

Knowledge from the Sacred Tree Runes: Images and Shapes of Energy

By Tina Houk

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The Runes of the Elder Futhark

Click a rune to go to its definition

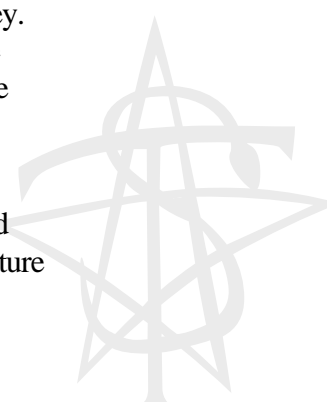
Introduction

There is no one ‘expert’ on the Runes. The information on Runes that has been accumulated by various authors and teachers is, at best, based on partial information or intuitive/channeled knowledge. This is because the complete history of the Runes and their origins is unknown; it is a mystery. This mystery and geographic ‘regionality’ account for the differences in name, sound, shape and order of the Runes in magickal and divination texts. For this reason, when working with any author’s presented order and historical origins, weigh the information in your heart to see if it feels right to you.

Various European Shamanic tribes used the Runes. That is an important concept - that Shamanism, the seeking of greater insight through transformation into other states of awareness and consciousness, by traveling into other worlds, if the Runes will facilitate you. The communication they provide through the process of divination and through consciously contacting them at other levels, are in itself aspects of the Shamanic journey. My purpose in recounting the Odin myth (the vision quest on the tree of life to receive the knowledge of the Runes) is to encourage us all to grow through exploration and the willingness to actively seek knowledge.

The information in this book on the relationship of the Runic shapes to their meanings evolved during personal workings with the Runes. This material was then incorporated into a beginner’s course that I was teaching and from there this book evolved as a mixture

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of that course and how I personally work with Runes. It is my hope that the information I have worked with will also benefit you. I recommend and refer to the books listed in the bibliography and encourage you to examine and potentially utilize the information that each offers.

I believe it is important to work with a Runic order and symbol shape that feels right to the individual. As a result, the binding of this book is constructed so as to pull apart, allowing the journal pages to be organized in any manner you choose. I had envisioned the owner of the journal writing their name and initials in the Runic alphabet on the cover provided, but that is up to you. Hopefully, this will encourage you to organize your journal in the order the Runes present themselves to you.

I firmly believe in the process of exploration. This, when done with a good intent and within safe space, can lead to many insights about life. I ask again, that the reader weigh the information presented to see if it feels right to you. Work with what you are comfortable and don't use what doesn't feel right to you. May Spirit Bless you on your journey with the Runes!

Chapter 1: What are Runes and where do they come from?

Runes are an ancient alphabet used by the Norse tribes of Scandinavia and the Germanic tribes of continental Europe from around 50 ce (common era) - 1300 ce. The word Rune comes from a root word meaning "mystery" or "secret" in the ancient languages of the Germanic and Norse peoples. The symbols, or glyphs, each are a sound. Associated to each sound is a name and each Rune conveys an idea that can be interpreted in different contexts. Each Rune is assigned a letter correspondence in the English alphabet.

Runes are the image and shape representations of natural energies. These energies are the life forces which we interact with either in harmony or in resistance. The Runes reflect the ever changing reality of the web of life events, the Wyrd, that connects and intertwines us all together. Using the runes, one can divine knowledge and understanding about these energies and about life.

Norse mythology details the story of the God Odin, hung himself upside down on the World Tree, the Yggdrasil, for nine days and nine nights without food or water, in order to receive the knowledge of the runes. This sacrifice in true shamanic terms, led him to see the Runic glyphs. Receiving the runes and their meanings and "taking them up", released Odin from his hanging. Thereafter he was the master of the runes. This story is told in the great Norse Bardic work, the Poetic Edda, an ancient collection, containing poems, myths and other runic information.

Archaeology has provided many examples of Runic inscriptions throughout Europe and the British Isles. Wooden tags or staves with runic carvings have been found scattered along the ancient trade routes of Europe. It is believed that these tags were the names of the manufacturers and merchants and were attached to goods that were traded. Other examples of runic inscriptions are found on large stones believed to be grave markers or memorials, and on various utensils and jewelry.

The Runic alphabet underwent several evolutions. The earliest alphabet is known as the Elder Futhark. This alphabet, the one discussed in this books, has 24 glyphs and is believed to have been used by the Norse and Germanic tribes from around 500ce to 800 CE. The Elder Futhark was later modified in the Scandinavian area and was contracted to 16 glyphs around 800 CE. This alphabet, known as the Younger Futhark, was used until approximately 1150ce. An expanded alphabet of 33 glyphs was used in the British isles after the Viking invasions. References are also made to Anglo-Frisian and Anglo-Saxon alphabets, each expanded in the number of glyphs. Around the beginning of the 20th century, German magickal exploration of these alphabets led to the use of another runic alphabet of 18 glyphs, referred to as the Armanic alphabet. All of these alphabets share common symbols and many variations of the same Runic names, for example, Fe and Fehu, Peorth, Perthro and Pertho. In exploring Runes, one will eventually encounter these variations. What is important to remember is that the particular alphabet that speaks to you is the one to use.

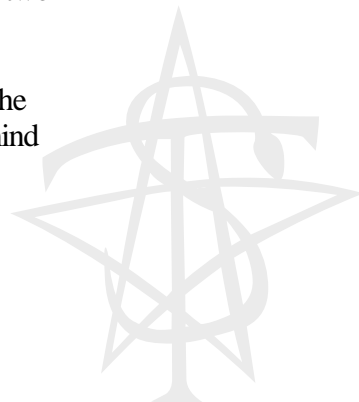
Ralph blum popularized Runes in the later half of the 20th century with his production of Rune sets. He included a 'blank' Rune, which is not found in any of the previously mentioned Runic alphabet variations. In utilizing the Runes of the Elder Futhark alphabet, the intent of his idea of the blank rune is incorporated into the meaning of the Rune Pertho.

The alphabet described in this book is known as the elder Futhark because it is the oldest alphabet chronologically and because the alphabetic values of the first six Runes spell the word 'Futhark'. Runes are used today as a system of divination, that is, they aid us in 'divining' information and energy around us that might not otherwise be apparent. There is also 'evidence' that the use of runes for this purpose is, at best, as old as their use as an alphabet. An eyewitness account written by the roman historian Tacitus in 89ce, indicates that among at least one of the Germanic tribes, signs (Runes) were carved onto wood and their interpretation was used for the purpose of providing answers to questions.

From the H. Mattingly translation of The Germania, chapter 10:

"For the omens and the casting of lots they have the highest regard. Their procedure in casting lots is always the same. They cut off a branch of a nut-bearing tree and slice it into strips; these they mark with different signs and throw them completely at random onto a white cloth. Then the priest of the state, if the consultation is a public one, or the father of the family, if it is private, offers a prayer to the gods, and looking up at the sky picks up three strips, one at a time, and reads their meaning from the signs previously scored on them."

Many different systems of divination have been used throughout the ages by different cultures to provide assistance to the questions of life. The Tarot and the I Ching are two examples of this. Runes are not different, and they have much relevance today by providing a counter to the modern day symbology of the 'logo' and the subliminal messages of television and magazine advertising. Working at a subconscious level, the runes are symbols of energy, activity and emotions available for us to use. They remind us that we as people exist in many planes of reality and many levels of awareness.



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There is a power to be found in working with the Runes organized in a particular order, there is also a personal power to be found in putting the runes in a random order that reflects you. The latter is what Ralph Blum did and which we are all capable of doing.

The purpose of placing the runes in an order is to receive the understanding and knowledge through combining the energies represented by the symbols into a system of energy flow to which we can adapt to and utilize in a personal way. The 'traditional' order of the Elder Futhark Runes has the added 'power' of the use by many groups of people and throughout time incorporated into it. This order organizes the Runes into three rows of eight, referred to as 'aetts'. Freya Aswynn, author of the wonderful book, *Leaves of Yggdrasil*, has written that this order contains the stories of the Norse mythology. At a divination level, the Runes of the first aett convey ideas that pertain to the external, physical world. The Runes of the second aett convey ideas related to the psychological and emotional world. The third aett conveys ideas related to interpersonal relationships.

In a different way, these rows represent energies that help us balance, the physical, emotional and spiritual. In the chapter on working with Runes, details are provided on interpreting the third aett as more than just interpersonal relationships, but the journey of the spiritual seeker. Putting the runes into a personal order and working with that order, one Rune at a time, leads to a greater understanding of their meaning. For example, this can lead one to sense what the individual energy of the Rune 'feels' like. By drawing the runes on a set of index cards and randomly organizing them, then placing one rune out at a time until all 24 have been experienced, one creates an effective exercise for this purpose. While the one rune is out, view its shape and say its name, then notice events in your life. Do they seem to be occurring in attunement with the particular energy of the Rune?

Throughout history, systems, symbols and their energy have been labeled as evil. An example of this is the use of certain Runic symbols by the German National Socialist Party, the Nazis. Various Runes of the Armanic Futhark alphabet appeared on the uniforms of some of the more notorious military groups. The Runes in and of themselves are neither inherently 'good' or inherently 'evil'. The intent of the user is what makes anything 'good' or 'evil'. Intent cannot be constantly applied to these energies for the purpose of changing the energy. That is like an attempt to make lightning contain itself in a constant pattern of 'good', for example. A natural force simply cannot be contained. Understanding this is very important: one can apply 'will' in working with the Runes at any level. However, one cannot control or change the nature of Runic energy as the Nazis certainly found out.

These symbols describe natural energy, such as health, birth, balance, creativity, and patience. What one can do with the runes is attempt to understand, adapt to and integrate these natural energies into life changes.

