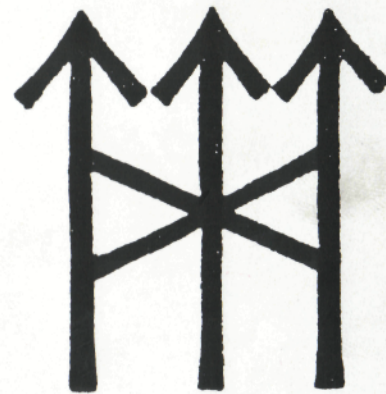


Introduction
to the
Germanic Tradition



Edred

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Introduction to the Germanic Tradition

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Published by
Rune-Kaven Press
P.O. Box 307
Austin, Texas 78712

ISBN 1-88875-1-2

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P.O. Box 307, Centerville, IL
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Published by
RUNA-RAVEN PRESS
P.O. Box 557
Smithville, Texas 78957

ISBN: 1-885972-17-2

Printed in the United States of America

Odian Outer Rune Gild
Workshop
PO Box 369 Centralia, IL
62801-0369 USA

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Introduction to the Germanic Tradition

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Information on the Rune-Gild

Abbreviations

OE Old English
ON Old Norse

A Note on Orthography

The text of this book contains some special characters particular to the old Germanic languages. These are the *thorn* þ and the *edh* ð. The thorn is usually transcribed as a “th” and the edh may also be a “th,” although it is also often transcribed as a “dh” in some books.

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Introduction

A great tide of reawakening is sweeping the land. The gods and goddesses of our ancestors are stirring once more. Runes are being carved and their names sung again. Is the age of rebirth and reawakening upon us? Has Hœnir once again begun to read the Runes aright?

This age of reawakening will not just "happen." It must be attended by inner and outer work by us, the descendants of those who lived in a more heroic time. It is therefore necessary for us to become familiar — as quickly as possible — with the basic lore of the Germanic Way. It is to this end that this book has been written. This is a guidebook to the Germanic tradition in that it is designed to plant seeds of knowledge and show the path to further knowledge. It will outline for you who the Germanic people are and what a worker in the Germanic tradition is and can become. Essential to the understanding of who you are is the soul-lore, or "psychology," of the ancestral path. This further defines *who you are* in a more precise way. Once you know who you are, you must orient yourself in the world. You must have information on the lore of the worlds, or cosmology. You must gain an understanding of the highest models of consciousness and right action—the gods and goddesses of your folk.

Beyond this you must learn the ways of *working*— ways of conducting symbolic actions and thoughts designed to open yourself and your environment to the reawakening at hand. In the Germanic tradition these ways are four-fold. Each of these methods are introduced here as guideposts for further work.

This effort to reawaken the Germanic spirit has been going on for centuries— since the time shortly after the official "conversion" of the folk to Christianity. There has been a long-standing underground movement to reestablish the old ways— many of which never died out, but just changed forms, the meanings of which were "forgotten." It is our task to *remember*. This monumental history of this movement will be outlined in *The Northern Dawn* (Rûna-Raven).

Who Is Of the Germanic Folk?

This is an essential question to pose, and an essential one to answer. Readers will most likely recognize at once whether they *are* or *are not* Germanic in their being after absorbing what it written here. The Germanic peoples are of northern and central European ethnic stock. They speak — as a native tongue — a Germanic language. All those who have German, English, Dutch or a Scandinavian language (Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Faroese or Icelandic) as a native language are Germanic. It has been shown that the language(s) one learns as a child actually contributes to the *organic structure* of the brain. Therefore there is a symbolic/linguistic component added to genetic heritage. One is Germanic if one is of Germanic stock, and/or has grown up speaking a Germanic language.

Also there are those who have familial links to Germanic culture. These are prevalent in the Mediterranean region— especially Spain, France and Italy all heavily Germanicized at the time of the fall of the Roman Empire. In this southern world the earliest foundations of national identity were laid by Germanic peoples: Visigoths, Swabians and Vandals in Spain and Portugal; Franks, Visigoths and Burgundians in France; and Ostrogoths and Langobards in Italy. In the Viking Age Germanic roots were also heavily laid down in otherwise non-Germanic regions: e.g. Ireland and Scotland in the west, Normandy and Sicily in the south, as well as Russia in the east.

It is therefore no wonder that the appeal of the Germanic tradition is so broad today. As the spirits of the old gods goddesses of the north reawaken in the minds of the descendants of those who honored them before, individuals from an apparent variety of cultural backgrounds will feel the draw. This inner call is not some random force— it is the reawakening of a definite ancestral, natural kind of *being* which is innate, or in-born. An encoded seed-form has been activated, and is beginning to send information to the brains of the folk. The Germanic tradition, for those who *are* Germanic, is not a choice— such as what shirt to wear, or what revealed religion to believe in today — but is a matter of *who* you really *are*.

peoples of the Germanic lands, from North America to Europe, from Switzerland to Sweden, and all around the world, all concentrated on their own traditions and culture many a fortune built on marketing foreign ideas to the Germanic world would be lost.

