abode of the gods, where he was resuscitated and lived in bliss forever after. You remember, also, that the name Valkuerie was interpreted as—chosen by acclamation. Those who fought the battle of life to the very end were chosen by acclamation to be the companions of the gods.

Brunhilde as chief of these daughters of Wotan, and her horse Grane, was the swiftest of the steeds. This animal, which had thus faithfully carried the spirit of truth, she gave to her husband; for truth may ever be considered the bride of the one who has found it. The horse, therefore, is symbolical of the swiftness and decision wherewith one who has married truth is able to choose aright and discern truth from error—only, provided he remains faithful.

Thus with the love of truth in his heart, and mounted upon the steed of discernment, Siegfried starts out to fight the battle of truth and bring the world captive to the feet of Brunhilde. Heaven and Earth hang in the balance, for he may revolutionize the world if he is faithful and courageous; but if he forgets his mission and becomes enmeshed in the sphere of illusion, the last hope of redeeming the world is gone. The twilight of the gods is close at hand, when the present order of things shall be done away, when the heavens shall melt in the fiery heat so that out of the travail of

Nature a New Heaven and a New Earth may be born, wherein righteousness as a garment shall clothe all and everything.

Let us now turn our eyes from heaven, from Siegfried and Brunhilde, to Earth, where the world, which the truth is to set free, waits for the coming hero. The northern myth introduces us to the court of Gunther, a king honest and upright according to the standards of the world. Guttrune, his sister, is the highest lady in the land, her brother being unmarried. Among the courtiers there is Hagen, a name which means hook, signifying inherent selfishness. He is scion of the Niebelungs, related to Alberich who formed the fatal Ring. Ever since the days when that Ring passed out of their possession, the Niebelungs have kept close watch upon its possessors: first, Wotan, who tricked Alberich and robbed him of the Ring, then Fafner and Fasolt, the giants who had built Valhal for Wotan, and who forced him to give them the Ring in part payment to ransom Freya, the goddess of love and youth, whom Wotan had prostituted and sold for the sake of power: then when Fafner slew Fasolt, the Niebelungs watched closed the cave where Fafner lay concealed, brooding over the hoard of the Niebelung as a huge dragon. And Mime, the foster father of Siegfried, paid with his life for scheming to obtain possession of the coveted treasure. Nor was Siegfried safe from their vigilant watch, save when he was at the rock of the Valkuerie; for no Niebelung, nor one who is a cur or coward, can ever penetrate beyond the circle flame of illusion into the realm of truth. Therefore, the Niebelungs do not know what has become of the Ring when Siegfried emerges anew into the world, though, of course, they surmise that it has been left with Brunhilde, and instantly commence plotting how to obtain it.

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The court of Gunther lies directly in the path of Siegfried, and Alberich speeds ahead and informs Hagen that the last known possessor of the Ring is coming. Together, they scheme how to find out its whereabouts and obtain possession, but each in his black heart, also plots how to outwit the other and obtain the treasure for himself alone; for there is no honor in the battle of the separate self; each is against all others regardless of who they are. Though in the world we find cooperation for a common purpose, the question that is uppermost in the mind of every one who participates is: What can I get out of it? Unless this is plain and a personal reward is in sight, the great majority of mankind are unwilling to work. The apostle tells us, "not to be concerned with the things for self alone, but also, to be mindful of the things of others." and we have given intellectual assent in the Christian countries, but, alas! how few are willing to live up to the ideal of unselfish service.

### **Rebirth, And The Lethal Drink**

"Birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Has elsewhere had its setting,  
And cometh from afar."

—Wordsworth.

When Siegfried leaves the rock of the Valkuerie and reaches the worldly court of Gunther, he is given a drink calculated to make him forget all about his past life and Brunhilde, the spirit of truth, whom he had won for his very own.

It is usually supposed that the doctrine of rebirth is taught only in the ancient religions of the Orient, but a study of the Scandinavian mythology will soon rout that misconception. Indeed, they

believed in both rebirth and the Law of Cause and Effect as applied to moral conduct, until Christianity clouded these doctrines, for reasons given in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* (page 167). And it is curious to read of the confusion caused when the ancient religion of Wotan was being superseded by Christianity. Men believed in rebirth in their hearts, but repudiated it outwardly,

as the following story told of Saint Olaf, King of Norway, one of the earliest and most zealous converts to Christianity, will show; when Asta, the Queen of King Harold, was in labor but could not bring to birth, a man came to the court with some jewels, of which he gave the following account: King Olaf Geirstad, who had reigned in Norway many years before and was the direct ancestor of Harold, had appeared to him in a dream and directed him to open the great earth-mound in which his body lay, and having severed it from the head with a sword, to convey certain jewels, which he would find in the coffin, to the queen, whose pains would then cease. The jewels were taken into the queen's chamber, and soon after she was delivered of a male child, whom they named Olaf. It was generally believed that the Spirit of Olaf Geirstad had passed into the body of the child, who was named after him.

Many years after, when Olaf had become King of Norway, and had embraced Christianity, he rode one day, as he often did, by the mound where his ancestor lay, and a courtier, who was with him at the time asked,

"Is it true, my lord, that you once lay in this mound?"

"Never," replied the king, "has my Spirit inhabited two bodies."

"Yet, it has been reported that you have been heard to say, on passing this mound, 'Here was I. Here I lived.'"

"I have never so said," returned the king, "and never will I say so."

He was much discomfited, and rode hastily away, presumably to avoid discussion of an inward conviction which all the dogmas of the new faith could not eradicate.

As a matter of fact, all ancient people, whether in the East or in the West, knew much about birth and death which has been forgotten in modern times, because second sight was more prevalent then. To this day, for instance, many peasants in Norway assert ability to see the Spirit passing out of the body at death, as a long narrow white cloud, which is, of course, the vital body; and the Rosicrucian Teaching—that the deceased hover around their earthly abode for some time after death, that they assume a luminous body and are sorely afflicted by the grief of dear ones—was common knowledge among the ancient Northmen. When the deceased King Helge of Denmark materialized to assuage the grief of his widow, and she exclaimed in anguish "The dew of death has bathed his warrior body," he answered:

" 'Tis thou, Sigruna,  
Art cause alone,  
That Helge is bathed  
With dew of sorrow.  
Thou wilt not cease thy grief,  
Nor dry the bitter tears.  
Each bloody tear  
Falls on my breast,  
Icy cold. They will not let me rest."

Students, when they realize the fact of rebirth, generally wonder why the memory of past lives is blotted out, and many are filled

with an almost overpowering desire to know the past. They cannot understand the benefit derived from the lethal drink of forgetfulness, and they look with envy at people who claim to know their past lives—when they claim to have been kings, queens, philosophers, priests, etc. There is, however, a most beneficent purpose in this forgetfulness, for no experience is of value in life except for the impress which it leaves by the purgatorial or heavenly post-mortem experience. This impress then acts in such a manner that at the proper time it directs, warns, or urges a certain line of action, and this warning, or urge, though dissociated from the experience, or rather for the reason that it is dissociated from the experience wherefrom it was extracted, acts with a quickness greater than that of thought.