You do not need to be 'special' to work with a system of divination. We are all special in this sense; for some it is simply a matter of their awareness and their sensitivity in understanding and working with these energies. It is very much listening to the intuitive voice inside that speaks up when we have a 'feeling' about some person or event. 'The

fact that you are reading this' is an old but true cliché about the readiness of the reader to deal with spiritual concepts that have been expressed by a great many cultures and religions world-wide. The primary tool one needs to work with the Runes is 'openness'.

With that sense of openness in mind and heart, begin reading the next section of this book, which will present a way of understanding the meaning of the Rune by understanding the shape of its glyph. Using an understanding of the symbol, you can understand more than just the divination meaning of the Rune: this is a way of working with the energy to create positive life changes.

Chapter 2: Understanding the Runes through understanding their Shapes

In observing the shapes of the Runes, one notices that there are nine Runes which if reversed, produce no change to their Runic shape. These Runes are referred to as Non-Reversible. They are Gebo, Hagalaz, Nauthiz, Isa, Jera, Eihwaz, Sowulo, Inguz and Dagaz. The remaining Runes either produce a vertical or sideways change (for example Kenaz and Pertho) when they are reversed. Reversed meanings are provided in these instances within this chapter.

There are two basic form shapes that provide an underlying clue to the meaning of the Rune for all of the Runes:



The vertical Line. This symbolizes the person.

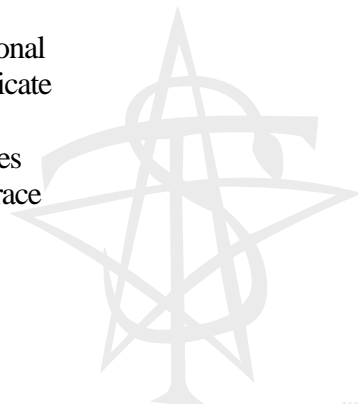


The arrow cap. This can indicate energy flow, the force of the focus of this energy, where it originates or where it is directed. This shape appears face in many different directions throughout the Runic symbology.

Various combinations of these basic form shapes provide the make up of the twenty-four Elder Futhark Runes. These form shapes are indicative of the Runic energy. They tap the very deep parts of our minds to reveal to us this energy and allow us to interact with it.

The Runes serve to show us our relationships to our environment, to our deep emotional and spiritual selves and to others: our friends, intimate partners and family. They indicate the dynamic forces in motion in our lives: fertilization, gestation, birth, growth, maturation, death and transcendence leading into the same process again. The Runes indicate change and what it takes on a physical, emotional and spiritual level to embrace and move through change, to experience growth in a positive way.

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The basis of this book is the idea that the meanings of the Runes can be learned from examination of the shape of the glyph. In the cases where this is not obviously apparent, the shape can serve to supplement the meaning that we have assigned.

When learning and examining Runes in this manner, one begins to see grouping and/or progressions in the Runes, as though a journey of the Self and the Soul can be traced through its life-span. The runes are their name: mystery. They provide much commentary on the mysteries of life and the Universe.

In particular, this concept has been used to teach divination although the Runic energy is much more than that. Divination is a good starting point to begin connecting to this energy and perhaps experiencing the more magicakal aspects of the individual Runes.

In this section, groupings of Runes will be presented showing the similarities in shape, connection and divergence in their meanings. The groupings are:



Isa, Nauthiz and Hagalaz



Fehu and Ansuz



Laguz, Ehwaz and Eihwaz



Kenaz, Jera and Sowulo



Gebo and Dagaz

Thurisaz, Wunjo and Mannaz



Teiwaz and Algiz



Pertho, Berkana and Raido



Inguz and Othila



Uruz



Isa, Nauthiz and Hagalaz



represent periods of time in the emotional life of the seeker. These moments are not always easy, but they provide insight and opportunities for growth and transcendence. These Runes utilize the basic vertical line motif to convey profound meaning.

Isa.



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'Ice' The Present

Alphabetic value I

Pronounced: Ee-Sa

A PERIOD OF FREEZING, INTEGRATION

The vertical line indicates the person, the seeker, you, or me. In this case, for this Rune, the person is frozen. The Rune has no movement or sense of flow to the line. When looking at this shape and seeing this, the question can then be raised, "Why is the person frozen?"

Sometimes a person needs time to integrate aspects of their life and are unable to move until they do so. This is a period of choosing to take the time to catch up with oneself after a period of intense activity.

If a conscious choice has not been made to stop and take time, the person subconsciously can be creating a block that freezes them. This person may be emotionally creating a "sticking" or "freezing" place for oneself. This generally is from fear of the present situation. The person is called upon to create a "thaw" by honestly examining what is going on in their present life — if the situation is such that a choice has not been made for integration of the self.

This Rune has no reversed meaning.



Nauthiz

'Need' The Future

Alphabetic value N

Pronounced: Now-this

A NEED THAT HOLDS ONE BACK

Working from recognizing the single line shape as being a person, the crossed line drawn blocking the person represents an obstacle that they have created in their Path preventing forward momentum from continuing.

Two questions need to be asked. Why is this person holding back? Is this obstacle 'real' or a 'creation' of the person?

Most often, this is a perceived obstacle because the person is anxious and that anxiety or fear, causes the person to create an obstacle that blocks the way of forward momentum.

This block put the person into the mode of looking ahead into the future to solve an issue that has not manifested into the present. This is the person who has the pattern of making plans in advance then cancels them before the event occurs. This is the person who talks themselves out of doing something, trying something or liking/loving someone because of (fill in the blank).

The lesson of this Rune is to create the future by dealing with the present and dealing with the fear and other emotions that cause the person to create obstacles in their path.

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Rather than stopping oneself, move forward by being in the now. This Rune has no reversed meaning.



Hagalaz

Hail; The Past

Alphabetic value H

Pronounced: Hah-gah-lahz

THE HAIL OF THE PAST FALLS HARD IN THE PRESENT

This Rune uses two vertical lines representing the seeker, the person as they are now and the person they were in their past. The connecting line represents the unresolved lessons of the person's past effecting them now in the present and creating chaos out of the unresolved lessons. This can range from what can be called a "flashback" of emotions related to a past event that totally obscures the present, to simple fears, angers, anxieties and such that arise to bring chaos into the present. This range of emotions signals the start of profound emotional change in the person's life: an opportunity to resolve conflict and to create healing, balance and harmony.

This represents an opportunity to integrate the person or child of the past to the person of the present, through acceptance of all aspects of one's life. These include all of the actions of the past and present and qualities that make up the self, even those that seem unfavorable.

This is a Rune of profound insight because by examining the past, one can find the key to healing the present through love and acceptance.

This Rune has no reversed meaning.

These two Runes represent the actions of humans in the external world through the following of Divine principles and the connection to Divine principles.



Fehu

Abundance

Alphabetic value F

Pronounced: Fay-who

ABUNDANCE IS A CYCLE OF GIVING AND RECEIVING

This Rune is usually described as "Wealth" or "Possessions," but it is more important to see it in the context of the metaphysical description of Abundance. As we are all part of the same Divine Source and flow, what we share is returned to us. By remembering this connection and freely sharing one's material possessions and wealth, the principle of

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abundance will flow through one and return, over and over. Fear, greed and hoarding prevent this Diving Flow from occurring. The vertical line represents the person, while the two diagonal lines indicate the arms extended outward, giving and ultimately receiving back.

Fehu teaches us about how much value we place on the material world. This energy can be used to create a wealthy environment. This energy requires learning the lesson of non-attachment to material possessions and of not losing sight of the spiritual, the interconnectedness that allows the flow of abundance to occur. In working with this energy, feel confident that this flow is moving within your life.

Reversed: When this Rune is reversed, it can indicate avarice and conflict or confusion over the possession of material things. The person of greed stands alone, abandoning people for material things. Or the person is in a bad financial position and through not understanding abundance does not know how to turn the situation around. Examination is called for to understand the value placed upon the material things and the value placed upon the Spiritual.



Ansuz

The Channel of the God

Alphabetic value A

Pronounced: Ahn-sooz

THE VOICE OF THE DIVINE SPEAKS TO ME

This Rune shape indicates a person who is a creative communicator, one who follows intuition and inspiration and is able to put into practice those ideas that are received from Divine Source.

The vertical line represents the person, while the downward diagonal lines represent the receipt and communication/dissemination of the information received. Using a chakra analogy, the points at which the information lines in this rune shape are drawn roughly represent the Third Eye (intuition) and the throat chakra (communication). The direction of the flow downward indicates the source is from above, from the Divine Soul. This person will be going through a period of time in which this creative source and communication source will be flowing allowing much to be accomplished in the person's environment — if the person is connected and chooses to hear the inner voice.

Reversed: When this Rune is reversed, the person is choosing to ignore the opportunity to listen, or is not at all connected to their inner voice. A creative block can occur or the person will find it difficult to manifest their creativity in the material. A stillness and centering are called for to avoid this missed opportunity. It is time for the person to open up, to re-connect to their Source.

These Runes all deal with emotions and balance at a personal and interpersonal relationship level.



Laguz

The Lake

Alphabetic value L

Pronounced: Lah-gooz

THE FLOW OF EMOTIONS AND I ARE ONE

The shape of this Rune has the vertical line/person motif and a single downward line moving out from the person. This Rune is about the heart being balanced by the Spirit. It is about emotions and appropriately containing and releasing them around others, especially within interpersonal relationships. By flowing with Spirit, emotions are appropriately felt and easily expressed. The seeker knows how to find the emotional connection in all interpersonal relationships.

This Rune has been associated with Initiation: the expressed intent and desire for change. Stepping up to a new level of connection allows one to step back from emotions and remove the distortion of 'water' from events, as well as 'diving in' and experiencing the deeper and shallower parts of the emotional experience.