It is the work of many organizations dedicated to the reawakening of Germanic spirituality and the inner work of the Rune-Gild, to make our traditions once more readily available and understandable to our people. This little book is intended as a call to action on your part. First begin to Seek the Rune — the Mystery — at the heart of your own Being. Once the first stirrings of this has been achieved, begin to seek out others of like mind and of like mission with whom to share and build on your enterprise. The work is an timeless one, and one that requires heroic kinds of individuals to take upon themselves at this time.

Listen! The ravens have flown forth, the hour of Need is at hand: Seek the Rune and Become Who You Are— Thus the Word is Spoken.

this organization in English, and it generally remains shrouded in mystery. The only work available on it is *Fire and Ice*.

The Germanic tradition has been a secret well-spring of esoteric cultural renewal for centuries, and this will continue in the future.

Closing

The Germanic system of esoteric knowledge and traditional religion is perhaps the most neglected in modern times as far as the mass-culture is concerned. This is ironic as it is the one that is most *natural* to the dominant culture of the 20th century. Despite their lip-service to "nature" and "naturalism," the mass-culture of the 20th century, with few exceptions, embraced only things which were in fact unnatural — and often toxic — to it. In the coming century it will be increasingly realized that what is *natural* to the culture is healthy for it. This will result in an ever greater number of people beginning to understand what it means to *become who they are*.

It should be emphasized that the true Germanic tradition harbors no ill-will toward any other people or race. The Germanic peoples of old were in fact quite xenophilic — they were very friendly to foreign peoples and ideas. (This is at the root of our sometimes unbalanced love-affair with the exotic and "multi-cultural" today.) However, the time has come too for us to take a more active interest in ourselves, and in a cultural fashion *give ourselves to ourselves* in order that we can better understand and become who we really are. Then, and only then, will we be able to respect, and be respected by, other peoples of the world.

Nevertheless, the Germanic tradition will probably continue to spawn some fear and loathing in others. The possible root of this feeling lies in the fear of the *real* and the *genuine*. The "occult mill" and other forces interested in "selling" as many different products and lines of thought as possible, in order to maximize their profits, have a vested interest in the Germanic market being small. If the great mass of monied consumers represented by the

Become Who You Are!

This is the greatest command of the Germanic tradition. "Knowing," or "believing" who you are in one thing. But doing the inner and outer work necessary to *become* who you innately and really *are* is another. Becoming who you are is the chief work of the Germanic tradition. *Becoming* is a process of development — of change from one condition to another, of transformation from one pattern to another. *Being* is, however, a stable, firm, steadfast state of relatively timeless perfection, or completion. This latter quality is exactly the same for us as it was for our ancestors. Our task in this matter and theirs remain the same. It is our belief that in this endeavor our ancestors were more advanced than we are at this time. Their codes — of pride in work, honor, and courage in battle, loyalty, love or freedom (willingness to take responsibility and bear the consequences) and of the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge — were far superior to the ones commonly held (or neglected) today. We may be richer in technological wonders — but when it comes to inner development and even the pursuit of true happiness we are woefully impoverished.

Workers in the Germanic tradition — be they followers of the Vanir or Æsir, ethical practical philosophers or seekers of Runic knowledge — all share the main task of becoming who they are. Who you *are* is like an embryo inside you which you must bring forth and to which you must yourself give birth. How you develop this embryo is the object of a variety of techniques. But before these techniques, or ways of working, can be gainfully applied, knowledge must be won about where the individual finds him- or herself as defined in the tradition. It is also the case that the true character of the higher models of action (divinities and heroes) and the true nature of the soul or total constitution of the individual must also be understood. Such understanding is not won overnight. These vast areas of knowledge comprise the traditional cosmology, psychology and theology of the Germanic peoples.

Germanic Cosmology The Traditional World-View

Our Germanic ancestors knew well that our total environment is a complex and mysterious thing. Traditionally they saw that *this* world—the world of matter, animals and humans — is at the *center* of reality. Hence they called this world Midgard— or the Middle-Yard. Arrayed around this focal point of the world is a number of other worlds, or dimensions of reality. The entirety of the model consists of nine worlds in a framework called the World-Tree. This World-Tree is called Yggdrasill in Old Norse. As we will see there is a strong link between the idea of the cosmos being symbolized as a tree and human beings who were said to have been shaped from trees (i.e. vegetable matter) by the first God of Consciousness (Wōden-Wili-Wē)

The traditional arrangement of the nine worlds is shown in Figure 1.

Asgard (ON *Ásgarðr*) is the enclosure of the Gods of Consciousness—the Æsir, or Ases. It towers above, in the highest reaches of the Tree. The Æsir are the Sovereign Ancestral Gods of Consciousness, that is they are meant to rule our actions, we are descended from them and their power is that of consciousness in the human being. The chief of them is Wōden, or Óðinn.

Hel is at the lowest point below the Tree. It is the realm of the dead and a peaceful abode of the souls waiting to be reborn among their descendants who are still living in Midgard.

Lightelf-home (ON *Ljóssálfheimr*) lies between Midgard and Asgard. It is the abode of the ancestral elves of innate intelligence. The elves (ON *álfar*) are the mental faculties of the ancestors, and this is their separate dwelling-place in the cosmic order.

