

The Molten Sea and Initiation

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Rudolf Steiner indicated that Christian Rosenkreutz is the keeper of, or has responsibility for, the Golden Triangle and the Molten Sea (Ref 1). This relates to the Temple Legend, which describes how Hiram Abiff built Solomon's Temple, and the disaster at the end when the Molten Sea was to be cast. A question can arise: to what does the Molten Sea really refer? What actually is it from the perspective of Spiritual Science? This question lies within a number of related aspects: the boundaries of knowledge to be overcome (Ref 2), the significance of the Cain and Abel streams, and certain aspects of Rosicrucianism. In what follows I assume readers are familiar with Anthroposophy, and will refrain from giving endless references, except where desirable.

First, Cain and Abel. We know from Rudolf Steiner that those of the former stream retain an interest and enthusiasm for earthly work, including all science and art. One deeper perspective concerns an esoteric aspect of Cain: he also represents the kind of knowledge that is gained by destructive forces (Ref 3), particularly in the human ego sphere. The slaying of his brother Abel represents that kind of knowledge, which would injure or kill others if allowed to hold sway in higher worlds, or for that matter in this. It relates to Shiva in his most terrible aspect: Ahriman. This way of knowing had to be so far emasculated that it was toned down to modern intellectual knowledge, which retains only so much destruction spiritually as is involved in analytical methods of thinking, which 'cut problems up into smaller parts'. To approach the Threshold of the spiritual world this method must be eliminated beyond the sense world. We have to become willing to be 'our brother's keeper' i.e. of our higher self which represents all we are potentially but have not yet become. Think of somebody you know who seems (or is!) so competent in every sphere you are not: irksome?! At the Threshold we need to be so far purified that we do not react that way, which is why a genuine path of knowledge is, as in the Dreamsong of Olaf Asteson, "long and winding". Even Christian Rosenkreutz had to take the long and winding path when approaching the Chymical Wedding. In the Cain stream are those not yet astrally pure, but with a compensating fiery enthusiasm seated in the astral body.

The Abel stream represents that which is pure and achieved its full development on the Ancient Moon. It is like the pure passionless aspect of the plant sap in relation to the Rose-Cross meditation. The point is: it is passionless, unenthusiastic, lacking fire, but pure. It relates to the much greater perfection of the etheric body. But it has little interest or competence for earthly creative work. It is something of a 'plaster saint', worthy but boring.

The Rosicrucians spoke of the need to unite sulphur and mercury, fire and water. In this they referred to the need to purify the enthusiastic fire of the astral body so far that it could unite with the pure etheric forces, and thus provide a dwelling place for the 'Queen of Sheba', the higher self. The Cain and Abel streams are both needed and their harmonisation of the yin and yang of enthusiasm and purity leads Hegelian-wise to a higher synthesis where the higher self can be born. Initiation is the birth of the higher ego, and is an image of the Mystery of Golgotha which was the equivalent of initiation for the whole of humankind. Christ was then in a sense 'born' for all of us as the supreme archetype of our individuality and higher self. This is the ideal nurtured by the Rosicrucians through the dark days of increasing materialism, with the goal of completing the Higher Temple of the White Lodge by the end of our current post-atlantean epoch. Christian Rosenkreutz, as the supreme leader of those in the Cain stream who seek purification and initiation, has the responsibility for this work. His guardianship of Golden Triangle refers to this purification, but the Molten Sea to something else. This leads us to revisit the Temple Legend.

In the Bible it is related how Solomon called upon Hiram Abiff, the supreme architect of his day, to

build his Temple. King David was not allowed by God to build the Temple as he had been too much involved in the necessary wars his people had to wage. So it fell to his supremely wise and pure son Solomon to accomplish that. Solomon, in all his glory, was the leading representative of the Abel Stream, and needed Hiram as the then leading representative of the Cain stream to take on the task. According to the legend the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, and was much attracted to him. However she wished to meet Hiram and, it seems, was even more attracted to him. This aroused a certain jealousy in Solomon, so that he refrained from warning Hiram of a plot against him. Hiram had three sub-standard apprentices who bore a grudge as he had refused them promotion, and they plotted to thwart his final triumph of casting the Molten Sea. Now a 'molten sea' is a large chalice or bowl, which in this case was to be in the inner sanctuary. It provides a vessel for the higher spirit of the temple. But the apprentices spoiled the proper mixture for the casting, and so it went up in flames. Hiram heard a voice bidding him plunge into the conflagration, which he did. He found himself in the centre of the Earth where he met Tubal Cain, the supreme master of all work with metals (who is mentioned in the Bible). Hiram learnt from him how to complete the Molten Sea, and was given a hammer and a golden triangle. This alone builds a bridge to Christian Rosenkreutz, who is thought to be a reincarnation of Hiram Abiff. One version of the legend has it that on his return Hiram was mortally attacked by his apprentices, but managed to throw the hammer and the triangle into a well before he died. Above all the secret mantric word which gave him his power was thus kept from the apprentices.