Reversed: When this rune is reversed, it indicates a period of time of emotional turmoil or a period of time where all emotions seem dead and there is no feeling. The seeker does not know how to stop their emotions from coming out unexpectedly, or they cannot feel or express their feelings within their relationships. It is a time of imbalance and indicates the need to become centered and grounded. The need to find balance is indicated, to allow the emotional self a chance to connect and flow once again appropriately.



Ehwaz

The Horse

Alphabetic value M

Pronounced: Eh-wahz

THE DESTINATION IS REACHED IF THE HORSE AND RIDER WORK TOGETHER

The shape of this Rune is partly Laguz, the previous Rune plus a mirror of Laguz. It would indicate two people, represented by the two vertical lines allowing their emotions to flow and to be contained in a balanced manner.

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This rune has been translated from Old Norse as "Horse". From that word, the relationship of horse and rider is implied through the idea of working together. This is a Rune of marriage at many levels. In the conventional sense it is the intimate relationship seen as two people, balancing and mirroring each other emotionally. In a non-conventional sense, it can be the marriage of the two polarities of the self, in perfect harmony, the intuitive side with the active side. This is a time of the celebration of the intimacy created by this balancing and to recognize what it takes to work together: patience, communication, love, and in some cases compromise, a merging of differing points of view that is done with honor, where both parties win.

Reversed: When this rune is reversed, it indicates disharmony within an intimate interpersonal relationship, where one person, or one half of the relationship, is at odds with the other. It indicates in the case of the self, a conflict between the active side and the intuitive side, with one side assuming dominance. In an interpersonal relationship level, the seeker has to ask the question, on which side of the imbalance do they find themselves? Are they too rigid or too submissive? Do they value the relationship enough, do they honor the relationship enough to honestly communicate, to potentially compromise and to examine their CO-creation of the problem?



Eihwaz

The Yggdrasil and the Sacrifice
 Alphabetic value of E or I
 Pronounced: Ay-wahz
 AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

This Rune shape borrows Laguz and mirrors it below rather than opposite as in the previous Rune Ehwaz. The phrase, "As above, so below" comes to mind when looking at this Rune. It also seems very tree-like which corresponds to much that has been written equating this rune to the Norse tree of life, the Yggdrasil. The tree symbology shows the strength of the trunk with the roots and the branches reaching out above. This is the tree upon which Odin hung himself, sacrificing himself, to receive knowledge that he used to change the world.

When this is equated to a person with their connection to their Spirit (above) and their Subconscious (below) it indicates a time of working to bring the two into contact with each other in full integration with the conscious mind. This means that both the dark aspects of the subconscious and the guidance that Spirit often brings in the form of synchronicity or direct channel to the conscious mind are active and balanced. This is not a time to be actively out in the world, but rather to be inwardly focus on working with this connection to improve emotional understanding of the seeker's direction in life, the choices that the seeker has made. It is a time to evaluate with the new found perspectives the power of balance that the integration of conscious mind, subconscious and Spirit bring to the seeker's life.

At an emotional level, this Rune indicates someone who is making a sacrifice to ultimately obtain knowledge. This is someone who can carry or who feels that they are carrying a burden or a lot of responsibility.

This is not a bad thing, but without care to remain balanced, this period of time can be very emotional. Through carrying on and making the sacrifice while finding completion, the person can learn much about their emotions and responses to life events.

There is no reversed meaning for this Rune.

These three Runes introduce the second of the major Rune shapes, the arrow cap. This group shows a progression of development for the self, as well as a progression of form among the Runes. The Runes are Kenaz, Jera and Sowulo. The spear cap shows a movement of force, energy and focus in the individual's life.



Kenaz

The Torch

>Alphabetic value of C or K

Pronounced: Ken-az

THE TORCH OF KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS THE WAY FORWARD

This Rune is simple energy and it is directed away from the center pointing outward. This shape symbolizes the quest for light in the form of knowledge. It is the drive, the desire and the focus to learn. It is enthusiasm for learning and discovering the world outside of the self. It is not wisdom, but it is learning new information. It is being open to new ways of doing things and experiencing life differently. This Rune calls for an open mind to reach outside of the self and explore the external material world. The light that is discovered in the external world, the experiences of the external world can then be brought back and integrated into the self. Knowledge offers the seeker options for change. This Rune indicates events in the material world of the seeker.

Reversed: When this rune is reversed (the Rune spear cap points to the Right), the person or seeker is not open to understanding and is closed minded. The external world seems dark. Enterprises and undertakings fall short because the person is operating with a lack of information. There is no joy in performing the tasks in the person's life; there is boredom and stagnation. This is because the person has closed their heart and mind. An opening up is called for here, to light a torch, which is one of the Old Norse translations of Kenaz. This torch will provide the necessary light to move out of the darkness and to examine that which is within the person causing the darkness and stagnation to be prevalent in their world.

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Jera

Harvest

Alphabetic value of J or Y

Pronounced: Yeh-rah

THE HARVEST IS ONE PART OF A CYCLE OF LIFE

This Rune uses the spear cap introduced in Kenaz and expands it so that a circle of energy is formed. Visualize the two spear caps slowly turning, much like the changing of the seasons and the meaning of this Rune can be seen in the shape.

This Rune reminds us of an important concept that we have forgotten in modern times, that of the cycle of planting a seed, nurturing the seedling into maturity, harvesting the mature plant and preparing for the next cycle of planting. Because of technology and consumerism there is the expectation of immediate results and that if a person can't have something right away, it is not worth working towards and waiting for. This Rune is a reminder of the right timing of events and of the earth. It is a Rune of the passage of time through the seasons with the portend of a successful harvest of what is being planted. In this case the seeker is planting an emotional seed, one indicating change in Self, in life direction perhaps, or in the way of looking at the world. It counsels taking the time to plant and nurture, to value and understand the growth process, to return to the earth's cycle of timing, honoring the seasonal process within one's self. The harvest is the end result, but along the way the process of planting and growing provides many opportunities for observation of the self and of personal behaviors and beliefs. The change in self and awareness and maintenance of connection to the Spirit is what the goal or the harvest indicates. This is a positive Rune of growth and attunement.

This Rune has no reversed meaning.



Sowulo

The Sun

Alphabetic value of S

Pronounced: So-woo-lo

THE SUNLIGHT OF THE HIGHER SELF SHOWING THE SPIRITUAL WAY FORWARD

This Rune is the joining of the two spear caps of Jera into a solid and complete shape. Again this shape implies movement of forces, but also indicates that the movement is in attunement and now connected.

This is a Rune of Rebirth. The name of the rune means the Sun. Now the person has connected completely with the forces of personal change, of personal growth and development and has reached a successful "harvest."

There should now be an awareness of looking for and affirming a new direction or the guidance that led the seeker into a new place, a new way of being.

The time is now to enjoy the wholeness that is felt by the self; it is a time where the sense of completion can be felt spiritually and emotionally. It signals a time of new beginning, of rejuvenation, of metaphorically enjoying the warmth of the Sun felt after a long winter and of truly being able to see, physically, emotionally and spiritually, in the Sun's light.

The seeker is now a beacon for others and can shed light not only on themselves and their emotions but can assist others to find their own light by the sharing of their experiences. It is a time where Spirit is guiding the seeker to enable them to see with clarity where their path lies and in what direction to continue.

This guidance comes in the form of placing the seeker in situations where feelings of emotional confidence and completeness are apparent. These feelings may occur through meeting new people or finding oneself in new situations. Recognition of a sense of fulfillment can serve as a reminder of the Higher Self's guidance at this time. This time is a gift of Spirit to the self.

This Rune has no reversed meaning.

These two Rune incorporate both the vertical line and the spear cap in the formation of their symbol. This provides images of balancing. They are Gebo and Dagaz.



Gebo

The Gift

Alphabetic value of G

Pronounced: Gay-bow

THE GIFT OF EQUALITY IS THE BALANCE OF LIFE

This Rune is a Rune of partnership in the sense of equality and balance. It contains the promise of an even exchange in giving and receiving. The name of the Rune has been translated as gift.

The two vertical lines represent distinct individuals coming together equally and with honor. The point at which the lines intersect represents a recognition and balancing of forces. This can indicate within a person the balancing of polarities, the male and female or the active self with the intuitive self, but at a divination level it teaches the cycle of giving and receiving. In particular this lesson is to be learned through the avoidance of extremes - it does no good to be constantly giving and not to be open to receiving; it is an imbalance to be taking all of the time as well. This is a very positive Rune because it

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manifests in the external, material world but also contains the energy to be making changes in the spiritual aspects of the self.

When this Rune is viewed as two spear caps coming together at a point, the lesson of the force of balance is even more pronounced. If one of the spear points were to be off center, the force of that spear would cause tremendous flow in one direction, rather than the equal meeting that the points of the Rune display.

This Rune has no reversed meaning.



Dagaz

The Day

Alphabetic value D

Pronounced: Tha-gahz

THE DAY DAWNS BRIGHTLY

Dagaz is the balance of the force of two opposite spear caps: night and day. The point at which they balance is dawn, or twilight and it signals a transition, a change, and a break.

In this rune each spear cap has a closed end, represented by the vertical line: it is a full arrowhead. This implies that one can fall deeply into either side, dark or light and hit a definite bottom, but the equality of the forces will move the person out of the depths of one, into the other, or, with dedication, the seeker can utilize the energy to achieve balance. The person will see the change reflected in the world and their life around them. Literally it is watching the red glow of the advancing sunrise and the setting of the moon in the same dawn sky. This Rune sends the energy of new beginnings, hope, and the power to work with the change. The energy of the shift in the person's life can be felt and worked with to positive advantage.

