

An Exposition on Runic Practices.

by

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Synopsis

This is a short exposition of rune practices as a follow on to the earlier talk by V.W. Fra. Michael Brocklebank and as a brief introduction I will look directly at the philosophies behind Runic Practises. These include, Theory of Ørlog as a universal law, the Philosophy of Wyrð, and Runic symbolism.

Following this introduction I will cover the practical aspects of Rune Lore, describing how in the past and present times the runes were and are still used for divination, healing and spiritual evolution.

To understand the practical uses of the Runes it is necessary to understand the basic concepts of Rune Philosophy as developed over several thousand years by our ancestors. It would also be an advantage to have a basic understanding of Norse Mythology.

The first concept to get to grips with is that of Ørlog, which is the Northern European law of cause and effect. It is very similar in nature to the Eastern philosophy of Karma without the re-incarnation aspect. The view was that you were born with a clean slate and what you did with your life from then on was your responsibility, if you got it wrong then you had to pay the price, both in your physical life and in the after life. To do good deeds in life would bring good fortune in return and a good death, which would in turn ensure that the afterlife was spent in Valhalla or Sessrumnir and not in Hel or if you were a particularly vile creature Niflheimr. The Hel of our ancestors was and is not to be likened to the Hell of Christian philosophies, it was merely a cold, dark and dreary never never world ruled over by Helia half goddess half giantess, where those who did not die in a state of grace would be consigned.

The Wyrð philosophy is used to explain the mechanics of the runes. The Wyrð is thought of as a giant spider's web that spreads its strands across time and space, with each strand made up of a different manifestation of energy, the culmination of these energies being the very fabric of the universe. From the moment we are born to the moment of our death it is believed by followers of the philosophy that we are some where on this web and because of the nature of it we are also a part of the web. The actual mechanics of the philosophy are very deep and a subject in themselves but as a simplified precis let us consider this; the Wyrð and Ørlog are interlinked, a person doing a good deed and building a good Ørlog will fill his psyche with positive energy. As that person is on the web and indeed part of it, it naturally follows that he will be on a positive strand of the Web. Because the web is the fabric of life then his world will be influenced by that positive energy.

The link between these ideas and the Runes is that if each strand of the Web is made of energy then to be able to identify the different types of energies we must give each of them a symbol. The Runes are these symbols. Each letter of the Runic alphabet as well as having its phonetic value represents an energy. In divination using the Runes what we are seeing is a reflection of the energies in and around the subject, and a person with a knowledge of these energies can then interpret their manifestation.

In healing the process is reversed instead of observing the manifestation of energy the Runes are used as a channel for energy beneficial to the recipient.

Much has been said and written on the source and history of the runes so as not to warrant a further discourse here, so we shall ignore their source and look to their nature. As I have already said the runes represent pure energy in its primal form, they also have names and concepts attached to each of them. It is not unusual in ancient alphabets for the letters to be given names as they serve as a suitable set of mnemonics, also the concepts attached to each rune is usually derived from its nature or some times from folklore of unknown origin. For a description of each rune see appendix A.

The practical aspects of Rune lore can be broken down into two main groupings for simplification, Passive i.e. divination and Active i.e. healing and spiritual evolution.

The earliest recorded Rune Divination was circa AD 93, and was described by the Roman Historian Tacitus in his volume Germania a profile of the Germanic tribes. He describes a Rune Divination carried out by an Elder of a village; cutting twigs from a fruit bearing tree (probably apple) and inscribing Runes on the individual pieces. A white cloth was laid on the ground and these twigs were cast on to it. All those twigs which landed with the Runes face upwards were taken as being significant; the one furthest away from the diviner being the most significant, then working backwards information was gleaned from the other Runes until the situation was clarified.

