

A Basic Guide to the Elder Futhark
Second Edition

Khel'Shen Akh' Hon Kyshera Du'Skhal
Kre'Mashen Akh'Hense

Self Published through The Spiritual Weal
Available Online and in Print by Request

Runic Corner

The Basic Guide to the Elder Futhark



The Elder Futhark the oldest system of twenty four runes grouped aetts named after deities. The oldest system of runes extant, it is perhaps the most commonly used today. It is the one that I use and feel comfortable with, and have used for many years. It is also the one that will be taught today. From here, if you wish to, you can explore the worlds of the other rune rows. The Elder Futhark though, is the oldest. Said to be discovered in folklore as a sacred form of recording and understanding the world by the god Odin after hanging for nine days and nine nights on the world tree, he saw them on the bark of the roots of Yggdrasil, the tree of life. Through this ordeal he was revealed both the Elder Futhark and their meanings, the system we will be looking at and using today.

There are three aetts, each named after a deity. The first aett is named after Freyja, the goddess of love and fertility and expresses earthly concerns. The second aett, named after the god Hagal or Hemidal (depending on the source) focuses on change, cycles around us and the worldly forces of the material and ethereal world. Last but not least is Tyr's Aett, focusing on the universal laws and forces underpinning it all, both inside and outside us. The rune rows form a diagram as can be seen below here, taken when I was charging up some of my many sets of runes to work together.

I have been using the Elder Futhark runes for many years for both divination and spell work, the result of which is never having too many sets of runes. Above you see my bone personal manifestation in rune row order, one of nine sets that I have charged, working together for different purposes. Missing is the Wyrð Rune, or Odin's rune, that I don't use as anything more than a spare rune. A relatively modern addition, I do not use it personally, but there are those that do. This rune will be a matching blank rune of the same material, a 25th rune in a set, that signifies the question to the answer is open. Whether you choose to use this rune is up to you, however, I chose not to. If you do not, and get a set with this wyrð rune (I add them to sets I carve so the end user gets the personal choice) the best use of it is to keep as a spare rune for your set in case one decides to go and work for you elsewhere, otherwise known as going missing, like mine have over time.

One of the biggest things I have found learning to carve them and writing a rune poem about them is they are their own living archetypal energies, living beings. This is why they go walkies – to help you in their own way. Treat them with respect this you will get good results from your runes, in divination and manifestation. In the pages below this basic explanation and diagram we will be looking into the basic meanings, grouped into Aetts below.

Freyja's Aett



Fehu – The first rune of the Elder Futhark as well as the first aett, this symbolises movable wealth. In ancient times this was sheep or cattle, but this could mean any form of portable wealth, up to and including digital bank accounts, stocks and shares, or any other form of wealth able to be traded today. This link is becoming increasingly more tenuous with money, as money gets more and more ephemeral, notes and coins becoming rarer. However, this meaning can still be there in a reading, especially if it involves being paid for a good or service, or a fee for service model of working. This goes to the basic meaning of fee, still with us today. Be guided by the questions, the runes around it. On the level of energy it can also mean energy and abundance coming your way through practice or movable goods and exchange. Reversed, or merkstave, this can mean blocked or delayed abundance, and wealth, or having to pay money out in the form of bills and fines. In spell work and manifestation use this rune to aid you in a steady gain of material wealth, but not a sudden or large windfall. This is a rune of tending your work to gain income, not of sudden fortune.



Uruz – The second rune of the Elder Futhark, this seems at times a nuanced one at times. The core meaning, however, comes from the strength of the primal ox. While most sources put the primal cow into Fehu, while doing the rune poems and carving runes I felt the wild, primal energy of the primal cow fit better here than above in Fehu, as it belongs to the formless and untamed universe of creation. This meaning, stemming from both the symbolism of the primal cow and bovine creatress Audhuma as well as the wordily symbolism of the Aurochs, an extinct breed of wild cattle hunted out in the 17th century. Both the Aurochs and the primal cow speak, in different realms, to the symbolism of universal strength and might, unatameable and belonging to nobody but there to help. Merkstave, or reversed, this is a warning against misusing this universal power in a selfish, greedy or evil way or it will reverse on you. Use in manifestation and spell work to help you empower your spell work. But if you do make sure that your intent is pure and not selfish or spiteful as this rune has more potential than most to rebound on you.