It is important to remember that the exploration of the dark is not a bad thing; each of us have many things in our shadow self, our dark self, to explore and to bring into the light. These are our lessons, the pieces of our personalities that we originally may not be fond of but with love we can come to terms with. The dark can also be experiences and events in our lives that feel as though we are experiencing an endless night. This will be reflected in the interpersonal relationships of the seeker or the relationship of the seeker to their Self.

This process allows us to become aware and to love ourselves enough to make positive changes rather than wallow in moments of pain and self-pity. This shift in energy is provided by Dagaz. This Rune has no reversed meaning.

The next grouping of Runes uses the vertical line and spear cap motif also. This group in particular indicates the flow of energy in relation to a person's environment and reflected in their interpersonal relationships. These Runes are Thurisaz, Wunjo and Mannaz.



Thurisaz

The Giant

Alphabetic value th

Pronounced: Tour-ih-saz

RAW ENERGY APPLIED TO LIFE

This Rune represents raw energy flowing into the environment of the seeker's life. This is shown by the vertical line representing the seeker and the spear cap which peeks out from what could be considered the solar plexus. The person is either sending the energy from their activities, into the material world, or, receiving this flow of energy from the outside in and it is affecting them in their ability to accomplish what is desired.

A translation of the name "Thurisaz" has been made as "Giant." The concept of giants appears in other cultures around the world. The Edmund Bordeaux Szekely translation of the Gospel of the Essenes (page 63), for example, contains the lines,

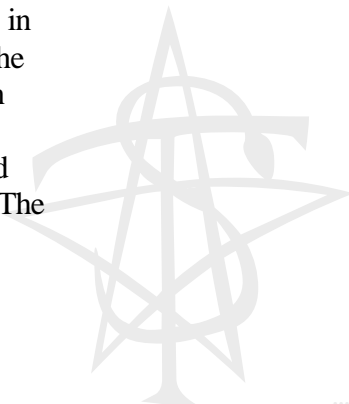
"For it was said of old, that in the beginning there were giants in the earth and mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And the Children of Light shall guard and preserve their written word, lest we become again as beasts and know not the Kingdom of the Angels."

In this passage, the giants provided written guidance to aid mankind in understanding the surrounding environment.

In the context of Norse mythology, the first beings of the earth are giants. Their interaction with the Norse gods is often comical and chaotic. The giants are energies who must be outsmarted and yet who are often the very forces of nature that mankind struggles to move into harmony with. This idea of chaotic and uncontrollable energy is the focus of the Rune Thurisaz. As a force of nature provides dramatic change to the environment, so does Thurisaz to the seeker. Often the seeker is changed in addition to the environment. This understanding of the 'giants' is still a mystery and once can speculate that this type of energy has resulted in the creation of many things by outside forces. Perhaps it is with this type of energy, coupled with creativity, that would result in the development of a language of the sounds of energy as in the Runes.

This energy in a person's life brings change: often it is uncontrolled and unwanted. This is change to the person's environment. Generally when this Rune is received in an upright position it should be read in conjunction with the Runes immediately around it, in a horizontal line. This Rune is also equated to a 'booster,' in the sense that it boosts the energy level of the Runic energies positive or negative that are drawn around it. When this Rune is by itself, it means change to the seeker's environment, often sudden, dramatic change. This can be chaos, lack of focus, and disruption, or, momentum and impetus, depending on how the seeker chooses to view it and work with the energy. The key to this change is not to fight it or try to control it. Containment is possible but this

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energy can quickly get out of control if the force of ego is applied. Spiritual will can be used to direct this energy but it should be stressed to keep the ego and all ego attachments out of it.

Reversed: When this Rune is reversed, the energy is still present in its raw, chaotic form, but it is out of control. This out of control situation has occurred because force was applied rather than acceptance or allowance of the situation. What can be expected and what is probably being experienced, is too much stimulus to the seeker's environment, too many things to take care of, or, to choose from, so that focus is not possible and events are just plain overwhelming. The seeker needs to allow, to accept and to focus on taking care of these events one task at a time. Apply patience and discipline to this period of time and slow down as best as possible to regain a sense of unity with one's life.



Wunjo

Perfection

Alphabetic value W

Pronounced: Woun-joe

THE PERFECTION OF A DIVINE WORLD

This Rune is extremely similar in shape to Thurisaz. The spear cap representing life energy, has now moved from the solar plexus area of the seeker (the vertical line) to entering/leaving from the third eye and throat chakras.

The third eye has been associated with creativity and beauty and that is one of the primary messages of Wunjo. There is perfection and beauty around the seeker and events are happening as they should. This Rune pertains to events involving the external world of the seeker. Having worked long and hard, having paid attention, having been focused, having applied Will rather than ego, events have now come to fruition and it is time for the seeker to bask in the beautiful energy of the moment. It is time to enjoy the energy of perfect timing, creation and beauty.

Wunjo is a reflection of the beauty and perfection of your accomplishments to the balance of your mind, body and spirit. This energy can be used by the seeker to begin the new, to share with others, to share with the self and to rejuvenate the self in relation to the external. Appreciate life.

Reversed: When Wunjo is reversed, life seems hard. There is no enjoyment to be found in what the seeker is doing. The seeker is in a rut and it is all that she or he can do to function. Everything seems dull and there do not seem to be any opportunities for choices or for change.

Changes is what must be sought - and a letting go. Perfectionism can be the culprit creating the rut. Let go. Seek a change in routine, a change in perspective, a choice to try new activities. The source of perfection and beauty come from a sense of harmony with

one's self and one's environment. This harmony has been lost and must be regained through change.



Mannaz

Mankind

Alphabetic value M

Pronounced: Mah-nahz

WE ARE MIRRORS FOR ONE ANOTHER

Mannaz visually looks like Wunjo plus a mirror of Wunjo. The vertical lines represent the person and the spear cap of energy flows outward from one to the other, and is reflected back in a balanced way, reminiscent of Dagaz. In this case, the person grounds the energy and a mirroring process occurs rather than a dynamic shift of energy.

This Rune means the relationship that one has to those around her or him, intending more interpersonal relationships than intimate relationships.

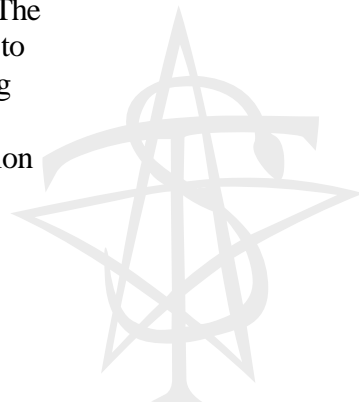
Mannaz indicates how the seeker feels about people. It is how one feels in relation to other people. It is a Rune that can indicate self image, and when upright can indicate a good communicator, or someone who has the power of persuasion through the conviction of belief and a good feeling about themselves. If the seeker is not aware or willing to discuss self-image, the indication will be the positive or negative effect of the seeker on the people in his or her life.

Upright Mannaz is read as positive interaction with others and the ability to reach others with their ideas. There is a willingness to be open and to share of the self. Relations with others are going smoothly and there appear to be no miscommunications. The seeker feels good and confident about themselves and is clear about their place in the world and their relations with others.

In a divination spread read in a horizontal line, other Runes around Mannaz can indicate an energy change or emotionalism. These energies will be found reflected within the seeker's relationships with others and feelings about others.

Reversed: When this Rune is reversed, the seeker is in conflict with the people around him or her and in conflict with the environment as a result. The cause of the conflict is most likely a poor self-image because that is what the reversed reflection indicates. Conflict can range from feelings of friction, to misunderstandings, to anger and hurt. The seeker must be willing to look inward and deal with what she or he is projecting out to the world: a poor self-image. What is occurring is a reflection of how they feel. Going inward will give the seeker an opportunity to deal with these relationships and by changing how they feel about themselves, find a spirit of self-worth, honor, cooperation and collaboration to bring to the relationships in conflict.

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Continuing the motif of dynamic energy as indicated by the spear cap acting in the seeker's life, the next two Runes, Teiwaz and Algiz, embody aspects of the spirituality that is present in the emotional make up and relations of us all.



Teiwaz

Spiritual Victory

Alphabetic value T

Pronounced: Tay-wahz

THE 'WARRIOR OF THE HEART'

Teiwaz shows the person (the vertical line) with their energy (the spear cap), focused upward, seeking a balance, and seeking spiritual answers from a higher authority than themselves.

This Rune upright indicates that emotionally, the person has reached a place of harmony from seeking inside and now moves outward into the world of others to continue to find answers.

Teiwaz speaks of justice; it embodies one who bravely faces their own karma, whether it is painful or joyous and one who is willing to fight for the truth, for the spiritual truth of all. At a very ordinary level, Teiwaz symbolizes honesty and honest effort in relations with others and success at an endeavor after long struggle. It can indicate success legally and success in interactions with others.

This is a Rune of focus on what it takes to achieve a positive result: seeing all sides and following through with whatever is needed to complete the project. This is embodied by the vertical line symbol of the person with the force of the spear cap driving upward and out, as a spear would appear in flight. Teiwaz is the Rune of the Path walker who is making successful progress. It is a Rune of confidence and faith; it is a Rune of balanced forces enabling the seeker to be an honest 'warrior of the heart' whose relationships reflect honesty and openness in the true sense as discussed by Danaan Parry in his book of the same title.

Reversed: When Teiwaz is reversed, the seeker should be careful as someone in the seeker's environment is not being honest. It can also indicate that the seeker is having trouble being honest with themselves. Relations with others require discernment, caution and the strength of a warrior to not let the emotions carry one from what is the truth of the matter. Express confidence but carefully consider the communications of others and be centered in the self. If possible take the time to weigh in one's heart the reason for the lack of honesty and/or the lack of confidence. There is some disharmony, some imbalance to be found and corrected to return the spear to the upright position.



