



## Transcript Episode 17: Poverty and heathenry

[start tune]

### 00:08 Jochem

Hello! Welcome to The Wyrd Thing Podcast, episode 17: Poverty and heathenry. I am Jochem and today I will talk with Frigga [Frigga: Hi], and our special guest Devon [Devon: Hello] about poverty and modern heathenry. Before we start, Devon, could you introduce yourself a bit, please?

### 00:31 Devon

I'm Devon. And, well, I've known Jochem for many years now, so that's why he probably thought of me for this subject. On and off I've been busy with heathenry, and shamanism, and things related, but never really studied it, until the last years. And in terms of poverty, I've been [giggles] experienced in that for many years. So, I hope to contribute something in that.

### 01:00 Jochem

Thank you. Frigga, you had prepared a short introduction on poverty?

### 01:07 Frigga

Yeah. Part of my homework for an episode of The Wyrd Thing Podcast, as listeners might have noticed in previous ones, is to look up the meaning of a word or concept. I need this due to my language sensitivity, and I think it's good to be on the same page. Am I poor? Not by the following definition I found on the World Wide Web: 'Poverty is a state or condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living.' I have a roof over my head, clothes to wear, and enough food every day. If I look around in the world, there are people living in severe poverty, because they have no or hardly an income. They lack social services, or access to proper health care. Children are forced to work, and so on. I have to keep in mind that the poverty line in rich countries as the Netherlands, is different from the one for poor countries. One should be aware but not compare, I guess. Before we start talking on what it means to be poor and what we as heathen communities could do to be an ally for people with minimum income or even lower, I would like my companions of today to ask about their definition of poverty. Devon, would you please share yours?

### 02:46 Devon

In terms of my mental health, spirit, soul, I feel myself rich, because I've developed many, many things and I learn more every day. But in practical sense, I consider myself poor, because I can't do what I would love to do and I can't eat every day. I can't turn on the heating and can't pay bills. So that makes life very difficult. And that's the life I deal most with, because that's an everyday thing, actually.

### 03:24 Jochem

To me it is not having enough money to make ends meet. I recently read a definition that defines poverty in the context of the society where a person is living in. And I think that is a good idea, because poverty in a country that is very poor of itself and where having means to eat is



completely different than here in the Netherlands, as by coincidence, we all three of us live in the Netherlands. Here you have set a minimum which we consider to be the social minimum. And if you live beneath that minimum, than a person is considered to be poor.

#### 04:21 Frigga

I like, Devon, what you said that you you make a difference between daily life and economics, maybe I can express it that way. And your spiritual life. I can relate to that. Yeah, then I can indeed say I'm rich. I learned a lot and still, although very, very less, are can online or in real life be part of rituals and stuff and read books and have access to the internet. And in that way you have access to a lot of knowledge.

#### 04:59 Jochem

Hmm. Maybe it's good to tell why it is the three of us who happen to be in this episode on poverty. I will start with myself. About eight years ago, I became chronically ill and I couldn't work anymore. And therefore I ended up with a social assistance benefit. And as those benefits in the Netherlands are designed for people who are temporarily, so to say, between jobs, just to bridge that period. And it's with emphasis meant as a temporary solution.

However, as a lot of people with disabilities, I am one of the people who ends up probably to live on this benefit for the rest of my life. And for a certain period of time, this benefit is enough if you don't have additional costs. But on the long term and having additional costs, in my case health related costs, which aren't covered by any insurance, I end up having about 150 euro a month short. So that's why I have been living in poverty for the last eight years. Devon, you said a bit already.

#### 06:36 Devon

Well, I have to say that during my working years I had already a very low income. The work I did wasn't considered to be well paid for. And even I was already sick then, but I kept on working. And about seven, eight years ago, I got so sick that I couldn't work anymore. And the benefit I have received now is actually a 70% from the income I had. And that income was already low, so that 70% is, let's say, not enough. And it will never be more than that anyway, because yeah, this is how the calculation apparently works. So that means that, yeah, my situation will last, yeah, until pension. And pension date will not even be much better, because the, yeah, the numbers don't significantly get higher when you are at your pension date.

#### 07:36 Jochem

No. And Frigga?

