

VAFTHRUTHNISMOL (THE BALLAD OF VAFTHRUTHNIR)

Othin spake:

1. "Counsel me, Frigg, | for I long to fare,
And Vafthruthnir fain would find;
In wisdom old | with the giant wise
Myself would I seek to match."

Frigg spake:

2. "Heerfather here | at home would I keep,
Where the gods together dwell;
Amid all the giants | an equal in might
To Vafthruthnir know I none."

Othin spake:

3. "Much have I fared, | much have I found,
Much have I got from the gods;
And fain would I know | how Vafthruthnir now
Lives in his lofty hall."

Frigg spake:

4. "Safe mayst thou go, | safe come again,
And safe be the way thou wendest!
Father of men, | let thy mind be keen
When speech with the giant thou seekest."
5. The wisdom then | of the giant wise
Forth did he fare to try;

He found the hall | of the father of Im,
And in forthwith went Ygg.

Othin spake:

6. "Vafthruthnir, hail! | to thy hall am I come,
For thyself I fain would see;
And first would I ask | if wise thou art,
Or, giant, all wisdom hast won."

Vafthruthnir spake:

7. "Who is the man | that speaks to me,
Here in my lofty hall?
Forth from our dwelling | thou never shalt fare,
Unless wiser than I thou art."

Othin spake:

8. "Gagnrath they call me, | and thirsty I come
From a journey hard to thy hall;
Welcome I look for, | for long have I fared,
And gentle greeting, giant."

Vafthruthnir spake:

9. "Why standest thou there | on the floor whilst thou
speakest?
A seat shalt thou have in my hall;
Then soon shall we know | whose knowledge is more,
The guest's or the sage's gray."

Othin spake:

10. "If a poor man reaches | the home of the rich,
Let him wisely speak or be still;
For to him who speaks | with the hard of heart

Will chattering ever work ill.”

Vafthruthnir spake:

11. “Speak forth now, Gagnrath, | if there from the floor
Thou wouldst thy wisdom make known:
What name has the steed | that each morn anew
The day for mankind doth draw?”

Othin spake:

12. “Skinfaxi is he, | the steed who for men
The glittering day doth draw;
The best of horses | to heroes he seems,
And brightly his mane doth burn.”

Vafthruthnir spake:

13. “Speak forth now, Gagnrath, | if there from the floor
Thou wouldst thy wisdom make known:
What name has the steed | that from East anew
Brings night for the noble gods?”

Othin spake:

14. “Hrimfaxi name they | the steed that anew
Brings night for the noble gods;
Each morning foam | from his bit there falls,
And thence come the dews in the dales.”

Vafthruthnir spake:

15. “Speak forth now, Gagnrath, | if there from the floor
Thou wouldst thy wisdom make known:
What name has the river | that ’twixt the realms
Of the gods and the giants goes?”

Othin spake:

16. "Ifing is the river | that 'twixt the realms
Of the gods and the giants goes;
For all time ever | open it flows,
No ice on the river there is."

Vafthruthnir spake:

17. "Speak forth now, Gagnrath, | if there from the floor
Thou wouldst thy wisdom make known:
What name has the field | where in fight shall meet
Surt and the gracious gods?"

Othin spake:

18. "Vigrith is the field | where in fight shall meet
Surt and the gracious gods;
A hundred miles | each way does it measure,
And so are its boundaries set."

Vafthruthnir spake:

19. "Wise art thou, guest! | To my bench shalt thou go,
In our seats let us speak together;
Here in the hall | our heads, O guest,
hall we wager our wisdom upon."

Othin spake:

20. "First answer me well, | if thy wisdom avails,
And thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
In earliest time | whence came the earth,
Or the sky, thou giant sage?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

21. "Out of Ymir's flesh | was fashioned the earth,
And the mountains were made of his bones;
The sky from the frost-cold | giant's skull,
And the ocean out of his blood."

Othin spake:

22. "Next answer me well, | if thy wisdom avails,
And thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
Whence came the moon, | o'er the world of men
That fares, and the flaming sun?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

23. "Mundilferi is he | who begat the moon,
And fathered the flaming sun;
The round of heaven | each day they run,
To tell the time for men."

Othin spake:

24. "Third answer me well, | if wise thou art called,
If thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
Whence came the day, | o'er mankind that fares,
Or night with the narrowing moon?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

25. "The father of day | is Delling called,
And the night was begotten by Nor;
Full moon and old | by the gods were fashioned,
To tell the time for men."

Othin spake:

26. "Fourth answer me well, | if wise thou art called,

If thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
Whence did winter come, | or the summer warm,
First with the gracious gods?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

27. "Vindsval he was | who was winter's father,
And Svosuth summer begat;"
. |
.

