

INTRODUCTION

The Grail legend started as a Celtic myth in the Middle Ages when stories about the feats of king Arthur were circulating among the populace. It was part of their oral tradition. The first documented work on this, *Historia regum Britanniae* was written by Geoffrey of Monmouth between A.D. 1135 and 1139. In this work, Geoffrey related the story of how the great king defeated the Romans in eastern France. The association of the Grail with king Arthur started with Chrétien de Troyes who wrote the earliest extant work on the Grail. He claimed to have had as his source for the story one Count Philip of Flanders. This work, *Conte del Graal*, written at about 1190A.D. was however left unfinished but was continued by four different Authors who gave different endings to it and only in the third of the continuations written by Manessier around 1230A.D. did Parsifal achieve the Grail. After Chrétien came Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* written between A.D. 1200 and 1210 and was one of the most celebrated romances of the time and has been considered by some to be of profound mystical significance.

The source of Eschenbach's work is not known but he may or may not have borrowed from Chrétien. Their hero, called Perceval by Chrétien and Parzival by Wolfram had the same qualities of innocence and guilelessness. Only their views about the nature of the Grail differed with Wolfram calling it a stone which falls from heaven and Chrétien declaring that it was a large bowl or chalice. In the 13th century came the Welsh romance *Peredur* which obviously had a similar origin with the work of Chrétien as the body of the work and the hero are the same. In fact it could be said that Chrétien's work was derived from the Celtic oral tradition which already may have had this character in it. Before Chrétien, the Grail was not considered to be a Christian symbol and he did not make much of an attempt to explain the Grail and the lance in a significantly Christian way. That was left to another medieval writer Robert de Boron whose work, *Joseph d'Arimathe* was written at about 1200A.D. De Boron was actually the first through this work to provide a coherent explanation of what the Grail and the lance were and their significance. He drew heavily from the apocryphal works *Acts of Pilate* and *Gospel of Nicodemus* (4th and 5th centuries).

De Boron claimed that his work was inspired and had been revealed to him by an Angel. He therefore initiated a chain of events which led to a total adoption of the Grail and the lance by the Christian faith. His conclusion that the Grail was the cup which had been used by Jesus and His disciples for the Last Supper and in which His Blood was caught while He was being prepared for burial was apparently carried to its logical conclusion when the *Queste del Saint Graal* was completed in 1210A.D. With the appearance of this body of work written probably by French monks, the Grail came to be fully interpreted in the light of Christian tradition. It fully became the cup of the Last Supper and the Spear became the lance that the Roman soldier, Longinus had used in piercing the side of Jesus. According to de Boron, Joseph of Arimathea had requested the body of Jesus from the Roman authorities so that he could bury it. While he was bathing this body, some blood trickled out from the wound, which Jesus sustained on the cross through the spear of the Roman soldier. He collected the blood in the cup which had previously been used by Jesus and His disciples during the Last Supper. When Jesus' body disappeared however,

Joseph was accused of stealing it, arrested by the Jewish authorities and jailed. While in jail, though he was deprived of food, he miraculously survived as a result of a wafer being dropped daily by a dove into the cup which he had with him. While in prison, Jesus appeared to him in a vision and entrusted the holy spear and the cup to him for safekeeping. Joseph thereafter journeyed westwards and established a church in Glastonbury, England dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

The Grail Order was born and a succession of guardians followed until we reach the Arthurian age when the Grail became associated with him. There have also been a succession of tables where the guardians sit to celebrate the holy Mass. The first Table was established by Joseph and his followers and only twelve may sit at this table representing the twelve disciples of Christ. The thirteenth seat was not occupied and it became known as Siege Perilous after one of them was swallowed up as he tried to sit on it. This seat represented that of Judas. In some versions of the story, Joseph did not reach Britain, but made his stop somewhere in Europe and was succeeded by his sister's husband Bron who established the second Table on the Mountain of Salvation which was identified to be in France and this man Bron in this version became the Fisher king and highest guardian of the Grail. The third Table called the Round Table was formed for king Arthur by Merlin, the magician but the Grail however was absent. It was said to have made a brief appearance at the Round Table at Pentecost and the sight was so magnificent that most of Arthur's knights pledge their lives to the pursuit of this mysterious object. The guardianship of the Grail required the highest degree of chastity and according to tradition, only the purest of men could be the guardians.

In return for their purity, the Grail conferred blessings upon the land and was visible to all. The Grail withdrew its presence from humanity however, when its highest guardian in one version looked lustfully at a maiden who had come to worship, the lance fell on him spontaneously inflicting a deep wound that would not heal and from then on he was referred to as the maimed or wounded king. Therefore, by the time of king Arthur, the Grail had withdrawn its presence and was no longer to be seen, hence the quest for it when it made its brief appearance. Merlin, the magician and prophet had sent a message to king Arthur telling him that the time was ripe to set about the quest for the Grail and the knight who would achieve this quest was already born and of the right age. With king Arthur and his knights, the stage was set for what was to be one of the most important if not the most important medieval quest. The very last of the medieval writers to concern himself with the Grail was Sir Thomas Mallory who transmitted the legend to English-speaking peoples. His work *Morte d'Arthur* was more of a chronicle of the history and achievements of king Arthur than it is a romance about the Grail.

THE GRAIL LEGEND

There are at least six versions of the Grail legend, the earliest as mentioned above being that of Chrétien (c1190). The work of Wolfram followed (c1200-1210). The two works did not make much of an attempt to adopt the relics as Christian. That started with the work of de Boron and this association came to be completed with the work *Queste del Graal* (c1210). *Peredur*, a 13th century Welsh romance is of unknown origin and the body

of the story is very similar to what we find in the earlier works of Wolfram and Chrétien. Mallory (15th century) did not pay too much attention to the mystical significance of the Grail and as such the legend was not explored further through him. We had to wait until the 19th century in Wagner's Parsifal (1882) to see the greatest advancement in the story of the Grail for close to five hundred years. Taking the theme further, Wagner gave it a body and a significance that was at once beautiful and religious. His opera was so profound that he declared it sacred and forbade its performance outside his theatre in Bayreuth.

The Grail legend goes as follows: Parsifal was brought up by his mother in the seclusion of the wilderness after his father had died in a battle with his elder brothers. His mother, grief stricken sought to protect her only remaining son from the world of chivalry by withholding from him all knowledge of arms and of the outside world. He was only allowed to play with sticks, bows and arrows in the use of which he became very proficient. One day, he happened to see some knights in full armour in the distance and asked his mother who these people were. The mother told him that they were angels. Parsifal then said that if these people were angels he would go and become an angel like them. He went over to them exchanged a few words with them and was able to learn that these people were not angels but knights. He intimated this knowledge to his mother who fainted as a result. He left her in that state and went to make a saddle for one of his mother's horses imitating what he had seen with the knights. When he returned, his mother had recovered sufficiently to ask him of his decision. He declared that he would go if she allowed him and the mother gave him leave. He left home and the accounts of his numerous adventures followed. He was trained to be a knight by a hermit called Gournemart. One day while he was returning home to see his mother, he happened to be riding along the bank of a river when he saw two fishermen and he asked them where he could find a passage across the river.

Since the passage was a long way off and he could not by any chance reach it by daylight, he asked for where he could get shelter. He was then directed by one of the fishermen to the top of a mountain where he would find a castle. He found the castle, was welcomed, fed and entertained. While he was dining with the master of the house however, a procession of youths passed several times with what appeared to be the Grail, a large cup which outshone all the lights in the room. A spear was also paraded which appeared to be dripping with blood from its tip. Though his curiosity was aroused by the spectacle and he wanted to ask about what he had seen, he however held his tongue, always calling to mind what he had been taught by the old knight, Gornemant, who had warned him against loquaciousness. This king, called the fisher king because he regularly fishes, is infirm having been wounded some say in a javelin battle in the thighs or as in some versions as a result of his sins when he looked with lustful eye upon the female worshipper, with the lance spontaneously falling upon him as mentioned above. In any case, this king is maimed and is not able to carry out his functions fully as keeper of the Grail as he is in continuous pain. His cure according to the legend was for Parsifal to ask the magic question about the Grail which is "Whom does one serve with the Grail?" He fails to do this however, and the country as a consequence becomes a barren land or a waste land as is so called in the legend.

