

Vidar in the Edda (Loki's Quarrel): discovering more words from this god

In my book, *The Vidar Flame Column - its meaning from Rudolf Steiner*, I have presented my research (pages 19-20) about special words from Vidar, contained in a certain verse from the Edda. But scholars normally regard these words as being spoken by Loki, not by Vidar. In my book I did not explain my reasons for including these as words from Vidar. The passage is, verse 11 in *Loki's Quarrel*. This article sets out to explain why I view these words as spoken by Vidar.

Firstly, in verse 10, there occurs the extraordinary scene wherein Odhin orders the powerful Archangel Vidar to stand up, away from the table, to thereby allow Loki – who represents evil beings – to join the Gods at their table in the great Hall. For Loki has demanded access to the table of the gods, but he can not gain this access, and thus influence human beings, if Vidar does not retreat.

Now, just before the next verse, verse 11, there is a special explanatory sentence which states, “*Then Vidar stood up and offered a cup of mead to Loki; and before he drank, he toasted the Aesir.*” Then comes verse 11 which consists of this toast or auspicious greeting; I provide here a slightly different translation to the one in my book, to make clear the nuances contained in it,

Blessed fortune and well-being for the Aesir gods,
and for the Aesir goddesses,
and to all of the most sacred gods – except for one,
who is seated further in, on the bench of Bragi. (transl. A. Anderson)

This is an auspicious greeting, which I regard as being fully sincere; it is a greeting which is not extended to Bragi, and we shall see why, later. There are various reasons why I have concluded that these words are actually spoken by Vidar, who after this speech becomes silent until the Twilight of the Gods. Firstly, I note that the introductory sentence simply says, *before he drank, he toasted the Aesir*. It does not specify Loki nor Vidar, simply “he” (in Icelandic, *en áþr hann drykki...*); so it is ambiguous. However, it is natural to think that ‘he’ refers to Loki here; but does it?

The usual interpretation says that it is Loki speaking here. There are only three possibilities to support this. One possibility could be that Loki is sincerely greeting the gods: but this is impossible as the entire text is about his hatred for the gods. The second view may be that Loki is speaking, but is being sarcastic: however, this not likely either, since he excludes Bragi. Loki and Bragi have already been involved in an argument – so if Loki were speaking and being sarcastic here, then he would all the more want to offer a ‘warm’ greeting to Bragi also, and not exclude him from the sarcasm. So the third possibility is that, when Loki is allowed to join with the gods, he makes a normal, traditional speech or toast, but is still angry with Bragi.

I cannot prove that this third option is wrong, but it is extremely unlikely, because Loki has had an argument already, not only with Bragi, but also with a god called Aegir or Gymir. Yet at the end of this speech, he excludes only Bragi (if it is Loki speaking). So this third possibility makes Loki's behaviour inconsistent. This third option is also doubtful because, it is unlikely that Loki would be portrayed as offering a traditional auspicious greeting in the context here, where he is hating and abusing the gods. So I find all three possibilities which could support the Loki theory are unlikely.

But my interpretation that it is actually Vidar who is speaking here does not have these inconsistencies. To me, Vidar, knowing the enormous importance of this ominous event, makes here a kind of ‘retreating away’ toast, rather than a ‘coming and joining you’ toast. Hence he made a very respectful and inclusive greeting (both gods and goddesses are included). And, to esoteric

insight, his toast also contains an ominous sign. We can discover this sign when we ask, why would Vidar (not Loki) exclude Bragi? Who was Bragi? Bragi is the deity by whom the runes and sacred words which convey the Mystery knowledge to the Druids, is made available to human beings. This power was conferred upon Bragi by Odhin. And it is exactly this which shall be badly harmed by the entry of Lucifer and Ahriman into the world.

Now we need to note that, in verse 11, Bragi is characterized by Vidar as, “one who is seated further in”, which means on the special benches with higher status – even though Bragi is not presented elsewhere in the Edda, as being so important. This reference to ‘inner benches’ and thus a high status to Bragi, shows us that the Mysteries, with their runes and verses, and Bragi’s role in all this, **are a very important focus for the speaker**. Loki would have little reason to give Bragi or the Mysteries such a high status. But Vidar would be very focused on both the importance of Bragi, and any threats to the Druidic Mysteries, for Vidar was a central being in the Nordic Mysteries.

Rudolf Steiner taught that Vidar’s nature was held secret in the Mysteries because it was so sacred; and Vidar is destined to have a crucial role in re-establishing new Mysteries, after the Twilight of the Gods. So Vidar is very aware that the Mysteries are destined to be harmed by the entry of Loki into the world and also, to be further harmed, some time later, by Loki’s offspring, the Fenris Wolf. So Vidar, as he sincerely makes an auspicious greeting here, blessing the gods, cannot in truth and sincerity, include Bragi in his blessing and auspicious remarks.

We need to note also that Loki soon gives a very nasty insult to Iduna (in verse 17); and she is the ‘wife’ of Bragi. Iduna, as Bragi’s ‘wife’, has an ability which “keeps the gods young”; that is, Iduna represents the power that, through the Mystery wisdom of the Druids, which Bragi is central to, enables human beings to commune with the gods (so the gods don’t fade away or ‘die’, as far as people are concerned). Therefore Iduna too, as an aspect of Bragi’s nature, must also soon be a victim of Loki; and so she is.

So, it is my conclusion that in verse 11 we have rare words here from Vidar, spoken as he retreats formally from the work of the gods, at a very significant time. As he does so, he extends his blessing to the gods; but since his words are sincere, he has to exclude Bragi from this, for he is very aware that Bragi’s future will soon become grim – a sad prelude to the later Twilight of the Gods. So it is Vidar who is speaking here, and giving an omen that the Mysteries, so dependent upon the runes and mantric speech from Bragi, shall be threatened by the entry of Loki to the great Hall. My interpretation of verse 11 makes sense, is not illogical, is consistent with the role of Vidar, and shows how Vidar responds to the entry of evil in the world. So this verse, as the words of Vidar, is deeply meaningful.

Dr. Adrian Anderson