

**Advanced Core Concepts
Independent Study Module No. 40**

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 so far 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 whither 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 recesses 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 nowadays 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 ascend 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.

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.

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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, or post-Atlantean Epoch Earth, 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.

[To Be Continued]

Questions:

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- 1.** What is absolutely essential to form the Christ within?
- 2.** What effect did the allegorical pictures, contained in the ancient myths, have upon man in his present and future development?

3. Why are these mythical pictures fading away in the etheric atmosphere of the Pacific Coast?

4. What do the Rhine Maidens and the lump of lustrous gold which lighted the water represent?

5. What do Alberich and the gold in its unformed state upon the rock represent?

6. What was necessary before Alberich could form the ring of gold and master the world?

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