Parsifal leaves the castle without asking these questions and came to meet a lady who happens to also be his first cousin. She told him of the terrible deed he had committed for failing to ask these questions and that the reason he failed was the sin he committed against his mother who had died grieving for him after he left her. That sin had been responsible for his failure. Parsifal hearing this broke down in woes of sorrow and did not return home again since his mother whom he was going to see had died. He left the lady and embarked on more adventures and entered Arthur's court as a celebrated knight. While there a loathsome lady made her entrance and addressed Parsifal, bemoaned of his failure to ask the question and warned of the consequences of his deed which would lead to the land being rendered wasted as mentioned above. Thereafter, he made a vow that he would not rest until he had found the Grail and learnt whom one served with it. He lost his way for five years and eventually on a Good Friday met a priest, made his confession because he had forgotten God for all these years and was absolved of his sins. Chrétien left his work unfinished.

We move on to the work of Wolfram. He believed that the Grail was a stone fallen from heaven which is a sharp contrast to the popular belief that it was a chalice. He however, gave the fisher king a name and called him Anfortas. The Grail resided in a magnificent castle and whatever was asked of it was given. Men ate, drank their fills and all these bounties were provided by the Grail. This stone had been brought down by neutral angels during the war between God and Lucifer and since then only the pure ones have been chosen to guard the Grail. This of course is in contrast to Chrétien's cup and there was no attempt to associate it with Jesus. The bleeding lance was also present and Parsifal in this account also failed to ask the magical question. His failure to ask the question however, was not attributed to his sin against his mother but to something else. Anfortas had been wounded in a battle between the thighs. He had been engaged in this battle because of the love he had for a woman. He had remained in agony since then and despite all the remedies in the whole world he remained in pain.

Confounded, his knights prayed that help should come to them and as if by some miracle, a writing appeared on the Grail stone, that a knight would come whom by asking the right questions would heal the king. Chrétien's Gornemant became Wolfram's Gurnemanz, the knight who trained Parsifal in the art of arms, and the loathsome lady of Chrétien became Kundrie. Parsifal however, achieved the Grail eventually and became the king by returning to the castle to ask the right questions. There are significant differences between the two works and some of these would include the differences in their perceptions as to the origin and the nature of the Grail and Parsifal's achieving the quest, which did not happen in Chrétien's work probably because this work remained unfinished. Parsifal however, achieved the Grail in one of the "continuations" of Chrétien's work by the author Manessier completed in 1230A.D.

As time went on other characters came to be added to the legends and the stories became more and more complicated and in some versions, attention shifted completely away from Parsifal to another knight named Galahad who was the son of Lancelot of the lake, a product of the union between Lancelot and king Arthur's daughter. The legends grew this

way until interest in them waned towards the dawn of the renaissance with the last true work on Arthur and his round table being that of Sir Thomas Mallory in the 15th century.

After a very long lull in interest in the legends came the work of Richard Wagner. Parsifal, finished in 1882 was a complete shift of emphasis from the Arthurian court to that of the Grail knighthood. The knights in Wagner's opera were not those of Arthur but of the Grail. The guardians of the Grail had become knights and the focus of the whole play was on these. It was the struggle between good and evil that was dramatised with good ultimately triumphing. He drew heavily on Wolfram's work but refused to accept the idea of the Grail as being a stone. Instead he stuck with de Boron's conclusions about the sacred association of these relics with Christ.

The Grail land itself thereby became the focus and centre of attraction of the whole play. Amfortas, the young knight had been appointed by his father Titurel to succeed him since he was getting old and was not able to perform his duties fully as first guardian of the Grail. Amfortas performed this duty until he succumbed to the evil machinations of the wicked one, Klingsor who had been denied membership in the Grail Order. The brotherhood came to be in possession of the relics (the holy spear and the Grail) through the appearance of the Saviour, Jesus to one of the founding fathers of the order. Jesus had entrusted the relics to them for safekeeping and had adjured them to be pure. Since then they had been the guardians of the Grail and the holy spear.

Things however were not looking so good for the brotherhood for they had lost many knights to the temptations of Klingsor who had built a beautiful garden of maidens who laid in waiting to seduce the weary travellers. Denied admittance in to the brotherhood, Klingsor had become versed in all sorts of magic, which he now used against the brotherhood in his hatred for them and in his desire to seize the chalice. The latter, called the Holy Grail was to the knights, the cup, which Jesus had used during the Last Supper with His disciples and in which His Blood had been caught. The Grail also was to them a kind of manna from heaven. It provided heavenly food, which was sustenance for them and as long as they ate of the wafer, which the Grail provided, they would not grow old.

For the blessings of the Grail to flow however, it had to be uncovered and this task was given to Amfortas. Amfortas, tired of the continual loss of his knights to Klingsor set forth with the holy spear in his hand to challenge him in battle. Klingsor however, laid in waiting and had already planned his destruction. He summoned his servant, Kundry who was partly good and partly evil to seduce him. Amfortas, with his defences weakened by her embraces let go of the holy spear. Klingsor appears snatches the spear, inflicted a deep wound with the spear on Amfortas and made his escape. Amfortas in agony was rescued and taken home and has lived with the pain ever since.

All treatments were to no avail and his sufferings grew worse by the day as the wound would not heal. He was meanwhile condemned to serve the Grail and as long as he looked on it he could not die, thereby prolonging his anguish. He prayed for death, to be released from service, as the pains were unbearable, made worse each day that he had to uncover the Grail. Amfortas had been shown a vision while praying in anguish that he

should wait for one who would cure him. One who through pity, knowing, would be his healer, the pure fool, (in German der reine Tor). The Knight Gurnemanz was busy recounting the story of how the brotherhood came to lose the spear when suddenly shouts of confusion were heard. A swan had been killed on holy land and a youth had been arrested. Brought before Gurnemanz, he was reproached but could not tell why he had shot the swan nor could he give his name. He appeared to have completely lost his memory.

At this point Gurnemanz began to hope that this might be the pure fool that was promised. Kundry however, happened to have been present while all this was going on and being ageless herself had seen quite a lot and remembers the youth and recounts his story. He had been brought up only by his mother, his father Gamuret, having died in battle just before he was born. But before he died he had pronounced his name. The mother, grief stricken retired into the woods and brought the boy up in complete seclusion withholding any knowledge of the outside world or of arms. He was only allowed a bow and arrows in the use of which he became very proficient. Parsifal however, left home without telling his mother in order to become a knight. His departure left the mother so devastated that she died from the effects of this.

All this Kundry recited and Parsifal, shocked at this account flung himself at Kundry and tried to strangle her. He was however, restrained by Gurnemanz. It was however, time for the holy meal and Gurnemanz proceeded with Parsifal to the Grail castle. A castle of great pillars, a round table, which can be regarded as an altar, an opening at the top. All the knights gather round the altar. Amfortas was brought in a litter as has become customary, as he was too much in pain to walk. A procession of Esquires brings in the Grail, encased in a box. Titurel, Amfortas' father orders him to uncover the Grail. At first he refused but after much pressure he relented and uncovered it. The Grail shines bright and streams of light descend on it from the height. All receive of this power and the wafer and wine were distributed.