#### 07:38 Frigga

Well, I think you almost have said the most what applies for me as well. With a little exception: that is that I became ill nearly 30 years ago and I live on social benefit for 20 years. To me, being poor and being disabled is completely intertwined. Due to that, the lack of that you indeed maybe can get a little more money or... No, I will be on this income until the day I die, I guess. And that's, yeah, that gives hardly any perspective.



### 08:26 Devon

I can recognise that I always feel stuck in the same situation. Knowing you can't do anything about it, because we happen to have an illness that won't get better. You can only hope this doesn't get worse even, but that's a side note. And we can only hope that the government, yeah, occasionally raises a percentage or something on the minimum wage that we benefit a little bit from it, to get a little bit more social benefit. But, yeah, other than that, we're very stuck and no light at the end of the tunnel. And yeah, that's very difficult sometimes.

### 09:02 Frigga

Oh yeah, as you say. Even if you get, let's say, 10 euros more a month, than you already: Ooh! Because the rent is raised, and everything is raised, and at least I get these few extra euros to... [Jochem: hmm] Yeah.

### 09:21 Jochem

When I realised that I was chronically ill, and indeed it won't get better, and on benefit for the rest of my life, it gave me so much stress! Dealing with chronic illness, it takes time. It's it takes mourning. It takes adapting to the new circumstances. And at the same time dealing with this extreme amount of poverty was so stressful, that the task of dealing with both new situations at the same time was almost too much for me to be able to deal with. And luckily I had savings a bit, because you don't get benefit if you have too much savings. So I had eaten part of my savings already, and in the years after I ate the rest of my savings. So at the end I had none savings left whatsoever. So all buffer had gone.

And that's makes poverty even more maddening, and stressful. Because if anything happens, I'm not able to solve it. [Frigga: Yeah] And I noticed that the stress of living this money stress on a daily basis, asking myself: do I have enough money to be able to buy food, or to buy necessary medications, or to buy a new refrigerator if my brakes? [Jochem sighs.] It's very difficult indeed.

### 11:12 Frigga

Yeah, it is depressing.

### 11:15 Jochem

As well. Yeah.

### 11:17 Frigga

And that's what I feel when things go wrong again, or with social services, or the help I need. That it is so... Then I really, again. I'm on the edge of depression and how do I get myself out of that? How does that feel for you, Devon?

### 11:33 Devon

Well, yes, a depression that's always lurking at the at the door to enter. In these last months, I've been struggling with that again, a bit. And indeed, money stress, I've always the fear of something breaking down like my car. I've always had trouble with things breaking down in the past. So, there's never a security: 'Okay, I'm good now.' And each time when I think: 'Oh, okay, everything seems to be okay.' Well, the next thing goes wrong. So that feels very unfair also.

And I have to deal with an organisation that says yes or no to my benefit, whether I'm allowed to get it or not. So there's always the stress in the back of my head, when are they going to knock on



the door for: 'Hey, you have to be checked up again and see if you can work now or not.' Instead of realising: 'Oh, leave this guy alone, he can't work anymore.' That's, yeah, almost a triple stress apart from how to get through the day with your illnesses and mental struggles alongside of it. So, yeah, it's... Yeah, there are days that I just want to, yeah, lay under a big rock or something, and disappear, and... Before I think: 'Okay, yeah. Okay, let's dip a toe in the water, and try again today, and see how it goes.'

#### 12:53 Jochem

Hmm.

#### 12:54 Frigga

Yeah. You have to live day by day, and even the minute by the minute, the hour by the hour. [Jochem: Yeah] And what you said: Always having in the back of your mind that your income can be taken away from you. Or my in my case, also my mobility scooter. Or the household aid I get. They can take it away. And then what?

#### 13:19 Jochem

In six years, I had seven different contact persons. One of them I have never seen even. And the others, I spoke to them once a year. And then when it was time for the next yearly chat, there was a new contact person. And every contact person again starts all over. You have to become acquainted. I hope they look into my file. They will ask the same stupid questions. Most of the time it turns out they didn't look into my file. So the same questions: 'Oh, you had a paid job before? Oh, so it's just basically bad luck what happened to you. Oh.' I am completely dependent on the decision of this person if I am able to live the next year, or not. Because indeed, if I am unlucky, they say: 'You can work.' So I have to apply for jobs and I know I can't work. And that's really stressing.

