Understanding how to read runestones

Written on behalf of Luna Holistics©

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A Brief History – Runes

The word “rune” actually means mystery, magic, secret, or whisper. They are an ancient Germanic alphabet that has been dated back to the 3rd century. It is thought that they were first used for divination purposes and later for writing and record keeping.

Legend has it that Odin, the Norse High God of the Aesir, hung from the world tree (Yggdrasil), impaled on his own spear for nine days and nights in order to gain the knowledge of runes. When the runes appeared below him, he reached down and picked them up, and the runic knowledge gave him power. He later passed on this knowledge to the Vanir goddess Freya. She in turn taught him the magic of Seidr. Heimdall the god who guarded the Rainbow Bridge taught the Runes to mankind.

The death of the runes as magical instruments occurred in 1639. The official laws of Iceland banned them, and any people found with runes in their possession were burned alive!

It is fascinating to think that as long ago as the 3rd century, runes had been used for major decision-making. That their belief in them was so strong gives them a sense of awe. I have great reverence for my stones and always treat them with the utmost respect. I truly believe that if you have a real affinity with your runes, they will speak to you.

Creating your own set

Today the use of rune stones is again becoming immensely popular. With many attractive sets available, (I personally have a beautiful amethyst set, which was given to me by a dear friend).

It can also be very satisfying to make your own set. These can be of wood with the glyphs burned onto them, or as simple as flat pebbles from the beach with the glyphs either engraved or marked with a permanent pen. Whatever style you choose, making the runes yourself will certainly help you to become familiar with them, and getting to know your stones is very important. A little imagination is all that it takes. I keep my runes in a velvet pouch, inside a beautiful box.
Lending your runes

Once you have become familiar with your own set, I think you will find it very difficult to lend these out. To me there is something very personal about my runes. I feel that my own personality is around these stones and strangely I am very protective over them.

The Blank Rune

Again this is down to the individual. There is no evidence to suggest that there ever has been a blank rune. You can of course delve into this a little deeper if you wish; my thoughts on this are not to include it in my castings. I will however give you the meanings, as I know them, so you can make your own decision on this. But my suggestion to you is that if you happen to have a set with a blank rune then keep it and use it, as a replacement should you need to.

While others prefer to pick the runes individually out of the bag and form a spread.

Day rune - A good way to get an answer for a certain question. Simply pick a single rune each day. There are several different spreads to choose from and I will explain a few of these later on.

Rune Diary

It is always a good idea to keep a rune diary, as it is important to keep a record of all of your readings, weather you think they are good or bad. This will also help you to become more familiar with your runes.

Rune casting

The runes have become a great source of inspiration for many, and for some they provide a guide for daily life. It is more a means of analysing the path one is on, and a likely outcome.
The future is not fixed; it changes with everything we decide to do. So if you don’t like the prediction then you can always change your path.

Rune stone’s are an Oracle from which you can seek advice. Sometimes they may not seem clear, and this is where your own intuition will be needed. These are the times when the runes will guide you to the answers. They work best if you focus on your current situation, and ask a specific question.

You will need of course your own set of rune stones a cloth of your choice on which to lay your stones, and one that is for this purpose only. A quiet place where you will not be disturbed is ideal.

**The Runes**  
(In their groups of 8)

**Freyr / Freyia’s Aett**  
Love, Fertility, Life force and Increase.

- Fehu
- Uruz
- Thurisaz
- Ansuz
- Raido
- Kenaz
- Gebo
- Wunjo

**Heindall’s Aett**  
Limitations, Fate, The Inner Journey.

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Tyr’s Aett
Connection to the Spirit and Others

Tiwaz  Berkano  Ehwaz  Mannaz
Laguz  Ingwaz  Dagaz  Othala
Elder Futhark

The old Germanic Runic alphabet of Elder Futhark contains 24 runes, these are divided into three groups of eight, and are called Aett or (Aettir plural). Each set of eight is ruled over by their own particular spirit, or Norse God. This helps you to remember their order, and later their significance in magical use will become clear.

Freya / Frey - Goddess and God of fertility and increase.

Heimdall - The watcher and keeper of the Rainbow Bridge to the Heavens

Tyr - War leader and spirit of the just

The word Futhark comes from the sound of the first six letters.

