

**Odin, the Well, and the Mead:  
The Theft of the Drink of the Gods**  
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**Abstract:**

The two principle myths from the Odinic tradition are the Mead of Poetry and the Well of Mimir, which are also related to the theft of the soma from Indian mythology. The drink attained is one of inspiration encompassing immortality, poetry and wisdom. The basic elements being the creation of the liquid, its theft with the killing of its source, then going to a giant who is beheaded and the secret of the liquid is revealed. This is also associated with the explanation that the eagle brought this drink of the gods down to mankind. The basic purpose of the myth was to explain the Moon. In myth the round shape of the Moon is explained as being Odin's eye; the phases are either a well, a bowl, or a drinking horn; while images on it are seen as Mimir with his drinking horn, Heiddraupnir's Skull, or Dadhyanc's horse head. The liquid revealed is a real intoxicating drink in the Indian tradition, while in the Nordic it appears only as a metaphor for inspiration, albeit a mead. At some point then this mythical drink was equated with intoxicating drinks.

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## **Introduction**

The primary myth of the Odinic tradition involves Odin's theft of the Mead of Poetry as told in Snorri's Edda, however reference to the same episodes also occurs in 'Havamal'. Although this is well known, in the mythology the mead is also linked to the use of the runes and to Mimir, the Well's guardian. It has also been noted by scholars that there is a direct association between the theft of the Mead by Odin in Norse mythology and the theft of the soma by Indra in Indian mythology. Taking these together it may be possible to establish details in the original myth, and show how it varied in time and place to form the details that were eventually recorded.

Although there is no detailed myth concerning Mimir and Odin, there are details that are interspersed and even an account of how Mimir lost his head in "Ynglinga Saga". That this latter episode is not mentioned in Snorri's Edda implies it is nothing more than a literary attempt by Snorri himself to explain these unexplained events. Given the absence of any other direct references, this has been used as the proxy myth about Mimir's beheading. However, there is also a myth that appears to recall the original telling, this being Odin's visit to the wise giant Vafthrudnir.

## **The Mead of Poetry**

The story of the Mead occurs in two distinct versions, one in each Edda. Snorri's version is by far the most complete and even shows signs of having been a blending from different stories into a coherent whole. In both of these versions Odin takes the name of Bolverk, but their details also

match, such as references to Fialar and Gunnlod and drilling through the cave wall. The version in Snorri is well known and summarized here:

The wise Kvasir (fermented juice) is formed for the peace treaty between the Aesir and the Vanir. Kvasir is killed by the dwarfs Fialar and Galar, who blend his blood into the Mead “whoever drinks from which becomes a poet and scholar” (Sturluson 1987: 62). They put it into two pots, Son (amends) and Bodn (vessel), and the cauldron Odrerir (intoxicating). The dwarfs then have a visit from the giant Gilling who drowns when their boat capsizes, and they kill his wife by dropping a millstone on her head. So Gilling’s son Suttung (drunk) threatens them with death and receives the mead in remuneration, which he puts in the mountain Hnitbiorg (clashing rock), guarded by his daughter Gunnlod (battle-ready). Odin, under the name of Bolverk (evil-doer), heads out and works for Suttung’s brother Baugi in return for a drink from Suttung’s mead, but when the time comes Suttung refuses. Odin uses the drill Rati (drill)<sup>1</sup> to get into the mountain to Gunnlod and spends three nights with her for three swigs of the mead.<sup>2</sup> With the mead in his mouth he flies out in the form of an eagle. Suttung pursues him in eagle form but Odin spits out the mead into containers the Aesir have put out to receive it. Some of this escapes and provides the portion used by poets to compose.

The phrases used for the word ‘poetry’ largely reflect this same story:

Kvasir’s blood and dwarfs’ ship, dwarfs’ mead, giants’ mead, Suttungi’s mead, Odin’s mead, Aesir’s mead, recompense for giants’ father, liquid of Odrerir and Bodn and Son and their contents, liquid of Hnitbiorg, Odin’s booty and find and cargo and gift. (Sturluson 1987: 70)

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<sup>1</sup> In India ‘rati’ means sexual pleasure, and the Hindu Rati is its goddess.

<sup>2</sup> This is referred to in *Kormak’s Saga* when the poet says: Let me not be forced into silence by scoundrels; I’m being charged for a daughter’s gift; but still I’ll keep paying Odin his due. (Whaley 2002: 53) The ‘daughter’s gift’ here is of course a reference to Gunnlod giving the mead.