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To make this point clear we may perhaps liken this record, graven upon our subtler vehicles, to a phonograph record, which playing, will cause a battery of tuning forks placed near it to vibrate as each note is struck. From the outward point of view there seems to be no reason why a certain indentation on a phonographic record should correspond to a certain one on the tuning fork, and when the needle falls into that indentation, a definite sound should be produced which sets the tuning fork vibrating. But whether we understand it or not, demonstration shows that there is a tie of tone between that little indentation and the tuning fork. And this does not depend upon a knowledge of how the impress came to be imprinted on the record, or what caused the tuning fork to respond to that vibration. It is there, whether we know all the facts about it, or not.

Similarly, when we have had a certain experience in life, be it joyful or the reverse, it is condensed in the post-mortem

experience, leaving an impress upon the soul to warn, if the experience is purgatorial; to urge, if heavenly. And in a later life, when an experience comes up similar to the one which caused the impress, the vibration is sensed by the soul, it awakens the tone of pain or pleasure, as the case may be, in the record of the past life, far more speedily and accurately than if the experience itself were called up before our mind's eye. For we might not, even at the present time, be able to see the experience in its true light while we are hampered by the veil of flesh, but the fruit of the experience, gathered in heaven or hell, tells us unerringly whether to emulate our past, or shun it.

Moreover, supposing we did know our past lives: that by our present endeavors to live well and worthily we had acquired that faculty. Supposing that we had lived lives of debauchery, cruelty, crime, and selfishness! If people now despised us accordingly, we would then hold that they ought not to judge us by the past—that they were wrong in ostracizing us. We would contend that our present life of worthy endeavor should be made the basis of judgment, to the exclusion of former conditions, and in this we should be perfectly right. But then, for the same reason, why should we claim honor in the present life, adulation or admiration, because in the past life we were kings and queens? Even if it were true that we had held such positions, why should we lay ourselves open to the ridicule of skeptics by telling such stories? So, whether we have memory of our past lives or not, it is better to concentrate our efforts upon the highest possibilities of today.

There is no doubt, that one who is able to search the Memory of Nature, and who does so for the sake of investigation in connection with the progress and evolution of man, will, at some time or other, come into touch with glimpses of his or her own past. But a true servant who really feels himself to be a laborer in

the vineyard of Christ, will never allow himself to swerve from the path of service and follow the trail of curiosity. The Disciple who receives instructions from the Elder Brothers, is warned at the first Initiation never to use his power to gratify curiosity, and on all subsequent visits to the Temple this idea is dinned into his ears.

The distinctions between the legitimate and illegitimate use of spiritual powers are so fine and so subtle, that, as one grows, the restrictions whereby one seems beset, multiply to such an extent, that were the tale told to others, ninety out of a hundred would say: "But what is the use then of having spiritual sight or of being able to leave the body? When you are so restricted, it seems that the possibility of trespassing is multiplied to such an extent, that there is scarcely any use of having these faculties." Nevertheless, they are of great value, and the responsibility is only the natural result of added growth.

An animal takes freely anything that it wishes: it commits no sin and is not held responsible for its action, because it knows no better. But as soon as the idea of "mine" and "thine" has been imprinted upon our consciousness, then also the responsibility comes. As our knowledge grows, so does our responsibility; and the finer the soul qualities, the finer the distinctions between right and wrong. This we observe in our daily lives, that the standards of the permissible or non-permissible vary according to the quality of each individual.

And when we aspire to that power whereby we may know the past, we shall find that we are no more justified in using this power for aggrandizement, than we would be justified in using it to obtain worldly wealth or power. So the life, or the lives, we have led are hidden from us for a purpose, until we know how to unlock

the door; and when we have the key we shall probably not want to use it.

For that reason, then, Siegfried is given the lethal drink the moment he enters the court of Gunther, and straightway he forgets about his past life with Mime, the dwarf, who claimed him as a son. He forgets how he forged the magic sword, "the courage of despair," which stood him in such good stead in the fight with Fafner, the spirit of passion and desire. He forgets that he had thus won the Ring of the Niebelung, the emblem of egoism, whereby he gained knowledge of his true spiritual identity and slew Mime, the personality, who wrongfully claimed to be his progenitor. He forgets how, as a free Spirit undaunted by fear, he broke the spear of Wotan, the warder of creed, and followed the bird of intuition to the abode of the sleeping spirit of truth. He forgets his marriage to her and the vow of unselfishness, implied when he gave her the ring.

But each and every one of these important events has left its impress upon his soul, and now it is to be tested: whether that impress has been deep or superficial. Temptation comes to us, life after life, until the treasure laid up in heaven has been tested and tried by temptation on Earth—whether or not it will withstand the moth of corruption. After the Baptism, when the Spirit of Christ had descended into the fleshy body of Jesus, it was taken into the wilderness of temptation to prove its weakness or its strength. And, similarly, after each heavenly experience we must expect to be brought back to Earth, that it may be learned whether we shall stand or fall in the furnace of affliction.

## **The Twilight Of The Gods**

When Siegfried reaches the court of Gunther, Guttrune, the fair sister of the king hands him the magic cup of forgetfulness. Forthwith, he loses memory of the past and of Brunhilde, the spirit of truth, and stands a naked soul ready to fight the battle of life. But he is armed with the sublimated essence of former experience. The sword of Nothung, the courage of despair, wherewith he fought greed and creed symbolized by Fafner, the dragon, and Wotan the god, is still with him; also Tarncap, or the helmet of illusion, which is an apt symbol of what we in modern times call hypnotic power, for whoever put this magic cap on his head appeared to others in whatever shape he desired; and he has Brunhilde's horse Grane, discernment, whereby he, himself, might always perceive truth and distinguish it from error and illusion. He still has powers which he may use for good or evil according to choice.

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As we have said previously, our idea of what truth is changes as we progress. We are gradually climbing the mountain trial of evolution, and as we do phases of truth appear which we never before perceived; and what is right at one stage, is wrong at another. Though, whenever we are in the flesh we see through the veil of illusion symbolized by Loge's flame which encircles the rock of Brunhilde, her swift charger Grane, discernment is also with us; and if we only give him free rein, the material brain mind, which is charged with the lethal drink of forgetfulness, can never gain the ascendancy over the Spirit.

The early Atlantean Epoch, when mankind lived as guileless "Children of the Mist" (Niebelung) in the foggy basins of the Earth, is represented in the Rhinegold. The later Atlantean time is an age of savagery, where mankind has forsworn love, as Alberich did,

and forms "the Ring" of egoism, where it devotes its energies to material acquisitions symbolized by "the hoard" of the Niebelung, over which giants, gods, and men fight with savage brutality and low cunning, as set forth in the "The Valkuerie."

The early Fifth Epoch marks the birth of the idealist, symbolized as the "Walsungs" (Siegmond, Sieglinda, and Siegfried), a new race which aspires with a sacred ardor to new and higher things—valorous knights who had the courage of their convictions and were ever ready to fight for truth as they saw it, and to give their lives as forfeit to uphold their heartfelt convictions. Thus the age of realistic savagery gave place to an era of idealistic chivalry.