Parsifal witnesses all this without understanding. He only clutched his heart in compassion in response to Amfortas' pain and agony. After the ceremony Parsifal looks around dumbfounded not grasping any of the happenings. Gurnemanz now asks him about what he had seen but he only shakes his head. The old knight, his hopes apparently having been mislaid sent the youth away in anger but a voice came from above in warning about the promised one. Shocked he became pensive but Parsifal was already gone.

Meanwhile, Klingsor had already seen Parsifal coming and knew that he could be their greatest foe yet. He summoned Kundry once more and convinced her to take up the assignment of tempting Parsifal and added that he who could brave her would save her as she was living under a curse, which she carried after having mocked Christ on the cross. Parsifal stumbled upon Klingsor's realm and found himself after battling his way through among the most beautiful of maidens he had ever seen. After initially chiding him for wounding their playmates, they asked that he stay with them. Parsifal soon got tired of their childish pranks and was about to escape when he heard someone uttered a name,

which had never been uttered. He turned and there appeared the most beautiful woman he had ever seen: Kundry. Her objective was his destruction just as she had done with Amfortas.

Using all the pathos she could muster, she told him about his mother's sorrowful death after he had abandoned her and promised to fill the void, which was surely to be left. Parsifal broke down in tears of sorrow for his mother and blamed himself for her death. Kundry using all her powers of persuasion tried to convince him that all was not lost and that he should love in a passionate way like his father did. Parsifal's defences weakened she gave him a long kiss. During this however, Parsifal suddenly jumped up with an expression of intense fear clutching his heart and shouted "Amfortas, die Wunde, die Wunde" (Amfortas, the wound, the wound). The spell had been broken and all the efforts of Kundry to hold him failed. All her appeals fell on deaf ears. In a rage, she cursed him to wander and called out to Klingsor who appeared and hurled the spear at Parsifal hoping that he would be killed. The spear however remained hovering over Parsifal's head. He grasped the spear and destroyed the realm with the power that rested in the spear. Parsifal had recognised what the problem of Amfortas was through his own experiences. He felt exactly the same pain and with this he recognised his mission, which was to heal Amfortas and return to the Grail realm as its king.

Kundry's curse had an effect. Parsifal was lost for a long time not knowing where to find Amfortas. Eventually on a Good Friday, he found his way. He chanced upon the knight Gurnemanz who had now become a hermit since Amfortas, in a final act of defiance had pointedly refused for a long time to uncover the Grail. All the knights were growing old as a result of this and old Titurel died as a direct result of being denied his manna from heaven, which had kept him and others alive. Kundry appears again cured of her curse for she had been braved. She now serves in loyalty. Gurnemanz seeing the spear was transported with joy and as it was predicted anointed the head of Parsifal as the new king of the Grail. But they still had to make their way to the castle where Titurel was being prepared for burial. Amfortas had promised that on this occasion he would uncover the Grail so that the body of his father could be sanctified.

The procession came into the hall of the Grail with Titurel's coffin and all were shocked by the state of his body when the coffin was removed. Amfortas however, still refused to uncover the Grail. He tore his clothes revealing the wound which had already started bleeding again and in the ensuing confusion with the knights demanding that he must do it enters Parsifal with the holy spear, Kundry and Gurnemanz. Parsifal points the lance at Amfortas' breast healing him. Amfortas overwhelmed by the experience staggers back. Parsifal orders that the Grail be uncovered and should never be concealed. Amfortas was relieved of his duties, the Grail shines brightest, the chalice was raised, all kneel worshipping, Kundry falls dying being able at last to die blameless, and the white dove appears hovering over Parsifal's head.

By all means the most absorbing and the most mystical of all the Grail stories. An extraordinary tale, which induced its creator to declare it sacred and pointedly forbade its performance outside his theatre. Though he may have borrowed from medieval sources

especially Wolfram, his creativity cannot be denied. The battle between good and evil was clearly played out and the legends of Arthur took a back seat. The Grail itself and its central character, Parsifal received the treatment they deserved. Wagner's aim was to cut off all the frippery and present us with a crystal clear story, something which had not always characterised the legends. Many medieval authors in their attempt to interpret the legends added so much of their own thoughts that the Grail itself and its central character almost lost their lustre and their powers of appeal to the human spirit.

The profusion of characters certainly did not help matters and many authors got bogged down in narrating the many adventures of the king Arthur that they forgot the central theme, which was the Grail. Wagner therefore, brought out the essential and refocused attention once more on the most important, the Grail, the power of which had induced men in the first place to search for it. Through his work interest has once more been generated and the quest once more could be resumed devoid of all externals. The Grail shines forth once more to exert its power of attraction on those who are open to this influence. These then would continue the search for it in the proper manner, their attentions having been redirected and refocused on the essential and core. The search for the Grail is a religious experience and all those who have concerned themselves with it have felt this and this is where attention should shift. The religious and mystical significance of the Grail is what should be focussed on.

THE HOLY GRAIL

What is the Holy Grail in reality? What is it about it that is able to hold people's imagination with so much force and persistence? What is it about it that is able to induce men to abandon all else in its quest? The idea of a chalice is not new to humanity and it was to be found in the folklore of the peoples of Europe even before they were converted to Christianity. The Grail itself only became a Christian symbol as a result of a conscious attempt by some medieval writers as mentioned above. Drawings of the chalice have been found in the caves of early man and it is also an important symbol in Greek philosophy where it was considered to be a bowl in which the Creator mixed the elements of life. The symbol of the cup was therefore, known to many races but why was this symbol so universal? Could this vessel be something that exists independently in Creation, to which each tribe had access? In almost every tribe it has been associated with power, with knowledge, with cosmology and even with the origin of life. Could this symbol be universal just like the stories about the fairies has been universal? Through studying the legends we get a picture of the characteristics of the Grail.

It was associated with purity and required that its guardians be the purest of men. Failures in the ranks of its guardians led to catastrophes as we see in the picture of the Waste land. It was also associated with blessings. It brought undreamed-of blessings to those who served it as portrayed in the peace and happiness that characterised the land when its service was pure. It was also an object of worship as many came from distant lands to worship through it. In fact in one of the legends it was during this time that the high priest failed when he happened to have looked lustfully at a maiden whose dress was torn when she came to worship. The lance fell on him as a result giving him the wound.

The Grail was therefore considered to be a spiritual object more so as it had the power to veil itself from humanity's gaze when there was no longer purity among the people. It was also an object that had the power to impart youth and even eternal life as long as one was able to eat of the wafer that came from it and as long as one was able to gaze into it. Because of these qualities, its withdrawal or the inability of its guardians to perform its service led to widespread disaster. Its blessings no longer flowed, the knights grew old, some died and the land became a desert thereby specifying also its effects on Nature. The natural harmony in everything even family life was disrupted as we see in the work of Chrétien when he said that ladies would lose their husbands and so on. To uphold its service was therefore, of the greatest importance if there was to be peace and plenty.

The failure of the fisher king or Anfortas as he came to be called by Wolfram or Amfortas as Wagner referred to him who was the first guardian led however, directly to these disasters. The reasons for their failures or inability to serve the Grail may differ depending on the version studied, but the effects are the same. Closely considered, Wagner's version seemed to be the most logical. Examining Chrétien's work, though left unfinished led to more questions than answers nor do the "continuations" of the work fully resolve the mystery in a satisfactory way. Chrétien claimed that the fisher king was wounded in the thighs by a javelin and the only cure for him was for a stranger to appear in the castle and ask some questions unprovoked. Parsifal failed to ask the questions, the king was not cured and as a result could not rule his land in the proper manner leading to famine and other natural disasters.

The failure of Parsifal therefore, led directly to all these disasters and the king himself is absolved of all blame. Parsifal's failure is in turn attributed to a sin he had committed against his mother in having left her against her will. This sin prevented him from asking these questions. Parsifal therefore, takes all the blame for the king's inability to serve the Grail. But then Chrétien did not explain the significance of the Grail nor did he as such attribute abundance in the land to the pure worship of the Grail. The blessings on the land depended on the king's ability to rule the land in a justified way. How that burden now came to fall on Parsifal is far from clear nor was there any supplication for help from the king which would probably have led to a prophecy of a helper.