Darkelf-home (ON *Svartálfheimr*) is the polar opposite of Lightelf-home. It is situated just below Midgard, on the road to Hel. The dark elves are also called dwarves (ON *dvergar*). These embody the shaping powers in the cosmos, and the innate (inherited) crafting skills of humanity.

Continuation of Germanic Tradition in Western "Magical" Teachings

The ancient tribal traditions of the Germanic folk were carried on in secret long after the official coming of Christianity. It is no accident that Germany and the North became hot-beds of secret lore in the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance and in modern times, as well.

In the prophesies of the "western" magical tradition, there is mention of an arising of a great "Lion of the North." This "Lion" is not a man, but the renewal of the esoteric Tradition of the North and of the Pole.

In the Renaissance times the North was the spawning ground of some of the greatest "occult" thinkers of the age: Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (Paracelsus), Cornelius von Nettesheim (Agrippa), and John Dee. The Rosicrucian movement was essentially a Northern phenomenon. What the Germanic mind brought to the "occult sciences" was a pragmatic and rational, virtually *scientific*, spirit. This spirit of verification goes back directly the most archaic times when the divinations of the Runecasters had to be *verified* with other corroborating signs in order to be worthy of being acted upon.

One German magical myth has perhaps shaped our modern age more than any other: that of Faust. Faust may have been a real magician who lived in the 16th century. But around his personality a vast legend grew. It hinged on the idea that a man, despite having learned all that can be learned in science, hungers for more — more knowledge, more power, and yes, more *pleasure*. For this he is willing to give anything— *to sell his soul to the Devil*, as the Medieval Myth world have it. Some have seen in this the story of "Western Man" over the past four-hundred years or so. If this is true, the key to understanding our present world, and being able to transform it, is rooted in this magical mythology. The deep-origins of the Faust Myth lie in the mythology surrounding the Germanic God Wodan—who so desired Knowledge that he "sacrificed himself to himself."

More recently there arose in Germany the magical order called the Fraternitas Saturni. Little has been written about

Seiðr

Seiðr holds great fascination for the modern mind. This is perhaps because it had a "sinister" reputation among many in the ancient North. It is a kind of magic, distinguished from *galdor*, which is the mainstay of the Vanic Goddess, Freyja. Freyja is said to have taught this form of magic to Óðinn as well.

This form of magic is often confused with "shamanism," with which it may or may not have links. It also has affinities with forms of Indian *tantrism*.

In fact, it seems that *seiðr* is a Northern spiritual technology for which the keys have been lost. The best way to try to recover these keys is through experiments using the few clues that were left behind in the literature of the North.

Seiðr involves the submersion of consciousness into an undifferentiated state where the *seið*-man or *seið*-woman interacts with the realm of the fabric of the universe, or with entities contained therein, on a semi-conscious basis.

To obtain this altered state of consciousness, the *seið*-worker uses several techniques: drugs, sleep-deprivation, sensory-deprivation, sensory-overload (through pleasurable/sexual stimulation and/or techniques of torture)—or simply rhythmic chants and songs sung by others. *Seiðr* also involves the ability to sing in an otherworldly voice—producing *seið*-sounds with the ability to heal or kill. These are not "words," but vocal effects.

The main work of the *seið*-worker involves "travelling to other worlds" to obtain knowledge or power. Perhaps the simplest rite of *seiðr* would be one in which the *seið*-worker "sits out" all night on a hill, or at a cross-roads, or on a grave, in order to obtain a vision of his or her fetch-animal. This is a manifestation, in animal form, of the person's guardian spirit, or an entity which is a pure manifestation of the basic being of the person. Knowledge of this form will lend the individual great power in future endeavors in *seiðr*.

The whole topic of *seiðr* is discussed in more detail in *Witchdom of the True*, as well as in inner workings of the Rune-Gild and publications of that organization.

Midgard (ON *Miðgarðr* OE *Middangeard*) is the central focus of the cosmos as it now exists for us. In Midgard—the world of matter—things happen and her things can be transformed. Note that only Midgard and Asgard share the designation as "gards"—as protected *enclosures*. This is because both are focal points of consciousness and need to be shielded against the forces of non-consciousness in order that progressively more conscious forms can be developed within them.

These five realms form the vertical axis, or pole, of the entire cosmic order—the central column of Yggdrasill. Lying around this central column are the four organic abodes—two of natural forces and two of natural entities.

Muspell-home (ON *Muspellsheimr*) is the realm of pure fire/energy. In it swarm the "fire-giants," i.e. cosmic natural forces of expansion and dissolution. According to tradition it lies in the south. It is from this realm that the ultimate destruction or cosmic order, or any ordered cycle of being, issues.

Nifl-home (ON *Niflheimr*) is the world of pure water-ice/substance. In it dwell the "frost-giants," i.e. cosmic natural states of entropy and gravitational mass. The tradition has it lying to the north. The directions "north" or "south," "east" or "west" have *symbolic* rather than literal meanings.

Wane-home (ON *Vanaheimr*) is the kingdom of the Vanir—the gods and goddesses of (re-)productive power. From this western realm issues the power to produce and to reproduce organically. The Vanir are the divinities of organic power in the universe. Their abode is on the horizontal plane because the organic/natural realm is symbolized by the horizontal plane of the Tree.

