

**Advanced Core Concepts  
Independent Study Module No. 44**

**The Ring of the Niebelung: "The Battle of Truth and Error"  
[continued]**

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.

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 from, 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! And 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 'twixt 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 un-scathed 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. Gutrune, 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 closely 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 co-operation 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.

**[To Be Continued]**

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**Questions:**

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- 1.** Why was it necessary for Siegfried to leave the rock of Brunhilde and reenter the material world?
- 2.** As long as the soldier of truth wears his armor and boldly faces the world, what is inevitable?
- 3.** What is allegorically represented when Siegfried gives Brunhilde the Ring of the Niebelung?
- 4.** Who were chosen by acclamation to be the companions of the gods?
- 5.** What will be the order of things when the twilight of the gods is at hand? **6.** What effort is made to relieve Siegfried of the ring when he emerges anew into the world?

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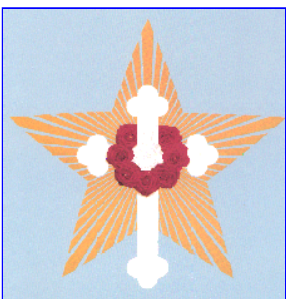
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