Chrétien's work is so disjointed that it is very difficult to make a logical appraisal and part of the problem may have been the fact that the work was left unfinished. What we can conclude is that the Grail according to his work was in a way associated with a miraculous cure for the king because Parsifal had to ask the question "Whom does one serve with the Grail?" This question about the Grail held the cure for the king and only Parsifal could pose this question. The power of the Grail in bringing blessings on the land was therefore, associated in an indirect way with the healing of the king through a question asked about it by Parsifal. Therefore, the Grail was indispensable to the prosperity of the land. The Grail still holds its central place in its ability to make the land prosperous through making its ruler whole.

The ruler's physical well-being therefore, was impossible without the Grail and Parsifal held the key to it. Nobody else could ask the question, only he. The prosperity of the land

therefore, depended entirely on Parsifal and the Grail and this thread we see in most of the stories. What may be illogical is the issue of sin transference. We know that his mother was unhappy but Parsifal left with her approval as she had given him advice and had told him to go to Arthur's court. How then could he be carrying a sin he had not committed.

Much of what has been said above will also apply to Wolfram's work. The only significant difference was that as has already been mentioned he considered the Grail to be a stone rather than a chalice. Much of the blame for the catastrophes was to be taken by Parsifal. Wolfram however, went further and placed his work in a prophetic context for he mentioned that the agony of the king was so great that the brothers in the realm prayed to God for a deliverer and a prophecy that a knight would come and he would ask the relevant questions on his own accord, (the king would be healed as a result and would be succeeded by him), appeared on the Grail stone. The predicted deliverer appeared however, failed and the kingdom became a waste land. He however, after many years found his way, asked the questions, restores the king's health and becomes king himself.

The same difficulty is encountered as to how Parsifal could take on blame for what he had not done. The Grail, though considered to be a stone still held the same characteristics of restoring the kingdom as long as Parsifal asked the right questions. Its spiritual origin was undoubted as it was said to have come from heaven through angels who were neutral when war broke out between God and Lucifer. Chrétien did not specify the origin of the Grail, but dealt only with its qualities. Wolfram's inconsistencies could be borne out by the fact that it is difficult to explain a situation where Parsifal, the knight who had been predicted to heal the king would already be coming with a burden of guilt on his shoulders. In that case he could not have been pure enough to serve the Grail, as the Grail required the purest of men to serve it.

With Wagner, Amfortas took the blame for everything as his failure to serve the Grail was his own fault and this failure led directly to calamities even the death of his own father. Here we have an almost perfect work with not too many loop holes. The prayers of the brotherhood, combined with that of Amfortas led to a promise of a helper. This helper would be sent by God to help deliver Amfortas from his pains. Wagner's works also suffers from this problem of always burdening Parsifal with some kind of guilt. Parsifal's own guilt however (that of abandoning his mother) did not prevent him from asking the relevant questions as he asked the old knight Gurnemanz what the Grail was. The question however, was not important as it was not relevant to the king's well being.

The king's well-being depended on his being able to serve the Grail unblemished free from pain, from his wounds. Where Parsifal contributed to the death of Titurel and the development of the waste land was in his getting lost and not finding his way to the castle early enough. But he was not to blame for that as this was due to the curse of Kundry on him. Therefore, looked at critically Parsifal, even in Wagner's play had no guilt as he was not really responsible for the death of Titurel. He lost his way not of his own accord but as a result of some measure of fate. He still had a burden of guilt on him however, as

Wagner insinuated that he had left home against the will of his mother thereby continuing in the vein of Chrétien and Wolfram.

It could be assumed that Wagner still introduced this theme to make way for the scene between him and Kundry where she would attempt to use this against him in an attempt to break down his defences. But as mentioned above, Parsifal could not have been guilty of leaving against his mother's will as he was given leave by her and even got some good advice from her. In Wagner's work we see the direct effect of the Grail itself. In earlier works it had been indirect and depended on the healing powers it would have if the right questions were asked about it. Here the Grail itself was the central symbol with its hero Parsifal.

Its proper service had led to blessings undreamed-of but when its first guardian failed as a result of his own guilt we also saw the consequences of its direct neglect. The failure to uncover the Grail had disastrous consequences. These consequences has nothing to do with Parsifal as he had not caused the Grail not to be uncovered even though Wagner still tried to imply this in the delay Parsifal suffered when he lost his way although due to no fault of his. The healing of Amfortas depended not on questions about the Grail but according to Wagner through pity, through knowing. The healing of Amfortas and consequently the service of the Grail depended on the personal involvement of Parsifal.

It is difficult to understand what Wagner meant by those words just by reading or hearing them but as the play unfolded one was forced to conclude that Parsifal would have through his own experiences come to know what the problem with Amfortas was. He had to follow the same road as Amfortas did, he had to be exposed to the same temptations and through his own experiences realise what exactly had befallen the Grail kingdom. On kissing Kundry he shouted "Amfortas! The wound! The wound!" revealing that he had received the knowledge and as such the solution to all the problems. The Grail would never fail to release its blessings as long as there was somebody to uncover it. Amfortas, in blind pain had at last defied everybody and refused utterly to serve the Grail because as long as he continued to look into the Grail he would never die thereby making his pain eternal. He therefore, by this refusal wished for death.

He was ready to take everybody with him as the consequences of this refusal to uncover the Grail is a slow death for everybody as happened with his father. Having won the holy spear back in a grievous battle with Kundry and Klingsor, Parsifal now set to look for Amfortas. The Grail, in Wagner's work received one of the most beautiful treatments and was certainly a vessel of the greatest spiritual significance. The power that emanated from it led to the greatest reverence and worship as could be seen from the attitude of the knights. It was an independently radiating vessel whose light outshone the surrounding lights, a characteristic also mentioned in Chrétien's work.

Now the question is, could such an object of such spiritual significance be of earthly origin? Could it really be the cup that was used by Jesus during the last supper and in which His blood was later collected? Though this vessel could be considered as sacred since it was associated with Jesus but could that cup of the last supper be the cup that

could hold men in such rapture? As mentioned above, diagrams of the chalice have been seen in caves of ancient men and the chalice was certainly known even before the advent of Christianity and was only adopted as a Christian symbol only relatively recently in the Middle Ages. Why did the Greeks consider it as the matrix of Creation? Why this consistency in its association with power, blessings, purity and service? These are questions that have not been resolved.

The Grail has also many times been associated with Paradise as can be seen in the earlier works on the Grail legend. Because the chalice or the Grail was already known even before the advent of Christianity, the idea that it was the cup, which Jesus used during the last supper is already out of the question. That single fact alone completely disqualifies this concept. That cup of the last supper moreover was a physical cup, which in any case over time would have to decay, a concept totally inconceivable with the Grail. The legends surely did not convey the idea of a cup that would age and decay. In addition how could a cup, which was supposed to impart eternal life itself decay which would in the natural course of events would have to happen.

Some might say that since it had been associated with Jesus then it at the same time acquired the quality of remaining eternal. Lofty as this idea may sound, it did not detract from the fact that in the end this cup was a physical one whereas the actual Grail from what one can garner from the legends is spiritual. It even had the power to conceal itself from the gazes of sinners. It is difficult to accept that any physical cup had that quality.