Algiz

Protection

Alphabetic value Z

Pronounced: Al-geez

REACH OUT TO THE DIVINE TO FOLLOW YOUR PATH IN SAFETY

This Rune is similar in shape to Teiwaz except the force of the spear cap is now directed downward from above into the person, the vertical line of the Rune.

Primarily this is a Rune of protection: the protection of finding and knowing what is your place emotionally, what is one's place in the world and what is the Path. The Path gives the protection of the Divine, surrounding and guiding the seeker to the safety of emotional stability. At this time, events and the emotions of the seeker may have led to choices now presenting themselves to be made, but now is not the time to make dramatic changes. The seeker can now invoke the knowing of the heart to feel safe and know that continuing is the best direction. Algiz is the energy of a person consciously choosing to contact the Divine, to actively seek the knowing and the connection to receive guidance. This is important energy during times of emotional stress requiring stressful decisions.

Reversed: When Algiz is reversed, the force of the energy flowing from the person, the vertical line, flows downward into the ground. This can indicate that emotionally, too much attention is placed upon the events within the seeker's material and physical environment. Attention needs to be moved from those events to seeking the Divine, to thinking of the Diving, to finding the spiritual meaning behind what is going on. Turn it over. This does not mean that this should become a period of intense active change but rather a period of quiet reflection and personal searching to find the way of re-focusing on a better balance between the spiritual and the material.

The next group of Runes to display the spear cap and vertical line motif are Pertho, Berkana and Raido. This grouping is symbolic of the journey of conceiving, birthing and integrating ideas from the balance of the physical, emotional and spiritual.



Pertho

The Ear

Alphabetic value P

Pronounced: Per-though

TO LISTEN AND HEAR THAT WHICH IS NOT APPARENT

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This Rune has a vertical line with two spear caps attached at the top and the bottom of the vertical line. The energy of the spear caps form a frame to the person, collecting and accumulating the energy entering from outside, much like an ear collects sound waves.

This is a Rune of listening. It is about paying attention to the inundation of information that is around us but which often is ignored through the selection process that is our filter.

This input is the seed, it is symbolic of the seeker's relationship to their intuitive and creative side: do they suppress that part of themselves or are they aware and connected to it? Listening to the inner self is the key to realizing the information and becoming one with it, integrating it. It is as though this is a process of becoming pregnant in the sense of the person carrying the connection to the intuitive and then by paying attention to the extra information that is available at this point, conceives a new feeling, idea or way of being through using the input. This is a Rune of faith, intuition, and patience with one's emotions. It contains a desire to extend oneself beyond the normal realm of how one operates in the world. The shape of this Rune is the key: it is the ear to hear the message clearly; it is a container to hold the data received and to nurture that data into birth at some future time. Pay attention. Listen up.

Reversed: When Pertho is reversed or inverted (as the direction of its opening will change), the seeker's filter over the world, for example, the emotional world view of the person, blocks the information that is available. It is a missed opportunity to work emotionally and integrate the female, intuitive and creative side of oneself. It is a state of emotional denial, an imbalance that prevents this not-so-obvious communication from taking place within the seeker. What is the reason for denial, what is the reason for the failure to hear or the conscious choice to ignore one's inner self and intuition? These are the questions to ask the seeker. If there is a willingness, the silence of the ego is the key to hearing the gentle voice of the intuition, to allowing a different emotional response than what your filter usually provides you.



Berkana

Alphabetic value B

Pronounced: Ber-kah-nah

THE GENTLE BLOOM OF SPRING IS A PERIOD OF GROWTH FOR ALL

Following on the concept of Pertho being the container of intuition, and emotional growth, Berkana is the birthing and the growth of the impregnated information from the container of Pertho. It brings these energies into the relationships of the seeker to the people around her or him.

Within the shape of this rune, Berkana is the person, the vertical, with the same two spear caps as in Pertho, but now they are attached to the person as integrated sources of energy, flowing around the seeker. This energy causes a 'spring' -like feeling, infusing the relationships around the seeker with the energy of the birth, the budding and growth of new green leaves on the Birch tree, one translation of Berkana.

This is an extremely creative period of time where the seeker will be able to work well with others, feeding and receiving ideas from other people. They will be able to take these ideas, develop them and bring them in to fruition through the interaction with others. New people may come into the seeker's life and these relationships will grow and take hold in a positive and creative way. Berkana is very gentle and its energy is subtle, slowly building and developing. Be aware and feel the rhythm of this period of growth in all relationships and activities.

Reversed: When reversed, Berkana indicates that the seeker is in a position where creativity and new avenues in relationships seem blocked and shut down. It can seem as if the seeker is caught in a winter that doesn't end and spring seems like a very distant dream. The blockage is created through expecting a specific outcome or result within the relationships of the seeker, rather than allowing things to progress in their own natural rhythm. To change this calls for self-examination, patience and courage in letting go of the outcome and moving into sync with the natural rhythm.



Raido

Riding and Traveling

Alphabetic value R

Pronounced: Ray-though

IT IS THE DISCIPLINE OF THE TRIP THAT SHAPES YOU, NOT THE DESTINATION

The shape of Raido is seen as a progression from the energy of the birth, budding and growth process of Berkana, to becoming integrated movement in the seeker's outside life.

In this shape, one sees the person (the vertical line), with the spear cap of energy near the top (wisdom), and a downward line of motion reaching forward.

Raido has always seemed fluid to me, symbolizing the movement of life, the person moving through the events in the outside world. This rune indicates the traveling that we all do through life, struggling with obstacles that we find in our way and coasting through the easy parts of the road. This energy indicates patience and focus, preparation and dedication to face what lies ahead and to continue onward no matter what.

The wisdom of the ritual, the sense of having performed the routine many, many times can provide a feeling of security when dealing with obstacles: this is drawing on past experiences. This Rune can also indicate a decision, a choice that is favorable. This has to be read in conjunction with surrounding Runes, however, when the divination spread is a horizontal line.

The wisdom of experience is that energy passed from the emotional lessons of Pertho and birthed from Berkana into the relationships of the seeker and now becomes energy that has been integrated in Raido. This can now be put to use in the material world. This means that within the material, the seeker is called upon to focus upon what is before him

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or her and to keep it moving, patiently, with dedication, focus and perseverance. This is not a time to apply the ego but to use the ego and personality as a tool for getting the tasks at hand completed.

Reversed: When this Rune is reversed, energy to complete tasks in the material world is scattered. It's as though you're trying to leave on a trip and can't find the car keys or your airline ticket, you change your mind about what clothes to wear, see correspondence that needs to be completed before you leave and all of this happens at once so that your attention is completely scattered and unfocused.

Experience is forgotten, and Discipline can be found hanging out on the corner with Patience, or anywhere other than with you. It is time to slow down and to focus on events. The seeker could apply energy to completing one task at a time and prioritizing things to be done. The key is to not let distraction take over and to make progress through completion. That is the way to turn the energy of this Rune over and allow the movement to again flow forward.

The last grouping of runes to be considered together are Inguz and Othila. These two Runes introduce a new Runic shape, that of the diamond, formed by two spear caps. The diamond can be considered as representing a safe space, a container that can be filled with and a door way or membrane that can be crossed into other planes. The space is created by the balanced forces of the spear caps, with the energy contained within and safety projected outward by the points formed from the caps. Notice that all directions are faced by the points of the spear.



Inguz

The Cauldron

Alphabetic value NG

Pronounced: Ing-gooz

INTO THE CAULDRON ONE PUTS MANY INGREDIENTS TO COOK OVER TIME

Inguz is the great cooking pot. It is a circle with corners, containing all of the elements of air, fire, water and earth and their correspondences: intellect, passion/energy, emotions and wisdom. This pot symbolizes the passing of time as something is 'cooked' or made.

What is put into this pot, are positive energies in the form of clear intent.

In divination this Rune applies to the relationships of the seeker but it can be used to apply to the over all life as well. It can speak of the time that it takes to bring a group of people together into a working coalescent organization. It speaks of the preparation of ideas to present to people with favorable results.

Inguz indicates the time that is necessary to get schedules coordinated, ideas formulated, communications sent, received and understood, groundwork laid. This period of time allows the 'ingredients' in the pot to 'cook' and become the 'delicious meal' that is

anticipated. This is a Rune of knowing: having the trust and belief that everything will turn out in a favorable manner. It cannot be hurried, but must be allowed to happen in its own time.

This Rune portends the meeting of new people who will help the seeker accomplish what is necessary. It indicates that know entities will enable and assist in what is going on.

The seeker must set the table and wait for the meal to finish cooking.

At a non-divinatory level, this Rune is a membrane that allows one to travel between and contact the energies in a more direct way than through divination. Meditation upon this door way will provided some interesting and helpful results.

This Rune has no reversed meaning.



Othila

Focus

Alphabetic value O

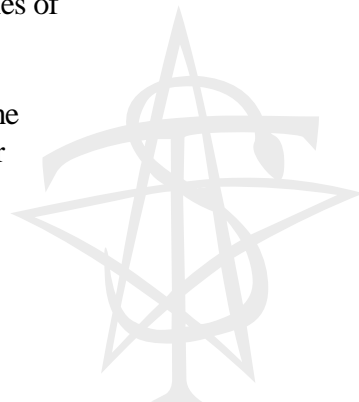
Pronounced: O-thee-lah

FOCUS ON YOUR CLAN AND REACH OUT INTO YOUR COMMUNITY TO SHARE OF YOURSELF

This Runic shape has the diamond of Inguz extended into the earth upon two legs. This is to extend the energy of the completion of what was in the pot into the world around the seeker.

The diamond of Othila contains the views of the heritage of the seeker and family. This is the world view of the clan, blood or otherwise, and it contains the judgments, hopes and dreams of that particular group. It contains how they view the world and feel about the world. This world view passes on genetically into the seeker who either accepts it or struggles with it.