This method of divination is still in use today, but because of modern man's intellectualisation more formal methods have been devised; the most simple being laying three runes. The diviner's method is thus: he meditates on the question for a short time, three Runes are then taken at random from the set,

they are then laid in a straight line. The left Rune represents the past or more precisely the nature of the situation leading to the present. The middle rune represents the nature of the moment in relation to the question and the right hand Rune shows the outcome of the situation. This method can be enlarged in some cases to give a more in depth view by using five runes, the centre Rune remains the present the two to the left a more detailed past situation and the two to the right a clearer view to the future.

Some modern Rune practitioners influenced by Eastern philosophies use the lay out of the Celtic Cross which is much favoured by Tarot readers. This method still works efficiently because it is a breakdown of life's various aspects and shows how each is manifesting, but is not favoured by traditionalists.

The more usual method for getting an overall view of one's direction in life is to use thirteen Runes. Once again the Runes are picked randomly and laid in a circle of twelve with the thirteenth placed in the centre. Life is then broken down into twelve different aspects in a similar method to the astrological house system ie:.

- 1) Self/Ego,
- 2) Material aspects,
- 3) Communication,
- 4) Home
- 5) Family
- 6) Occupation
- 7) Relationships/Partnerships
- 8) Life Cycle
- 9) Inner Self
- 10) Status
- 11) Mentality
- 12) Unseen Aspects
- 13) Synopsis

The diviner will then glean what he can from the individual aspects of life and the synthesis of all aspects together thus giving an overall view of the direction of the querent's life, whilst still giving details of individual aspects.

The Runes also have a tradition of use in healing and spiritual evolution i.e. initiation. These two aspects can be looked at together as the methods and underlying philosophy are similar. If we think back to the web of Wyrð mentioned earlier and the idea that depending on our position on the web it would influence the nature of the energies that were prominent in our psyche. Shamanic tradition holds that all illness is caused by an influence of negative energy disrupting the natural balance in the body, therefore the healing process must replace the unbalanced energy with a balanced or harmonious energy; this by its very nature would cause a persons position on the web to move. If we look at Shamanic Initiation it also relies on changing the nature of the energy in the person which also alters the person's position on the web thereby causing the sought after spiritual evolution.

The modern methods for changing a person's energy differ only slightly from the methods used several thousand years ago. The recipient of the energies is normally laid down in a darkened room or if done in the open usually at night this is to enhance the healer's visual abilities while trying to see the energies. Runes carved on pieces of wood or bone will be placed at varying positions on the person's body or in some cases actually drawn on the skin, the position depending on the ailment. After an invocation of their deities they would then use these runes to channel the energies they represented into the body in the hope of displacing the negative energy currently in place.

Similarly during a shamanic initiation using the Runes they would be used to channel the energies required to illuminate the candidate and bring about a move towards spiritual evolution. In some cases the runes would be used as for healing, but more often is the case for the energy to be transferred from the rune to a physical medium i.e. wine mead or bread and ingested. This act would take place

in a ritual situation with the transference of energies being the climax of the ritual after a series of invocations of deities and rune energies.

Appendix A.



FEHU. The primal fire, the motivating force of the multiverse, energy, fertility the force of creation and destruction.

EXPRESSION - strengthening Psychic faculties, projecting power, increasing personal monetary wealth energy.



URUZ. The rune of manifestation, the forming force, vital strength, health.

EXPRESSION - Healing and maintaining vitality, self knowledge/awareness, utilization of earth forces stamina.



THURISAZ. The unemotional power of will, the rune force of realisation, normally paralleled with Mjollnir, the hammer of Thorr. Force of destruction, defence, power, action.

EXPRESSION - Defence (active), curses, increasing the will, enchantment.



ANSUZ. Spiritual power and numinous knowledge, the direct inspiration of Odhinn, inspiration, ecstasy, the mysteries of death and regeneration.

EXPRESSION - Magical powers, communication, realisation of power, knowledge and wisdom and communication with Odhinn.



RAIDHO. Order, divine law, and proper development.