Othin spake:

28. "Fifth answer me well, | if wise thou art called,
If thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
What giant first | was fashioned of old,
And the eldest of Ymir's kin?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

29. "Winters unmeasured | ere earth was made
Was the birth of Bergelmir;
Thruthgelmir's son | was the giant strong,
And Aurgelmir's grandson of old."

Othin spake:

30. "Sixth answer me well, | if wise thou art called,
If thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
Whence did Aurgelmir come | with the giants' kin,
Long since, thou giant sage?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

31. "Down from Elivagar | did venom drop,
And waxed till a giant it was;
And thence arose | our giants' race,

And thus so fierce are we found.”

Othin spake:

32. “Seventh answer me well, | if wise thou art called,
If thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
How begat he children, | the giant grim,
Who never a giantess knew?”

Vafthruthnir spake:

33. “They say ’neath the arms | of the giant of ice
Grew man-child and maid together;
And foot with foot | did the wise one fashion
A son that six heads bore.”

Othin spake:

34. “Eighth answer me well, | if wise thou art called,
If thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
What farthest back | dost thou bear in mind?
For wide is thy wisdom, giant!”

Vafthruthnir spake:

35. “Winters unmeasured | ere earth was made
Was the birth of Bergelmir;
This first knew I well, | when the giant wise
In a boat of old was borne.”

Othin spake:

36. “Ninth answer me well, | if wise thou art called,
If thou knowest it, Vafthruthnir, now:
Whence comes the wind | that fares o’er the waves
Yet never itself is seen?”

Vafthruthnir spake:

37. "In an eagle's guise | at the end of heaven
Hræsvelg sits, they say;
And from his wings | does the wind come forth
To move o'er the world of men."

Othin spake:

38. "Tenth answer me now, | if thou knowest all
The fate that is fixed for the gods:
Whence came up Njorth | to the kin of the gods,—
(Rich in temples | and shrines he rules,—)
Though of gods he was never begot?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

39. "In the home of the Wanæs | did the wise ones create him,
And gave him as pledge to the gods;
At the fall of the world | shall he fare once more
Home to the Wanæs so wise."

Othin spake:

40. "Eleventh answer me well, |
.
What men | in home
Each day to fight go forth?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

41. "The heroes all | in Othin's hall
Each day to fight go forth;
They fell each other, | and fare from the fight
All healed full soon to sit."

Othin spake:

42. "Twelfth answer me now | how all thou knowest
Of the fate that is fixed for the gods;
Of the runes of the gods | and the giants' race
The truth indeed dost thou tell,
(And wide is thy wisdom, giant!)"

Vafthruthnir spake:

43. "Of the runes of the gods | and the giants' race
The truth indeed can I tell,
(For to every world have I won;
To nine worlds came I, | to Niflhel beneath,
The home where dead men dwell."

Othin spake:

44. "Much have I fared, | much have I found,
Much have I got of the gods:
What shall live of mankind | when at last there comes
The mighty winter to men?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

45. "In Hoddmimir's wood | shall hide themselves
Lif and Lifthrasir then;
The morning dews | for meat shall they have,
Such food shall men then find."

Othin spake:

46. "Much have I fared, | much have I found,
Much have I got of the gods:
Whence comes the sun | to the smooth sky back,
When Fenrir has snatched it forth?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

47. "A daughter bright | Alfrothul bears
Ere Fenrir snatches her forth;
Her mother's paths | shall the maiden tread
When the gods to death have gone."

Othin spake:

48. "Much have I fared, | much have I found,
Much have I got of the gods:
What maidens are they, | so wise of mind,
That forth o'er the sea shall fare?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

49. "O'er Mogthrasir's hill | shall the maidens pass,
And three are their throngs that come;
They all shall protect | the dwellers on earth,
Though they come of the giants' kin."

Othin spake:

50. "Much have I fared, | much have I found,
Much have I got of the gods:
Who then shall rule | the realm of the gods,
When the fires of Surt have sunk?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

51. "In the gods' home Vithar | and Vali shall dwell,
When the fires of Surt have sunk;
Mothi and Magni | shall Mjollnir have
When Vingnir falls in fight."

Othin spake:

52. "Much have I fared, | much have I found,
Much have I got of the gods:
What shall bring the doom | of death to Othin,
When the gods to destruction go?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

53. "The wolf shall fell | the father of men,
And this shall Vithar avenge;
The terrible jaws | shall he tear apart,
And so the wolf shall he slay."

Othin spake:

54. "Much have I fared, | much have I found,
Much have I got from the gods:
What spake Othin himself | in the ears of his son,
Ere in the bale-fire he burned?"

Vafthruthnir spake:

55. "No man can tell | what in olden time
Thou spak'st in the ears of thy son;
With fated mouth | the fall of the gods
And mine olden tales have I told;
With Othin in knowledge | now have I striven,
And ever the wiser thou art."

Revision #2

Created 2025-10-17 12:05:23 UTC by Ekospirit

Updated 2025-10-17 12:06:37 UTC by Ekospirit