#### 14:26 Frigga

And it is what mood they are in. [Jochem: Yeah] And they indeed they can make decisions, about you, that are so... Yeah, it's about your income. It's about the services you need.

#### 14:40 Jochem

The absolute basis of life.

#### 14:42 Frigga

Yeah. And they have that power. [Jochem: yeah] And that's indeed, you sit there with this... Nngg! And you don't know how to respond, you know. Is it better to be calm and polite? Or should you open your mouth and step up for yourself? You never know. You hardly can prepare yourself for that kind of force. [Jochem: yeah] And most likely they will leave me alone, because I nearly 63 by now. And officially they had to say that. A couple of years ago, I had to... I got by a physician declared that I can't do normal work and also no voluntarily work. But if somebody is just, whatever, suddenly they can... be on your doorstep and start asking questions again.

#### 15:39 Jochem

Yeah. Devon, do you have such a statement of a physician or specialist that you are unable to work?



### 15:47 Devon

Well, the thing is... I have, I'd say, lots of proof that I'm sick and unable to work. But the organisation that I'm dealing with takes up that pile of information and throws it in the dustbin. They don't believe the specialist. They don't believe what I'm saying. And it's indeed very dependent on what person you have in front of you. But I've never been lucky with the person. I was... The last time was... They recently diagnosed me with complex PTSD, and on that ground I got a new period of the social benefit. But the whole physical thing that was... [whistles] wiped off the table, and nothing to be done with.

And also indeed: 'Yeah, you've worked many years.' And when I say: 'Yeah, but I've worked many years being sick as well. Because people kept on pushing me to continue and I always did.' And, yeah, when you then fall to pieces, you fall hard. [Jochem: Yeah] And I can't see myself working anymore. And then I try to explain myself that even things in the household are very, very difficult. And even then they say: 'But you are able to do the dishes, so you can work.' [Frigga: No] No. And I mustn't show anything like voluntary work. If I were able to do that: 'Oh, you can do some voluntary work. You can work for a pay job as well.' So it's horrible.

And it feels like my life is in someone else's hands. They decide whether you get an income, or not. Or whether you can be left alone for a bit. But just knowing that every so many years it's your turn to defend yourself again, that you're sick, and need the benefit, and can't work. And just that fact alone is already, yeah, horrible. Sleepless nights sometimes.

### 17:35 Frigga

I can imagine. And it's the distrust, and the stigmatisation that you have to deal with.

### 17:41 Jochem

Yeah.

### 17:42 Devon

Yeah. If you don't have a broken leg or anything, and they can't see you're sick, and you look good, you're smiling or whatever, doesn't even matter when you start to cry or not. 'We can't see anything. You can work.'

### 17:54 Frigga

Yeah.

### 17:55 Jochem

I'm in a slightly different position, because I have not to deal with the Employee Insurance Agency. So I have never been tested by a health care provider. So I don't have proof that I am ill, or that I am able or unable to work, although I'm clearly unable to work. But I feel very anxious as well about these yearly chats I have to do, because I can't prove I am unable to work. And as Devon says, I have the same experience that with my illness: Some physicians don't believe in it, or don't believe that the disability is true. So again, it's depending on the person that I will meet, if I am forced to go to such an check.

### 18:58 Frigga

Yeah, it's what I often say: The eternal denying, the eternal disbelief, what you have to face over, and over, and over again. I have my social benefit from the local government, part of that which is



in charge of the household help, and whether or not you need a mobility scooter, or a wheelchair, or such. [Jochem: Yeah] You have to visit a specialist on a regular basis. If you don't, then it simply doesn't exist. And yeah, there is no reason to see a specialist because they can't help me either.

#### 19:37 Jochem

I have the same experience. Always they say: 'Yeah, we need a statement of your specialist.' And then I explain: 'I don't have one.' 'Huh? You don't have a specialist?' And then I explain again: 'No, because I used to have a specialist, but they can't do anything more for me. So it has no use.' And then they are always amazed. And they don't know what to say. And then of course, Netherlands being the Netherlands: 'No, but we still need this statement from your specialist.' So then I go to the GP, to ask for a referral for the specialist. Go to the specialist, just to have a statement for the bureaucracy.

