

## **The Tree of Life and The Tree of Knowledge**

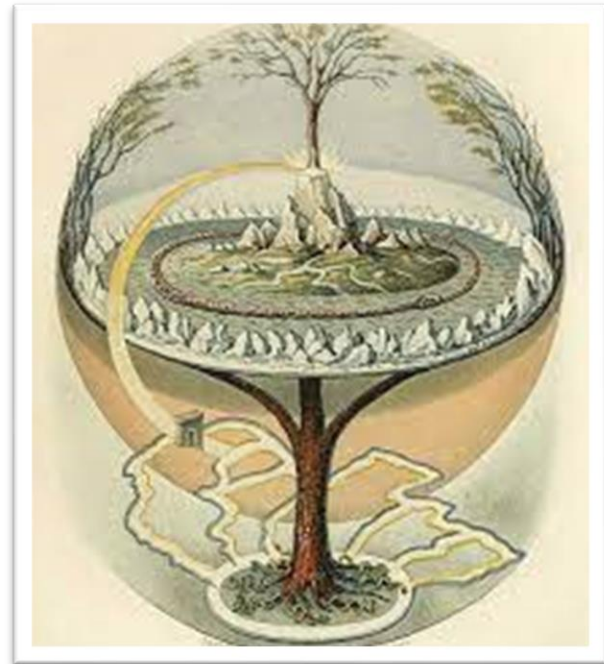
In the center of the glittering garden, I saw a sheet of water in which lay an island connected with the opposite land by a pier. Both island and pier were covered with beautiful trees, but in the middle of the former stood one more magnificent than the others. It towered high over them as if guarding them. Its roots extended over the whole island as did also its branches, which were broad below and tapering to a point above. Its boughs were horizontal, and from them arose others like little trees. The leaves were fine, the fruit yellow and sessile in a leafy calyx like a budding rose. It was something like a cedar. I do not

remember ever having seen Adam, Eve, or any animal near that tree on the island. But I saw beautiful noble-looking white birds and heard them singing in its branches. That Tree was the Tree of Life.

Just before the pier that led to the island, stood the Tree of Knowledge. The trunk was scaly like that of the palm. The leaves, which spread out directly from the stem, were very large and broad, in shape like the sole of a shoe. Hidden in the forepart of the leaves, hung the fruit clustering in fives, one in front, and four around the stem. The yellow fruit had something of the shape of an apple, though more of the nature of a pear or fig. It had five ribs uniting in a little cavity. It was pulpy like a fig inside, of the color of brown sugar, and streaked with blood-red veins. The tree was broader above than below, and its branches struck deep roots into the ground. I see a species of this tree still in warm countries. Its branches throw down shoots to the earth where they root and rise as new trunks. These in turn send forth branches, and so one such tree often covers a large tract of country. Whole families dwell under the dense foliage.

At some distance to the right of the Tree of Knowledge, I saw a small, oval, gently sloping hill of glittering red grains and all kinds of precious stones. It was terraced with crystals. Around it were slender trees just high enough to intercept the view. Plants and herbs grew around it and they, like the trees, bore colored blossoms and nutritious fruits.

At some distance to the left of the Tree of Knowledge, I saw a slope, a little dale. It looked like soft clay, or like mist, and it was covered with tiny white



flowers and pollen. Here too were various kinds of vegetation, but all colorless, more like pollen than fruit.

It seemed as if these two, the hill and the dale, bore some reference to each other, as if the hill had been taken out of the dale, or as if something from the former was to be transplanted into the latter. They were to each other what the seed is to the field. Both seemed to me holy, and I saw that both, but especially the hill, shone with light. Between them and the Tree of Knowledge arose different kinds of trees and bushes. They were all, like everything else in nature, transparent as if formed of light.

These two places were the abodes of our first parents. The Tree of Knowledge separated them. I think that God, after the creation of Eve, pointed out those places to them.

I saw that Adam and Eve were little together at first. I saw them perfectly free from passion, each in a separate abode. The animals were indescribably noble-looking and resplendent, and they served Adam and Eve. All had, according to their kind, certain retreats, abodes, and walks apart. The different spheres contained in themselves some great mystery of the Divine Law, and all were connected with one another.