Some runes look the same whichever way you look at them there is therefore no reverse meaning to these.

Some casters like to tip the whole bag out and read the runes that have fallen face up, and of course depending on whether the rune is reversed or not, will have a bearing on the reading as a whole.
Rune Meanings

Freyrs Aett

_Fehu (F)_

Nourishment
_Sacred to Freya, Goddess of Fertility and Love_

_Right side_


This rune asks that you look after what you have, especially in times of good fortune, as this is the time when we relax and take our eye off the ball so to speak.

Enjoy your good fortune and remember to share it!

_Reversed_

At a standstill, lack of balance and possibly some form of loss.

Loss of property, esteem, or something in which you make an effort to keep.

You need to look closely at what is happening, and learn from it. Remember un-welcoming situations come in many shapes and forms.
Uruz (U)

Strength
Sacred to Thor, God of Thunder and Strength.

Right side
The rune of endings and new beginning's. A time of great energy and health. Freedom, Courage, Strength, Understanding and Wisdom.
Prepare for an opportunity disguised as a loss!
Possibly the life you have been living is due for major change.

Reversed
Could mean an opportunity missed. Over protectiveness, or possessiveness. Domination by others.
For some Uruz reversed serves to alert, giving clues in the form of minor failures, for others it may be a hard jolt.
Thurisaz (TH)

Place of Non-Action
Sacred to Loki, Trickster and Shape Changer. The God Thor

Right side
A tendency towards change.
This rune strengthens your ability to wait, as patience are what you need. Now is not a time for decisions, it is a time for reflection on what has brought you to where you are now and where you are going in the future. Do not act impulsively, or without knowledge.
As Thor was the Norse God of strength, other meanings are security, protection, and possibly good news.

Reversed
Reversed this rune indicates similar messages as above.
Thorn, as in thorn bush can point to dangers of a minor kind. A feeling of vulnerability. Unfavourable news.
A bad man or woman. Betrayal, and malice.
Ansuz (A)

Messenger

Sacred to Odin, God of Wind and Spirit.

Right side

A rune of Gods blessings and joy. A rune of wisdom
Receiving signals, messages, and gifts.
A time to expect the unexpected. New beginnings. New life.
A guarantee of harmony and order. Take special notice during meetings, or chance encounters, particularly with people older and wiser than yourself as it is possible that aid could come from someone older. Expect the unexpected.

Reversed

There is a warning against trickery or pranks, especially if an older person is involved. An older person causing trouble.
Think carefully before accepting any advice.
Raido (R)

Communication
Sacred to Thor and Thunder

Right side
A rune of personal development. Journeys and travel, the journeys may be of a physical or spiritual nature, or a relationship matter, either way it will bring positive developments. It is also a time of choice, seeing the right move for you and deciding upon it. Justice can be expected.

Reversed
Delays and possibly difficult journeys. Loss. Be particularly attentive to relationships. Efforts need to be made.
A possible injustice.
Kenaz (K)

Fire
Sacred to Hiemdall

Right side
A rune of renewed light after a period of darkness and confusion. Inspiration and creativity. Understanding, and a new strength and energy. In relationships there may now be an opening up. Communication and Knowledge.

Could also be a sign of possible ill health.

Reversed
Expect a change within a relationship, a friendship, or a part of yourself that no longer relates to the person you are now. It points to the end of a way of life.

Can also indicate a block in creativity.
Gebo (G)

A Gift
A sacred mark dedicated to the Gods

Right side
The giving and receiving of gifts, both in the sense of sacrifice, and of generosity, maintaining a balance. Kindness and aid to others. Partnerships and relationships are blessed, and move to a deeper level, but remember to retain your own individuality.

All matters pertaining to exchanges including contracts.

Reversed
There is no reverse meaning for this rune.
Wunjo (W)

Joy, Light
Sacred to Odin

Right side
A new clarity, which may result in a change of direction to your existing plans, now is the right time. Situations will change for the better.

Peace and harmony reign with the possibility of wishes being fulfilled. A rune of material and emotional gain. Success, and recognition of worth. A time of new friendships.