Etin-home (ON *Jötunheimr*) is the world of the etins (ON *jötnar*). These entities are also organic and their realm lies to the east on the horizontal plane. They are the forces of the flux and chaos of organic/natural existence and life. They are agents of evolution and mutation, although they themselves do not change. In ancient times they were often worshipped as local deities, and so are not necessarily "evil."

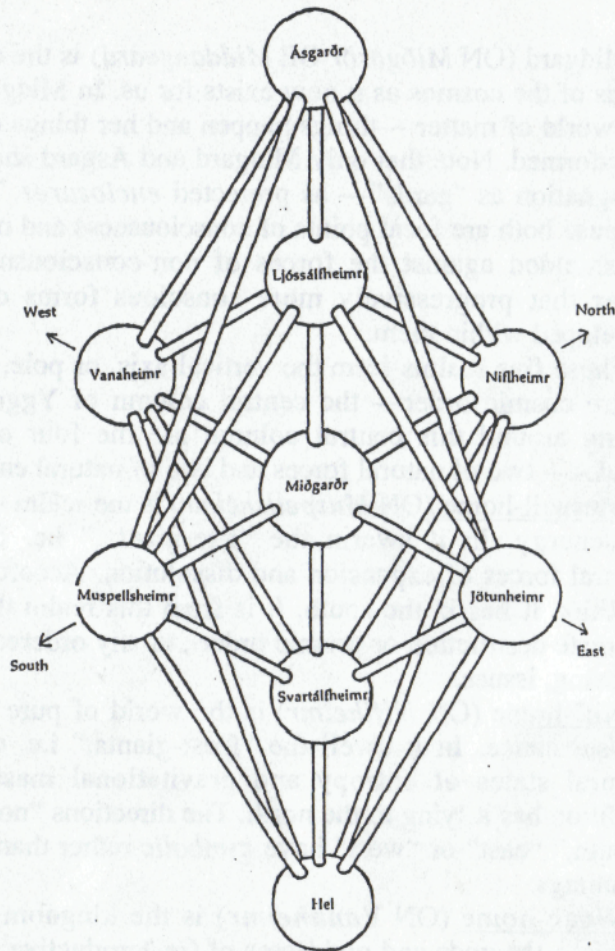


Figure 1: The World-Tree

It should be noted that this arrangement owes *nothing* to the Cabalistic "Tree of Life." The texts from which the Germanic system is derived are far older than any known reference to the "Tree of Life." Besides the Biblical references to this tree *never* equate it with a *cosmic structure*— it is more likely that the Cabalistic idea of a tree being the cosmic structure was taken from Indo-European lore, rather than the Germanic World-Tree being somehow based on Cabalistic ideas.

The Runes of the Older Futhork

No.	Name	Translation of the Name	Esoteric meaning of the Name	
1	ᚠ	<i>fehu</i>	Livestock, money	Dynamic power
2	ᚢ	<i>uruz</i>	Aurochs (wild bison)	Vital formative force
3	ᚦ	<i>þurisaz</i>	Thurs (giant)	Breaker of resistance
4	ᚨ	<i>ansuz</i>	A god (= Woden)	Sovereign ancestral power
5	ᚱ	<i>raīðō</i>	Wagon/chariot	Vehicle on path to cosmic power
6	ᚷ	<i>kēnaz</i>	Torch	Controlled energy
7	ᚨ	<i>gēbō</i>	Gift (sacrifice)	Exchanged force
8	ᚱ	<i>wunjō</i>	Joy/pleasure	harmony of like forces
9	ᚱ	<i>hagalaz</i>	Hail(-stone)	Seed form and primal union
10	ᚱ	<i>nauhiz</i>	Need (distress)	Need-Fire (resistance/deliverance)
11	ᚱ	<i>isa</i>	Ice	Contraction (matter/anti-matter)
12	ᚱ	<i>jēra</i>	Year (harvest)	Orbit (life-cycle)
13	ᚱ	<i>eihwaz</i>	Yew-tree	Axis (tree of life/death)
14	ᚱ	<i>perþrō</i>	Lot-cup	Evolutionary force
15	ᚱ	<i>elhaz</i>	Elk	Protective and tutelary numen
16	ᚱ	<i>sowilō</i>	Sun	Sun-wheel (crystalized light)
17	ᚱ	<i>teiwaz</i>	the god Týr	Sovereign order
18	ᚱ	<i>berkanō</i>	Birch(-goddess)	Birch numen (container/releaser)
19	ᚱ	<i>ehwaz</i>	Horse	Twin equine gods (trust)
20	ᚱ	<i>mannaz</i>	man(-kind)	Human order of divine origin
21	ᚱ	<i>laguz</i>	Water	Life energy and organic growth
22	ᚱ	<i>ingwaz</i>	Ing, the Earth-God	Gestation/container
23	ᚱ	<i>dagaz</i>	Day	Dawn/twilight (paradox)
24	ᚱ	<i>opila</i>	Ancestral property	Self-contained hereditary property

Runic Ritual

Rituals involving Runes can be simple or complex. The real key to wielding the power of the Runes lies in the level of Runic Being the Runer has attained. The construction of a work of Rune-Galdor, the actual Runic formula, often requires knowledge not only of the Runes, but of the proper language to use with the Rune-staves.