Snorri adds in “Skaldskaparmal” that the Mead of Poetry was made in the cauldron Odrerir (Sturluson 1987: 72). The inclusion of names for other pots holding the mead, Bodn and Son, by Snorri suggest that these might have been from a different rendering of the tale.<sup>3</sup>

The version in the *Poetic Edda* includes the use of the drill to get away from Gunnlod’s cave.

I visited the old giant, now I’ve come back,  
I didn’t get much there from being silent;  
with many words I spoke to my advantage  
in Suttung’s hall.

Gunnlod gave me from her golden throne  
a drink of the precious mead;  
a poor reward I let her have in return,  
for her open-heartedness,  
for her heavy spirit.

With the mouth of the auger I made space for myself  
and gnawed through the stone;  
over me and under me went the paths of the giants,  
thus I risked my head.

The cheaply bought beauty I made good use of,  
the wise lack for little;  
for Odrerir has now come up  
to the rim of the sanctuaries of men.

(Larrington 1999: 28)

This reference to Odrerir is here a reference to the Mead itself, and certainly reflected in the name, which means ‘what brings intoxication’ (Simek 1993: 250). The eagle and Kvasir, the

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<sup>3</sup> There is a passing resemblance too between the words Son and Soma.

source of the mead in Snorri's version, are absent here, but this does not mean they were unknown to the poet

Another reference to the mead links it with understanding the runes.

Nine mighty spells I learnt from the famous son  
of Bolthor, Bestla's father,  
and I got a drink of the precious mead,  
poured from Odrerir.

Then I began to quicken and be wise,  
and to grow and to prosper;  
one word found another word for me,  
one deed found another deed for me.

(Larrington 1999: 34)

There is even one more reference in "Havamal" that is worth considering:

Billing's girl I found on the bed,  
sleeping, sun-radiant;  
the pleasures of a noble were nothing to me,  
except to live with that body.

...

So I came afterwards, but standing ready  
were all the warriors, awake,  
with burning torches and carrying brands:  
thus the path of desire was determined for me.

And near morning, when I came again,  
then the hall-company were asleep;

a bitch I found then tied on the bed

of that good woman.

(Larrington 1999: 27)

The Billing referred to here appears to be another spelling of Gilling, the giant killed by Fialar and Galar. A phrase for the Mead of Poetry is “Billing’s son’s drink” (Sturluson 1987: 116), also suggesting that the story of how Odin came to possess the Mead referred to here is a slightly different one from Snorri’s myth.

The alternate myth referred to in the *Poetic Edda* might have followed this sequence: A giant or dwarf named Fialar was possessor of the mead Odrerir in the vessel Bodn, but because Fialar had been responsible for Billing’s death, was forced to give it to Billing’s wife. Odin first visited Fialar then Billing’s widow, but was frustrated. The mead went to Suttung, so Odin made promises to him and proposed to his daughter Gunnlod. On their wedding night, she was willing to let him have a single drink of the mead. After taking it all in one draught, Odin made his way out through the stone wall by the use of a drill, and the giants searched for him high and low.

## Mimir the Giant<sup>4</sup>

Snorri mentions that the root of Yggdrasill among the frost giants “is where Mimir’s well is, which has wisdom and intelligence contained in it, and the master of the well is called Mimir” (Sturluson 1987: 17). In the story “Fiolsvinnsmal” within *Svipdasmal* a tree is called Mimameid (Mimi’s tree) and would seem to be Yggdrasill (Simek 1993: 216). Here the giant is called Fiolsvidr (knows-much), which is an epithet for Mimir. Mimi’s tree is similar to Hoddmimir’s wood, in which Lif and Lifthrasir hide during Ragnarok.

Brimir, another primal giant, was also to live in the underworld drinking in his beer-hall in Okolnir (uncold place), perhaps a warm place in the cold north. It also recalls the *Rig Veda*’s reference to Yama: Beneath the tree with beautiful leaves where Yama drinks with the gods, there our father, the head of the family, turns with longing to the ancient ones. (O’Flaherty 1981: 55) This idea of a primal giant sitting under a tree and drinking is thus a common mythological image. The tree would lie in the north, at the axis of the stars, where the world of the dead was thought to be.<sup>5</sup>

The story of Odin’s drink from the Well of Mimir is the other distinct mythical event in the Odinic tradition. The origin of this comes from the Moon: the ‘Man in the Moon’ is the giant himself and its phases mark it as a well. Mimir’s Well is also identical with the Well of Fate, as both represent the Moon. The verse “The sons of Mim are at play and Fate catches fire at the

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<sup>4</sup> In Snorri’s Edda it seems the term for heaven ‘storm-Mimir’ means rain, and ‘winter-Mimir’ means ice, and the term for a sword ‘flesh-Mimir’ means blood. So the name Mimir is used as a substitute for ‘water’.