Othila indicates how the seeker feels about their community and family, and how they are interacting with that particular group. When this Rune is upright, there is focus and interaction in a positive way with both community and family. The seeker is secure in their family role and where they live. They appreciate their community and feel as though they belong. There is the sense of the energy of that belong that carries through into the seeker's life and into their feelings and relations with others. This is a Rune of focus because the seeker focuses on the community and carries the combined energies of that group into all aspects of life, accomplishing much at this time. It is a time of working on the home and home life in a positive way, of understanding family relationships and of healing any strife or differing points of view. Sometimes this Rune indicates a realization of the person's genetic heritage and understanding of whatever particular culture their family came from.



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Reversed: When Othila is reversed, the person is at odds with their home, physical space, or in conflict with their family or community. There is no longer a sense of fitting in, of sharing common values or family views. This does not have to end in a termination of relationships, but can often indicate the tension that goes on when an independent view point is assumed and expressed differently from the primary group of the seeker. This most often indicates a period for both the seeker and the group to adjust to this change; although sometimes it can mean a change of address for the seeker or a period of no communication with the primary group. In either case, the values of the family and community are not necessarily erased, they are modified and incorporated within the seeker. The energy that occurs while this is going on is uncomfortable, however.

The remaining Rune is Uruz. It is unique in its shape and its position among the other Runes. Because of its different shape, Uruz can be considered in a magical working to be an organizing Rune around which the other Runes interact.



Uruz

Strength

Alphabetic value U

Pronounced: Oo-rooz

THE STRENGTH LIES IN ALLOWING WILL TO MANIFEST

Uruz is the shape of the seeker building structures in the material. The shorter vertical line represents the incomplete person who is in a state requiring change in the material world. The change that is needed can be to regain health or to create a new situation out of one that is unfavorable, for example. Through the process of realizing that change is required, the seeker states or verbalizes the intended change. Then through perseverance, endurance and determination, represented by the angled line, change is manifested and the seeker is transformed to a position of strength, represented by the longer vertical line. The new person on the other side of the manifestation is always able to look back, down the angled line to remember what they have been through and the change they have manifested into reality. This remembrance can give added strength to the new position, the knowledge of the ability to manifest also gives the seeker added strength. For once this energy has been used, it can be utilized again in other situations.

This is the power of Uruz: the ability to birth in the material environment and to create a position of strength.

This rune is primarily used for healing and indicates that the seeker has a period of health and strength available at this time.

It is important to remember to utilize this energy to accomplish and complete any tasks that are left undone in the seeker's material environment pertaining to the stated intent.

The key to utilizing this rune, is not to force the energy, but to flow with it. This sounds contradictory to the previous statements referring to force of will. What is meant is that once the intent is stated, do not try to manipulate the timing or how the intent specifically

manifests. It is important to allow the energy to work through one to accomplish the intent in the proper time and the proper form. This requires the persistence and consistency of sticking to one's intent and following up on all of the tasks necessary to see it through to completion. This provides a source of strength in knowing that the endurance exists to get through the events in the material.

Uruz is the ability to adapt, endure, persist and to get the job done. This is raw Will that drives one to change the material through the strength of one's intent. This is how a change in health can be accomplished: the will and desire to heal are first and foremost the goal of the patient. There are no hidden issues or agendas. When the True Will is set to do something, it cannot be stopped. The difference with this Rune is that Uruz deals with Will, with vital life force and not ego. If ego enters into the picture with the fears and doubts that the ego mind contains, the energy of this Rune is thwarted.

Reversed: When Uruz is reversed, the seeker is in a position of necessary change. The potential exists that a change in health, in vital life energy, passion and strength will occur because the seeker is hanging on to a situation or a specific outcome in a situation and through the stress of the events is not taking care of themselves. This will cause a change in health or energy. It is necessary for the seeker to let go of the situation and restore the life events to a period of balance in order to regain a healthy position, or, literally physical health.

Chapter 3: An Exercise to 'Ground and Center'

'Grounding and Centering' is a phrase that is often encountered in spiritual workings but which is very seldom seen with an explanation of what this means and practical suggestions on how to do this.

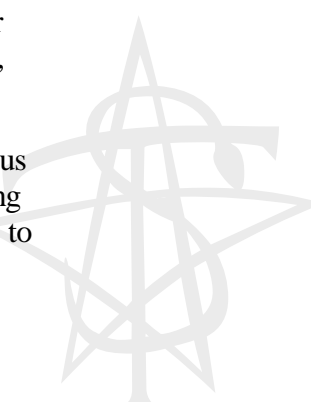
Grounding and centering means being present in the moment, totally focused on what is going on and conscious of the space that one is in. Sometimes one is unconsciously out of balance physically. Most people unconsciously tend to walk with their head and shoulders first, rather than walking aware of their center of gravity. Often people's thoughts are 'in the clouds' rather than completely present in the moment. Here are some suggestions for becoming 'grounded and centered' before working with the Runes. (This will work for other spiritual workings as well.)

Become aware of the earth by sitting on the floor or ground and placing both hands palms down onto the floor or ground.

Stand up and become aware of your own balance and center of gravity. Stand with feet shoulder length apart, knees neither completely bent nor completely straight. Attempt to feel your weight distributed evenly from side to side and from front to back. Using your hands, palms outward, move them around you creating a sphere of balance around you, so that your hands can feel the sphere it has created.

See yourself in the center of this sphere and see your center of balance as the solar plexus area, a glow of energy flowing from you and your sphere. Now take a few steps walking from your center. Touch both your palms to this center and focus. Now you are ready to begin.

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Chapter 4: Working with the Runes

Divination and Personal Practices

There are several divination spreads that offer different options for receiving the energy and messages of the Runes.

Most often the question is posed, what exactly does one do, to 'do' divination? There is no exact answer or right or wrong answer: the seeker should do whatever makes them feel most comfortable in asking and receiving the energy. Here are some suggestions to experiment with in creating a safe space in order to ensure the ability to focus and the comfort of the seeker.

Safe space means creating a safe atmosphere of privacy: visualize a circle of protection and love around you; establish privacy; use candles; use incense; put on favorite quiet music; say an affirmation that you have written; journal your question and answer.

These are all things that can be done singly or combined together to creation atmosphere that is conducive to working with Runes. Or you can do none of these things. The important thing is to do it and do it in a way that is comfortable for you.

The next question usually is, "Do I ask a direct question or just stay open to what I will be told?" Again there is no right or wrong in this situation. My personal preference when working with the Runes is to do a spread that allows the Runes to tell me what I need to know most at that moment rather than attempting to focus them through the filter of my own questioning process. However for others it is perfectly appropriate to ask a direct question and to receive a direct answer, although a direct answer is not what one will always receive from the Runes. Mine have always tended to have a "sense of humor" when I have attempted to ask a direct question and the responses I receive require a little digging and an ability to laugh at myself to understand what it is that I am being told.

Runes can be thrown or drawn; intentionally chosen or randomly picked. At first you may want to work with them only in an upright position, to understand the symbols first, then move to incorporating reversed or inverted drawings. When I throw Runes, I place a white cloth in front of me, gather my Runes in both hands, focus and connect so I feel the flow of energy through me, then toss them onto the cloth. From that cloth I gather three Runes to work with - one for the physical, one for the emotional, and one for the spiritual.

There are endless variations - work with those that land face up only; work with those that land face down only or only those that roll to the far edges of the cloth or off the cloth.

There is no one way to work with Runes. Yes, there are different traditions, Norse, Celtic and the Germanic, who specify that the Runes are part of their heritage and who specify that the Runes must be worked with in a specific order and way. With respect to those traditions, I recognize the appeal and power of these particular world views, however, I feel it is also true that the Runes will "speak" to anyone who has the desire to learn. One of the first things that an individual can do to work with the Runes is to find their "own order." What this means is draw or pick Runes randomly, one at a time, working with each one and not replacing it in bag or deck. This establishes an individual order, which

can change as often as you do this exercise, and allows the individual to think, feel and interpret the influence of the Rune in their daily life. Each day, the person would pick or draw a new Rune until the whole 24 had been experienced.

Earlier in the book, the breakdown of each of the aett of the traditional order was discussed, according to the information provided by Freya Aswynn. There is another way of looking at the meaning of the traditional order of the Elder Futhark.

The order describes groupings of Runes from the physical, emotional and spiritual. The balance of all three bodies, of all three rows is the goal in achieving connection and union to what is Divine.

A lot of people who ask for readings are people on spiritual journeys and often the Runes that appear from the last row describe not just interpersonal relationships, but the relationship of the seeker to their Spiritual path and journey.

Teiwaz for example, is the seeker dedicating themselves to focus on what is Divine, on what is true spiritually for them. Spirituality calls for honesty and understanding of karma - that every action or non-action has a consequence.

Berkana is the Rune of spiritual progress. This is the period of time where the buds of spring appear after intense work, allowing the seeker to feel and see that progress has been made along the Path. This progress can be anything from a sense of achieving deep states of relaxation and meditation to experiencing a greater sense of beauty, appreciation and connection to nature.

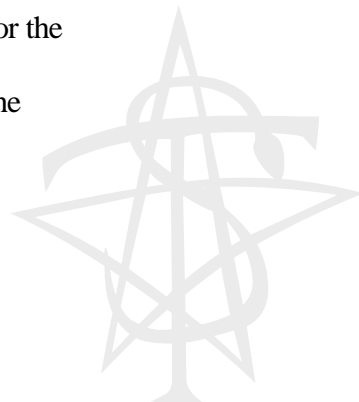
Ehwaz is the merging of ego to spiritual will and achieving balance and ethics. Without this sense of balance, exercises are inconsistent, focus is scattered and the connection to the Divine is felt to be very tenuous. When all the bodies are united, then the channel, the sense of the Oneness, is wide and infinite.