The basic Runic ritual consists of 1) carving the staves while singing the name of each Rune as it is being carved, 2) coloring the staves with red dye, paint, or blood, and 3) singing or speaking the whole formula. The more advanced the Runer, the simpler the rite becomes. In these, and other similar technical acts of Rune-Work, the Runer is imitating the divine patterns of action initiated by the First Rune-Carver: Óðinn. The more accurate the Rune-Work, the greater the *resonance* with the timeless divine patterns.

Galdor

Galdor is the craft of operative work that stems from the use of signs and symbols derived from the realm of the Gods. The Runes were called “divinely descended” in the most ancient tradition. Galdor is the use of verbal symbols, songs, poetry, Runic consciousness in speech and writing, to directly enact the divine parts of the human being, once these aspects have been reawakened through the discipline of Rune-Work. This discipline is best discussed in the *Nine Doors of Midgard* (Rûna-Raven, 1997).

The practice of galdor is under the aegis of the God Wôden, or Óðinn as he is called in the North. Óðinn received the Runes in a flash of inspiration as he sacrificed *himself to himself* on the World-Tree, Yggdrasill. At that moment he found what he had sought—the Mystery (*Rûna*). Those who seek to immolate Óðinn and not worship him, do as he did—they “Seek the Mystery.” This is chief requirement of all who would be called Odians. From this search stems all true power in galdor-craft.

Essential to Runic understanding is the Runic *fubark*. This must be learned in its basic traditional forms. There are traditional shapes, names and ordering of the staves (Rune-shapes). Recent years have seen pseudo-rune books and authors who play fast and loose with the tradition—and thus loose all possibilities of connecting with the old powers and meanings. (The hand of Óðinn can be seen in the blinding of would-be rune-masters, which causes them to make fools of themselves.)

The Runic table presented below provides the basic information the traditional Runer needs to begin his or her journey into the Rune-Realm. The names of the Runes are in Proto-Germanic, the common language spoken by all Germanic peoples before around 700 CE. The translation of the name provides the basic exoteric meaning of the Rune-Name, while the esoteric meaning indicates what that name really *meant* to the ancestors.

The Runic tradition can be explored in any number of my books listed in the bibliography. I recommend beginning with *The Nine Doors of Midgard*.

Soul-Lore

Grasping the soul-lore of our ancestors opens the doors of understanding to the world and to the gods. Our ancestors had many names for parts of the soul. They did not learn these in schools in mysterious forms of initiation: they were built right into their everyday experience and how they processed what they did and what happened in the world. In the present day soul-lore is the specialty of “psychologists” and the like—and for every psychologist there seems to be a different “psychology.” Our ancestors had a complex technical vocabulary for the soul and its workings because they were intimately familiar with its workings. What people know well, they have many names for. Figure 2 shows a schematic diagram which outlines the various parts of what we like to call the body-soul complex. We use Old Norse names for the parts of the complex simply because most people are most familiar with these terms.

It is thought that if we can return to an understanding of the workings of the timeless soul of our ancestors, we will not only be able to understand the mythology, runic inscriptions, and art forms which they left behind, but that we will also once again become more *effective* as human beings. We believe that in the area of “psychology” our ancestors were far in advance of where we stand now. Their complete *life* — linked as it was to all levels of their culture — found its instrument of expression and perception in the model of the soul we present here. If the “modern” individual can internalize these structures, he or she will be able to transform the self in ways that can only be imagined now. This too is part of *becoming who we are*.

Hugr: The *hugr* is the thinking and feeling part of the human being. These two faculties are much more related in our ancestral soul than they are in the conventional thought of modern times.

Óðr: The *óðr* is the divine inspiration to which individual can open themselves, who know how to do so. It is a dangerous faculty, and should not be trifled with. This is the part of the soul over which the high-god Óðinn is the master.

Minni: The *minni* is the repository of memories. These are not just personal memories of past events, and so on, but rather the well-spring of eternal shapes and forms—the archetypes of existence and consciousness. The *óðr* energizes us, the *hugr* guides us rationally and with a good heart, but the *minni* provides the eternal meaning and purpose for what we do in Midgard.

Önd: This is the breath of life. It feeds the whole system of the body-soul complex with an energy which was originally given to humanity by the God Óðinn. It is the power which “keeps body and soul together.”

Sjálf: The *sjálf* is the “self,” the synthetic whole of the person, or even of a god.

Ek: This is literally the “I,” the *ego*. This faculty, or focal-point of consciousness, can exist at any one point in the whole body-soul complex. The place of this focal point in any individual’s life will determine what kind of life one will lead. It can be moved around within the system— but this requires great effort to overcome habits of focusing the *ek* in the wrong places. Ideally it is balanced among the *óðr-hugr-minni*.

Lík: The *lík* is the physical, completely *natural*, part of the human being. It is the organic structure into which the gods infused the divine elements which made us human.