What then is the Grail? In the book "In the Light of Truth" the Grail Message by Abd-ru-shin, we read "At the summit of the eternal sphere of Spiritual Substantiality stands the Castle of the Grail, spiritually visible and tangible, because it is still of the same species of spiritual substantiality. This Castle of the Grail contains a Sanctuary which lies on the outermost border adjacent to the Divine Sphere, and is thus of still finer consistency than the rest of spiritual substantiality. In this Sanctuary, as a pledge of the eternal Goodness of God the Father, as a symbol of His Purest Divine Love, and the point from which Divine Power issues, stands the Holy Grail! This is a chalice in which it bubbles and surges unceasingly like red blood without overflowing. Enveloped as it is in the most Luminous Light, it is granted only to the purest of all spirits in the Realm of Spiritual Substantiality to look into this Light! These are Guardians of the Holy Grail!"

The Holy Grail according to this book lies at the summit of the spiritual creation. This would identify the Grail as a spiritual object, a view, which is consistent with the legends where the Grail had been associated with Paradise.

The Grail therefore has a spiritual origin but more than that it has its origin at the summit of this realm. As we find in the legends, the Grail always resides in a castle called the Grail castle and this would be consistent with what Abd-ru-shin says of the Holy Grail occupying a sanctuary called the Castle of the Grail. Abd-ru-shin gives a clue as to why the Grail had been associated with power and with blessings when he referred to it as the point from which Divine Power issues. This Divine Power that issues from it is what is responsible for the blessings and the immense effect it has on people. The Holy Grail

therefore, has its origin in the spiritual realm and only the purest from this realm are allowed to be its guardians. If the Holy Grail therefore has its origin at such height, a height as we are told in religion that no sin can ever enter, a realm synonymous with Paradise, how then are we to explain the failure of the fisher king or Amfortas or whatever we may want to call him.

If the guardians are the purest of spirits, then it is impossible for them to fail. If therefore, no sin can ever enter into Paradise, why this apparent contradiction because as mentioned above, if the paradisaal realm is perfect and as indeed it should be, then there could be no question of a failing of its first guardian. Certainly not at that point where Divine Power issues. Certainly such a place cannot be transformed to be a waste land. Paradise cannot from what we know so far about it be transformed into a waste land as a result of the failure of its first priest. This cannot be explained away by saying that after all Adam and Eve failed in Paradise.

This is also one of the inconsistencies that characterise the human story. Adam and Eve could not have failed either in Paradise as no sin could ever enter into this. We would divert a little and say that there could have been no question of a failure of an Adam and Eve because their expulsion from Paradise was not a consequence of any failure for the reasons already mentioned. If they were expelled from Paradise it would have been for quite different and much more plausible reasons, not a failure which was impossible in any case. Please see the lecture "The Development of Creation" in the book "In the Light of Truth", The Grail Message by Abd-ru-shin.

If therefore, no sin could ever be found in the spiritual Grail, which Grail was then referred to by the legends? We quote again from Abd-ru-shin's book *"If it is said in the legends that the purest of men are destined to become Guardians of the Grail, this is a point about which the blessed poet has drawn all too earthly a picture, because he was unable to express himself differently! No human spirit can enter this holy Sanctuary! Even in its most perfect state of spiritual substantiality, after having returned from its wanderings through the World of Matter, it is still not so fine that it could cross this threshold, i.e., the boundary line! ... The Guardians of the Grail are Eternal Primordial Spiritual Beings, who were never human beings. They are the highest of all in the Realm of Spiritual Substantiality."*

Fallible human beings therefore were never guardians of the Holy Grail. The actual Guardians of the Grail were higher spiritual creatures described as Primordial Beings. We read further "There actually is a Castle where an Amfortas dwelt, who for a time was considered the first guardian there. In this castle there is a vessel called the "Grail", which is faithfully guarded by the knights.

It was indeed there that Amfortas actually met his downfall, and where a great helper was promised. But this happened neither on earth nor in the high Light Castle of Primordial Creation! The Castle which is revealed there (where Amfortas was) is even today still to be found as the highest point on a plane in which the Created Beings have their field of activity towards the developed ones. In their purest volition and worship of God, they

possess only an imitation of the Light Castle. This Light Castle radiates down from the highest place in Primordial Creation and as the actual Castle of the Holy Grail, also forms the exit gate from the Divine Sphere of Radiation." The actual Grail was therefore not referred to in the legends but only an imitation present in material creation although at its summit.

It is only at this place, which already is part of the material sphere can imperfection enter and the first guardian fail. Never could this failure happen for purely logical reasons in the actual Grail Castle where its Guardians were perfect spiritual creatures, not fallible human beings. The guardians of the Castle where Amfortas was once active were human beings and this would explain their fallibility. The legends were therefore happenings, which a few writers were able to receive through inspiration and set down. Inevitably however, their imagination crept in which led to inconsistencies and variations depending on how big a role the imagination played.

We have therefore, made mention of two Grails: the actual Grail, which lies at the summit of the spiritual realm and an imitation of the first, which lies lower down in material creation. The first is the actual real Grail, the point from which divine Power issues. It has its actual existence in a place where no sin can enter. This fact eliminates the possibility that an Amfortas could have met his downfall in such a place. The second is an imitation of the first, present in material creation although at its height, where evil is already to some extent established and it must have been at this lower lying imitation that Amfortas met with his downfall.

What does the Grail signify however? We have already examined what the legends say about it. Let us however, go a bit further. The Grail signifies more than what we have hitherto been able to depict. The Greeks as mentioned above have associated it with the matrix of Creation and to almost all peoples who have been able to divine it, was regarded as a symbol of immense power. Abd-ru-shin in his book as was already mentioned also says that it is the point from which Divine Power issues.

Could this explain why without the proper service of the Grail during the time that it was left uncovered in Wagner's work or during the time when supposedly Parsifal fails to ask the question, the land becomes wasted and the guardians' bodies degenerated? Denied of this power, the land could no longer regenerate. The knights too who depended on this power for their sustenance also slowly shrank away. Looking at the legends, one could conclude that everything in the realm depended on the Grail including even the natural world.

The rivers, plants, animals even the lives of people, family life and so on. Could it be that being denied the power that issues from the Grail was being denied the Power that issues from God? At least this was how the writers of the legends perceived it. For those who believe in God, Nature and everything in it depends on His Power. Could this Power be equivalent or identical to that which issues from the Grail? Why do calamities arise when the realm was denied the Grail?

Why does the place become a desert? Why do rivers no longer flow? Are these stories to be dismissed only as legends and sagas or be seen as a reflection of what actually takes place? We quote again from Abd-ru-shin "From time to time on the Day of the Holy Dove, the Dove appears above the Chalice as a renewed token of the unalterable Divine Love of the Father. It is the hour of communion, which brings about the renewal of power. The Guardians of the Grail receive in humble devotion and can then transmit this magic power. On this depends the existence of the whole Creation! It is the moment in which the Love of the Creator radiantly flows forth in the Temple of the Holy Grail, bringing new life and a new urge to create, pulsating downwards and diffusing itself through all the Universe. A trembling and a holy awe, with forebodings of joy and great happiness, vibrate through all the spheres. Only the spirit of earthman still stands aside, without intuitively sensing what is happening particularly to him at that moment; or in what a dull-witted manner he accepts such an immeasurable gift....It is the moment when a new supply of vital energy is sent out into the entire Creation! It is the necessary, ever-recurring ratification of the Covenant between the Creator and His Work! Should this supply ever be cut off, should it ever fail to come, inevitably all that exists would slowly dry up, grow old and disintegrate. The end of all days would then come, and only God Himself would remain, as it was in the beginning, because He alone is Life!"

The Grail legends therefore, may not be seen or dismissed just as sagas or stories but may well represent a particular reality of life. Abd-ru-shin's description here uncannily resemble what the legends themselves have depicted about the Grail. Life-giving, source of power and an object held in awe and worship. An object that showers blessings on those who recognise it. An object through which power is given to the lands for their renewal and regeneration and without which they would be turned to waste. This object therefore could not possibly have been the cup which Jesus and His disciples used for the Last Supper. This cup is more.