Thurisaz – The third rune of the Elder Futhark, this symbolises the power of defence as well as the power to face life's challenges and battles. What this rune shows us is not only the challenges of defending ourselves, or getting through a hard time, but that we have the resources. Connected to the natural symbolism of the defensive thorn on plants such as blackcurrants and brambles, this is a powerful passive defence that is always there and able to overcome all comers. An alternative meaning that I have also found is the power to get through and rise above your challenges, like climbing a mountain. Through this process you can not only face your fears and challenges, but grow into a stronger wiser being through the experience. The energy is there, you just need to harness it. This metaphorical facing the mountain of your challenges and come back. Reversed it shows challenges lie ahead, look around other runes to see what this means and how the resources come to defend it. Use in spell work and manifestation to empower the great passive defence and power to overcome your challenges this rune represents. This makes it especially useful in protection or binding work and as a empowering rune in healing rites.



Ansuz – This rune, with a symbolism of the Ash tree and a link to greater consciousness is considered a 'God rune', or a link to the form that higher creative consciousness is for you. In Norse tradition, it is linked to the World tree Yggdrasil, which in legend is said to be an ash tree, bringing this symbolism to life. This also has parallels to the Celtic Tree of Life as well as other tree of life legends across the globe. As one of the three runes of spirit, this is the most focused of the runes connection you to spirit, showing you have connection and support to a higher power. Unlike with Uruz, where the connection is to the greater will of the pre-creation universe in all its untamed strength, this is more focused on a particular, conscious source in creation. Depending on the question, the other runes around it and the context it is drawn, it could just mean the power of the world tree. Or it could mean a particular guide or deity is making contact and helping you out in a hard time. Often linked to divine aid, this is a good rune to draw when you are facing challenges you don't think you can cope with. Upright it shows that the power of the universe in its many facets of belief are with you, supporting you – As above so below, As within, so without. Reversed it calls for you to see what you need to call on divine support. As a manifestation or spell work rune use this to bring in the runes positive qualities into your spell work.



Raidho – Raidho symbolises cycles, working through defined processes such as a bureaucratic processes or initiation rights as much as physical road travel. It can also mean any creative process with defined boundaries such writing and performing music. In the modern day this could easily mean a course of study, or any other defined process that you will encounter in modern life as well. The traditional a raid, music, physical road travel as well as other, more modern associations are tied into working with the cycles of life, which are defined processes. These many and varied processes is about understanding and working with these processes in our lives, be that etheric or physical. Upright it shows processes or actions that require defined processes in motion, looking at other runes in the spread to show what this all means. Reversed, it shows that you may be trying to swim against the proverbial tide and you may need to look at working with it for better results. Look for clues as to which cycles are coming through and how to work with them in other areas of the reading as well as your question. Use in spell work and manifestation to manifest movement and growth in any of the areas that Raido represents.



Kenaz – There are two forms of this rune, the most common one (in the Elder Futhark) being the chevron form you see above. Denoting illumination, inspiration and new ideas, this embodies the civilising ideas of fire and the inspiration, the light in the darkness it brings in the nobles hall at night. While Mannaz in the Third Aett is the rune of mankind's achievement and knowledge, if you will a third level solar plexus level, intellectual knowledge, this is a rune of higher knowledge. This rune activates the higher knowledge of the fifth level of reality, the throat chakra in you. Look for inspiration, innovation, fresh ideas when you draw this rune, for this is what it is indicating is coming to you. This is especially true if you are currently trying to nut out a problem that you can find no solution to. Sleep on it, engage your creativity and try to find a solution in the new rather than the old. Merkstave, or reversed, this shows that you might be missing an insight, piece of information or new idea that might help you. Look for this for new understanding into your problems. As a rune of spell work and manifestation use this to bring in higher light as well as ideas and illumination into your spell work and your life.

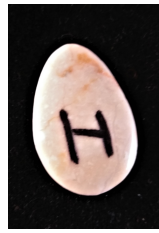


Gebo – Gebo, or gift, denotes a partnership, be that between divine and man, or between men. In rune work the crossed lines would denote the partnership between men and gods, and being written with two connecting chevrons indicating a partnership or agreement between two human beings. It is interesting to note that this symbol is still used as a signature for the illiterate even today as a symbol of exchange, showing the influence of runes in our societies even till today. This is one that is a very good one to get, as it denotes a partnership that is beneficial. It is also the most directed of the three spirit runes, showing a direct connection or gift from spirit in your life, either with an individual deity or guide or a gift in yourself. If in a bad position or coming up wrong side down (This rune does not have a form that reverses) it indicates for the questioner to look at their partnerships and see how equal they are, or what can be done for them to work better, or whether they are healthy at all. Use in spell work and manifestation to cultivate a relationship with guides and deities, and promote partnership and exchange on all levels.