We are now in the latter part of the Fifth Epoch. The truth seekers of the past have again left the fire girt rock of Brunhilde. We have again assumed the veil of flesh and partaken of the lethal drink, and we are today actually playing the last part of the great epic drama, "The Twilight of the Gods," which is identical in its import with our Christian Apocalypse. "The gospel of the Kingdom" has been preached to us, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" has been opened to us, as it was to Siegfried; and we are on trial now, as he was at Gunther's court, to see if we will live as "married to truth," or whether we will drag her from her retreat and prostitute her, as Siegfried did. In order to gain the hand of Guttrune, he wrested the emblem of egoism, the Ring of the Niebelung, from Brunhilde's hand and put it on his finger again; he bound her and carried her to Gunther to be his wife; he prostituted her, and himself committed adultery with Guttrune—for having once married truth, it is spiritual adultery to seek the honors of the world.

Heaven and Earth are outraged at this colossal betrayal of truth. The great World-Ash, the tree of life and being, shakes at its root, where Urd, Skuld, and Verdande, the past, present, and future,

spin the thread of fate. It grows dark on Earth; Hagen's spear finds the only vulnerable point in Siegfried's body—his life is the forfeit, and as the highest ideal of the age has failed, there is no use in perpetuating the existing order of things. Therefore, Heimdall, the heavenly watchman, sounds his trumpet, and the gods ride in solemn procession over the rainbow bridge for the last time, to meet the giants in final battle involving the destruction of heaven and Earth.

This is a very significant point: At the opening of the drama we find the Niebelungen "at the bottom of the river." Alberich later forges "the Ring" in fire, which can only burn in the clear atmosphere such as we have in the post-Atlantean age. During this age the gods also hold their sacred councils at the rainbow-bridge, which is the reflection of the heavenly fire. When Noah brought the original Semites through "the Flood," he kindled the fire. "The bow" was then set in the cloud to remain for the age and during that time it was covenanted that the alternating cycles, summer and winter, day and night, etc., should not cease. In the Apocalypse 4:3, John is offered instruction concerning "things which must be hereafter," by "One having a rainbow around Him"; and later (10:16), a mighty Angel with a rainbow on its head solemnly proclaims the end of time. Thus it is plain from the northern myth and the Christina teaching, that the epoch began when the bow was set in the cloud; when the bow is removed the epoch will end and a new condition of things physical and spiritual, will be ushered in.

The other phenomenon attending this time of trouble is set forth in the ancient myth. Loge, the spirit of illusion, has three children: the Midgaard Serpent which encircles the Earth, biting its own tail, is the ocean which refracts and distorts every object immersed therein. Men fear the treacherous element; their cheeks have

always paled at the thought of what it may do when unleashed. The wolf Fenris, the atmosphere, is also a child of illusion (optical), and the dread roar of the tempest may strike fear into the stoutest heart. Hel, death, is the third of Loge's children, and the "queen of terrors." Before man entered concrete existence, as described in the beginning of the great myth and in Genesis, his consciousness was focused in the spiritual worlds where the illusive elements, Loge (fire), Fenris (air), and the Serpent (water), are nonexistent; hence, death also was an unknown quantity. But during the present epoch when the constitution of the human body is subject to the action of the elements, death also holds sway.

At the sound of the trumpet of Heimdal, all the factors of destruction press forward to the plain Vigrid, the counterpart of Armageddon, where the gods of creed and their sworn supporters have assembled to make a last stand. The sons of Muspel (physical fire), press forward from the south, demolishing the rainbow bridge. The Frost Giants advance from the north. With an awful roar, Fenris, the tempest-driven atmosphere, rushes upon the Earth. So terrific is its velocity that the friction generates fire, hence it is said that its lower jaw is upon the Earth, its upper reaches the Sun, and fire streams from its nostrils. It swallows Wotan, the god in charge of the age of air, when the bow was in the cloud. The Midgaard Serpent or watery element is vanquished by Thor, the god of thunder and lightning, but when the electrical discharges have finally disposed of the element, water, there can be no thunder and lightning, hence the northern myth informs us that Thor dies of the fumes from the Serpent. In our Christian Apocalypse we also hear of thunders and lightnings, and are told that finally "there shall be no more sea."

But as the Phoenix arises rejuvenated and beautiful from its ashes, so also a New Earth, fairer and more ethereal, was seen by the

ancient prophets to arise from the great conflagration where "the elements melt with fervent heat"—"Gimle," she called it. Nor was it without population, for while the great conflagration was in progress a man and a woman called Life and Liftharaser (life means life) were saved and from them springs a new race which lives in peace and close to God.

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"A hall I see,  
More brilliant than the sun,  
Roofed with gold.  
On the summit of Gimle,  
There shall live  
A virtuous race,  
And enjoy blessedness  
To eternity.

"Thither cometh the Mighty One—all—Father,  
To the council of the gods,  
In His strength from above.  
He who thinketh for all,  
Issueth judgments;  
He causeth strife to cease,  
And establisheth peace  
To endure forever."

Thus the ancient northern myth teaches, but from a different angle, the same truths as found in greater fullness in the Christian Scriptures from Genesis to the Apocalypse, and it is important that we should realize the truth of these tales. There are, alas, too many in the class described by Peter as saying: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were in the beginning." There are few who realize

the import of the statement in the second chapter of Genesis, that "a mist went up from the ground and watered the earth before it rained," and that thus the children of the mist must have been physiologically different from the man of today who breathes air since "the Flood," when the mist condensed and became the sea. But just as sure as these changes happened in the past, so there is now another change impending. True, it may not come in our time—"that hour knoweth no man, neither the Angels, neither the Son," and repeatedly the warning of Noah is held up before us in this connection. In that day they ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, but suddenly the waters engulfed them and all who had not evolved the physiological requisites, lungs, necessary to live in the new condition perished. The Ark carried the pioneers safely through the catastrophe.

To make the next change safely, a Wedding Garment is required, and it is of utmost importance that we should work upon it. The soma psuchicon or "soul body" which Paul mentions ([I Cor. 11:44](#)), is an etheric vehicle of paramount importance; for when the present elements have been dissolved in the impending change, how shall we survive if we can function only in a dense body as now!

It is exactly the mission of the Rosicrucian Order working through the Rosicrucian Teachings, to promulgate a scientific method of development suited particularly to the Western people whereby this Wedding Garment may be wrought, so that we may hasten the day of the Lord.

**Tannhauser**

**Pendulum Of Joy And Sorrow**

In this drama we deal again with one of the ancient legends. It was given to humanity by the divine Hierarchies who guided us along the path of progress by pictorial terms so that mankind might subconsciously absorb the ideals for which, in later lives, they were to strive.

In ancient times love was brutal; the bride was bought or stolen or taken as a prize in war. Possession of the body was all that was desired, therefore woman was a chattel, prized by man for the pleasure she afforded him, and for that only. The higher, finer faculties in her nature were given a chance of expression. This condition had to be altered or human progress would have stopped. The apple always falls close to the tree. Anyone born from a union under such brutal conditions must be brutal; and, if mankind were to be elevated, the standard of love had to be raised. Tannhauser is an attempt in that direction.

This legend is also called "The Tournament of the Troubadours," for the minstrels of Europe were the educators of the Middle Ages. They were wandering knights, gifted with the power of speech and song, who journeyed from land to land, welcomed and honored in court and castle. They had a powerful influence in forming the ideas and ideals of the day, and in the Tournament of Song held in Wartburg Castle, one of the problems of that day—whether woman had a right to her own body or not, a right to protection against licentious abuse by her husband, whether she was to be considered a companion to be loved as soul to soul or as a slave bound to submit to the dictates of her master—was the question to be decided.