Mimir’s name also arises in the German river Mimling and the Swedish river Mimeså near Mimesjö (MacCulloch 1964: 169). Grimm writes: “It is the vulgar belief in Norway, that whenever people at sea go down, a sœdrouen (sea sprite) shews himself in the shape of a headless old man”. (Grimm 2004: 491)

The name also appears as the master smith who made incredible swords with special powers: Mimir in *Thidriks-saga*, Miming in Saxo, and Mime the old in the German hero-saga *Biterolf* (MacCulloch 1964: 169), although there is no direct connection to the giant here.

<sup>5</sup> Even in Greek mythology the axis of the sky, held up by Atlas, was in Hyperborea. There Hercules went to seek the golden apples and took them after slaying the tree’s guardian snake. (Apollodorus, p. 83)

ancient Giallar-horn” (Larrington 1999: 10) seems to be speaking of the Well of Fate (Urd) catching fire, indicating also that this and the Well of Mimir were interchangeable. Snorri includes a quotation about Weird’s Well (Urd’s Well) that says “Weird rose from the well” (Sturluson 1987: 121), which intimates Urd and Mimir were the same.

The only tale directly relating to Mimir is not told in either of the Eddas, but is rather a part of Snorri’s other work, *Heimskringla*, regarding the exchange of hostages after the war between the Aesir and Vanir.

The Vanes gave them their highest men, Niord the Wealthy and his son Frey, and the people of Asaland in return gave the man called Haenir, whom they thought well fitted to be a leader, being a big and handsome man. With him they sent Mimir, the wisest of men, and the Vanes in return gave the wisest of their men called Kvasir, and when Haenir came to Vanaheim he was chosen as leader and Mimir gave him every advice. But when Haenir was at the thing or at gatherings, where any difficult matter came before him, then he always answered the same (unless Mimir was present), “Now get the counsel of others”, said he. Then the Vanes had a suspicion that the Asaland people had played them false in the exchange of men. They therefore took Mimir and beheaded him and sent his head to the Asaland people. Odin took the head, smeared it with such herbs that it could not rot, quoth spells over it and worked such charms that it talked with him and told him many hidden things. (Sturluson 1990: 2-3)

That this myth does not appear in Snorri’s *Edda* means that it was not among the original mythographic material used for its composition. That it is also not referred to elsewhere is also important, as the most palpable explanation is that it was itself a literary invention of Snorri himself. However, even if it was not his invention, there is good reason to believe that it was not the original myth about Mimir.

The myth “Vafthrudnismal” (Vafthrudnir’s Sayings) presents the tale of Odin’s visit to a wise giant in a contest in which they wager one another’s heads on the outcome of their competition.

Then Odin went to try the wisdom  
of the all-wise giant;  
to the hall he came which Im’s father owned;  
Odin went inside.  
‘Greetings, Vafthrudnir! Now I have come into the hall  
to see you in person;  
this I want to know first, whether you are wise  
or very wise, giant.’  
‘What man is this to whom I am addressing myself  
in my hall?  
May you not come out of our halls alive  
unless you turn out to be the wiser one.’  
‘Gagnrad I am called; now I have come walking,  
thirsty to your hall;  
in need of hospitality and of your welcome,  
I have journeyed long, giant.’  
‘Why, Gagnrad, do you speak thus from the floor?  
Go to a seat in the hall!  
There we shall test which one knows more,  
the guest or the old sage.’  
(Larrington 1999: 40-41)

Although the giant’s name given is Vafthrudnir (great riddler) this might be another epithet for Mimir. The hall Odin arrives at is one that belongs to Im’s father, either implying that

Vafthrudnir is Im's father or that Im is Vafthrudnir. If it means that Im is his name, this too could be equivalent to Mim. Of further relevance is that Vafthrudnir like Mimir is a wise giant and that he and Odin both wager their heads, suggesting that the fate of Vafthrudnir is the same as Mimir. In "Grimnismal" (Grimnir's Sayings) Odin says:

'Svidur and Svidrir I was called at Sokkmimir's,  
and I tricked the old giant then,  
when I became the sole slayer of the famous  
son of Midvidnir.'