Hamr: The *hamr* is the subtle “shape” of the body. It is intimately connected to the *hamingja*, the dynamic part of the soul. If one looks at a recently dead person, one can see that there is *something missing*, even though the external shape *appears* to be the same. This “something” is the *hamr*. In life certain individuals can manipulate their *hamar* so that they can appear different at different times— sometimes they look older, or younger, for example. many actors can do this— and it is at the root of the phenomenon known in ancient times as “shape-shifting,” or *hamramr*.

Fylgja: The *fylgja*, or “fetch,” is the contra-sexual part of a human being which acts as a “guardian spirit,” and as a repository for the fate or destiny of the individual— as the effects of deeds done in past times (even past lives) play out in the present.

5. Loading

The speaker pours drink into the horn and says:

“We give you the gifts of our works woven and blended with the might and main of this drink. It lends us — gods and folk together— help in our striving toward the shining plain where the worlds and wights dwell in wholeness.”

6. Drinking

The speaker then drinks from the horn and pours the remainder into the blessing bowl on the harrow. The horn is then refilled and passed to each of the gathered folk. Each makes the sign of the hammer I over the rim of the horn before drinking. Each time the remainder of the drink is poured into the blessing bowl by the speaker.

7. Blessing

The speaker now dips the evergreen twig into the bowl and sprinkles the harrow and the gathered folk with the words:

“The blessings of all the gods and goddesses of our folk be upon us!”

8 Giving

After the blessing is completed, the speaker pours the contents of the blessing bowl out upon the bare ground to the east of the harrow with the words:

“To Woden, Tîw, Balder, Frigga, Idunna, Thunar, Freyja, Freyr and to all the gods and goddesses of our folk!”

9. Leaving

The speaker returns to the harrow and says:

“Thus the work is once again wrought, it renews our hearts to do worthy deeds, and to strive toward our goals with mighty moods, wise words, and trust in our own might and main— ever holding to our oaths to ourselves and to our folk!”

3. Rede

The speaker says:

“Today/tonight we gather as in times of yore to honor all the gods and goddesses who dwell in Asgard, and all our own forebears who dwell in the halls of Hárr and Hel. We call upon them to make ripe their might and main in our lives. We call upon them all — the holy gathering — living as a whole as is Wōden’s Law.”

4. Call

The speaker makes the following calls. After each call, the gathered folk give welcome to the god or goddess being called with their name, and the words: “We Give Thee Welcome!”

“Woden, we are awed by thy craft,
Tîw, we stay true to three forever,
Balder, thy brightness and boldness guides us,
Frigga, thy fruit and wisdom keeps us all,
Idunna, thine apples strengthen our souls,
Thunar, thy thunder wards our stead,
Freyja, we get freedom from thy frolic,
Freyr, from thee we get a harvest of frith.”

Then a litany of divine attributes of the gods and goddesses just called is recited by the speaker. After each the gathered folk shout: “We give thee welcome!”

“Rune-Lord,
One-Handed God,
Holder of the Hringhorn,
Lady of the gods and goddesses,
Keeper of the apples,
Guardian of Asgard,
Holder of the Brisingamen,
God of the Wane.”

“Again we all to you in all your names, be among us here this day/night:

Hail all the gods, hail all the goddesses,
Hail all the holy ones
Who dwell together.”

Hamingja: The *hamingja* is the dynamic power of the soul. It is the luck of an individual as well as a repository of personal power inherited or passed from person to person.

Sál: The *sál* is not important to the living person. It is the after-death shape of the person, and that which holds certain elements together in the after-death state in Hel.

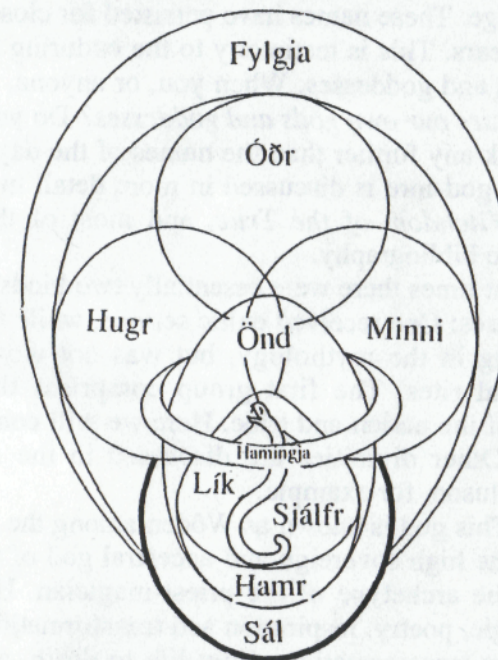


Diagram 2: The Structure of the Soul-Body Complex

This diagram is only meant to *suggest* certain relationships between the various kinds of soul, what parts interact closely, which ones are considered more isolate, which ones are considered to be more all-encompassing, and so forth. The soul exists for the most part in higher dimensions of space. The soul is like the *hyper-body* of the individual— it reaches back in time and participates in timelessness and it extends itself into the unformed realm the profane call the “future.”

The soul-lore is outlined in more detail in *A Book of Troth and Runelore*.