EXPRESSION - Ritual abilities, guidance from within, justice according to right, harmonising of self with the multiverse.



KAUNAZ. The controlling of the primal fire, the receptacle that holds the fire of creation, controlled energy, creativity, regeneration of will and sexual drive.

EXPRESSION - regeneration, creative control, love.



GEBO. The mystery of the dualistic nature of the multiverse, the exchanging of energy between poles. The force of fertility.

EXPRESSION - Mystical union, raising magical powers, harmony, influence, acquiring wisdom, magical initiation.



WUNJO. Joy, the force of attraction, harmonious being, well being, binding.

EXPRESSION - Friendship, well being, binding runes.



HAGAL(AZ). The seed, the framework of all being, evolution, completion, protection.

EXPRESSION - Balancing power, mystical experiences and knowledge, evolution and protection.



NAUDHIZ. The need fire, resistance, pain, bringing into manifestation, direction of will to overcome negative Ørlog.

EXPRESSION - Overcoming negative Ørlog, development of spiritual and magical powers, divination, protection, enchantment, sudden inspiration.



ISA. Ice, that flows from Niflheimr, anti-matter, the force of attraction the ego, concentration, restriction.

EXPRESSION - Power of constraint, development of concentration, constriction.



JERA. Harvest, the realisation of the past, the natural cycles of the multiverse, fruition, reward, the year.

EXPRESSION - Fertility, creativity, bringing into physical manifestation.



EIWAZ. The Yew tree, the world tree, the vertical axis, initiation, re-birth, endurance and protection.

EXPRESSION - Initiation, mystery of re-birth, spiritual endurance and strong will, mystical vision, personal power, communication between worlds.



PERDHRO. The force of Ørlog (Fate) the Nornic laws, for which past action is projected into the future, the Norns, cause and effect, change.

EXPRESSION - Divination, evolution of events.



ELHAZ. Communication with Odhinn, and a mode by which Odhinn communicates with man, the rune of spiritual protection, the spiritual rise of man, the force that connects Asgardhr, Midhgardhr and Hel, connection between gods and men, protection.

EXPRESSION - Protection, mystical communication, strengthening magical power and life force.



SOWILO. The Solar force, the magical will, success, honour, and goal.

EXPRESSION - increase in spiritual will, enlightenment, victory and success by will.



TIWAZ. The force of law and justice, justice bought about by Ørlog. The god Tyr, the god of justice and victory, known as the war god. Spiritual discipline, justice and order.

EXPRESSION - obtaining victory and success by just means and law.



BERKANO. The great mother, the mother of all manifestation in the world, the feminine aspects, the birth, life and death cycle, containment, the hearth.

EXPRESSION - Bringing ideas to fruition, to bind other powers together, protection, spiritual rebirth.



EHWO. Harmonious relationship between two forces, harmonious duality, journeys to other worlds, fertility, marriage.

EXPRESSION - Astral travel, a source of wisdom, projection of magical will, swiftness.



MANNAZ. The rune of the archetypal human, the power of intelligence, the perfected man, divine link, initiate, realisation of the micro and macrocosm,

EXPRESSION - Increasing mental powers, harmonising the personality, restoring inner balance.



LAGUZ. Basic life force, the source of all organic life, growth, vital power, the primal water.

EXPRESSION - Guidance through initiation, increasing vitality, accumulation, development of clairvoyance.



INGWAZ. The force of potential energy and gestation.

EXPRESSION - The retention and transformation of power for magical use, fertility rites, centring of energy and sudden release of energy.



DAGAZ. The Odhinnic paradox, the force that removes that removes barriers between worlds, the twilight rune, the mystic light.

EXPRESSION - Reception of inspiration, attainment of mystical experience.



OTHALA. The force of prosperity and growth, through past knowledge, inheritance of magical power, the monogram of Odhinn.

EXPRESSION - Maintaining order, evolution within the family, wealth and prosperity, receiving knowledge from the past.