(Larrington 1999: 59)

Given that Sokkmimir (deep Mimir) is Mimir<sup>6</sup>, then Odin claims responsibility for having slain the wise giant himself, thus drawing an even further identification between the two (even though in Vafthrudnir's myth he goes by Gagnrad and not Svidur or Svidrir). In addition, Sokkmimir's father's name 'Midvidnir' could mean 'mead robber' (*miod-vitnir*) (Simek 1993: 215). So in the same way Suttung took the mead and set his daughter as guardian, so might Miodvitnir have placed his son Sokk-mimir to guard it, though there is nothing to verify this.

This does not imply that the Vafthrudnir myth itself is of ancient origin, rather it contains a wide sample of mythological material that was likely composed later rather than earlier. However, the story of Odin and Mimir is surely of early origin.

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<sup>6</sup> Sokkmimi is also referred to in 'Ynglinga Saga', where he is used as a generic name for a giant (Sturlason 1990: 9).

Likewise, in “Sigrdrifumal” (Song of Sigrdrifa), a certain drink is implied to have been the inspiration for the carving of runes, but it is said to have come from the skull of Heiddraupnir (bright dropper) and the horn of Hoddrofnir (hoard-tearer).

‘Mind-runes you must know if you want to be  
wiser in spirit than every other man;  
Hropt interpreted them,  
cut them, thought them out,  
from that liquid which had leaked  
from the skull of Heiddraupnir  
and from Hoddrofnir’s horn.

On the cliff he stood with Brimir’s sword,  
a helmet he had on his head;  
then Mim’s head spoke  
wisely the first word  
and told the true letters.

(Larrington 1999: 168-169)

Hropt himself is Odin and seems to have drunk mead from the Well of Mimir. Mim too appears as the one who teaches Odin how the runes are to be used.<sup>7</sup> This also includes other references to the Moon, such as the skull visible on its surface and seeing the Moon itself as a drinking horn (which explains the origin of the Moon’s phases for the same reason a well would explain them).

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<sup>7</sup> Odin is referred to as ‘Mim’s friend’, but because he consults him, not because he cut off his head. (This reference is only made as Mim and not as Mimir.)

The reference to Brimir's sword relates back to the giant named in "Voluspa" and even without an explanation implies that Brimir might have been a giant equivalent to Ymir, killed by Odin, who came to possess his sword.

Then all the Powers went to the thrones of fate,  
the sacrosanct gods, and considered this:  
who should form the lord of the dwarfs  
out of Brimir's blood and from Blain's limbs?  
(Larrington 1999: 5)

Whoever Brimir was, he was certainly attested to have been dead and residing at his beer-hall in Hel.

To the north there stood on Dark-of-moon Plains,  
a hall of gold, of the lineage of Sindri;  
and another stood on Never-cooled Plain,  
the beer-hall of the giant who is called Brimir.  
(Larrington 1999: 9)

Thus in this version, Odin does not attain a drink from the well through a sacrifice of his eye, but because he got access by beheading its guardian with Brimir's sword. This also equates with the implications of "Vafthrudnismal". Then after Odin learns the meaning of the runes, the mead and runes are spread around the world:

All [the runes] were shaved off, those which were carved on,  
and scattered with the sacred mead

and sent on wandering ways;  
they are among the Aesir, they are among the elves,  
some are with the wise Vanir,  
some with humankind.  
(Larrington 1999: 169)

The stories of “Sigdrifumal” and “Havamal” compare in this manner: in the first Odin takes a drink from the Well of Mimir to learn the runes, then gets advice from wise Mim’s head to learn how to use them, in the second Odin learns the runes from hanging on the World Tree to retrieve them from the Otherworld, then drinks the Mead of Poetry to learn how to use them. Also there is the myth of the Mead of Poetry where the runes are not even mentioned. This implies three distinct Odinic variations, but there is no way to learn from where each originated or how far they are from their common origin.