Mannaz is the sharing and the mirroring outward into the world of the energy and peace that a spiritual path brings. It is the completion of a cycle of learning where the seeker is absorbing information and ideas and communicating them. Integration occurs through the communication, forcing the seeker to face the need to create or change or acknowledgment of the next level of the Path.

Laguz is the next level; it is the Rune of Initiation. The seeker immerses the self into the water of the 'Lake', Laguz, and dies only to emerge reborn, cleansed, and flowing in the energy of Divine change. The seeker understands the flow of the journey and the rhythm of the Divine and is able to work with these amorphous ideas in a concrete way.

Inguz is the cooking pot, the cauldron into which the seeker places the ingredients for the time to come. As each ingredient is placed, the seeker has become one with its properties. With time, the membrane of the pot dissolves until the manifestation of the ingredients is now the reality of the seeker. This Rune requires clear intent, understanding, patience and responsibility.

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Othila is a Rune of focus, magnifying the workings of a group, perhaps the creation of the seeker, or, arising out of the need of the seeker. This Rune has brought the energy of the family to me - not my birth family, but my spiritual family- those souls with whom I have agreed to interact for the purpose of mutually solving our life lessons. The power of the family united is truly awesome and as we all reach out to our communities with love, we share and heal ourselves and others.

Dagaz is the ending of one cycle and the beginning of the next within the spiritual journey. This Rune requires understanding polarities and how to balance them. It requires the understanding of letting go. Dagaz is finding the Middle Pillar between Mercy and Severity. With this energy one transforms.

This information is additional to the meanings presented in the previous section and is to provide you with an additional option in working with the Runic meanings. I do not feel these additional meanings change the way the symbol applies to the definition.

Specific Rune Layouts

In working with divination layouts, two things are important to remember. The first is that the question you ask may not be answered - you will get what you need most to know, which may or may not be related to the question that you asked. The second is that the outcome is subject to the direct will of the seeker and is not cut in stone, not fixed in any way. These energies are presented for consideration, not obsession or blind obedience, nor to create the belief in that reality. The Runes are here as interactive tools for us, to help enable us to connect to the Divine and to evolve spiritually.

Answer a specific question

If you want to ask a specific question, a good spread to use is a simple three-in-a-row horizontal layout. read right to left. The first Rune drawn is placed on the right and indicates the energy that is passing away. The Rune placed in the middle represents the now, this moment, what to focus on and hold in mind. The last Rune placed at the far left indicates the energy that is becoming.

Body-Emotions-Spirit

Without asking a question, the seeker can utilize the same spread as described above.

The first position is "What will help my physical body?" The second position is "What will help me emotionally?" The third position is "What will help me spiritually?" This layout has no past or future time period: these questions represent energies that apply to the present moment.

The Spiral

To get an overall, "report card" of one's situation, try the Spiral. This is an adaptation of a spread published by Vicki Noble in the Motherpeace tarot book.

In the middle, the first position is the seeker (1), the reality of the seeker (as opposed to how they see themselves).

To the left of the first position is the environment of the seeker (2).

To the right of the first position is the energy which is to be integrated or which opposes the seeker - sometimes it can be both (3).

Directly under the seeker, is the energy of the subconscious that is subtly influencing the world of the seeker below the surface of the conscious mind (4).

To the left of the environment of the seeker, is the energy of the recent past (5).

Directly above the seeker is the conscious mind and what is on it (6).

To the right of the energy to be integrated or which opposes the seeker is the near future (7).

Between the recent past and the conscious mind is the self-image of the seeker (8).

Between the conscious mind and the near future are the hopes or fears or hopes and fears (sometimes it can represent both) of the seeker(9).

Between the near future and the subconscious is the energy that spirit has to offer the seeker (10).

The outcome, three Runes drawn together are found between the subconscious and the recent past (11, 12 13).

The Nine Worlds

Understanding that the Runes are part of a shamanic culture is part of understanding the Norse concept of the worlds. The Norse believed that there were nine worlds: three worlds comprising the Underworld of the Dead and spirit souls; three worlds of Middle Earth, inhabited by human beings, dwarves and elves; and three worlds of the Gods and light elves. The Norse shaman travels between all nine worlds and all nine worlds are connected through the axis of the Tree of Life, the Yggdrasil.

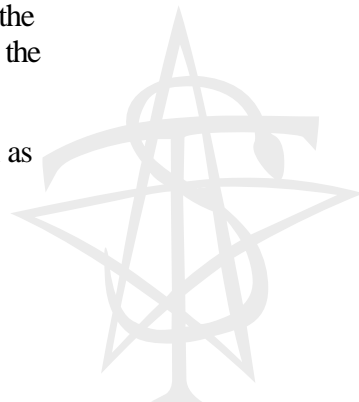
The Underworlds were: Hel, the palace of Hel, the great guardian of the souls of the Underworld; Muspelheim, the land of fire, one half of the creation force that made the worlds; and Niflheim, the frozen ice land whose ice combined and balanced with fire of Muspelheim to produce the creation of the worlds.

Midgard was the land of human beings. Svartafhlheim was the land of dwarves and dark elves. Jotunheim was the land of the Giants.

Asgard was the realm of the Aesir, one half of the Norse pantheon. Vanaheim was the home of the Vanir, the fertility gods and the other half of the pantheon. Alfheim was the home of the light elves.

These worlds can be seen reflected in the following description of the lay out known as the Nine Worlds.

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The last spread that is particularly insightful, is from Freya Aswynn's book, *Leaves of Yggdrasil*, modified very slightly. This spread consists of nine Runes read from bottom to top, laid out in a pattern similar to the Qabbalistic tree of life. The bottom three Runes represent the subconscious of the person and indicate psychological lessons and tools.

The middle Rune represents the person's consciousness, their ego-self, who they are.

The four Runes above represent tools that the person has available to them at this moment. The top Rune represents the gift that their Soul has brought them for this lesson.

The first Rune represents the Soul lesson of the shadow self (1), what the person is working on or dealing with, consciously or unconsciously. This corresponds to the world Hel.

Above and to the right (traingularly to the first one drawn) is the Runic energy that indicates the person's relationship to their active, outward male side (2). This represents the world Muspelheim.

To the left of this Rune, forming a triangle with the other two, is the Runic energy that indicates the person's relationship with their intuitive, creative, female self (3). This corresponds to the world of Niflheim.

Above the soul lesson Rune the Runes of the male energy and the female energy, is placed the Rune of the conscious self (4). This is the world Midgard.

Above this Rune is a square pattern starting upper right (East - Alfheim) (5), then lower right (South - Jotunheim) (6), lower left (West - Vanaheim) (7), then upper left (North - Svartalfheim) (8) are placed Runes that signify the following:

East - intellect, communication capabilities, creativity;

South - passion, energy level, ability to accomplish;

West - emotions, tools and liabilities;

North - ability to accomplish in the material, wisdom, organizational gifts, money abilities or liabilities.

Above and to the middle of this square is read the last Rune, the gift that the Soul has brought to assist with the lesson of the shadow self (9). This is the world of Asgard.

Incorporating the Rune Meaning to the Layout Position

The last step is to incorporate the meaning of the Rune into its position meaning within the layout. This is the part that most people seem to find most difficult in working with any divination system.

Sample question: Will what I am teaching here be understood? First Rune (What is passing away): Wunjo. Second Rune (What to focus on in this moment): Fehu. Third Rune (What is becoming): Eihwaz.

Answer: Overall, yes. Wunjo indicates that the energy and sense of beauty I feel about the subject will carry through into this moment of sharing, without thought of return (Fehu). I am wealthy in my knowledge and share it with others. The people that will read this information are willing to become as Odin and hang on the tree of Yggdrasil to obtain the knowledge of the Runes. The knowledge is the tree and what is important; those who are ready will hear it.

In a larger spread, the blending of the Runic message and the position meaning is the same. For example, if someone had Mannaz, upright, in their position of East, it could be said that their gift is a positive self-image and communication. This is the ability to focus, speak and work with others. This person enjoys interacting with others and that is reflected in their ability to communicate.

Granted these are fairly simplistic examples, but in starting to work with the Runes, that kind of simplicity is called for. The more complex meanings and shadings will reveal themselves through time and usage.

Writing with Runes

One of the most profound ways to connect to the Runes is through writing in the Runic alphabet. If you have a specific divination question or wish to affirm a particular statement and work with the Runic energy, write it in the Runic alphabet. The movement of writing the symbols somehow reaches in and triggers the subconscious to work with the energy. If you do not have a specific question, write your name in the Runic alphabet to receive the information which will assist you the most at the moment of the working.

Following is a list of the Elder Futhark Runes and the English equivalent for each Rune.

As there are a couple of Runes which can be used for the same vowel, (Isa and Eihwaz both can be used for the vowel I), personal choice should be the key in deciding which to use.

Ansuz = A

Berkana = B

Kenaz = C or K

Dagaz = D

Eihwaz = I or E

Ehwaz = E

Fehu = F

Gebo = G

Hagalaz = H

Isa = I

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Jera = J or Y

Laguz = L

Mannaz = M

Nauthiz = N

Othila = O

Pertho = P

Raido = R

Sowulo = S

Teiwaz = T

Uruz = U

Wunjo = V or W

Algiz = Z

Thurisaz = th

Inguz = ng

X can be created by the combination "ks"

Q can be created by the combination "ku"

The first exercise recommended is to write your full birth name in the Runic alphabet in the journal section of this book. Seeing "who you are" in runes is also very powerful.

Begin With Three or "How to begin to learn the meanings without having to look them up all the time".

Now that you have written your name, the Runes that you can start with are your initials.

