

THE NORROENA SOCIETY

FUNDAMENTALS PROJECT

A NEW DAY IS COMING . . . by Mark Puryear

At the risk of sounding pretentious, I would like to announce to the Odinit community that I sincerely believe that we are reaching the dawn of a new era for our faith. We are seeing new ideas evolve like never before, with excellent researches being published which give us a newfound hope that the hierology of the Odinit religion can once again be presented in a pure form, completely devoid of Christian and Classical influences. We have the blueprint for such a bold venture; we only need now to put all of the pieces together. In a few years we should see books published that could change the way Odinitists and non-Odinitists view our sacred way of life. This new revolution, if I may call it that, is going to at last put the venerable writings of our religion into our hands, made for our people, by our people.

Do you know who will be at the forefront of this revolution? You. That's right, every single member of Odin's Nation is being called upon to play his or her role in this, for without the backing of our folk, progress is impossibility. The only thing that will be required of you is an open mind and a dedication to move our faith forward. Why is this so important? Because The Norroena Society is developing a project in accordance with a systematic approach for reconstructing our religion, the likes of which may require a paradigm shift for many. Accepting change is difficult for a lot of people, but this is absolutely necessary if we are to grow as a religion.

So as not to be enigmatic here, I'll get straight to the point. As you may have seen elsewhere on this website, we are The Norroena Society have a goal set to fully re-establish every aspect of the Odinit faith, as embodied by our twelve cultural fundamentals: Lore/Theology, Pantheon, Law, Nature, Diet, Music, Dance, Folk/Ancestry, Magic, Arts & Crafts, Combat and Ritual/Prayer. It is our plan to put together and publish a series of books focusing on each of these fundamentals, one at a time, until every one of them is covered so all can have a deeper understanding of every facet of our religious culture. Such an undertaking will take years to complete, but as each book is published a new fundamental will have regained its foothold within our community.

Please do not think I have lost my perspective here. I am well aware of the fact that books on Odinitism have been out there for years. The problem is that, from what I have seen, these books try to cram as much information as possible into one book, resulting in only a few fundamentals being represented, and then those aspects of the faith are given piecemeal. It is impossible to present all of our traditions in one book if you want a detailed description of each fundamental. Certainly some of these, such as Ritual & Prayer have already been covered exhaustively. In such cases we hope to present new

ideas using the research methods that we have found to be quite effective, while at the same time honoring the ancient traditions of our forefathers.

Before I mentioned a paradigm shift that will be required for all of us. This may become the most controversial aspect of our program. For the most part, as I write this, it is our lore that I have in mind, but eventually my words here will cover all of the works of our proposed series. You see, because our lore has come down to us in such a fragmented form it is up to us to repair it, to put the epic back together in a way that we know, without any doubt would make our ancestors proud. There will be times when we will need to make our own additions to the epic, which will be nothing more than a resurrection of the skaldic tradition that was once highly revered among our people.

There will be some that might scoff at this, claiming that we shouldn't tamper with what we've been given through the ages. And this is where the paradigm shift comes in. The establishment of Christianity in Europe brought about some very profound changes in our religious ideals. Where once our religious views were alive and vibrant, built upon an ever-expanding tradition of poetic creativity, it became part of the European mindset that stories are to be stagnant and old, only 'that which is written' can be revered and all else in heresy. It is time for us Odinists to stop viewing the world through Christian lenses, and stop looking at these old Christianized texts as 'sacred'. Furthermore, it is time for us to break the chains that may have fettered us to the mainstream academia for so long. We must embrace our skaldic heritage and revive the spirit of our ever-progressing poetic tradition! It wasn't the poems that were necessarily sacred to our people, it was the inspiration they derived from, granted to those lucky enough to hear the voices of the gods and goddesses through such inspiration.

The skalds were the most important people in ancient Teutonic civilizations and it was their position among the people that established the sacredness of their works. The poetic art comes from the gods themselves, from the holy mead that Odin risked his life to obtain. From this skaldic tradition arose a strict set of rules concerning metre, kennings and content, the foremost of which seems to have been to never contradict what has come before.

So please do not think that I am proposing some sort of new literary movement where one can just make up whatever they wish and claim it to be sacred part of our faith. For now, it is enough for us to simply try to piece together what we can of our great epic, provided that we all accept what needs to be done. There will be times when we will need to make our own, logical and well-argued additions to this for the purposes of coherency. Our strong bond with the academia may lead some purists to denounce this as disreputable, which is why it is important for us to begin discussing this now, for this is necessary for us to begin to move forward.