### **Indra and the Soma**

Odin’s source of wisdom was the Moon (his sacrificed eye in a well) with the Sun being his remaining eye that traverses the sky. The Well is thus tied to the soma of Indian mythology in the *Rig Veda*: Here I saw your highest form eager for nourishment in the place of the cow. As soon as a mortal gets the food that you enjoy, the great devourer of plants awakens him. (O’Flaherty 1981: 87) Here the horse (Sun) goes to the place of the cow (Moon) from where he attains what brings man great wisdom or awareness. This “devourer of plants” seems to be the

cow, who is the Moon, and might refer to a drink of inspiration found there.<sup>8</sup> In addition the Moon is called Soma, and the waxing and waning is likened to the soma bowl filling and draining (O’Flaherty 1981: 267, 272).<sup>9</sup>

In Indian myth, the intoxicating drink soma was known as the “well of immortality”. It was attained by Indra from his father Tvastr while its secret was held by Dadhyanc. Indra speaks to his mother of the theft of the soma: In Tvastr’s house Indra drank the Soma worth a hundred cows, pressed in the two bowls.<sup>10</sup> (O’Flaherty 1981: 142) Dadhyanc yielded to tell the Asvins the secret only to have Indra cut off his horse head, which then fell into a lake, where it continued to prophesy.<sup>11</sup> This horse head, like Mim’s head, is visible on the Moon, as shown in *Figure 1*.

There is a reference in “Havamal” of Odin having become drunk both at Fialar’s and Gunnlod’s dwellings. Here Odin is like Indra, who boasts of having gotten drunk from the soma (Keith 1964: 20). The similarity of the names Tvastr and Kvasir is also striking. Given that the story of Kvasir arising from a peace treaty is a later invention, it does not refute the identification of the two as deriving from the same character. Kvasir himself seems best described as the god of fermentation, a likely source for both the mead and the soma, though his origin might well go further into prehistory than the rise of fermented drinks.

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<sup>8</sup> This may provide an association between the Moon and the Indian Dadhyanc, whose name means ‘light milk’.

<sup>9</sup> Soma in this regard is related to Heimdall (Hama), who is a moon god, and also with Haenir through their association with fluid and their similar epithets. Soma is also similar to the Syrian drink Haoma. There is good reason to speculate that they all arise from the same source.

<sup>10</sup> That it is made from two bowls is rather reminiscent of the twin pots Son and Bodn.

<sup>11</sup> The myth tells how Indra threatened that if Dadhyanc told the secret to anyone else that he would cut off his head. The Asvins then replace his head with a horse’s head, so when Dadhyanc tells them about the soma, Indra cuts off the horse’s head and the Asvins then restore his former head. (O’Flaherty 1981: 185) The Asvins (and their association with the horse cult) might be a latter addition to an older myth where it was Indra who received the secret in this way.

**Figure 1.**  
**Dadhyanc's horse head visible on the Moon**



Although soma is a drink of expansion rather than of wisdom they are both drinks of inspiration. However, the soma was presumably a real intoxicating drink that was known to the composers of the *Rig Veda*, while the Mead is merely a metaphor, without suggestion that it represented a true brew.<sup>12</sup>

The story then involves the eagle, who brings the soma down from the heavens. When speaking in an elevated state after drinking the soma, Indra says:

‘O Maruts, the bird shall be supreme above all birds, the swift-flying eagle above all eagles, since by his own driving power that needs no chariot wheels, with his powerful wings he brought to man the oblation loved by the gods.’

Fluttering as he brought it down, the bird swift as though shot forth on the wide path; swiftly the eagle came with the honey of Soma and won fame for that.<sup>13</sup> Stretching out in flight, holding the stem, the eagle brought the exhilarating and intoxicating drink from the distance. Accompanied by the gods, the bird clutched the Soma tightly after he took it from that highest heaven. (O’Flaherty 1981: 129)

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<sup>12</sup> The original mythical drink of the gods might later have been associated with real fermented drinks.

<sup>13</sup> Soma is here and elsewhere described as being honey, like a mead.

The eagle is also to have come from a “hundred iron fortresses” (O’Flaherty 1981: 129), escaping with the soma and carrying the god Indra, which more closely matches the story of Odin.

As the eagle came shrieking down from heaven, and as they led the bringer of abundance down from there like the wind, as the archer Krsanu, reacting quickly, aimed down at him and let loose his bowstring, the eagle bearing Indra brought him down like Bhujyu from the summits of heaven, stretching out in swift flight. Then a wing feather fell in mid-air from the bird as he swooped on the path of flight.<sup>14</sup> (O’Flaherty 1981: 129-130)

The theft of the soma is thus related both to the concept of the Mead of Poetry and Mimir’s Well. It ties them together as being both alternate versions of the same mythic episode, principally relating to the Moon and its phases.