Naturally, at each change there are always those who stand for the old things against the new, and champions of both sides took part in that battle of song in Wartburg Castle.

The question is still rife. It is still unsettled with the majority of mankind, but the principle enunciated is true, and only as we conform to this principle by elevating the standards of love, can a better race be born. This is particularly essential to one who is aiming to lead a higher life. Though the principle seems so self-evident it is not even yet agreed to by all who make high professions. In time everyone will learn that only as we regard woman as the equal of man can mankind truly be elevated, for under the Law of Rebirth the soul is reborn alternately in both sexes, and the oppressors of one age become the oppressed of the next.

The fallacy of a double standard of conduct which favors one sex at the cost of the other should be at once apparent to anyone who believes in the succession of lives whereby the soul progresses from impotence to omnipotence. It has been amply provide that, far from inferior to man, woman is at least his equal and very often his superior in many of the mental occupations; though that does not appear plainly for the drama.

The legend tells us that Tannhauser, who represents the soul at a certain stage of development, has been disappointed in love, because its object, Elizabeth, was too pure and too young to be even approached with a request that she yield to him. Yearning with passionate desire, he attracts something of an identical nature.

Our thoughts are like tuning forks. They awaken echoes in others who are capable of responding to them, and the passionate thought of Tannhauser brings him, therefore, to that which is called "the Mountain of Venus."

Like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of Shakespeare, this story of how he finds the Mountain of Venus, of how he is taken in by this lovely goddess, and is kept in passion's chains by her charms, is not entirely founded upon fancy. There are Spirits in the air, in the water, and in the fire; and under certain conditions they are contacted by man. Not so much perhaps in the electric atmosphere of America, but over all of Europe, particularly in the north, there broods a mystic atmosphere which has somewhat attuned the people to the seeing of these elementals. The goddess of beauty, or Venus, here spoken of, is really one of the etheric entities who feed upon the fumes of low desire, in the gratification of which the creative force is liberated in copious quantities. Many of the Spirit controls which take possession of mediums and incite them to laxity of morals and abuses, who act as their soul lovers and seriously weaken their victims, belong to this same class which is exceedingly dangerous, to say the least. Paracelsus mentions them as "incubi" and "succubi."

The opening scene of *Tannhauser* introduces us to a licentious debauch in the cave of Venus. Tannhauser is kneeling before the goddess who is stretched on a couch. He awakens as if from a dream, and his dream has inculcated a longing to visit the Earth above again. This he tells the goddess Venus who answers:

"What foolish plaint! Art weary of my love?  
By sorrow once thy heart was crushed above.  
Up minstrel, seize thy harp and sing of bliss divine,  
For love's chief treasure, love's goddess is thine."

Inflamed with new ardor Tannhauser seizes harp and sings her praise:

"All hail to thee! Undying fame attend thee.  
Paeans of praise to thee be ever sung.  
Each soft delight thy bounty sweet did lend me,  
Shall wake my harp while time and love are young;  
For love's sweet joy, and satisfaction's pleasure,  
My sense did thirst, my heart did crave;  
And thou, whose love a God alone can measure,  
Gave me thyself, and in this bliss I lave.  
But mortal am I, and a love divine,  
Too changeless is to mate with mine.  
A god can love without cessation,  
But under laws of alteration,  
Our share of pain as well as pleasure,  
We mortals need in changing measure.  
Too full of joy, again I long for pain,  
So, Queen, I cannot here remain."

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When mankind emerged from Atlantis, and came into the air of the Fifth Epoch, the rainbow stood for the first time in the sky as the sign of the new age. At that time it was said that as long as this bow was in the clouds the seasons would not cease to change; day and night, summer and winter, ebb and flood, and all the other alternating measures of Nature would follow one another in unbroken succession. In music there may not always be harmony. Discord once in a while comes in to give appreciation of the melody which follows. Thus it is with the question of pain and sorrow, of joy and happiness: they are also measures of alternation. We cannot live in one without craving the other, any more than we could remain in heaven and gather experiences that are only to be found upon Earth. And it is this inward urge, this swing of the pendulum from joy to sorrow and back again, which

drives Tannhauser from the cave of Venus that he may again know the strife and struggle of the world; that he may there gain the experience which sorrow alone can give and forget the pleasures which bring to him no soul power. But it is characteristic of the lower forces, however, that they always seek to influence the soul against its will; that they always use every endeavor to keep it away from the path of rectitude; and so Venus who stands as the representative of these powers in the drama of Tannhauser, warningly and dissuasively says:

"In dust thy soul will soon be humbled,  
Adversity thy pride will fell,  
Then crushed in spirit, ardor crumbled,  
Thou'lt plead again to feel my spell."

But Tannhauser is firm in his purpose. The urge within him is so strong that nothing can keep him back, and though he still feels the spell, he exclaims with great fervor:

"While I have life, but thee my harp will praise,  
No meaner theme will e'er my song inspire;  
Thou spring of beauty and of gentle grace,  
With sweetest songs dost quicken love's desire;  
The fire thou kindlest in my heart,  
An altar flame will burn alone for thee,  
An though in sorrow now from thee I part,  
Thy champion I shall ever be.  
But I must forth, the life of earth I crave,  
Here I must aye remain a slave;  
I thirst for freedom though my death it be,  
Therefore, O Queen, from thee I flee!"

Thus when Tannhauser leaves the cave of Venus he is the pledged champion of the low and sensual side of love; and this he goes out into the world to teach, for that is the nature of mankind; whatever the heart feels, must come out.

Knowing the country well, he at once turns his steps toward Wartburg where a number of minstrels are always staying with the lord and lady of the manor, who to a very large extent are patrons of minstrelsy always anxious to be entertained, and always lavish with their gifts.

After awhile he meets a band of minstrels who are walking in the woods, and these, his former friends, are surprised that they have not seen him for so long. They ask him where he has been, but Tannhauser, knowing that there is a general sentiment against being with the lower elemental forces in Nature, hides his whereabouts during the period of his absence from them, by giving an evasive answer. He is then told by the minstrels that there is to be a tournament of the troubadours at the castle and is invited to go with them.

Hearing that the subject of the song contest is to be love, and furthermore, that the prize will be given to the winner by the hand of the beautiful daughter of the lord, namely Elizabeth, (the lady Tannhauser has loved so ardently and who so inflamed his soul in past days that it drove him to the cave of Venus) he hopes by the ardor with which he is inspired, to induce the beautiful maiden to hear his plaint. As we always reap a harvest of pain whenever we go contrary to the laws of progress, Tannhauser, by this act, is sowing the seed that will one day bring him the harvest of pain he coveted in the cave of Venus.

## **Minstrels, Initiates Of Middle Ages**

When Tannhauser emerged from the cave of Venus one of the first sounds which greeted him was the chant of a band of pilgrims going to Rome to obtain forgiveness for their sins, and this awakened within him an overpowering sense of his own delinquency. Therefore he kneels and exclaims in deep contrition:

"Almighty, praise I give to Thee,  
I pray Thee mercy show to me.  
By sense of sin I am oppressed,  
The load too heavy far for me.  
I have no peace, can find no rest  
Till pardon I receive from Thee."