#### 20:26 Frigga

And that's a waste of your time, and it's a waste of your energy.

#### 20:28 Jochem

And money!

#### 20:30 Frigga

It's a waste of money, indeed.

#### 20:34 Devon

And in my case knowing that that same specialist is dismissed. They don't believe in what that specialist does. But I still go to that specialist - Well, go. We have regular phone calls - to keep on having a specialist. 'Well, no specialist? Oh, you're probably getting better. You don't need a specialist anymore.' Blah, blah, blah. Well, that same specialist can't do a thing. And the information given is dismissed and, yeah, they don't do anything with it. Why the peep do I need a specialist, then? [Giggles]

#### 21:05 Jochem

Yeah.

#### 21:06 Frigga

Because it is in their rules. [Devon: Yeah] And they make up that rules to make it more difficult. [Devon: Yeah, Jochem laughs] Yeah. [Laughs]

#### 21:19 Jochem

Okay, let's close this rant of the frustration and the sheer hopelessness of living in poverty. One of the things in heathenry is that every person has the obligation to contribute to the community. And it will be stated in several places, but one I found was the last sentence of Hávamál 71. In one of the modern translations, it says: 'There is nothing the dead can do.' Which may point to the fact that everyone is able to contribute to the community, in one way or the other.



### 22:04 Frigga

[Laughs] I find this a very interesting sentence. Because, as a heathen, the ancestors are still alive and part of the community. But let's not go into that.

### 22:19 Jochem

Let's save that for a later episode. [Frigga: Yeah] What are your experiences of being part of the community, contributing and that kind of stuff? Devon.

### 22:33 Devon

Well, I have to say that I can't join anything physically, and not do much. Sometimes I try to follow an online ceremony or something. You have this small idea of being a part of something. Yeah, mainly I feel like I'm doing things on my own. I do sense some collective spirits somewhere, some. And also with such a ceremony that I have the idea that I can feel others. But really physically joining or contributing, that hasn't been possible for me.

### 23:10 Jochem

Okay. Frigga?

### 23:12 Frigga

Well, I think, Devon, that you give a contribution to the community by joining this episode. And telling about your experience.

### 23:22 Devon

Ik hadn't seen it that way.

### 23:24 Frigga

Yeah, well! [Laughs] I think that's rather important. And a rather important contribution. I have been very active from the day I suddenly found myself to be a heathen. And always have been. A lot of people helped me with that. Otherwise couldn't have done it. But the last couple of years, it becomes more difficult. Covid-19, the pandemic, these two years really... Things faded away even more. The few things that were still there, are gone.

The pandemic also brought more online. Which partly is still there, which I think is very important. It was before Covid I went the last time to a heathen gathering. And, you know, more than a couple of days. Having really that company, and the feeling of indeed being part of something. Belonging to a community. And that's what I think most people need. I mean, I've learned to be alone, and I can... deal with that, I think rather properly. But yeah, it's a constant being alone. And then, you know, there are a lot of people but you. The feeling of belonging, or feeling part of it, starts fading away. And then knowing it is not enough because you can't feel it anymore.

### 24:55 Jochem

Yeah. To me it is a combination of disability and not having money. I would like to join communities, and events, and rituals, and festivals. But the combination of my disability and a lot of festivals being on, in the grass, in the woods, being in spaces that aren't the slightest bit accessible doesn't help, so to say. I don't have a driver's license, so I am dependent on public transport. But that doesn't drive to every... not, not even in a tiny country as the Netherlands. And then the issue of money. There are really interesting events, or trainings, or things that I would like to... to go to, but



I can't raise the money. [Frigga: yeah] Because it's the access fee, but also the travel costs to the event and back home again.

#### 26:04 Frigga

I need to sleep indoors. I can't sleep in the tent anymore. I need a good bed and I need a toilet... close by. Which means that I need to sleep in a bed and breakfast, or a hotel. If it's for 2 or 3 nights, I can do that maybe once or twice a year. But it becomes too expensive. And often they are then also, you know, a bit for me, three kilometres is an end.