How was it that Hiram the supreme architect needed instruction from Tubal Cain? This leads to the nature of the apprentices. Our 'personality' or 'lower ego' may be seen as the relationship between thinking, feeling and willing, but also that between the sentient, mind and spiritual souls. Reality, we learn (Ref 2), consists of beings and the relationship between beings, so our lower ego (which is in many ways illusory) starts off as a relationship. When we cross the Threshold we lose our lower ego on the other side, which is rooted in the fact that thinking, feeling and willing then separate. If all goes well our higher ego is born in place of what we lose. The three treacherous apprentices may be seen as aspects of Hiram's as yet unpurified astral body, which let his ego down at the critical moment. A little self-knowledge may lead most of us to recognise this in ourselves. So Tubal Cain will have taught him how to balance the 'metals' of his astral body, containing as it does influences from all the planets, and thus the way to purification of the apprentices. However, the result was not immediate and so he had to await another life for that to bear fruit. The Golden Triangle represents in esotericism the perfect balance between thinking, feeling and willing: the purification of the soul. One of Tubal Cain's gifts. But that is not to mean it loses all enthusiasm. This relates to the old inner, microcosmic southern path of initiation, and one of the boundaries referred in the beginning of the *Leading Thoughts*: the inner boundary of the soul which is as much a maya as is the sense world. Hiram won this gift and so Christian Rosenkreutz is the guardian of the Golden Triangle of the inner aspect of initiation, related to time.

Tubal Cain's other gift was the golden hammer, which refers to the other boundary of our soul life, the sense world. Also to the old northern mysteries where initiation led the pupil out into the labyrinth of the Cosmos, into space. With this hammer Hiram could complete the Molten Sea. One aspect of the hammer is its symbolism of competence in practical matters. Thus the outer aspect of initiation is also entrusted to Christian Rosenkreutz, as symbolised by the Molten Sea.

It is clear what the Golden Triangle involves: inner purification of the threefold soul. But what is required of us to cast the Molten Sea? It follows from the above considerations that it relates to the outer sense world. The task of the Cain stream is to work on and transform matter through art and science. Now it was known in the old mysteries that art lacks Truth, and science Reality (Ref 4). Is that not still the case today? Yet something of modern art portrays the reality of our time, while science - for all its success - still seems stuck in the unreality of abstraction and hypothesis. Its theories rest in exquisitely beautiful mathematics that says nothing about reality. A book by a

leading physicist appeared a few years ago with the title *The Road to Reality*, but seems for all its brilliance to be the road to somewhere else. Reality and Truth are juxtaposed! So an aspect of casting the Molten Sea is to restore Truth to art and Reality to science. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" said Christ. He can restore the reality to science and the truth to art, but also the path to their fusion. However, He seeks to accomplish that through us, not for us, and so our strenuous efforts have meaning. In art and science we concern ourselves with work in the mineral realm, and the casting of the Molten Sea may be seen as *the transformation of the mineral realm into a chalice for the spirit*. Rudolf Steiner was very anxious that proper forms should be given to technological products, not just utilitarian ones. The reality of what is cast into machines and all the artifacts of our civilisation should be truthfully conveyed, or we will become ever more spiritually detached from the world we are so industriously fashioning. Art transforms the mineral world in its creations with great consequences for the soul, which should convey the truth. Thus it is that a genuine attempt to transform our art and science with the help of spiritual science is of the utmost significance and importance, and is the start of truly casting the Molten Sea. Initiation Science is required for that.

In Ref 2 Rudolf Steiner points out that rhythm is not merely physical, but half spiritual. In old paths of initiation pupils started with physical rhythms, particularly breathing but also lifestyle, and because of the above fact reached into the spiritual world. Our modern path starts with a spiritual rhythm in thinking e.g. in a mantram, and reaches down to the physical so that breathing becomes regular for that reason, but also our meditative life can inform our practical work. Can we not see this fact about rhythm as the practical way in which to cast the Molten Sea? Think only of the way our medicines are prepared rhythmically with succussion. That rhythm lifts the physical medicament to the spirit. If rhythm is brought into art and technology, there too may the spirit become involved and the chalice built. The 'law of synchronised vibrations' Steiner spoke about in etheric technology is surely relevant. However 'the spirit' is not a guarantee of the Good. Ahriman and Lucifer are spirits. So this enterprise must needs be united with the Abel aspect to reach the Good. Christian Rosenkreutz carries the Cain aspect of our evolution, while the Master Jesus who works so closely with him is concerned with the Abel aspect, that of our religious life. Thus they serve Christ who fain through the Archangel Michael would lead us to the goal of our true humanity.

References

1. Rudolf Steiner *The Temple Legend*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1985, 20 lectures in Berlin between 23 May 1904 and 2 January 1906.
2. Rudolf Steiner's *Leading Thoughts* and *Michael Letters*, GA26.
3. Rudolf Steiner *The Effects of Esoteric Development*, the Hague 20 to 29 March 1913, GA 145.
4. Rudolf Steiner, *Mystery Knowledge & Mystery Centres*, Dornach November 1923, GA 232.