While he is thus dejected and feels himself accursed, doomed to roam alone and unblessed through the world because of his unhallowed love for Venus, the minstrels come upon him, and recognizing him, endeavor to persuade him to accompany them to Wartburg, but as said before, it was the passionate love of Elizabeth that drove him thence, and he feels that he dare not approach her. As a last argument, Wolfram von Eschenbach tells Tannhauser that Elizabeth loves him. Elizabeth has never been at the contests of song since Tannhauser left, and Wolfram von Eschenbach, one of the purest and most beautiful characters in medieval history, endeavors to secure the happiness of Elizabeth by bringing Tannhauser back to her though he himself loves her, and it breaks his own heart to do so. On hearing this, passion fires Tannhauser's soul anew, and he sings:

"Ah, dost thou smile once more upon me!  
Thou radiant world that I had lost!  
O sun of heaven thou dost not shun me  
By stormy clouds so long o'ercrossed.  
'Tis May, sweet May. Its thousand carols tender,

Rejoicing set my sorrow free.  
A ray of new, unwonted splendor  
Illumes my soul, O joy 'tis she!"

On meeting Tannhauser at the castle, Elizabeth tells him:

"Now the world to me is darkened.  
Repose and joy from me have flown.  
Since fondly to thy lays I've hearkened,  
The pangs of bliss and woe I've known;  
And when this land thou hadst forsaken,  
My peace of heart had also fled.  
No minstrel could my joy awaken,  
To me their lays seem sad and dead.  
In slumber oft near broken-hearted,  
Awake, each pang was oft recalled;  
All joy has from my life departed.  
Oh tell me why I am enthralled!"

To this Tannhauser replies:

"All praise to love for this sweet token!  
Love touched my harp with magic sweet.  
Love through my song to thee hath spoken  
And captured, leaves me at thy feet." Elizabeth then confesses:

"O blessed hour of meeting!  
O blessed power of love!  
At last I give thee greeting,  
No longer wilt thou rove.  
Now life anew awakens,  
Within this heart of mine;  
The cloud of sorrow breaketh.  
The sun of joy doth shine."

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Thus Elizabeth has inspired love in the hearts of two of the minstrels, Wolfram and Tannhauser, but how different this love is will be seen from the way each handles the theme in the contest of song, which follows in the second act, where the Lord of Wartburg opens the contest with the following words:

"As oft in war times, death we braved,  
And knightlike battled, honor to maintain,  
So, minstrels, you have fought and virtue saved.  
Upheld true faith with voice and harp's sweet strain.  
Tune up again; another lay indite.  
Describe true love, that we may surely know;  
And who so does most nobly this recite  
The princess shall reward on him bestow."

In this last verse we gain a true understanding of the relative scope and mission of knighthood and minstrelsy. It was the duty of knights to follow war, to defend with the sword all who were in need thereof, to fight with a strong arm the battle of the weak. In so far as a knight followed the code of honor then prevailing, and defended the weak, keeping faith with friend and foe, he learned the lessons of physical and, in a certain sense, of moral courage, which are so necessary for the development of the soul. Anyone who enters upon the path of spiritual attainment is also a knight of noble birth, and it behooves him to realize that he must have the same virtues which were required of knighthood, for upon the spiritual path there are also dangers and places where physical courage is required. The Spirit, for instance, cannot come to liberation without physical inconvenience. Sickness usually attends soul growth to a greater or a less extent, and it requires physical

courage to endure the suffering incident to that attainment, after which we all strive, and thus sacrifice the body for the soul.

It was the mission of minstrelsy to foster this courage and to inculcate the finer virtues also. All minstrels, therefore, had that poetical strain which brings us in touch with the higher and finer things in Nature not sensed by ordinary humanity; but more than that, many among the minstrels in medieval times were Initiates themselves, or perhaps lay brothers. Therefore their words were often found to be pearls of wisdom. They were looked up to as teachers, as wise men, and were friends of the true nobility.

There were, of course, exceptions, but Tannhauser was not one of these, however. We shall find that he was really a noble soul despite his faults, and in fact we should remember that we are all Tannhausers before we become Wolframs. We all respond to Tannhauser's definition of love before we grow to Wolfram's spiritual conception as given at the contest.

Lots are drawn to see who shall begin the contest, and the name of Wolfram appears on the slip first taken from the box. He therefore commences as follows:

"Gazing around upon this fair assemblage  
How does the heart expand to see the scene!  
These gallant heroes, valiant, wise, and gentle,  
As stately forests growing fresh and green,  
And blooming by their side in sweet perfection,  
I see a wreath of dames and maidens fair.  
Their blended glories dazzle the beholder,  
My song is mute before this vision rare.  
I raise my eyes to one whose starry splendor

In this bright heaven with mild effulgence beams,  
And gazing on that radiance, pure and tender  
My heart is sunk in prayerful, holy dreams.  
And lo, the source of all delight and power  
Is then unto my listening soul revealed.  
From whose unfathomed depths, all joy doth shower  
The tender balm through which all grief is healed.  
Oh! never may I dim its limpid waters  
Nor rashly trouble them with wild desires.  
I'll worship thee, kneeling, with soul devoted.  
To live and die for thee my heart aspires.  
I know not if these feeble words can render  
What I have felt of love both true and tender."

At the end of Wolfram's song Tannhauser starts as if from a dream. He rises and sings:

"I, too, drank from that well of pleasure;  
Its waters, Wolfram, well I know;  
Who that has life may dare ignore it?  
Hear how its virtues I will show:  
But I would not draw near its margin  
Unless desire consumed my soul;  
Then only would its wave refresh me,  
My life and heart make new and whole.  
O tide of joy, let me possess thee!  
All fear and doubt before thee fly;  
Let thy unfathomed raptures bless me!  
For thee alone my heart beats high,  
So that I own thy fiery splendor,  
Let me with longing ever burn.  
I tell thee, Wolfram, thus I render  
What I have known of truest love.

Here we have the true description of the two extremes of love; that of Wolfram being the love of soul for soul, Tannhauser's being the love of sense. One is the love that seeks to give, the other demands possession that it may receive. This is only the beginning of the contest, of which we shall hear fully later, but these being the definitions first given by the two chief exponents of love, it is well worth noting that Wolfram von Eschenbach stands as the exponent of the new and the more beautiful love which is to supersede the primeval conception.

Even to this day, unfortunately, the ancient idea is entertained that possession is the signature of love. Those who believe in rebirths in alternate sexes, should by this fact be sufficiently convinced that, as the soul is bisexual and our bodies contain rudimentary organs belonging to the opposite sex, so it is no more than proper and just that each human being regardless of the polarity of the present garb, should have the same privileges as the other.

### **The Unpardonable Sin**

During the contest the sublime and heavenly ideals of the companionship of soul with soul, is sung by the majority of the minstrels, and at each presentation there comes from Tannhauser a passionate retort defending the sensual phase of love. At last, enraged at their seeming insipidity, which he regards as sentimental nonsense, he cries, "Go to Venus. She will show you love."

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With this remark his guilty secret is out. It is taken by everyone to mean that he has committed that which is the worst phase of the unpardonable sin, namely, intercourse with an etheric entity; and

feeling that he is depraved beyond redemption, they rush at him sword in hand and would surely have killed him had not Elizabeth interceded, pleading that he be not cut off from life in his sins, but be given a chance to repent. Then a band of pilgrims is heard in the distance and the minstrels agree that if he will go and seek the pardon of the Holy See at Rome, they will spare his life.