God-Lore

The gods and goddess of our ancestors are still living among us, of course. Stop and think about the names of the days of the week: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Where did these names come from? These indicate first the two sovereign gods: Tiw and Wōden, then the Thunderer of the gods, Þórr (OE Thunor), and finally the goddess Frige. These names have persisted for close to two thousand years. This is testimony to the enduring strength of our gods and goddesses. When you, or anyone, stops to think: *Who are our own gods and goddesses?* Do you really have to look any further than the names of the days of the week? The god-lore is discussed in more detail in *A Book of Troth, Witchdom of the True*, and most of the other books in the bibliography.

In ancient times there were essentially two kinds of gods and goddesses: One received cultic service, while the other was a being in the mythology, but was not worshipped with special rites. The first group comprises the high-divinities of the nation and tribe. Here we will concentrate on these. Other divinities are discussed in the *Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, for example.

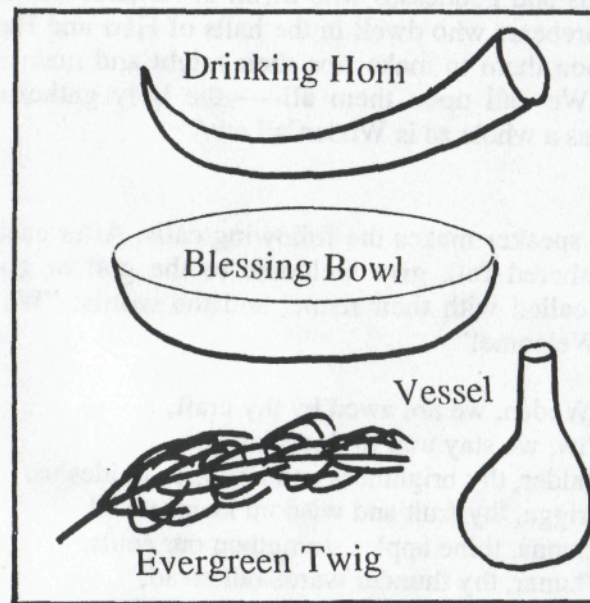
Óðinn: This god is known as Wōden among the English, and he is the high sovereign and ancestral god of the folk. Óðinn is the archetype of the priest-magician. He is the god of magic, poetry, inspiration and transformation— this includes the transformations from life to death, and from the dead back to the living. Óðinn was often feared in ancient times, but in our present age his ways have perhaps become more familiar. (See the article “The Way of Woden” in *Blue Rána*.)

Týr: He is the god of justice and right. In the mythology he sacrifices his hand for the sake of the good of the divine community. he is the god of self-sacrifice for the common good, but he is also an archetype of a wise judge-king.

Þórr: He is the warrior of the gods. With his great physical power — that of thunder and lightning — he pushes back the borders of divine order, destroying monsters of chaos and unconscious giants. He is the greatest friend of every man and woman.

The All-Around Blessing Formula

The Harrow (“altar”) is set up in the standard fashion, as shown here:



1. Hallowing

Make the sign of the hammer I in the four cardinal directions, north, east, south and west. Each time you make it say: “Holy hammer, hallow this stead!” Then, when you are facing north again, make the sign above you toward the ceiling and below you toward the flood and again repeat the words: “Holy hammer, hallow this stead!” At the conclusion of this the speaker says:

“This stead is hallowed for our work here today/tonight. As the god Heimdall wards the Bifrost Bridge, so this stead is warded against all unholy wights and ways.”

2. Reading (Lay)

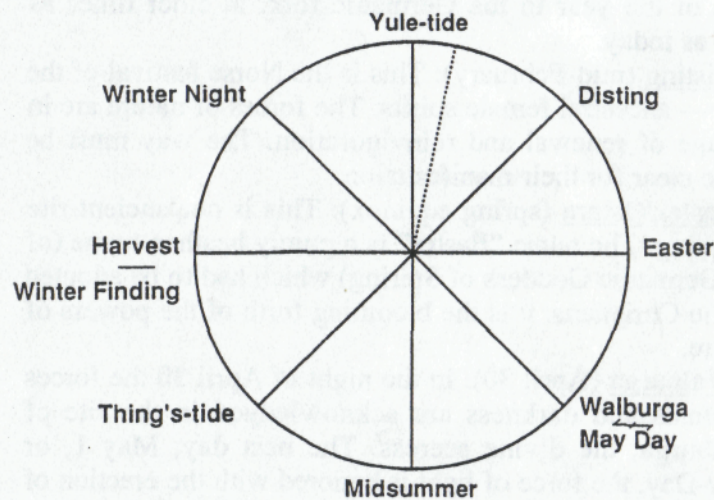
The “Völuspá” is to be read or recited to the gathered folk.

Thing-Tide (late August): This is the time of the great national or international gatherings to do business and to celebrate the social and organizational aspects of the troth. At this time too, disputes are traditionally settled in a peaceful and lawful manner.

Harvest: (autumnal equinox): The cycle of natural force is drawing to a close, the rewards of the expression of vital action in the past year are being taken in. this cycle culminates in the Night of the Mothers.

Although the descriptions above note times such as "vernal equinox," it was not necessarily traditional to observe such mechanical celestial events. More traditional is the careful observation of certain signs which are particular to the region in which one actually lives. The mechanical events are merely guidelines and ordering principles.

