

Using the Runes

In the Havamal (one of the many poetic eddas), or “Sayings of the High One” the story of how Odin discovered the runes is told; hanging himself for nine days and nights from the world tree, impaled on his own spear. Such tales also reference the importance of respecting the runes and their great power.



“No man should carve the runes unless he can read them well. Many a man goes astray around those dark letters.”

-Egil's Saga, Chapter 73, translation by Bernard Scudder

Granted this respect, the runes can be used in a number of ways:

Most popularly in contemporary use, they are drawn the same way someone might draw tarot cards, being read according to their arrangement. A reader might also take a few which are pertinent to their question and throw them upon a mat or into a bowl to see which land face up. Another method is to search for them in nature, like in cracked ice or the branches of trees.

Aside from reading, a user of the runes might also be able to invoke their power by drawing or carving them upon objects and surfaces. They may even create symbols out of two or more connected runes, creating what is known as a *Bindrune*.

Suggested Readings

[Nordic Runes](#) by Paul Rhys Mountfort

[Runic Amulets and Magic Objects](#) by Mindy MacLeod

[An Introduction to English Runes](#) by R.I. Page

[Aspects Of Anglo-Saxon Magic](#) by Bill Griffiths

[Witchcraft and Magic in the Nordic Middle Ages](#) by Stephen A. Mitchell

[The Poetic Edda](#) translated by Henry Adams Bellows (available online)
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/>

[The Cowboy Hávamál](#) translated by Jackson Crawford (available online)
<https://tattuinaldoelasaga.wordpress.com/2012/01/12/cowboy-havamal-full-text/>



THE RUNES

𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝𐀞𐀟

An ancient form of divination dating as far back as 150 C.E. by the accounts of some scholars. A sacred alphabet and tool for meditation and introspection.



The Elder Futhark

Is the most popular set seen in today's market. Named by the first six runes in the first set, Fehu, Uruz, Thurisaz, Ansuz, Raido, and Kenaz, the Elder Futhark is a set of 24 runes divided into three sets of eight, known as *aetts*. Each *aett* is named for the first rune in its set.

Fehu-Uruz-Thurisaz-Raido-Kenaz-Gebo : Frey's Aett

Hagalaz-Naudiz-Isa-Jera : Hagal's Aett

Tiwaz-Berkana-Ehwaz-Mannaz-Laguz : Tyr's Aett

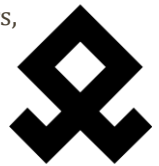
THE RUNES		upright meaning	inverted meaning
Fehu	wealth, abundance, prosperity, luck	inv. greed, material loss,	
Uruz	challenges, trials, adversity	inv. failure, suffering defeat	
Thurisaz	disruption, pain, misfortune	inv. *above intensified, women's health issues	
Ansuz	communication, spoken word	inv. misinformation, falseness	
Raido	travel by land, movement, rhythm, questing	inv. lack of movement, going astray	
Kenaz	fire, illumination, learning, togetherness	inv. burning, fever, loss of light	
Gebo	gifts given or received, sacrifices, exchanges		
Wunjo	community, joy, fulfillment, bliss,	inv. unhappiness, loneliness	
Hagalaz	hail, disruption, delays, hostile places		
Naudiz	hardship, necessity, inability to act, healing, discomfort		
Isa	stasis, coldness, thawing, deceiving beauty		
Jera	festivity, harvest, reaping rewards		
Eihwaz	transitions, life and death, womb or grave	immortality, regeneration	
Pertho	sacred play, laughter, storytelling, divination	inv. sadness, the need for happiness	
Algiz	protection, defense, shielding	inv. vulnerability, defenselessness	
Sowilo	inner light, energy, enlightenment, guidance		
Tiwaz	the warrior, honor, justice, righteousness	inv. futility, lost cause, over-aggressiveness	
Berkana	birth, new beginnings, fertility, purification	inv. difficult starts, halted plans	
Ehwaz	mobility, journeying, boundaries	inv. stagnation, disrespect of boundaries	
Mannaz	talent, potential, creativity, compassion	inv. misanthropy, hatred, unused talent	
Laguz	travel by water, depths of soul, insight	inv. blockages, unconscious fears/dangers	
Inguz	fertility, new ideas, sexuality, confidence		
Dagaz	divine inspiration, enlightenment, the day		
Othila	home, contentment, one's place in life	inv. displacement, alienation, homelessness	

This list is based on one personal interpretation of the runes. Though meanings vary far less than other forms of divinations such as Tarot, it is encouraged for individuals to do their own research on the runes.



The Ugly Truth

It is unfortunate to note that much of what is known about runes and the religion which birthed them came from the Nazi regime and Hitler's desire to create a religion which validated the message of white supremacy, an issue which still plagues the Heathen community today. It is for these reasons that users of the runes should be careful and respectful in their use, as too often they have been used disrespectfully, such as the double sowilo rune of the SS officers, the infamous swastika, or the contemporarily popular winged othila rune.



It is our responsibility as a community to recognize and reject such hate symbols, and to take care in our use of the runes.

"Once again, the Third Reich misappropriated runic and other occult materials for its own sordid ends, a cynical manipulation that provokes disgust in contemporary runic practitioners. But the gross and nationalistic distortions of paganism practiced in Hitler's Germany no more reflect the Northern Tradition's central beliefs than the Crusades, Inquisition, and witch burnings did Christ's." (Nordic Runes by Paul Rhys Mountfort, page 182)