When Elizabeth reveals the grief of her heart in her plea for Tannhauser, he at last sees the enormity of his sins and is seized with an overwhelming sense of his depravity. He, therefore, anxiously grasps the suggestion given him, joins the band of pilgrims, and journeys toward Rome. Being a strong soul, he does nothing by halves. His contrition is as sincere as his sin was brazen. His whole being yearns to cleanse itself from impurity that he may aspire to the higher and nobler love awakened in his breast by Elizabeth.

The other pilgrims sang psalms of praise, but he scarcely dared to look to Rome in the distance, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." While they refreshed themselves and slept in hospices on the way, he made his bed upon the snow. When they walked over the smooth road, he walked among thorns, and when he came to Italy so that not even the fair scenes of that land should give him joy, he blindfolded his eyes and thus journeyed toward the Eternal City.

At last the morn came upon which he was to see the Holy Father, and hope rose in his heart. During the entire day he stood patiently while thousands of others passed by, the ecstasies of heaven on their countenances, and received there the pardon they craved, going away with lighter hearts, gladdened and ready to make a new start.

At last came his turn. He stood in that august presence and waited patiently for the Holy Father's message, waiting and hoping for a kind word to send him on his way rejoicing. Instead there came the thundered words, "If you have associated with demons, then there is no forgiveness for you, neither in heaven nor on Earth. Sooner will this dry staff which I hold in my hand blossom, than that thy sins will be forgiven."

At this heartless announcement the last spark of hope died within Tannhauser, and lust, a thing of blood, lifted its head. His love was turned to hate, and blazing with anger he cursed everything in heaven and on Earth, swearing that if he could not have true love, then he would return to the cave and seek Venus anew, and telling his fellow pilgrims to keep back, he leaves them and journeys back to his native home alone.

Meanwhile the prayers of Elizabeth, the pure and chaste virgin to whom Tannhauser's love had gone out, unceasingly called for forgiveness for the sinner. Hopefully she awaited the return of the pilgrims, but when at last they arrived and Tannhauser was not among them, despair seized her, and feeling that there was no other way she passed out of this phase of life, to present personally her petition at the Throne of Grace before our Heavenly Father. The funeral procession is met by the returning Tannhauser, who is bowed with unspeakable grief at this sight.

Then another band of returning pilgrims arrive, telling of a great miracle which has taken place at Rome. The staff of the Pope had budded to signify that a sinner refused remission on Earth, had found pardon in heaven.

Though the legend is clothed in medieval and Catholic phraseology, and though we may discount the idea that any one

man has power to forgive sin or deny remission, it contains spiritual truths which are becoming more pertinent with each passing year. It deals with the unpardonable sin: the only sin that cannot be forgiven, but must be expiated. As you know, Jehovah is the highest Initiate of the Moon Period, the ruler of the Angels, who during this present Day of Manifestation work with our humanity through the Moon. He is the author of generation and the prime factor in gestation, the giver of offspring to man and to beast, using the lunar ray as his vehicle of work during the times which are propitious to generation. Jehovah is a jealous God, jealous of his prerogative, and, therefore, when man ate of the tree of knowledge and took the matter of generation into his own hands, he expelled him from paradise to wander in the wilderness of the world. There was no forgiveness. He must expiate it in travail and in pain, reaping the fruit of his transgression.

Before the Fall, humanity had not known either good or evil. They had done what they were told, and nothing else. By taking matters into their own hands, and by the pain and the sorrow which followed their transgression, they learned the difference between good and evil: they became capable of choice. They acquired prerogative. This is the great privilege which more than compensates for the suffering and the sorrow man has endured in expiation of that offense against the Law of Life, which lies in performing the creative act when the stellar rays are unpropitious, thus causing painful parturition, and a multitude of other diseases to which humanity is heir today.

In this connection I may mention that the Moon is the ruler of the sign Cancer, and that cancer, in its malignant form, admits of no cure, no matter how many remedies science may bring forward from time to time. Investigation of the lives of persons who suffer from this disease has proved in every case that the one involved

has been sensual in the extreme during previous lives, though I am not prepared to say that this is a law, since a sufficient number of investigations have not been made to establish it. It is, nevertheless, significant that Jehovah, the Holy Spirit, rules generative functions through the Moon, that the moon governs Cancer, and that those who abuse the sex function in a very marked and bestial degree are later afflicted with the disease called cancer: that that is incurable and thus bears out the saying in the Bible that all things may be forgiven save the sin against the Holy Spirit.

There is a mystic connection between the Cherubim with the flaming sword at the Garden of Eden and the Cherubim with the open flower on the door of Solomon's Temple: between the spear and the Grail cup: between Aaron's rod that budded and the staff of the Pope which flowered and the death of the chaste and pure Elizabeth, by whose intercession the stain was removed from the soul of the erring Tannhauser. Neither can one who has never known the awful torment of temptation realize the position of one who has fallen. Christ, Himself, felt in the body of Jesus all the passion and all the temptations to which we ourselves are subject, and it is stated that that was for the purpose of making Him merciful unto us as a High Priest. That He was tempted, proves that temptation is in itself not sin. It is the yielding that is sin; therefore, He was without sin. Whoever can thus be tempted and withstand, is of course highly evolved; but let us remember that none of the present humanity has yet arrived at that stage of perfection and that we are better men and women for having sinned, and suffered in consequence, until we have become awake to the important fact that the way of the transgressor is hard, and have turned into the pathway of virtue, whereon alone is found inward peace. Such men and women are on a much higher stage

of spiritual development than those who have lived lives of purity because of a sheltered environment. This Christ emphasized when He said that there shall be more rejoicing over one sinner who repents than over the ninety-and-nine who need no repentance.

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There is a very important distinction between innocence and virtue, and what is more important still, is that we should realize the fallacy of the double standard of conduct which gives liberties to or rather condones them in a man, while insisting that one misstep will ruin a woman for life. Were I to choose a wife today, and later learn that her life had been clouded by a mistake for which she had suffered, I should know that such a one had learned to know sorrow, and had engendered compassion and forbearance thereby, and had thus acquired qualities which would make her a better and more sympathetic companion than one who stood "innocent" upon the threshold of life, liable to fall a prey to the first temptation that befell her.

### **The Rod That Budded**

In the prologue of Faust, God is represented as saying, concerning the hero:

"With vision imperfect he serve me now  
But soon I'll lead him where more light appears;  
When buds the sapling doth the gardener know,  
That flow'r and fruit will grace its coming years."

This is the actual fact concerning all mankind. At the present time we all serve God imperfectly because of our limited vision. We have not the real, true perception of what is wanted and of how we should use the talents wherewith we are now endowed.

Nevertheless God, through the process of evolution is constantly leading us into greater and greater light, and by degrees we shall cease to be spiritually barren: We shall flower and bear fruit. Thus we shall be able to serve God as we would and not as we do.

While the foregoing applies to all in general, it applies particularly to those who stand in the limelight as teacher; for naturally, where the light is the strongest, the shadows are also the deepest, and the imperfections of those among us, who must take up the burden of teaching, are naturally more marked on that account.

In the story of Tannhauser, the Pope shuts the door of hope in the face of the penitent because the letter of the law requires it, but not thus is God's mercy frustrated. The Pope's staff blooms to prove that the penitent has been forgiven because of the sincere penitence whereby the evil has been washed from the record made upon the seed atom. Thus by a higher law the lower has been superseded.