Notice which row from the "traditional" order each Rune is from. Remember the additional meanings of physical/material, emotional/psychological, and interpersonal relationships/spiritual for each row. How do these apply to the Runes of your initials? What are the meanings of each of these Runes? Think back to events in your life and see if you can see any patterns that apply to these first Runes. Journal any connections you see or if none apply to you.

Bind Runes

Bind Runes are essentially "new" Runes created from the combined shapes of any of the runes from the Elder Futhark. Pick up a pen and let yourself draw some of the Runic shapes. We have been examining the similarities of the shapes and how they imply the meanings of the Rune energies. Now play with basic shapes, the vertical line and the

spear cap. What combinations can you make? The long term idea, is that when an understanding of the meanings of the Runes is integrated within, you can choose to work with several of the energies at once by creating a symbol that is personal, significant and powerful to you. You "bind" the energies together into a new symbol.

In these next few sections, intentionally there is not much structured information provided because it is believed that experimentation is the best teacher in these areas.

The seeker who has that spirit of adventure will find the necessary information to learn and progress through making personal choices and recording the results. For those who truly need structure, research the additional books listed in the bibliography on Runes.

Intonation and Vibration

The practice of using sound to move energy is very ancient and is found in many shamanic cultures world wide. Sound is created so that a vibration is felt with the whole body and refined to specific areas of the body, creating waves of energy that move through the body. "Toning" or "vibrating" the Rune name that you wish to work with provides you with much knowledge of the energy of that Rune and allows you to make personal changes with that energy. According to Thorsson, this is a practice known as *galdr*. In addition to vibrating the Rune name, break the name down into consonants and vowels. Then tone each of these as a build up to the actual Rune name. An ability to find privacy and to overcome the ego's feelings of self-consciousness are necessary to really utilizing this practice.

Runic Posture

According to Thorsson, this is a more traditional practice and is known as *stadha*. Other sources in the bibliography can provide you with more detailed information, but again it is felt strongly that this is experienced best through experimentation rather than exacting instructions. The process of using your body to create Rune shapes is helpful in truly understanding the process of the flow of energy. Slow movement and creating a "posture" to embody the Runic energy is a very powerful tool of discipline and focus. If the seeker is unable to "figure out" the "correct posture," visualization of the flow of energy that one is attempting to create is helpful. All of the Elder Futhark Rune shapes can be "postured" without having to become a pretzel. Practice with one of the Rune shapes for a number of days and see if you do not sense a greater awareness of that energy. For example, start with the Rune Isa. .

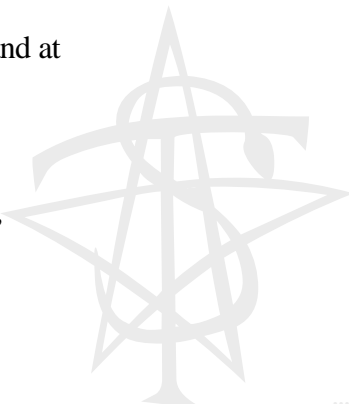
Chapter 5: Runes as Energy: Shamanic and Healing exercises

"There is a doorway within our minds that usually remains hidden and secret until the time of death. The Huichol word for it is Nierika. Nierika is a cosmic portway or interface between so-called ordinary and non-ordinary realities. It is a passageway and at the same time a barrier between worlds."

- Prem Das, "Huichol/Nierikaya: Journey to the Realm of the Gods"

Communicating and working with the Runes provides passages into different realities, different layers of the web. World wide Shamanic cultures from Africa to Australia

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utilize common tools in entering different planes of reality. These common tools are sound and movement.

Sound and movement produce changes in the vibrational energy of the life force that surrounds us all. By consciously choosing to change the rate at which our life force flows and moves around us, we can create changes in our lives physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The tribesmen who originally worked with Runes were Shamanic in nature. Through understanding the concepts of sacrifice and death in a spiritual sense as representing a level of change, the vision quest in which Odin received the knowledge of the Runes is seen in cultural context. One must be willing to change and transform in order to grow and learn. And as one grows and learns, one is changes and transforms. That is what Runes and Runic practices assist us in accomplishing.

By working in these different planes of reality (or in Norse terms, traveling to the worlds of the individual Runes or the Nine worlds), one sees the overall effect of the web and potential outcomes and consequences of actions. This provides additional information that can be applied to the physical world. This in a small way, is what occurs through the process of divination: a conversation takes place with energy that exists in many different places allowing a transference of potentially life changing information.

The Runes are the sounds of pure, natural energy. One works with them by ‘resonating’ to one or more of these vibrations: finding the ones that feel right and sound right through their shape and their name.

Just as a song is comprised of different notes combined into a specific order and rhythm, so to are Runes. This note/song combination will be different for different people. The ‘sounds’ of the Runes often operate at frequencies that are outside of the frequency scale that is heard by the human ear. In the way that rocks and wood vibrate, so too, do Runes.

Writing or carving them on rocks or pieces of wood enhances the vibration they produce and combines them into a new ‘melody’. This can be done specifically at a personal level, but this also explains the power of what is considered to be the traditional, FUTHARK, order. That order is the energy vibration of what would equate to a hymn sung and felt by many peoples over many ages. The echoes of that use are present in the order. This is also the principle behind why the traditional practices of galdr (toning) and stadhr (posture) work.

Meditational Work

Pick a Rune to work with. Create space that is safe for you. From a state of deep meditation, contact that Rune and ask to visit its world. What does the Rune say to you? What does the Runic world look like? Journal your results.

Choosing Runic Energy to Work With

When working with Runes at levels other than pure divination, descriptions only interfere with the basic energy that creates change - one needs to work with key concepts. The concepts of energy are contained in key words, rather than in paragraphs of definition.

The purpose of working with a shorter concept is that the word is also a symbol to assist us, who are from the modern era, understand the depth of the ancient symbol.

In working with these concepts, think and feel, what does this imply?

Fehu: Generative, creative power

Uruz: Healing, Manifesting

Thurisaz: Raw Energy, Defense through force of will

Ansuz: Divine Contact, Inspiration

Raido: Discipline, Direction

Kenaz: Knowledge, Regeneration

Gebo: Balancing of Energies

Wunjo: Expression of Fulfillment

Hagalaz: Creating Balance through Chaos and Change

Nauthiz: Development of Will, Order and Spiritual Abilities

Isa: Concentration, Constriction of Unwanted Forces

Jera: Positive Change, Peace, Harmony, Enlightenment

Eihwaz: Liberation from Fear, the Vision Quest

Pertho: Recollection of Hidden Knowledge

Algiz: Protection through Divine Pathworking

Sowulo: Divine Guidance, Positive Energy to Apply to an Intent

Teiwaz: Development of Faith, Courage

Berkana: Rebirth of Spirit, Bring Ideas to Fruition

Ehwaz: Understanding the Oneness, Swiftmess of Completion

Mannaz: Opening to Insight, Mental Clarity

Laguz: Accumulation of Life Force

Inguz: Centering of Energy Poised for Release

Othila: Focus of Concentration, Collection of Past Knowledge

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Dagaz: Transformational Inspiration, Temporary Momentum

Utilizing this list, you could create an environment of healing, utilizing the energies of Uruz, Jera, Sowulo and Laguz, for example. Intentionally, there is not much detail provided here. This is to encourage you to think, feel and choose carefully. Then go and experiment with your ideas and journal your results.

Runes and Color

Using Runes with color produces dramatic effects. The Runic shapes seem to work best with red for that is a color frequency that allows their energy to be broadcast clearly. The colors that are visible to our eyes are waves of energy as is sound. Working with colors as a background to visualizing the runes in red is one way to experiment harmonizing with Runic energy.

For example, if a healing is desired, try filling the area of the body and the surrounding physical area outside of the body with a color of healing. Then with the color as a background, introduce visually the images and feelings of Runes of healing.

This exercise can be done with other tasks in mind and can result in gentle or radical change depending on the combination of colors and Runes chosen.

If one follows any of the known Chakra color systems, for example:

Crown - White - Spiritual connection

Third Eye - Purple - Insight, creativity

Throat - Blue - Communication, inner truth

Heart - Green - Love, Healing

Stomach - Yellow - Intellect

Abdomen - Orange - Life force and energy

Root - Red - Sexual energy, physical body -

one can pick Runes, a color and corresponding chakra to work on feeling and discerning the vibration of the combined energies and moving into with them. By working with these natural energies, one changes the energy pattern of the body, mind and Spirit and thus creates changes in one's life.

Runes and Crystals

Today, Albert Einstein is understood as the scientific basis for the concept that thoughts create change through the movement of energy. Runes are the sounds and symbols of ideas and thoughts and work in the same way as an affirmation, by moving energy into anew pattern. Runes are a different language of energy that is available for use.

Using crystal or other semi-precious stones can amplify the Runic energy. By painting the Runic symbol to be worked with upon the crystals or stones and creating a geometric grid with the stones, healing, for example, can be accelerated. There are many books to assist you that discuss how to utilize stones in healing work and in other magical workings.

A very basic way of working is to create an area of energy using the stones to define the boundaries of the area and to assist in filling the area with energy. Using Runes in conjunction with the stones, amplifies the desired energy.

Other ways of working with Runes and crystals, involves toning. Toning is producing a specific note and vibrating that note so that the body feels it, thus producing change. You can pick an intent for change and focus on that intent clearly in the heart and mind's eye.

Utilizing a crystal or a favorite stone, pick the rune or Runes that would best lend energy to achieving the intent, and draw or paint them on the stone. Holding the stone and the Rune, tone the note or notes that come to you, while you are focused on your intent. The creation of sound, in conjunction with the natural vibration of both the stone and the Rune, with the image of the symbol in mind, will create change to one's life energy.

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