Wunjo – A good indicator of joy and balance, it is a rune of the Norse goddess Gefin, or the bountiful giver. Also related to the wind vane on both Norse temples and later early stave churches it shows the harmony of balance – Neither too much nor too little. Just enough to create harmony between opposites such as need or want. This form of happiness, far divorced from our society that encourages and rewards excess, is one that we need to take into account when working with runes, as with Fehu. Upright, it shows harmony and balance is coming into your life, or has come into your life already, depending on position. Merkstave, it indicates that there is a lack of balance in your life, or the area in question, and you should look to see how you can work to restore this balance to create harmony and balance. In spell work and manifestation it can be used to bring in any of these qualities to any spell work. By itself it is about balance in life, but it can be also used in healing work to signify restoring a healthy balance to the body, or the mind.

Hagal's Aett



Hagalaz – The rune of ice and hail, and of winter in the form of hail to the point that it is named after this natural phenomenon. Representing chaotic, unpredictable change in the same way hail splits transformation into three phases – What was before, The white landscape of the hailstorm, and what comes after, it works as a predictor of change. Be that change within or without this is a time of change, the old state, the chaotic , unexpected change state and the new state. This is a state in cycles a state of being, a state on your life. This may not be pleasant, but it must be borne to get through to the other side as like the rune, it cannot be reversed. In a good position or right side up it shows a change for the better in your life, as chaotic and negative it feels right now. Be patient and go with the flow. Wrong way up or baldy positioned, it shows that you are resisting necessary change and making things worse. Let go and go with the flow, this is a necessary change, be it not exactly feeling good at the moment. As the ice thaws you will see the results of your patience and forbearance. Use in spell work to support this movement of three state change in your life, or others, giving them the power to get through to the other side and the end result – The changed state after the chaos.



Naudhiz – This can be an ominous ruin, meaning necessity, restrictions and want. The shape representing a bundle of firewood that is needed to kindle the need fire, this is not always bad. A rune of Wyrd, or fate, this represents the three norms, the Nordic goddesses of fate. But it is not always bad, and mean kindling the inner need fire, or finding ways out of your restrictions, facing your challenges and overcoming your restrictions to create a new higher set of them of your choosing. Far from negative, this can actually be a positive phase of growth. Upright, depending on the runes around it can show the power to work with the game of life for our advantage, working with fate, or finding a way of breaking through our current need and restriction. Reversed, it can show we are acting against fate, to no avail. Try and fresh approach working with cycles and your wyrd rather than against it. Use in spell work and manifestation to kindle your inner

need fire and help find a way out of your restrictions and needs.



Isa – The rune of ice, restriction and the depths of a frozen northern winter this was a time and place of rest, a break or transition in cycles. The end of the old and the beginning of the new. Conversely, it can also represent crystallised wisdom in the form of the quartz crystal as the icy times of year are at time of rest and reflection as well as constricting ice. Taken to a further extent in other rune rows, this crystallisation of wisdom is here. There is, however, a lot of good to go with this, as this indicates that with the breaking of the ice and the thaw a new spring would come in due time. Upright, this indicates a change in cycles and a new spring. This rune, by its nature does not have a reversed, or merkstave form, but it can be in a bad position in a reading or be drawn upside down. When this happens it is a delay in the thaw. Be patient, gather your wisdom and energy and await the thaw, when things will move again. As a manifestation or spell work rune use this for either the crystallisation of wisdom in the time of rest, as the quartz crystal, or to help you break the ice and start the thaw.



Jera – After winter comes spring. Spring brings the start of the growth towards the Autumn harvest, which this rune represents the climax of. In its completed form it represents the harvest garland, but in this more common form it means change towards completion. With two forms, the twin, interlocking chevrons, and the diamond shape of the harvest garland, this shows the completed harvest. In this case, it shows the harvest changing towards completion, be it a physical or mental harvest. Upright, it shows that things are changing towards your harvest. Keep going, you are going in the right direction. This rune cannot reverse, but it can be in a bad position or come out in a reading wrong side up. If you get this then things are not quite yet, the harvest is delayed. What do you need to do to change the delay, what do you need to change to get there, towards your harvest? Take a look and change what you need to for a better result. As a spell work and

manifestation rune use to manifest your harvest of effort.