There is in this legend of the Pope's staff, a similarity to the tale of the Holy Grail and the spear; to the story of Aaron's rod which also bloomed, and to the staff of Moses that brought the water of life forth from the rock. All have an important bearing upon the problem of the spiritual life of the Disciple who aims to follow the path to the higher life and seeks, like Kundry, to undo the deeds of ill of former lives by a present life of service to the higher self. The legend of the Grail distinguishes between the Grail cup itself and the Cleansing Blood which it held.

The story is told of how Lucifer, when he strove with the Archangel Michael over the body of Moses, lost the choicest gem in his crown. It was dislodged in the struggle. This beautiful gem, comparable to none, was an emerald named "Exilir." It was thrown

into the abyss but was recovered by the Angels and from that the chalice or Holy Grail was made which later was used to hold the Cleansing Blood that flowed from the Savior's side when it had been pierced by the centurion's spear. Let us first note the fact that this jewel was an emerald: it was green, and green is a combination of blue and yellow, and is, therefore, the complementary color of the third primary color, red. In the Physical World red has the tendency to excite and energize, whereas green has a cooling and a soothing effect, but the opposite is true when we look at the matter from the viewpoint of the Desire World. There the complementary color is active, and has the effect upon our desires and emotions which we ascribe to the physical color. Thus the green color of the gem lost by Lucifer shows the nature and effect thereof. This stone is the antithesis of the Philosopher's Stone. It has the power to attract passion and generate love of sex for sex, which is the vice opposite to the chaste and pure love, symbolized by the apocalyptic white stone, which latter is the love of soul for soul. As this effect of the complementary colors is well known, though not consciously realized, we also speak of jealousy, which is engendered by impure love, as the green eyed monster.

The Holy Grail finds its replica in the chalice or seed pod of the plant, which is green. The creative fire slumbers within the seed pod. Likewise the same phenomenon must become manifest within each one who enters upon the quest of the Holy Grail. Will is the male quality of the soul; imagination is the female. When will is the strongest attribute, the soul wears male attire in a certain life, and in another, where the quality of imagination is greater, the female garb is taken. Thus under the Law of Alternation which prevails during the present age of the rainbow, the soul wears a different garment in alternate lives, but whether the gender is

feminine or masculine, the organ of the opposite sex is present in an undeveloped state. Thus man is now, and will be so long as the physical body endures, both male and female.

In the hoary past, when his consciousness was focused in the spiritual world, he was a perfect creative unit with both sex organs equally developed as are many flowers today. He was then capable of generating a new body when the old one was worn out, but he was not at that time aware to the same degree as he is now of the fact that he had a body. Then some who were pioneers—some who saw more clearly than others—told to their compeers the astonishing story that man has a body. They were often met with the same skepticism which is now shown to those who affirm that we have a soul.

Thus the symbolical story of Lucifer losing the green gem is the story of how man ceased to know himself and began to know his wife; of how the Grail was lost, and of how it may only be found through the cleansing of the passion filled physical blood which was originally contained in that green vessel.

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At a propitious time of the year, but neither before nor after, the rays emanating from the heavenly orbs pierce the planted seed and waken its latent generative force into activity. Then a new plant springs out of the ground to again beautify the Earth. Thus the act of generation is accomplished in perfect harmony with the Law of Nature, and a thing of beauty is generated to adorn the Earth. The result is different in humans since the feminine quality of imagination was roused by Lucifer.

Now the generative act is performed regardless of the propitious solar rays, and as a result sin and death entered the world. From

that time the spiritual light has waned, and we are now blind to heaven's glory.

In the hands of the divine leaders of mankind, one of them signified by Aaron, the living rod was a vehicle of power. Later the blooming rod dried up and was laid away in the Ark, but we are not to conclude that there is no redemption on that account, for as man was exiled from the heavenly state when the green gem of passion and desire rolled from the crown of Lucifer, who then led mankind through generation to degeneration; so also there is the white stone, the Philosopher's Stone, the symbol of emancipation. By using the power of generation for regeneration, we overcome death and sin. It then endows us with immortality and leads us to Christ.

That is the message of the story of Tannhauser. Passion is poison. Abuse of generation under the sway of Lucifer, has been the means of leading us downward into the gloom of degeneration, but the same power turned into the opposite direction and used for purposes of regeneration is capable of lifting us out of the gloom and elevating us to a heavenly state, when we have thus won the battle. Through passion the Spirit has been crystallized into a body and only by chastity can the fetters be loosed, for heaven is the home of the virgin and only in so far as we elevate love from that of sex for sex to the standard of soul for soul can we shatter the shackles that bind us. Then, when we learn to make conception immaculate, saviors will be born who will loose the fetters of sin and sorrow that now bind us.

In carrying out this ideal let us remember, however, that suppression of the sexual desire is not celibacy; the mind must concur and we must willingly abstain from impurity. This can only be done by what the mystic calls "finding the woman within

himself." (Of course for woman, it is to find the man within herself.) When we have found that, we arrive at the point where we can live the same pure life as the flower.

In this connection it may also be very illuminating to remember that the "Dweller on the Threshold" which we must confront before we can enter the superphysical worlds always has the appearance of a creature of the opposite sex. Yet it seems to be ourselves. It should also be understood that the more licentious or lustful we have been, the worse will be the appearance of this monster, and Parsifal standing before Kundry, when his refusal of compliance has turned her into a virago, is in fact at the very point where the candidate finds himself face to face with the dweller, before the spear is given into his hands.

## **Lohengrin**

### **The Knight Of The Swan**

Among the operas of Wagner there is, perhaps, none which is so universally enjoyed by the large majority of people who see it, as Lohengrin. This is probably because the story seems, on cursory examination, to be very simple and beautiful. The music is of an unusually exquisite character, which appeals to all in a manner which is not equaled by the author's other operas founded upon myths such as Parsifal, the Ring of the Niebelung, or even Tannhauser.

Although these last named productions affect people who hear them powerfully for their spiritual good (whether they are aware of the fact or not), it is nevertheless, a fact that they are not enjoyed by the majority, particularly in America, where the spirit of mysticism is not so strong as it is in Europe.

It is different with Lohengrin. Here there is a story of the time when knighthood was in flower, and although there is an embellishment of magic in the advent of Lohengrin and the swan in response to the prayer of Elsa, this is only as a pretty poetical fancy without deeper meaning. In this myth is revealed one of the supreme requirements of Initiation—faith.

Whoever has not this virtue will never attain; its possession covers a multitude of shortcomings in other directions.

The plot is briefly as follows: The heir of the Duchy of Brabant has disappeared. He is but a child, and the brother of Elsa, the heroine of the play, who is accused in the opening scene by Ortrud and Telramund, her enemies, of having done away with this young brother in order that she may obtain possession of the principality. In consequence she has been summoned before the royal court to defend herself against her accusers, but at the opening scene no knight as yet has appeared to espouse her cause and slay her traducers. Then there appears on the river a swan, upon which stands a knight, who comes up to the place where court is being held. He jumps ashore and offers to defend Elsa on condition that she marry him. To this she readily agrees, for he is no stranger; she has often seen him in her dreams and learned to love him. In the duel between the unknown knight and Telramund, the latter is thrown, but his life is magnanimously spared by the conqueror, who then claims Elsa as his bride. He had, however, made another condition; namely, that she may never ask him who he is and whence he came. As he appears so good and so noble, and as he has come in answer to her prayer, she makes no objection to this condition either, and the couple retire to the bridal chamber.