PARSIFAL

Parsifal has been linked with the Grail since the inception of the legends as the hero, the knight who would eventually be the king of the Grail. He it is who has it in his power according to the legends to heal the king and bring prosperity to the land. In the earlier legends, he failed to ask the questions concerning the Grail and the consequences were disastrous. He however, realised his mistakes, went back, asked the relevant questions, heals the maimed king as a result and succeeds him. Parsifal therefore, becomes king of the Grail. In Wolfram's work, he was the prophesied knight whose prediction had appeared on the stone after the guardians had prayed for a healer for their king who was continuously in agony.

This theme was pursued further by Wagner in the idea of the coming of *der reine Tor*, the pure fool or simpleton, whom the brotherhood were to await. Amfortas himself had received this vision and the brotherhood came to expect this innocent healer. Part of the prediction was that Parsifal would become the king of the Grail and that it would be Gurnemanz hand that would anoint his head. This so much we learn from Act Three of the opera. Therefore, in almost all the writings on the legends Parsifal was the innocent

who was always prophesied and who would eventually be crowned king of the Grail. Throughout all the writings, Parsifal would always be the one to attain to the Grail, though in some writings especially those of the Vulgate cycle, others like Galahad and Bors would also attain it but the association of Parsifal's name with the attainment of the Grail is far more consistent than these other two and in all the works only Parsifal becomes king.

If Parsifal was predicted as Wolfram and Wagner suggested and as can even be surmised from the works of Chrétien, one would normally ask the question: where then does he come from? If the brotherhood had prayed to God for a helper for the sorrows of their first guardian and their prayers were answered through a prophesy, does it mean then that the coming of Parsifal was the answer to this prayer?

One would have to look at the effects of Parsifal's coming to be able to answer this question. His coming led once more to the uncovering of the Grail as we see in Wagner's work and the restoration of the land. His coming led to the recovery of the lost spear. His coming led to the healing of Amfortas. In Wolfram's work, his coming led also to the healing of the maimed king and the rivers flowed again. It would then appear that the coming of Parsifal achieved the desired objective. In praying the knights had a desire, an expectation. This desire and expectation made them pray so that these desires and expectations would be fulfilled. A prophecy came as a result and the promised knight brought about the fulfilment of all the expectations of the brotherhood. If their supplication went up to God, then the question would be: did God then send him? If so, from where? Parsifal then must have his existence somewhere for him to have been in a position to be sent as a response to a prayer from the brotherhood.

Why is his name always associated with Grail? The regularity with which this occurs must make us begin to think that this name must indeed be synonymous with the Grail and probably inseparable from it. It is almost unthinkable to conceive a legend about the Grail without this character. His characteristics are innocence, purity and guilelessness. Somebody who had grown up with no knowledge of the world and who had even forgotten his identity. He was sent on a mission, that much we know, but by whom? And from where? If the brotherhood had prayed to God and Parsifal appeared and fulfilled all the expectations, which the brotherhood would have expected a messenger from God to fulfil then we must conclude that he was sent by God.

Was he then a messenger from God? We can conclude that he was for the reasons already stated. Then we have an innocent, guileless, pure messenger from God whose name is forever associated with the Grail. But why is that? Why is his name forever associated with the Grail? Why is he always the protagonist in the Grail drama. Why must he always be the one to achieve the Grail? Why must he always become king as the legends consistently say? Why is he always the answer to the Grail problem? To put things in perspective once more, we must realise as already mentioned that the Grail Castle where Amfortas failed was the lower lying imitation of the actual Grail Castle which lies in the highest spiritual heights where the effects of sin can never be found.

If then Parsifal was sent he would have had to descend from where he was to the level where there was affliction. He could not perchance have ascended to that level. If he was coming as a messenger from God, then he would have had to descend in a downward direction as that was the only logical direction he could have followed. If Parsifal then was a higher being who originated in a plane much higher than that of Amfortas, then he could not descend from his higher region to become the king of the Grail in a lower region and remain there. A messenger never tarrys on a mission.

He fulfils his mission and returns to his master. If Parsifal then is to fulfil the true meaning of a messenger then he could never have tarried in Amfortas' realm. After fulfilling his mission he would inevitably have moved on. Then Parsifal did not become king of the Grail in the lower lying region of Amfortas because as a messenger on a mission he could not have tarried there as king. Then why is Parsifal referred to then as king of the Grail? Parsifal entered the Grail castle in Amfortas' realm not to become the king of the Grail and tarry there but he entered that Castle as King of the Grail! He was therefore, always King of the actual real Grail in the Highest Heights.

He is therefore King of the Holy Grail on a Mission of the Redemption of all the Worlds. Healing Amfortas was just one of the missions He fulfilled on His descent. He as a Messenger of God therefore, could not have tarried in this realm but had to move on as He was on a Mission and messengers on missions do not tarry wherever they were supposed to bring help. Their stay is always of short duration. Therefore, Parsifal entered that realm as King, resolved the problem and moved on. Parsifal therefore, in the legends is referred to as king of the Grail not because he became king but because he was already King of the actual Holy Grail because as mentioned, being a messenger he could not have tarried.

If Parsifal therefore, is King of the actual Holy Grail in the spiritual realm and this Holy Grail as mentioned earlier is the point from which Divine Power issues, then Parsifal must be associated with this Divine Power. If Parsifal is the King of the Holy Grail, it would help explain the reasons for the consistency in the association of the name with the Grail. It simply means that from time immemorial He has always been the King otherwise we would not have this degree of consistency in the legends.

The question then as to where Parsifal came from and as to where God sent him from can be seen to have been resolved. If the Holy Grail exists at the summit of Creation, then its King obviously also has His Being at this height. Parsifal therefore, is to be found at the summit of the entire Creation and is to be found as the King of the Vessel from which Divine Power issues. And it is on this Power that the whole of Creation depends which is already implicated in the legends. If Parsifal then is the King of the Grail then it is reasonable to assume that it is He who dispenses this Power, which issues from the Grail.

We have referred to Abd-ru-shin's reference to the Dove, which appears on the Chalice as a "renewed token of the unalterable Love of the Father." This reference to the Dove is stunning if one remembers Wagner's work where he says "The ray of light falls from above, and the Grail glows brightest. From the dome descends a white dove and hovers

over Parsifal's head." Wagner associated the Dove with Parsifal. Many people have found it baffling the association of the Dove with Parsifal and this association has not been understood.

The Dove is commonly associated with the Power of God, with the Spirit. The association of the Dove with Grail as Abd-ru-shin says is understandable because if the Grail dispenses Divine Power and the Dove is the symbol of Divine Power it stands to reason that the Dove must be associated with the Grail. But Wagner's association of the Dove with Parsifal needs further elaboration. It stands to reason that if Parsifal is the King of the Grail which dispenses Divine Power and which is associated with the Dove then this Dove must as a matter of logic be associated with the King of the Vessel with which this Dove is associated. Parsifal therefore, by logical extension is the first in Creation since He is King of the Vessel, which lies at the summit of Creation. He is therefore, not "der reine Tor" (in German) meaning the pure fool as Wagner makes us believe, but *das reine Tor (the pure Gate)*. He is the Gate from the Divine to man.

Since God lies outside of the Creations and Parsifal is the first in Creation it is obvious then that He stands at the summit of Creation as the Last if looking from below upwards and as such as the gateway to the Divine. He is therefore, logically speaking the First and the Last in Creation. Looking from above downwards, He is the First and looking from below upwards He is the Last. Parsifal is therefore, much more than we think. It is a shock to realise this considering what our conceptions have been in the past. He is therefore, the Alpha and Omega of Creation. He is therefore, the Gate from God to man (das reine Tor).