Reversed
Conflict and changes that are not positive. It is a warning to expect problems in certain situations.
Heindall’s Aett

Hagalaz (H)

Hail, Wrath of Nature
Sacred to Heindall

Right side
Events may seem totally out of your control, when you draw this rune expect disruption. But be ready for an awakening, this can be in any number of ways, you may think that you have finally seen the light.
You may experience a loss, or a break up of a partnership,
Look to yourself for the answers.
It is possible you may experience a loss before there is a great gain.

Reversed
There is no reverse meaning for this rune.
Nauthiz (N)

Need, Necessity, Pain.

Sacred to Norns, weavers of fate and Nort, Goddess of night that gives birth to day.

Right side
A rune of limit, and patience. Recognition of one’s fate.
Face your fears. This is a time to pay off old debts, to restore harmony and balance. A time to consider your plans carefully.
Hard work is required to work through this time, but try and treat it as a learning curve.

Reversed
Warns against hasty decision-making, don’t be impulsive, and keep your anger under control.
**Isa (I)**

Ice, Standstill, That which Impedes
Sacred to intensity, it intensifies any other rune associated with it.

**Right side**
A rune of obstacles and mental blocks, a barrier preventing, and warning against proceeding. Look to yourself to see what it is you are holding on to why you are allowing this situation to carry on, and let it go. There could be a coldness between people. Positive actions are what is needed. You need to be self-reliant. This rune reinforces the runes around it.

**Reversed**
There is no reverse meaning for this rune.
Jera (J)

Year, Fertile Season
Sacred to Freya and Frey the Bountiful People

Right side
This rune symbolises success. What you have sown so shall you reap. The result of earlier effort’s being realised. Projects will succeed, although plans cannot be rushed, and patients must be the order of the day.

Reversed
There is no reverse meaning for this rune
**Eihwaz (EL)**

The Yew Tree
Sacred to Odin.

**Right side**

Perseverance and foresight are what is needed here.
It indicates that you have set you sights on a reasonable target and can achieve your goals. Old ways will pass giving way for the new. An honest man who can be relied upon. This could well be a trying time it is certainly a meaningful one.

**Reversed**

There is no reversed meaning for this rune.
Perthro (P)

Something Hidden
Sacred to Frigg, the “All Mother”

Right side
A rune of mystery, and things not quite being what they seem.
Powerful forces of change are at work here. Good changes.
This is a rune of revelation. There could well be surprises, and unexpected gains are not unlikely.

Reversed
Secrets may come out into the open. It is a time for you to move on, out with the old in with the new. Not an easy time, but a necessary one, for your own good.
**Algiz (Z)**

**Protection**

Sared to Heimdall, the Watcher

**Right side**

New opportunities and challenges are typical of this rune, but be aware that unwelcome influences may come with this. The protective urge to shelter yourself or others. Following your instincts, and protect what has been worked for.

Resist temptation.

**Reversed**

Be thoughtful about your health. Look carefully at associations you form at this time, people may be using you, but if you are aware of this and take responsibility, then you can only benefit. Be mindful of danger from another person.
Sowilo (S)

Sun, Wholeness, Life Forces
Sacred to Balder, the beautiful God of the Solar Wheel.

Right side.
A rune of Health, Wealth, and Happiness.
It portends good fortune in any journey, especially one over water.
This is a rune of great power. Making energy available to you for the positive changes in your life. Always be true to yourself, and never lose sight of who you are, and what you stand for.

Reversed
There is no reversed meaning for this rune.
Tyr’s Aett

Tiwaz ( T )

Victory.
Sacred to Tyr, Lord of the Heavens, and War Leader

**Right side**
A battle with you is what is going on here, it is a time to look deep within as it is there that the answer lies. Patience is a virtue as far as this rune is concerned. It signifies success in competition and in legal matters. New partnerships will produce great things.

**Reversed**
Matters of trust and confidence are the issue here. Be careful of upsets that sap your energy. If you are sad because a brief friendship has come to the end, then don’t be, because everything has its purpose. You are asked to examine your motives. You will fine the answer within yourself.
Berkana (B)

Birth, Growth
Sacred to the Earth Goddess

Right side
This rune is about new birth and new beginnings. While it can indicate an actual birth or marriage, it can also refer to personal growth. Prosperity involving a new venture. You must be ready for this new beginning, by removing any doubts, or unfinished business.