We all know that all of the works passed down to us have their Christian taint. What many do not realize is that the mainstream academia has just about all of its theories

based upon such Christianized versions of our ancient path. They will cling to these Church approved documents because they are not interested in revitalizing Odinism; they are only interested in presenting the information as it is. Not that they are useless to us. To say that the works of Hilda Davidson, Henry Bellows or Lee M. Hollander are useless to us would be folly. What I am saying is that it is time for us to evolve beyond what they have to offer us, to make bold new steps in the directions of our aims. All they can offer us are the cold hard facts; the exact records passed down to us by Christian scribes who at best weren't very fond of our religion. Because of this their researches will never result in products that will fulfill the needs of our religious community.

Do you realize that we are probably the only faith in the world (well, except for perhaps some of our heathen cousins) that primarily relies upon the investigations of those who either aren't of our religion, or worse, represent another? What do you think the outcry would be if a known Odinist put out a translation of the Bible or the Torah? We simply cannot continue to allow outsiders to lay the foundations of our beliefs! So, some of us have decided to step up to the plate and do our best to recreate every fundamental in a form that we hope will do honor to our ancestors, to our folk, to our gods and goddesses, and most importantly to our descendants.

I want you to consider something for a moment: one of the most popular translations of the Poetic Edda is that of Lee M. Hollander. If you are reading this and have a copy of the book look through it and see how many times he related Biblical ideas to the poems. Then, count out how many times he makes note of conjectures, interpolations and emendations. I've counted close to 200, most of which seem to serve little purpose and can actually be damaging to the true understanding of the lays. I can promise you that we do not plan on accepting any such corruption of these traditions. Any additions we make will be purposeful for our goal of reconstructing the lore and other fundamentals.

The foundations from which our program is built upon are primarily the works of Dr. Viktor Rydberg, who pioneered a method of investigation that will prove invaluable as our series progresses. He called such texts emendations as the ones mentioned above as 'text debasing' and, rather than relying on the changing of a passage to reach a better understanding of it, he sought out every possible means of explaining its original form. Although there are several errors in some of his theories, which we are working through now, Rydberg set us on the path that will lead us towards new horizons for our religion. His methodology used to connect the ancient tales into a coherent epic is priceless, and serves the basis for our plan to create a new Edda, the first of the Fundamentals series.

I want everyone out there to know that it is our sincerest desire to create these fundamentals texts in the service of our faith, folk and family. We do not seek to gain profit or prestige for this is any way, shape or form. This is why, before any of these books are published they will be printed on our website for all to view for free. Then, we ask that you be the editors. We plan to set up a message board for each text (once we have it all up) so that anyone can share their views on its contents. We will encourage whatever they feel would be appropriate for the book, all of which will be taken into consideration in the final copies. Furthermore, all of the books will be published anonymously with the following stamped within every cover:

'This book was written, edited and published by the men and women of The Odinist Nation.'

We might all agree that the term 'Odinist Nation' should represent all of us, all who follow the path of the Aesir and Vanir. Perhaps we could copyright the term so it always means just this and can never be held by any particular group.

It is of the utmost importance that everyone recognizes this as a project of The Norroena Society. Not because we feel like we are the great authorities here, or that we seek any sort of praise of higher standing, but simply because we can guarantee that this project will be backed by literally decades of research by some of the best scholars in the field. If someone decides to jump ahead of us and use these ideas for their own gains, I hope they'll be able to make such claims as well. Every detail of our research will eventually be made available so anyone can see why or how any of our theories developed. I can't really see why anyone would want to steal these ideas from us, for doing so could only be for the benefit of their ego, and since we're willing to allow the entire world to present arguments for or against our research, and contribute in any way they can, such a theft would be unnecessary. By recognizing this as a project of The Norroena Society we are not only establishing a precedence for the creation of a Teutonic hierology, we are doing so in a manner that honors our entire community. Basically, our desire is that when someone sees a fundamentals book published by The Norroena Society they will know that all of our people have had a chance to contribute to it and all contributions will be important in the creation of these texts, even if they are simply in the form of moral support.

We are not going to try to push these books as the authorities on our religion. It will be up to each individual to determine their value in their lives. Our purpose behind all of this is to simply record a focused, methodic recreation of our ancient traditions for future generations so they will not have to accept the Christianized texts and academic biases we have had to put up with. I want to tell my children the tales of our gods and goddesses in a way I know our ancestors would be proud of. I want to experience everything our faith has to offer without the shadow of the Christian taint lingering it. We can have this, the path has been laid out for us, now all we have to do is follow it.

If you have any comments or questions please email us at - info@norroena.org