This is a little error from Wagner because it is easy to confuse his characteristics, which Wagner described as being a fool with what really He represents. If looked at properly however, his characteristics do not indicate a fool at all. The words innocent, guileless, are more descriptive. For the sake of drama or probably out of ignorance, Wagner choose the wrong substantive in his transmission. Considered objectively, the expression *das reine Tor* is far more appropriate. You are not a fool just because you are pure or innocent or even just because you are ignorant of a particular matter, or because you are not cunning.

THE MISSION OF PARSIFAL

Why would God send the King of the Grail down below to help the knights of the brotherhood? Why should He have been sent on a Mission just to resolve this problem? The simple answer is He was not sent just to resolve this problem. We have to examine this matter a little bit deeper if we are to reach a conclusion as to why Parsifal found Himself in the imitation of the Castle down below. "Harre sein, der reine Tor" we read from Wagner, but as already mentioned, it should have been "Harre sein, das reine Tor" the pure Gate which means "wait for him the pure Gate." People over the centuries have assumed that the Holy Spirit is something amorphous, intangible, with no form, yet we all agree that It is a Part of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

If in our minds, these other members of the Holy Trinity are personal, have a form so to speak, why can we not assume the same of the Holy Spirit. If the Love of God is embodied in Jesus, what stops His Power or His Spirit from also being embodied? From also having a form? His Spirit therefore, is represented in Parsifal and embodied in Him.

This Spirit of God was first mentioned in Genesis 1:2 "And the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" which would indicate a close association of the Spirit with the process of Creating. In fact many people have come to the recognition that the creative Part of God is His Spirit, the Holy Spirit and that is probably why He is concerned with the dispensation of Power for its maintenance. Not only then is the Holy Spirit concerned with the coming into being of the Creations, He is also concerned with its maintenance.

This He does through the Holy Grail, which is the subject of the legends we have been discussing. The Holy Spirit therefore, pours out the Power through the Holy Grail to the Creations for their continuous existence. If the Holy Spirit does not pour out this Power through the Holy Grail, then as has been said in the legends, everything would dry up. Parsifal therefore, as the Spirit of God is responsible not only for the creating but also for the maintenance of the Creations. Since the Creations have Laws, He is also responsible for the maintenance of the Laws that guide the Creations. If He is therefore, concerned with the Laws, then He must also be concerned with Justice within Creation. He is therefore, the Justice of God embodied. He who is concerned with the Laws is also as a matter of course the upholder of the Justice that must exist within the work. If He is therefore, concerned with Justice, He must also be concerned with Judgement.

The Justice of God and the Judgement of God go hand in hand. The Judgement therefore, is the responsibility of Parsifal. We quote Abd-ru-shin again "Christ Himself said that sins against God the Father and against God the Son could be forgiven, but never those committed against the "Holy Spirit"! Does the Holy Spirit then stand higher or is it more than God the Father and God the Son?...The Holy Spirit is the Will of God the Father, the Spirit of Truth Which, severed from him, works separately in all Creation, and yet like the Love, in the form of the Son, remains closely connected with the Father and one with Him....The Holy Spirit is Executive Justice, Whose eternal, irrevocable and incorruptible laws pulsate throughout the Universe. Up till now these laws have only been guessed at and variously described as...Fate...Karma...Divine Will!"

If then the Spirit of God is responsible for Justice or Judgement how do we prove this? Is the Judgement not the responsibility of Jesus? In John 14:25-26, we read "These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." Jesus here has obviously referred to the Holy Spirit in person and He referred to Him as he, which means that Jesus regards the Holy Spirit as being personal. Here Jesus predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit although contemporary religion has interpreted this coming to be the event that took place at Whitsuntide when the power from the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples at Pentecost and tongues of flame were distributed amongst them. Even this extraordinary event at

Pentecost can be explained in the light of the legends alone when for example the Grail appeared at King Arthur's table at Pentecost.

The image of the Grail was so spectacular that as from then on several of Arthur's knights vowed to seek after the Grail. What happened at Pentecost with Arthur and with the Disciples of Jesus is always so at Pentecost. It is when the Holy Grail sends out Power to the whole of Creation for its renewal and rebirth. This is an event which always recurs every year at this period and that was why the Grail made its appearance because this power comes from It as has been explained.

The gathering of the disciples coincided with the day of the Pentecost and being open spiritually, they experienced the rapture, which is always connected with the Grail. And this rapture is already explained in the legends themselves in that the knights are always held in rapture whenever the Grail dispenses its blessings. The reason is that the human spirits at such moments receive of the Power of God as dispensed through the Holy Grail and the effect of this Power on the human spirit borders on the miraculous. The disciples therefore, experienced the effects of the Power of the Grail on themselves. This is however, not the fulfilment that Jesus meant by His prediction concerning the Holy Spirit. This was obviously not a personal fulfilment, as one would be forced to conclude if these words were critically examined.

Jesus however, went further in John 14:30 "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me." What did Jesus mean by this statement. Who is the ruler of the world? From what we have been discussing so far the answer to this question would be obvious. The Holy Spirit is the ruler of this world. He is ruler simply because He is the Creative Will of God. He is that Part of the Holy Trinity whose responsibility it is to guide and maintain the Creations.

In maintaining and guiding however, He rules. Jesus goes further to say that this ruler has no power over him. This means that this Ruler of the world and Jesus are equals. They are both Parts of the Holy Trinity, both Sons of God and as such they are equal. Nobody else can be an equal to Jesus apart from the Holy Spirit. And then He says that this Ruler is coming. This other Part of the Trinity is coming. This Spirit of God will be sent to teach us all things and will be sent in the name of Jesus. All this goes to confirm what has been said concerning the Holy Spirit or Parsifal. Jesus went further and said that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things and will bring to our remembrance all that He had said to us. From this it looks like a personal fulfilment is involved here. Somebody has to come to bring Christ's teachings to our remembrance. Jesus also called Him a Counsellor.

A Counsellor obviously cannot be some form of amorphous power. Properly considered a Counsellor has to come personally and counsel. He went further in John 15:7-8, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you. And when he comes he will reprove the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement." Jesus Himself has proven that the task of the Holy Spirit is Judgement. Therefore Parsifal is concerned with Judgement, with reproving the world of sin and righteousness. From Jesus' words Himself one could easily

conclude that the task of judging was not going to be administered by Him but by another whose duty it has been right from the beginning to do this.

Parsifal therefore, is the embodiment of the Holy Spirit whose duty it is to administer the Judgement. In His Mission however, of reproofing the world of sin, he had to explain to us once more the Message of Christ. This is why Jesus alluded to the Spirit of Truth bringing His Words to our remembrance. Jesus went further in John 16:12-14 "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." This is obviously the promise of the coming of one who will fulfil all these.

This is to be regarded as a prophecy from Jesus of the coming of someone who will come and personally fulfil this prophecy. It is doubtful whether we can conclude that all that Jesus prophesied was fulfilled at Whitsuntide. There was no Judgement, there was no new teaching and the world was not reproofed of any sin but on the contrary sins multiplied. All the diversion I have made is to try to clarify the issue of why Parsifal found Himself on the plane of Amfortas.

Being the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Truth He was on a general Mission for all the Worlds and being on a Mission of Redemption for all the World and since as Christ prophesied He had to be personally involved in everything, it is then not surprising that He also became personally involved in the Grail story of Amfortas. The reason He became personally involved is already clear from what Christ prophesied as quoted above but is also explained by Wagner in Parsifal (der reine Tor, "durch Mitleid, wissend") meaning through pity, knowing. Parsifal's inability initially to understand Amfortas' problem until he had personally gone through the same experience.

Parsifal had to go through the same ordeal and temptations and experiences like Amfortas for him to be in a position to help. Then the words of Wagner should have been "**das reine Tor, durch Erfahrung, Wissen**" the pure Gate through experience, knowledge. It was only through the experiences, which he had to go through that he gained the knowledge to help Amfortas. When he first made his entrance into the Grail castle he did not understand what was going on, he could not understand Amfortas' pain. After going through all of the experiences however, he was now in a position to help through his knowledge, hence "the pure Gate, through experience, knowledge".