#### 26:32 Jochem

It's far!

#### 26:35 Frigga

Yeah, it's far away. Yeah. If I stay somewhere for 2 or 3 days and I have every evening to drive with my mobility scooter three kilometres in the evening and in the morning back. I always call it the 'And-and-and' story. If you are healthy - or at least more healthy than close to that - you know, you just do it.

And for example, if I have to go to do some shopping, just groceries, I have to make a list, and I have to put my clothes on, and I have to put my coat on, and I have to drive to the shop, and I have to walk to the shop, and in the shop I need my foggy brains to look on my list, and see that I get what I need, and I have to pay, and then I have to put the groceries shop in the back, and I have to carry that back to my mobility scoot, and I have to drive home, and so on.

And that's with a lot of things. It is and-and-and-and, and you have to think upfront. It is not that you just, you know, can jump in the train, and go there, and have fun. No, you have the days before I have to keep free. And I have to think of a lot of things: How can I manage to do that? That also takes a lot of energy and time. So instead of just enjoying: 'Oh, hurray, I'm going to a festival!' It is: 'How do I make it possible for myself? Can I make it possible for myself? Money wise, energy wise...

#### 28:10 Jochem

Planning wise.

#### 28:12 Frigga

Sorry, guys! This is not a funny episode of The Wyrd Thing Podcast. [Frigga and Jochem laugh]

#### 28:22 Devon

Yeah, it's very recognisable for me as well. Not the energy, not the money to go somewhere. Sat back after such an event, of how many days I'm more sick than the usual days. That's also costing way too much. Even if I were having a little more money, than even then I wouldn't go, because it's so craving to go to such an event. Even small events, like a one day or a few hours or...

But yeah, money wise also, because most things are usually far away, or on a location that isn't easily reached, or indeed toilet usually a problem, or sleeping somewhere is a problem. Gasoline costs, I mean, you can have a car and driver license, but keeping that car driving costs a lot of money as well. [Jochem: Yeah] So, yeah, it's just really difficult. And yeah, that makes me feel excluded sometimes. Yeah, it doesn't seem to be much thought of being at more accessible for more people than what they apparently have in mind.





### 29:28 Frigga

Yeah, I sometimes say that a lot of events are for the healthy and the wealthy.

### 29:32 Devon

Yeah.

### 29:33 Jochem

Yeah.

### 29:34 Frigga

And I think that we have mentioned that before in previous episodes, it is always within reason that we ask for things. [Jochem: Yeah] And it's not always possible, and I can live with that. But sometimes it is: 'Oh, I wish that I could go there, but I can't.'

### 29:51 Jochem

Yeah. And sometimes festivals or events do offer indoor sleeping spaces, at additional cost. Now there is a camp I go to once a year. This is my holiday. It's a queer pagan camp in the UK. It's five days and all what you have said apply to me also. It takes a lot of planning. It takes basically more money than I have. And I have to make all kinds of arrangements: I travel to a friend in the UK. I stay the night, because to travel all the way in one day is too far for me. Then I'll be five days at that camp. I go back to that friend, and then go back home. And then at home I'll be bedridden for a week, approximately.

But this camp, it's so much fun. It's so good to see those people, that I have seen once a year for years now. I need it spiritually. So on one hand, I need it and it's healthy and it makes me grow. And on the more physical level, it's absolutely draining.

### 31:14 Frigga

Yeah, there's a price to pay. [Jochem: Yeah] And I'm not always, yeah, willing or capable or whatever to pay that price. Sometimes it's okay, but sometimes that's also draining you - at least that's what I have that I hardly can look forward to something. And so it's always this and-and-and-and. And sometimes I'm, you know, just dreaming about: What if I would have money? And then I also realise still I'm very limited.

### 31:54 Jochem

When it comes to rituals, tools, courses, maybe books. What are your experiences on those matters?

### 32:06 Devon

Well, I've been busy with some courses and books lately. And next to that, they're mostly quite expensive, which isn't handy, so to speak. I mean, the prices, it would be nice if they were lower. So I can't buy all the books I want to buy, of things I'm interested in. And sometimes, with the course I'm doing now, I'm really thinking: Was it worth this much money?

