

## The Asatru Alliance and the Question of Race

" ... Gangleri said, '... the people who inhabit the world, where did they come from?' Then High answered, 'The sons of Bor were once walking on the seashore and found two trees. They lifted the logs and from them created people. ... They gave them clothing and names. The man was called Askr and the woman Embla. From them came mankind and they were given a home behind Midgard's wall.'"

- The Prose Edda

Recent events make it important for us to clarify our position on the question of Asatru and race. To begin, I quote from the Preamble to the Bylaws of the Asatru Alliance written by our honored founder, Valgard Murray:

**"The Asatru Alliance promotes the native [spiritual] culture of the Northern European peoples. However, we do not practice, preach, or promote hatred, bigotry, or racism. We believe that Northern Europeans can believe [in] and promote their own culture and heritage in a positive manner. This is expressed through our native religion: Asatru."**

This statement underscores important values that inform all our governing documents and our spiritual culture and practices. Before expanding on what that means it is important to clearly state what it does not mean.

**We categorically reject** the idea that Asatru is a religion for "white people" only, which is to say Europeans or people of European ancestry. In the Prose Edda (quoted above), mankind is described as descending from Askr and Embla, our first ancestors. Note that the Edda makes no distinctions. ALL of mankind ... not just Scandinavians or Northern Europeans. It is further written that we were given Midgard as our home. Midgard, which is to say Earth. ALL of the Earth, not just Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, etc.

We honor the fact that other indigenous faiths have different cosmogonies, some of which differ radically from our own. That does not change our interpretation that the fundamental message of the Prose Edda on this topic is that all of humanity is of divine origin.

**We categorically reject** the idea that any ethnic or racial group is superior to any other, more entitled to protection under the law, more worthy of respect or deference, or more entitled to safety, freedom, prosperity, education, health care, and/or happiness than

any other. We further submit that any belief to the contrary is diametrically opposed to the fundamental message of the Edda regarding the divine nature and ancestry of the human person.

**We categorically reject** the idea that the preservation of our spiritual heritage is intrinsically more important than the efforts of other ethnic groups to preserve their ancestral spiritual heritage. It is certainly our duty-bound priority to preserve ours and labor tirelessly for its evolution and growth but that does not in any way necessitate depriving anyone else of their efforts and/or the means to do the same.

**We categorically reject** the idea that the symbols, images, myths, traditions, customs, and practices of Asatru are somehow more accurate or representative of Truth than those of any other indigenous faiths. The Transcendent will always be sought by those whose hearts burn for Truth and culturally specific symbol systems are a normal and rational place for seekers to find a place of ingress into the larger Mystery that ultimately informs all human spiritual aspiration. As Asatruar we have found what has the greatest utility for us in our native spirituality but honor other paradigms and those who seek truth therein regardless of how radically they depart from our own.

We do not believe that any person, sect, or religion is in possession of the totality of Truth. We stoke the fire of spiritual aspiration and strive to the best of our ability to act on it as Asatruar while respecting the efforts of others to do the same who practice different indigenous faiths. We believe these combined efforts on the part of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, or geographic origin cannot help but heal the earth and humanity from the harmful effects that the (often violently forced) adoption of non-indigenous monotheist faiths have inflicted on the human family.

To return to the subject of how the Preamble to the Bylaws of the Asatru Alliance informs our decision-making processes, I quote from the section in the Bylaws of the Asatru Alliance on Membership:

"3. The Board of Directors of the Asatru Alliance shall be responsible for the screening of new kindreds."

**I assure the reader that the Board of Directors of the Asatru Alliance will never admit a prospective kindred to membership in the Alliance if that kindred's own membership criteria includes standards of race and/or ethnicity.**

We are an Alliance of independent kindreds, all of whom have some variation regarding admission. Some may admit new members shortly after application. Others may insist on a longer period of probation before admission to full membership. Some may

require that applicants are twenty-one years of age while other may allow applicants who are eighteen years of age. Some may insist on prospective members successfully passing knowledge tests prior to full membership while others may not.

We recognize that standards of admission to member kindreds can also include criteria that are less easily definable. For example, an applicant may simply not be the "right fit." Perhaps they are looking for an organization that supports or encourages their racism or supremacist beliefs. Maybe they heard that Asatruar are "party animals" and want to join in or are looking for people with whom they can pretend to be Vikings. There are many inappropriate reasons for people to seek to join us. It is our duty to the Gods, Alliance, and to applicants to carry out a discernment process to determine if both parties are compatible with each other. We respect and support the decisions of kindred leaders regarding their membership as reasonable and defer to them regarding what best serves their kindreds and the Alliance as a whole so long as they support the vision and values made clear in this statement.

The Asatru Alliance and other Asatru/"Heathen" organizations have been put to considerable inconvenience over the last number of years by fringe Asatru groups with racist and/or "white supremacist" agendas. Ridiculous statements on the part of these organizations, such as the promulgation of David E. Lane's "fourteen words" and other zealous support of "white nationalist" and "pan-nationalist" agendas, have tarred all Asatruar and Asatru organizations with the same filthy brush causing many legitimate organizations to unnecessarily defend themselves against scurrilous accusations of racism.

We have no allegiance to or relationship with these organizations and offer them no support or affirmation. We aspire and strive to be a remedy to the poison with which they routinely infect Asatru and will persevere in our duty to maintain an organization in which sincere seekers of the wisdom and practices of our ancestral faith can find a home and a means of entry into the deeper Mysteries of Asatru.

May the Holy Powers of our faith grant us wisdom and strength for this journey.

In your service,

Ottar F. Valgardsson,

Allsherjargothi of the Asatru Alliance