This is already indicated in the way the drama unfolded. Parsifal coming as he did from out of the Light had absolutely no knowledge of evil, hence his innocence, and hence his lack of understanding for what befell Amfortas. He soon gained knowledge of it however, through all his experiences including through his encounters with Kundry and Klingsor. With these experiences his eyes became open and he recognised his mission. Thus, Parsifal in order to be an effective Counsellor or Teacher first had to know what

the problems with human beings were. He first had to come to know evil and all the consequences.

He first had to experience evil on Himself and through these experiences, would gain the knowledge necessary to help mankind. Having experienced all the evil in that realm He then was in a position to help Amfortas, not before. He was therefore, on a Mission of redemption for all the worlds and since Amfortas' realm was not the only realm besought by evil He could not have tarried there. He moved on to other parts in the fulfilment of His Mission and inevitably He would find Himself on earth also in fulfilment of the Mission prophesied by Jesus so long ago. Just like it happened in Amfortas' plane, He would first have to gather his experiences, come to experience all the evil that were wont to befall man and through these experiences gain the knowledge to be able to offer help out of this darkness at the right time. Jesus said as much that He would guide us into all truth.

Through His experiences on earth and also on all the planes that make up the entire Creation, He would be in a position to offer advice and help for all those wishing to free themselves from the effects of the darkness. In his book "In the Light of Truth" the Grail Message, Abd-ru-shin says "To think of Parsifal as the Son of the Light, Who descends into Creation from above, Who is not perchance lifted up from below; to think of Him as the beginning and the end in Creation, the A and the O for all the weaving outside of the Divine, and therewith King of the Holy Grail, King of Creation! Parsifal's great work of purification which leads Him personally through the worlds, with the unreserved condition that He must through His own experiencing learn to know all the evil, which work was bound to end with the fettering of Lucifer for the protection of the Creations and of all the creatures that remain after the purification."

His battle with evil was depicted in Wagner's opera when not only did He have to face temptation with the flower maidens and then Kundry, He also had to face Klingsor who tried to kill him with the spear. Parsifal's struggles was not only depicted by Wagner however, but is to be found in the earlier legends where he encountered on two separate occasions two ladies who tried to tempt him. With him therefore there had always been the struggle he had to have with the forces of darkness. One would have wondered why this was so but we now know the answer to this question. The consistency with which the writers of the legends mention this in their stories would bear this fact out.

The Grail legends therefore, if looked at objectively and critically enough, may well represent a reality of life. The decision to examine it critically and to look for its meaning in the experiences of our lives however, rests with each individual alone.

THE HOLY SPEAR

The Spear in the Grail legends has been regarded as the spear, which the Roman soldier used to pierce the side of Jesus on the cross. This spear, having been associated with

Jesus was considered sacred by most religious people especially as this spear had touched the Blood of Christ. The Spear also could be regarded as a symbol of power as it was used by Parsifal to destroy the kingdom of Klingsor and turned the whole realm into a desert. Amfortas took the spear with him when he went to challenge Klingsor with the assurance that as long as he had the spear with him, his victory against Klingsor was guaranteed. The Spear therefore, meant a lot to the inhabitants of the Grail realm. It was also an object that inspired reverence in the brotherhood.

If we take Wagner's opera as an allegory, then the brotherhood represented the forces of good while Kundry and Klingsor would represent the forces of evil. Klingsor could even be regarded as representing Lucifer in a way; he had appropriated the Spear and was obviously misusing it. With him the spear came to rest in the wrong hands. He had even used this spear to wound Amfortas. Not many people understand the concept of the evil, which Lucifer brought. What we understand about him is that he is the fallen archangel. An archangel who was once with God but fell through his own guilt.

What we have been able to garner from reading the Revelations is that Lucifer was sent to help humanity but instead of helping became our accuser. In Revelations 12:10 we read "And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God." Lucifer therefore, instead of fulfilling that for which he was sent down here to do could not wait for the gradual maturing of humanity and introduced his own system which to him was to speed up our maturing.

He always accused human beings whom he had been given charge. He always complained about his duties, about having to be burdened with the trouble of looking after such sloppy ones as us, hence this statement. Lucifer could not wait for the gradual maturing of his wards because he was impatient and lacked love. We quote Abd-ru-shin "The dissension started after the creation of all matter had begun.

Sent out to support Spiritual Substantiality and further its development in the World of Matter, he failed to carry out his mission in accordance with the Creative Will of God the Father but, through a volition, which came to him while working in matter, he chose ways other than those ordained by this Creative Will. Misusing the power delegated to him, he introduced among other things the principle of temptation in place of the principle of supporting help, which is identical with serving love; serving love in the Divine sense, which has nothing to do with slavish servility, but only has the spiritual ascent and thereby the eternal happiness of his fellow men at heart and acts accordingly!

The principle of temptation, however, is identical with the setting of snares which cause creatures who are not sufficiently strong within themselves quickly to stumble, fall and become lost, whereas others, it is true, grow stronger and more alert so as to blossom forth powerfully towards spiritual heights. But all that is weak is irrevocably abandoned to destruction from the start. This principle knows of no goodness, no compassion; it is

wanting in the love of God the Father, and therewith also in the mightiest power to ascend and in the strongest support available."

Lucifer therefore, instead of performing his duties faithfully and patiently awaiting the slow maturing of human beings, decided that he could not wait, as we were too slow, lamenting always and finally found a 'faster' way for our maturing. The fact that his methods would lead to the destruction of many did not concern him as long as it made his work easier. He thereby introduced as mentioned above the principle of temptation with which most of us are familiar. Having being sent down by God, he was given a power so that he would be able to perform his duties. This power is the Divine Power of supporting love. This power, he completely misused and perverted and ultimately used it to inflict a deep wound on the realm of the spirit.

Most human spirits that have left Paradise in order to come here to mature could not find their way back and as a result their cycles of existence could not be completed thereby creating a huge gap in this cycle. This gap was created as a result of the application of his principles. Lucifer therefore, through the application of his principle inflicted a wound on the spiritual realm, which weakened this realm because most out-flowing human spirits remained trapped in the material world without the possibility of being able to make it back to Paradise.

This realm therefore, became depleted and as a result weakened. He had used the power given by God to do this. This continual outflow of human spirits symbolically speaking is like the continuous draining of a wound that would not close. The continual haemorrhaging of human spirits from the spiritual realm. A huge gap that indeed will never close until his principles were no longer applied. This will now allow those human spirits trapped in material creation to now find their way back into the spiritual realm thereby automatically closing the wound. The same power, which was used to inflict the wound must also be the power that would heal it. With Lucifer, the Power of God thereby came to lie in the wrong hands. This Power therefore must be wrested from him and then lying in the right hands can then be used to heal the realm of the spirit.

The Spear in Klingsor's hands therefore, came to symbolise the Spear in Lucifer's hands. The symbol of the Power of God, which Lucifer received is therefore, the Holy Spear which he used symbolically speaking to inflict a wound that would not heal on the sphere of the Spirit. Parsifal wresting the Spear from Klingsor and redeeming the brotherhood is therefore, symbolically speaking Parsifal wresting the Spear from Lucifer and using the Power that lies in it to heal the sphere of the spirit and as a result redeem the whole world.

With His experiences and the Power that lies in the Spear, Parsifal would now use the principle of supporting love to help mankind in His Word. Through the use of this new Grail principle, the wound inflicted by Lucifer on the spiritual sphere will close because human beings would no longer be entangled in the material world but will now be able to find their way back home. The same spear therefore, that inflicted the wound will be the same that will heal it as indicated in the legends. The confrontation between Parsifal and

Klingsor represents the face to face battle between Parsifal and Lucifer with the eventual regain of the Holy Spear.

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