Reversed
Possible family upsets, or anxiety about someone who is close to you. Beware of deceit. A feeling of stagnation. You may be dismayed that you have taken the wrong action, but next time you try be more diligent.
Ehwaz (E)

Progress, Movement
Sacred to Frey, Summer Sun.

Right side
This is a rune of travel and change, possibly a job, career, residence, or maybe all three. There could be an improvement of a situation. Teamwork, trust and loyalty are all here. The rune indicates that you have progressed thus far, and should now be in a secure place, where you can face the future with confidence. But remember to share this good fortune with those around you.

Confirmation beyond doubt of the runes around it.

Reversed
A warning against overreaching, and trying too hard. Feeling confined and restless in a situation, perhaps a change is craved.

Be careful of feelings of betrayal, and mistrust. As in all things time is of the essence and patience is a virtue.
Mannaz (M)

The Self
Sacred to Odin the All Father and Heindall the watcher.

Right side

This is a rune of major growth.
About awareness, and the ability to know what is right. A rune is about you and your ability to know yourself, to be true to yourself.
Remain modest, as this is not a time to look for credit for achievements. Notice your attitude towards others and their attitude towards you. Expect to receive some sort of aid or co-operation now.

Reversed
A lack of common sense.
If you feel blocked right now, then take a step back and look within yourself. Be humble. You could feel the need for isolation especially from family.
*Laguz (L)*

Water, Flow
Sacred to Njord, God of the wealth of the sea.

*Right side*
A time of nourishment. A rune indicating psychic ability. Trust in your intuition. Expect success in travel. The possibility of gains made through loss. A time for re-valuing, re-organising, and possibly change.

*Reversed*
You may be experiencing a period of confusion in your life right now. You may be making wrong decisions and feel you are going round in circles. This could be because you are not trusting your own wisdom when you should be.
Inguz (NG)

Fertility, New Beginnings
Sacred to Frey, Summer Sun, and Consort to Freya

Right Side
This is a rune of peace, prosperity, and also fertility. It may mark a time of joyous deliverance of new life, or a new path. This rune has great power, and is telling you that you now have the strength to tie up loose ends, enabling you to move in a new direction. Being centered and grounded will free you from unwanted influences. The hearth and home are protected.

Reversed
There is no reversed meaning for this rune.
**Dagaz (D)**

![Image of Dagaz rune]

**Breakthrough, Transformation**
Sacred to Heindall, the watcher

**Right side**
It may feel like you have stepped out from the dark and into the light, now everything seems clear. A time to embark on new ventures. A major period of achievement and prosperity is often introduced by this rune, but do not engross yourself too deeply in the future or behave recklessly. Some hard work may be involved. Everything in the garden looks rosy.

**Reversed**
There is no reverse for this rune.
Othila (O)

Seperation, Retreat, Inheritance
Sacred to Heritage

Right side
Property is associated with Othila, as it is a rune of acquisition and benefits, stability and prosperity. Source of safety, increase, and abundance. Inherited property, or possessions, a house, a home. Family values. Although something may have to be given up, or lost in order to acquire property or an estate, the wise use of resources are shown here.

Reversed
You may be called upon to make radical changes to your old way. Total honesty is required here, or you may cause pain to others and damage yourself.
The Blank Rune
This rune stone is blank, and symbolises something that cannot be known or controlled and as such, fate will decide the outcome.

As I have stated before there is no evidence that this rune existed.
So the usage of it is entirely up to you
The Single Rune

Selecting one rune can help you focus more on the issue in question. If you are undecided about something, drawing a single rune can help you deal with the situation more clearly.

How you happen to turn the stones may alter the direction of the symbols to either upright or reversed, this is of course all part of the process. It may help you to always use the same method when choosing your stones.

Three Rune Spread

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<th>Action</th>
<th>Situation Now</th>
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The Three Rune Spread is satisfactory for all readings. You may wish to place them face down, and then turn them up. Pick three runes one at a time and place them from right to left. Reading from the right.

The first rune is about the situation as it is. The second rune is about the course of action needed. The third rune is about the outcome of the situation if you meet your challenges successfully.

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