Eihwaz – A rune of survival, regeneration and the Yew tree, this shows survival and regeneration. An evergreen, a tree that can bleed toxic sap and live and be regenerated by its own daughter trees, this is a tree of survival and renewal. This is why, in the Younger Futhark this is associated with the death rune, Yr. However, it is not considered as unlucky here, showing change and regeneration, possibly sudden and unexpected, as in a secondary meaning embodied in the name the lightning rune. As such it represents resilience, survival and renewal. In other rune systems the tree is also associated with a weapon of war and defence – The bow. Upright it shows that this strength of resilience, survival and renewal is with you. Reversed it shows that challenges are ahead and you need to find this within you. Use in spell work and divination when you want a quick change in a situation, or need the strength of the Yew tree in your work or your life. But use carefully and be ready for the results, because it might not be what you expected.



Perdhro – A complex rune of layered meaning, this can mean chance, fate, the game of life and the womb of mother earth. Fate and the game of life comes with the idea of the dice cup, a common form of gambling and shown to represent the game of life. We are not always dealt the best hand, sometimes it is how we play it. In this way, it has similar meanings to Naudhiz. The womb of mother earth is a more modern interpretation, coming from the shape of the dice coming out of the cup, showing the symbolism of birth in that aspect. In this way, it is a rune of life. Upright, it gives us a sense that we can control our fate a little if we control our own fate by playing the hand we're dealt with to our best ability. Reversed, or Merkstave, it shows us we should take a look at how we are playing the game and re-evaluate life to work more effectively.



Elhaz – A rune of defence, representing the Elk and the Sedge plant, this has often also meant a divergence of paths and choice to make. Unlike Thurizas, which is passive defence and rising to our challenges, this is a rune of active defence, the mighty Elk buck which nobody dares challenge in their prime. Either reading of this rune you get, you are looking at a challenge, be that defence or of making a choice. Look to the runes around, and the question to see which one fits your question best. Upright, this means a positive change and the ability to defend and make the right decisions, to take up the challenges ahead. Merkstave or reversed, it means tread carefully, and look at all the factors when making decisions, or taking actions. There is danger and hidden factors around which will need to be taken into an account in your decisions. Use as an active defence rune when in danger or under attack, or any time you feel uncomfortable, as this energy comes through quicker than Thurizas. It is also a good combination with Thurizas as a bind rune when needing a stronger defence. When facing choices or a crossroads, it can also be used to bring in the energy to make a wiser decision.



Sowulo -Sowulo, or Sig, is a rune of sunlight, and the greatest interpretation of light. As with the light rising after dawn, it can represent light, victory and new beginnings after dark times. A good rune to draw if you've had a hard time recently, but it is always a sign of good luck in a reading. Upright it shows new illumination coming into your life, a new start, a new idea, and new beginning. It also shows favourable conditions for victory. This rune does not really have a form that reverses, but it can be in a bad position in a reading, or appear in a thrown reading wrong side up. It shows this delayed, but coming. Don't give up yet, victory is not here yet, but it is in sight. Use in manifestation and spell work to bring in these positive qualities to your workings.

Teiwaz's Aett



Teiwaz – The rune of Tyr, the sky god, and shaped as his spear, this means just rewards for effort as well as right justice. A rune of the law, justice and hard work and sacrifice being returned, the spirit of this rune is shown by the titular deity's sacrifice of his hand to help bind the Fenris wolf successfully, the third time. Apart from the alternative title for the said deity being the wolf's leavings showing very common elements between Norse and Australian humour, This shows the feel of this runes energy as a reward for sacrifice and favourable outcomes in just court cases. Upright, it shows a feeling of reward for sacrifice and Justice coming if the cause is just. Unjust causes, or miscarriages of justice do not occur under this influence. If reversed it shows that this quality may not be forthcoming, results not as good as expected or delays and disappointments in legal cases. Use in spell work for bringing favourable outcomes in just court cases and bringing the right settings to get reward for your efforts.



Berkana – Also called Berkano, this is a regenerative rune of birth, rebirth and spring. Associated with spring, regeneration and renewal, this is a rune of positive change. A rune of healing, representing the renewal in healing, this is a good one to draw when recovering or if you are sick. But it can also show healing in your life, or regeneration in another aspects of your life, like a renewed career. Associated with the goddess Frau Bertcht, a nature goddess, this shows abundance and renewal in your life. In limited circumstances it can also show a birth in the family. Upright this shows renewal and healing, like a northern spring after winter coming through, into your life. Reversed, or merkstave you should ask yourself, what is holding renewal back? What can you do to change this? What can I do to start healing and work towards a positive outcome? Use in manifestation and spell work for any of the positive qualities you see above, to bring them into your life and your spell work.