## **Gunnlod**

Since the story of the soma and Mimir’s well are related to the Moon, and the story of the Mead is related to these, it would seem that there might be something the Moon might provide in explaining the story of Gunnlod. The episodes include Odin’s transgression into Hnitbiorg and leaving Gunnlod after he attains the mead. Hnitbiorg means ‘clashing rock’ and relates well to a mountain that opens and closes (Simek 1993: 154). This in a sense could relate to the phases of the Moon, that appear to open and close with regularity. Then when they are fully open at the

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<sup>14</sup> This might relate to something real, such as an explanation for the Morning Star.

time of the full moon, then the image seen today as the ‘lady reading’ may have been seen as Gunnlod weeping, holding the empty bowl, with the hole from which Odin escaped over her shoulder. This is shown in *Figure 2*. The original tellers would have pointed this out to show that it actually took place as they had said.

**Figure 2.**  
**Gunnlod within Hnitbiorg (the Moon)**  
(holding empty bowl, with drill-hole behind)



## **Conclusion**

As there is no specific myth about Odin’s sacrifice, the sequence of events must be based upon details within the myths that are then conjoined. The creation was initially by or from Kvasir. Mim’s father robs the mead and puts his son Mim to guard it. Odin then subsequently goes there and wins it back, sacrificing his eye or beheading Mim, and thus learning the wisdom. Then the mead is brought down to earth upon eagle’s wings.

The stories of the Mead of Poetry and the Well of Mimir are tied together in the tellings of the myths in India. Indra’s father Tvastr is the source of the soma, who is killed by Indra and the soma is drunk. He then goes to Dadhyanc who tells its secret of the soma, but Indra cuts off his

horse head which falls into a lake. Then it is the ‘swift-flying eagle’ who brings this drink of the gods down to mankind. This is then basically the same story in three parts: creation, theft, and the bringing to earth. A comparison of these myths is shown in *Figure 3*.

**Figure 3.**  
**Mythologic comparison of the myth concerning**  
**the theft of the gods’ drink**  
*(The chronology here is imprecise.)*

<b>Indra and Soma</b>	<b>Mead of Poetry</b>	<b>Mimir the Giant</b>
Tvastr (Indra’s father) is the source of the soma	Kvasir is the source of the Mead	Odin’s uncle is the source of the rune-spells
Tvastr is killed by Indra	Kvasir is killed by Fialar	
Indra takes the soma	Fialar makes the Mead	(Mim’s father steals the mead)
Indra goes to Dadhyanc	Odin goes to the giant Suttung	Odin goes to the giant Mim
Indra beheads Dadhyanc		Odin beheads Mim (& sacrifices his eye)
Dadhyanc’s horse head is in a lake		Mim’s head is in a Well
Indra learns the secret from Dadhyanc		Odin learns the secret (of the runes) from Mim’s head
Indra drinks the soma	Odin drinks the Mead	Odin drinks from the Well of Mimir
The eagle takes the soma (and Indra)	Odin escapes as an eagle with the Mead	
The eagle brings soma to men	Some of the Mead escapes to men	The mead and runes are scattered to all

The first part of the Indian myth resembles the story of Mimir’s Well, while the latter dealing with the bringing of the soma to humanity is more like the Mead of Poetry story. It could be that either the two stories were separated out in Europe or combined together in India. Either way, there is enough evidence to appreciate the close relationship between Indian and Nordic myth. The mead of inspiration brings both poetry and wisdom, while a drink from Mimir’s well grants wisdom. Although the soma is a drink of immortality, it arises out of an ecstatic state

experienced upon consumption, giving one the sense of expansion and endlessness. Thus it is closely related to the notions from the Norse stories.

So the Mead would have been at some time the same as the liquid in Mimir's Well, the Moon. The basis of the myth then arises from a basic explanation for the Moon itself: its round shape, its phases, and the images on its face. Thus in Nordic myth these things became Odin's eye, a well or a horn, and Mimir with his drinking horn or Heiddraupnir's skull. In Indian myth it was the soma bowl and Dadhyanc's horse head in a lake. This implies that the common myth was only later linked to recognized objects (or that these assignments changed through time), which is why the general points equate more than the specific details.

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