And for what I've experienced up till now in the courses and the books is that it seems to be written by and for people with more money than me, a better health than me, and rather binary. So all things that doesn't feel very inclusive to me, and that makes me want to, yeah, nearly want to stop



reading or doing the course. Because I just don't feel the connection. And that's actually kind of a shame, because there's so much information in there and things you can learn from. Yeah, I find it also difficult, because I'm relatively new to doing rituals and ceremonies. I did them before, but not necessarily in this subject, but I don't have enough creativity yet to design my own rituals and ceremonies, and when you can't find that information in the books, because that's more for people who are more able to do things, or can't go places to places where you can learn, then I don't know, how can I get, yeah, am I doing things right? How can I get more creativity in, yeah, doing a ritual that feels good to my intentions? Yeah, I also spoke to it with a friend of mine lately, and he also had the feeling that it's not very inclusive, all those books and courses.

### 33:56 Frigga

Well, if you have any questions about performing rituals, please contact me. I'm more than happy to talk with you about it.

### 34:04 Devon

Yes, I know you just recently and by accident actually through this podcast. But if I didn't have stumbled on this podcast, than I wouldn't know you. [Frigga: Yeah, yeah] So, so, that's I mean, coincidences are nice, but when you really, yeah, check the, the books, the courses, or some online magazines or something, it's really difficult to find your own way in that.

### 34:28 Jochem

Yeah.

### 34:29 Frigga

Yeah. Getting back to... For many years, there has been a yearly gathering in the Netherlands for Pagans and Heathens. And several times I could make the exchange that I gave a workshop, or performed a ritual, and then I didn't have to pay the entrance fee. And that's what I really liked, and I did that on a more occasions. And then that makes things more possible.

### 34:56 Jochem

Yeah. Same experience here. Not particularly in heathen context, but before that, I didn't have a lot of money either. I was one of the working poor, a group that we haven't spoken about much yet. And then because I know sign language, I often trade that I would sign - interpret, in fact - in exchange of a lower fee or no fee at all. That's really great. [Frigga: Yeah] The so called quid pro quo, in a positive way. [Giggles]

### 35:34 Frigga

Yeah. For me for a very long time, the way I approached it is what I always say: It's from the community for the community. And I love to offer things to the community, and a lot of people do so. But maybe that is one of the things for heathen communities and groups, that for people with a lower income, that they can help them to lower the price for them. That you have this exchange.

### 36:07 Jochem

And speaking of that, many organisations might not be aware of the money boundaries they raise, because they have no idea of the implications of living in poverty. And I get the impression that heathens and pagans tend to have less money than average. So this may be particularly important



in our heathen communities. So what could organisations do to make it more accessible, money wise?

### 36:45 Frigga

Well, what was in use in the... What was it, the 70's, in the Netherlands: Make three levels of prices. [Jochem: Hmm] And simply trust the people that they will pay price due to their income. [Jochem: Yeah] That's something which can be done. One of the things is when you have a lack of money, and that's it's a disability, and then the combination of it: You always have to ask. Yeah, and you know, then you have to tell, but: 'Oh, I'm poor, and please.' And how can we deal with that? And well, the example I gave for a gathering with three prices, then people don't have to ask. [Jochem: Yeah] And tell that I am poor. No, it's just, you know, then an organisation shows: We know there are differences in income. Then there is still, if you really can't afford it, what is possible? And then you have to ask, of course, again and contact.

### 37:48 Jochem

Yeah. At another organisation I am involved in, they always state: 'If money would be the reason not to come, please speak up and contact us, so we can talk about possibilities.'

### 38:04 Frigga

I think that is the least. [Jochem: Yeah] Because then you acknowledge. And again, whether it's about money, or disability, or whatever other... - foggy brains, I can't find the words! - things that are to deal with. Then it's acknowledged. [Jochem: Yeah] And it makes you visible. [Jochem: Exactly] Because I'm lately thinking about that a lot. But we have talked about before: When you have to deal with social services, and local governments, and stuff, or physicians, you don't exist. That's what it comes down to, because your illness, they don't know anything about it, so it doesn't exist. And you get the feeling that you don't exist. And then people can assure you: 'Oh, but you do!' No, that's the way it feels. And the longer you are living with the low income, the longer you are - at least that's my experience - living with disabilities, the longer you have the feeling that you're not visible. You don't exist.

