

The Legend of the Sun

Of the celestial bodies, the moon (as well as the Morning and Evening Star, Venus) is usually seen as a symbol of our Lady, rather than the sun. Nevertheless, the most ancient mythologists invariably represent the sun as a female figure, from Wuru^semu of the ancient Hittites to Grainne of the pre-Christian Irish. Merlin Stone, in her study of ancient Madrian religions, lists sun-goddesses (Geniae) in Canaan, Anatolia, Arabia, Australia, Japan, India and among the Eskimos.* Germans still refer to "Frau Sonne."

The following is a sun-legend current among modern Madrians. Like all genuine mythic material, particularly that based on the seasonal cycle, it contains archetypes of Divine Truth, but it is not a work of pure Divine inspiration like the sacred Mythos.

-----THE LEGEND OF THE SUN -----

The Mistress of All Things knew that the light of day could no longer be silver, and so She called the seven colours to Her that they might run a foot-race among themselves. For She knew that she who was chosen must be a strong champion, for the Snake would not cease in his attempt to destroy her.

And though the colours were but infants, having been born with the dawning of that very day,** each of them ran with marvellous swiftness. But the swiftest by far was Yellow, who ran the whole length of the straight course and back to the beginning before the others had completed the course. And the Goddess laughed and called her Golden, and she was crowned with ivy, and a

precious metal was created bearing her name.

And when her festivities were over, she was given a golden chariot and seven golden battle-ponies, and was crowned with holly and with thorns, and was given her warrior-name: Sun, the all-conquering. And when that night was ended, she rode slowly forth from the cave of night, bearing aloft her great mace which streamed out pale gold light.

And when the Snake saw this, he laughed, saying: "this is but a child. Has She sent forth a child against the Snake?"

But as Sun rode onward, she held the brilliant disc of her shield before her body, and her light grew brighter, and the hooves of her battle-ponies struck fire from the skies. And lo, in war the babe was terrible, and the Snake's legions fled on every side from the blows of her mace. And her light filled all the world.

But still the world was cold, and the creatures upon it tired. And as Sun passed, the shadows closed behind her, and night came quickly. But the creatures of the earth loved her light and did her honour, and grew stronger in her light. And every day Sun grew more powerful, and the legions of the Snake retreated further, and every night was shorter than the one before it, and the earth grew warmer.

And there came a time when the night was no longer than the day, and Sun had grown to maidenhood. Tall she stood among the clouds made brilliant by her light. And delight came upon the earth, and life in all things, and the daughters of the earth danced the death of the Snake. And still each day added to her victories, until the whole world was resplendent with her delight. And she had grown to fullness as a warrior and none could withstand her.

But still the Silver Time had passed, and even her forces could not be inexhaustible. And the crafty Snake waited, for it had been long since any had dared to attack her. But the shadows grew closer; and there was a day when it seemed that her grip on the mace grew looser, and the legions of the Snake attacked.

And many were they that dashed themselves upon her shield, and many that were smitten by her mace before the last of them was put to flight. But the Snake smiled, saying: "You are strong, yet I think you grow weaker."

For on this day, the day was no longer than the night, and from this day on they grew shorter. And everywhere upon the earth the legions of the Snake ran to and fro, spreading chill and darkness; yet scurrying hence whenever the mighty champion appeared. And day by day they grew bolder, until one day the Snake found the hardihood to stand at the mouth of the cave of night and call to Sun, saying: "Sun, my legions will tonight lay waste the earth unless you dare to fight me hand to hand."

"Go your way," replied Sun, "And do not tempt me to your own destruction."

"Nay," cried the Snake, "you are not the mighty warrior that once you were, and I fear not the combat."

And thereupon, Sun said no futher word, but left her chariot and her battle-ponies and went with mace and shield to the mouth of the cave of night. And the Snake withdrew himself within, and Sun pursued him. And thus began the longest night the earth had known.

And all that night was heard the clangour of the battle, which shook the whole earth. And the

daughters of the earth fell down in prayer and supplication that their champion should emerge victorious; for they knew that only the victrix might leave the cave alive. But the great priestess of the Mistress of All Things had seen a sign: she had seen Sun, as she rode behind the sea at evening, all red with blood, and her blood spread out upon the sea. And thus, although she also prayed, she held but little hope.

And when the clangour ceased, the Snake emerged, dragging behind him the body of Sun.

And the daughters of earth wept bitter tears. For three days the funeral lasted; and many were the songs sung of the deeds of the champion, and the races run in honour of she who had won the first race ever run. And for three days the funeral pyre was built of sacred branches of the oak and ash. And on the third day the body of Sun was placed on the summit of the pyre, together with her chariot. And the torches were set to the pyre.

And the flames rose from the bottom of the pyre until the whole was ablaze; and the world was suffused in its golden light. And the daughters of the earth said: "It is as though Sun were with us once more." And they looked aloft, and lo, in the chariot stood a babe all crowned with ivy.

And great was the rejoicing on that day as the daughters of the earth gathered thorns and holly wherewith to crown their champion.

*Merlin Stone, The Paradise Papers, Quarter Books, 1976, p. 18.

**See The Creation, chapter III, verse 1 & 2.