Although temporarily defeated, Ortrud and Telramund do not by any means give up their conspiracy against Elsa, and their next

move is to poison her mind against her noble protector, so that she may send him away and then be again at their mercy; for they hope, eventually, themselves to secure the principality to which Elsa and her brother are the rightful heirs. With this end in view both present themselves at Elsa's door and succeed in getting a hearing. They profess to be exceedingly penitent for what they have done, and very solicitous for the welfare of Elsa. It pains them very much, they say, that she has been taken in by someone whose name she does not even know, and who is so afraid that his identity be known that he has forbidden her, on pain of his leaving her to ask him his name.

There must be something in his life of which he is ashamed, they argue, which will not bear the light of day, else why should he wish to deny the one to whom he is willing to link his whole life, knowledge of his identity and antecedents?

By means of these arguments they arouse a doubt in Elsa's soul, and after some conversation she goes in to Lohengrin, changed. He notices the difference in her, and asks the cause. Finally she admits that she feels uncertain about him and that she would like to know his name. Thereby she has broken the condition which he has imposed upon her, and he tells her that now, having expressed a doubt in him, it will be impossible for him to remain. Neither tears nor protestations can change this resolve, so they go together to the river where Lohengrin calls his trusty swan, and when that appears he reveals his identity, saying, "I am Lohengrin, the son of Parsifal." The swan which then comes, is changed and stands before them all as the brother of Elsa. He then becomes her protector in place of the departing Lohengrin.

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As said, the story of Lohengrin contains one of the most important lessons to be learned on the path of attainment. No one will ever attain Initiation till that has been learned. In order that we may properly grasp this point, let us first look at the symbol of the swan and see what is behind it and why the symbol is used. Those who have seen the opera, Parsifal, or who have read attentively the literature on the Grail, are already acquainted with the fact that swans were the emblem worn by all the Knights of the Grail.

In the opera, itself, two swans are mentioned as preparing a healing bath for the suffering King Amfortas. Parsifal is represented as shooting one of these swans, and a great deal of sorrow is manifested by the Knights of the Grail at this unwarranted cruelty.

The swan is capable of moving in several elements. It may fly in the air with great swiftness; it also propels itself majestically upon the water; and by means of its long neck it may even explore the depths and investigate whatever may be found upon the bottom of a not too deep pond. It is, therefore, an apt symbol of the Initiate, who, on account of the power developed within him, is capable of elevating himself to higher realms, and moving in different worlds. As the swan flies through space, so may one who has developed the powers of his soul body travel in that vehicle over mountains and lakes; as the swan dives below the surface of the water, so may also the Initiate go underneath the surface of the deep in his soul body, which is not in danger from fire, earth, air, or water. In fact, that is one of the first things that the Invisible Helpers have to be taught: that they are immune from any danger which may befall them in the physical body, when they are invested with the Golden Wedding Garment of which we have spoken so much. Thus they may enter a burning building with immunity, there assisting those who are in danger, sometimes in a most miraculous

manner; or they may be on board a sinking ship giving encouragement to those who are about to face the great change.

The ancient Norse mythology tells us how noble warriors of old, when they had fought the battle and had finally been overcome or mortally wounded, sang their swan song. But let it not be supposed for a moment that it was only the brutal fight fought upon the battle field with sword and lance that was meant; rather it was the inner fight, the hidden meaning, that a noble soul who had fought the battle of life well, at the last when he had attained to that which was possible in those days, sang his swan song: that is he took his oath of Initiation and became capable of entering another realm to help others there as he had helped them here; for it was ever the sacred duty of a noble knight to succor those who were weak and heavily laden.

Elsa is the daughter of a king. She is thus of the highest and most noble birth. No one who is not thus well born can lay claim to the services of such a knight as Lohengrin in that manner; that is to say of course, there is in humanity neither high nor low, save as we stand in the scale of evolution. When a soul has been long upon the stage of life, has gone to school for many, many lives, then gradually it acquires that nobility which comes from learning the lessons and working along the lines laid down by the schoolmasters, our Elder Brothers, who are now teaching us the lessons of life. The nobility earned by eagerness to do deeds of mercy for our less highly advanced fellow beings, is the key to their favor, and therefore when Elsa was in distress, a noble soul is sent to teach and guide her.

In [The Book of Revelation](#) we read about the mystic marriage of the Bride and the Lamb. There is that marriage in every soul's experience, and always under similar circumstances. One of the

first requisites is that the soul must have been forsaken by every one else: it must stand alone without a single friend in the world. When that point has been attained, when the soul sees no succor from any earthly source, when it turns with its whole heart to heaven and prays for deliverance, then comes the deliverer and also the offer of marriage. In other words, the true Teacher always comes in response to the earnest prayers of the aspirant, but not till he has forsaken the world and been forsaken by it. He offers to take care of one who is thus anxious for guidance, and forthwith conquers untruth with the sword of truth, but having given this proof, henceforth he requires an absolute unquestioning faith. Please remember—let it imprint itself upon your mind, let it sear itself into your very being with letters of fire, that having come in answer to the prayer, (which is not only words but a life of aspiration) the indubitable, unquestionable proof is given of the power and ability of the Teacher to teach, to guide, and to help; and then the requirement is made that henceforth there must be absolute faith in him, otherwise it becomes impossible for him to work with the aspirant.

That is the great lesson that is taught by Lohengrin, and it is of supreme importance, for there are thousands upon thousands walking the streets in many cities today, looking hither and thither, seeking a Teacher. Some pretend to have found him, or have deceived themselves into that belief; but the requirement that is enunciated in Lohengrin is an actual requirement. The Teacher must, will, and does prove his ability. He is known by his fruits; then in return he demands loyalty, and unless this faith, this loyalty, this readiness to serve, this willingness to do whatever is required, is forthcoming from the aspirant, the relationship will be terminated. No matter how hot may be the tears of repentance which might follow in the case of the aspirant who had failed in his

loyalty to the Teacher, no matter how sincere his repentance; the next opportunity will not be forthcoming in the present life.

Therefore, it is of the very greatest importance that those who are seeking Initiation should understand that there is something due them from the professed teacher, before they accept him. He must show the fruits of his work, for as Christ said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." This the genuine Teacher always does without being asked, and without seeming to do so or to want to give a sign. He always furnishes some evidence to which the mind of the aspirant can cling as an indubitable proof of his superior knowledge and ability. When that has then been demonstrated, it is absolutely essential that loyalty to the teacher must follow; and no matter who says this, that, or the other thing, the aspirant should not be disturbed, but cling steadfastly to the proven fact, stick to that which he believes to be true and faithfully uphold the one to whom he looks for teaching; for unless that faith is there, there is no use in continuing the relationship.

It is very significant, however, that Elsa's brother was, as we learn from the final scene, the swan which had carried Lohengrin to his sister, and who was changed back to his natural shape when Lohengrin departed. He had been through Initiation. He, no doubt, knew of his sister's plight, as one soul who is advanced and studying along these lines knows of another's struggles, but although he saw the predicament of this fair aspirant, or sister soul, he had no fear, for was he not the means of bringing to her the succor that she might have had permanently had she been as faithful as he?

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