Thus the wheel of the year looks like this:



This eight-fold division of the year was traditional in the far North, and the day was similarly divided into eight times of the day, as well.

Frigg: She is the wife of Óðinn and the mistress of the gods and goddesses in Asgard. She oversees the divine order as a mistress does her household. She is also a seeress.

Freyja: The name of this goddess merely means "the Lady." Under this name perhaps a variety of feminine divinities were worshipped in ancient times. She is the Great Goddess of the North. She has magical aspects, as well as ones relating to war, but most especially to the powers of wealth, well-being, and pleasure.

Freyr: He is the brother of Freyja, and his name literally means "the Lord." Freyr was widely worshipped in ancient times, as he was the bringer of good harvest and material gain and well-being.

Njörðr: He is the father of both Freyr and Freyja. He is a god of the sea and of bounty and well-being. He, like his children, is a member of the Vanic class of gods, which are distinguished from the Æsir— although all of the Gods and Goddesses mentioned in this list now dwell among the Æsir and are in Asgard.

Ways of Working

The Germanic tradition is one of action, not merely thought. It is not just a matter of belief, but rather doing, as well. So what should one *do*? There are three major kinds of meaningful action, or ways of working. These encompass three areas: troth, galdor and *seiðr*.

Troth means "faith," or more pointedly: *loyalty*. This loyalty extends from the individual out to the family, to the clan and its chief on to the tribe and its elders and king, if there is one. But from there, it extends back in time to the gods and goddesses themselves. So that the essence of troth, of the "religion," lies in the concept of loyalty— of remaining true to one's gods and tradition, and to one's family and its heads.

Galdor is work with verbal and meta-linguistic signs and symbols, such as the Runes, to impress the will of the galdor-man directly onto the warp and weave of the world. *Seiðr*, on the other hand, works with trance-states, magical substances (such as herbs), and non-verbal symbols.

Troth

The most powerful single way of working in the Germanic tradition is through conscious action in the world. This action, this way of doing, builds increasing levels of *hamingja*, or haming, in the individual. There are two main ways of building this haming in the way of true doing: with the practice of the Nine Noble Virtues, and/or with the regular enacting of the seasonal rites of the folk. The Nine Noble Virtues are:

Courage (Heartiness)

Truth

Honor (Worthiness)

Loyalty (Troth)

Discipline (Hardiness)

Hospitality (Friendliness)

Industriousness (Hard-Work)

Self-Reliance (Freedom)

Perseverance (Steadfastness)

Here the classic forms, or definitions of the Nine Noble Virtues are given, with the more traditional words in old-fashioned English provided in parentheses. These virtues, or *strengths*, are to be practiced on a moment by moment basis. With each virtuous deed, luck is drawn in to your being—much like reeling in the strands of the threads of “fate” so that good fortune will be yours. The *magical efficacy* of this mode of acquiring good fortune is beyond compare.

A worker in troth will begin his or her day by meditating on the Nine Noble Virtues and will end the day with an assessment of how the goals of the day were met, or not. To the extent that one finds one’s self wanting in the virtues, one makes the resolve to do better the next day, and so on, day by day. Beginners may start out with one virtue, or *thew*, and work on realizing them one at a time, until all nine have been explored. Then, as soon as possible, all nine should be meditated and acted upon daily. Balance of development is key here.

Another important way of working in troth is by performing and/or participating in the major customary blessings, or *blótar*. By participating in these you are

returning honor and worth to the gods and goddesses, and you will therefore not be a *thief* as you enjoy the fruits of Midgard. Taking part in the blessings of the troth is one of the main ways the tradition is kept alive and active. A general blessing formula is provided below. From this your own rites can be developed, or you can consult further with the contents of *A Book of Troth*, which contains a whole calendar of such rites.

The traditional calendar of the ancient north includes many seasonal celebrations:

Winter-Nights (three nights in mid-October): This is the end of the harvest season, when the forces of nature have expended themselves fully. It is the Norse new-year, and the beginning of the sacred mid-winter time.

Yule-Tide (December 20-31): The Yule-Tide begins with the Night of the Mothers and ends on Yule proper. This is the time of the rebirth of the solar power in the depth of the year, and the time when the ancestral spirits come closest to the world of the living. It is the holiest time of the year to the Germanic folk, in elder times as well as today.

Disting (mid-February): This is the Norse festival of the *dísir*—ancestral female spirits. The forces of nature are in a stage of renewal and reinvigoration. The way must be made clear for their manifestation.

Easter/Ostara (spring equinox): This is our ancient rite of spring. The name “Easter” is a purely heathen name (of the Germanic Goddess of Spiring) which had to be adopted by the Christians. It is the blooming forth of the powers of nature.

Walburga (April 30): In the night of April 30 the forces of chaos and darkness are acknowledged in the rite of Walburga, the divine seeress. The next day, May 1, or May-Day, the force of light is honored with the erection of the May-Pole—the axis of heaven.

Midsummer (summer solstice): The victory of the sun over the darkness is celebrated and honor is given to the concepts of peace and plenty provided by the Sun. The force which was given birth on the Night of the Mothers has come full cycle.