Ehwaz – Carrying the symbolism of the partnership of horse and rider, the joy, the movement and the nobility, it also shows that in this partnership all is not equal. Associated with equine deities, this represents movement, partnership and travel, be that towards goals or physical travel. It can also mean swift communication, harking back to the day horse messenger was the fastest way of communicating. With this association with the associations with messengers, who up until recently were on horseback, it can also mean swift communications. I have also seen fibre optic cables among other images when carving this rune, showing the evolution of communicating with each other swiftly over distance, and how it still holds the same meaning. Upright, depending on the question and runes around it, it shows swift communications, swift transport, movement in partnership towards a goal. Reversed, depending on the question or the runes around it, it shows a lack of partnership, poor communication, and bad teamwork that may spell disaster in reaching a goal. Look at what is blocking your success and work through it to get results. Use in spell work and manifestation to bring in partnership in business and towards goals as well as swift, positive communications into your life.



Mannaz – Representing the first man, Askr and Embala, the first woman, transformed from Ash and elm trees respectively, this represents humanity and the products and achievements of the human mind. This is a rune of Mankind, or Humanity as it is more commonly known today. This makes of the intellect, knowledge and humanity's skills and achievements. Good for gaining success in exams and other mental tasks, it is also a rune of the stable, functioning order of humanity as a whole. Upright it portends success in examinations, other mental tasks and tasks relating to the right, functioning order of human society and achievement as whole, Merkstave, or reversed, it shows a lack of success and problems in these areas. For more information look at the question, the place in a reading and the runes around this rune to interpret what this may mean. Use in manifestation and spell work to foster achievement in examinations, intellectual activity, in areas society values as well as any other product of humankind or their achievements.



Laguz – Where Isa represented changing points in cycles, Laguz represents tides, be they physical or energetic. This is a rune of water, and of the leek, which was considered a sacred plant by the Welsh. Like Raidho, or Isa, this can represent movement, hindered movement and how well you are going with the flow. Depending on your question and reading this can represent the flows of physical life, or the energetic flows of energy around us. As with all of these ambiguities, look for the answers in the reading and question. As this represents tides, the best way of looking at this rune upright in a reading is a suggestion to go with the flow of energy, or life around you for best results, as scary as it sounds. Reversed this shows that you are going against the flow, or warning against it. Swimming against the tide is difficult and will not get you as good a result, if it gets you any positive result at all. Look to your awareness on how to realign. Use in manifestation and spell work to better interpret and work with the flow of life.



Ingwaz – Also called Inguz, representing the hearth fire god Ing, the consort of Mother Earth, this can be a protective rune, often carved into houses to protect them in the alternative, introverted, diamond form, denoting internal change towards completion. The expansive form, the one above, indicates the inward power of the diamond projecting outwards. It also represents the masculine principle of light and fire, and the effects of this upright can be drawn from this in the form of inexorable change towards completion inherent in masculine sexuality, the buildup to the resulting orgasm. It cannot be reversed by it's very nature, being symmetrical, in a way showing the immutability of light even in it's changing expressions. However, it can appear upside down or in a bad position in readings, showing delayed completion or a wrong path. Look at the runes around it and the question to see what you need to do next. Use in spell work and manifestation to bring in the qualities of this rune to complete tasks and goals, or cycles of change.



Dagaz – The rune of daylight, Dagaz is a rune of breakthrough. Also called the dawn rune, this is a rune of success, victory and breakthrough. In a form that does not really reverse, but if in a bad position drawn or

wrong way up this merely means that success is delayed. There are two positioning for this rune, one the the end after Othala (the next rune) or before as here as the penultimate rune. I have always personally had more of an affinity with the second one, and am thus using it here and what the sources I learnt from have also stated. A great rune to draw, it is a sign of a new dawn in your life and new chances. Use in spell work and divination to bring in a new dawn in your life, especially after a hard time.



Othala – The last rune in this rune row, Othala, also called Othil or Othil in variation is a rune of wealth that cannot be bought and sold. At a time this was cattle and livestock, here this means ancestral land. In that way, in closing the circuit this means inherent wealth, be that talents, property or ancestry and genetics. Upright this is a favourable inheritance, including talents, skills, gifts or family inheritances that can set you up in life. It can also mean going home after a journey, be that spiritual or physical. Reversed this can mean cursed inheritances such as genetic diseases, family violence patterns or family and negative group karma. Look to the question and other runes in the reading for more information for exactly what this means. Use in spell work and divination if you wish to bring in any of these qualities, especially inherited spiritual gifts into your spell work.