

**Advanced Core Concepts  
Independent Study Module No. 47**

**Tannhauser: The 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 their deals 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 not 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 proved 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."

When mankind emerged from [Atlantis](#), and came into the air of [the current Fifth Epoch Earth](#), 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.

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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,  
And 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 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.

### **[To Be Continued]**

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#### **Questions:**

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- 1.** Why was it absolutely necessary to improve the standard of womanhood of ancient times?
- 2.** In order to truly elevate mankind, why is it necessary to regard woman as the equal of man?
- 3.** Who is the Goddess of Venus, and upon what does she survive?
- 4.** Explain the inner urge of Tannhauser that drove him from the cave of Venus, that he may again know the struggle of the world.
- 5.** Why did not Tannhauser frankly tell his minstrel friends of his sojourn with Venus?

6. What is the result of going contrary to the laws of progress?

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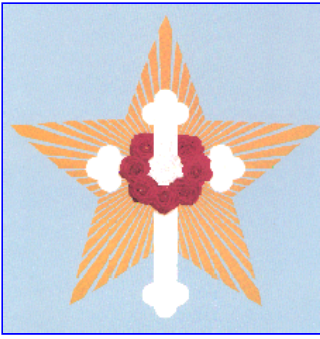
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