### 39:08 Jochem

I think as a society we even erase people with disability and little money. [Frigga: Yeah] Because in a way it's very inconvenient for healthy and, or wealthy people to acknowledge that they are just being... lucky? [Frigga: Yeah] And that chances are that they for no reason at all, from one moment to the other, get disabled or get poor, due to circumstances that can't be helped.

### 39:45 Frigga

Rutger Bregman, he is a Dutch historian and writer, said - if I can recall it properly - that being poor is not character, but lack of money. [Jochem: Yeah] And that is due to society.

### 39:59 Jochem

But back to: What could organisations do? [Frigga: Yeah] So, they could implement three tiers of money, so people could choose the price they are able to pay. Or at least organisations could state: 'If money might be a problem, please contact us.' Devon, do you have suggestions of what organisations could do?



#### 40:27 Devon

Well, yeah, the biggest thing I was thinking about, was also the three levels of entry fees. Plus a sentence indeed about getting in touch, a low level type of sentence above it: 'Even if one of these three is not possible for you, please contact us'. Just in a very friendly way. For me, it's very awkward indeed to contact about my situation and next to that, with my partly autistic brain, what can you afford? I don't know! I need to see examples for what is possible, and that the organisation doesn't lose money on going too low with entry fees.

And show the possibilities, or even if that's not applicable, different things. Sometimes it's possible to, instead of paying an entry fee, doing some voluntary work on the on the event ground, or helping out with sending out emails, or whatever, that you pay it in a different way. [Jochem: Nice] But yeah, for me it's it depends on how it's written to contact the organisation, you know, whether I have the guts to do that or not. Because I find it also a very scary thing to do, to phone somebody, and email mostly takes a lot of time before someone answers. And all the time then I'm stressing: Oh, what will the answer going to be? So yeah, a mixture of, of things we already thought about.

#### 41:49 Frigga

And a lot of hidden gatherings I'm talking about is all voluntarily work, or at least 99%. So then offering to do voluntary work is maybe... Sounds a bit strange to me. But yet it is, again, becoming aware of it, and realising that even when it's all of us voluntarily do the work. But also due to what somebody physically is capable of. [Jochem: Yeah] Because you can't ask me to do a lot of heavy work, I simply can't. And I can't do it for a long period.

#### 42:28 Jochem

Same here.

#### 42:30 Frigga

So it's also realising that maybe what looks to you a tiny little bit can be for another person a lot.

#### 42:38 Devon

Yes, health wise for me most things are near to impossible indeed. But when I think in general terms, then it could be more possible for other people who have more capabilities to go somewhere. Yeah, when I look at the magazine *Dryade* lately again. And there sometimes are adverts, advertise... [Jochem: Advertisements?] Yeah, about small events going on somewhere. And then there was one that stood out.

It was a one day event somewhere on an island in the Netherlands. I can't go by boat or anything, that's one. Two, it was 35 euros. And you had to bring your own food and drinks. And then I'm thinking: Okay, travel costs, a high entry fee, my own food and drinks, and I'm sitting there, losing my energy, and... [Jochem: Yeah] How am I ever going to go to an event like that? And I think, okay, most people going there are able to afford that all, both physically and in money. Okay, that's unfair. So that's... There must be a smaller group than they anticipate to come. And nowhere a statement for contact us for if there are any issues, or whatsoever like... Oh, I don't want to go here. [Giggles]

#### 43:53 Frigga

Yeah. And going back to what heathen communities or groups can do, is at the same time of the gathering also an online event. [Devon: Yeah] For the people who can't go there for whatever



reason. And that doesn't need to be, you know, if it's a weekend or three days event, a three day online event. But just at least 1 or 2 moments, a ritual, or whatever.

#### 44:20 Jochem

Hybrid events are extremely difficult to organise that properly. Technically.

#### 44:28 Frigga

I don't think about hybrid, because I understand that. I don't even think about streaming. That would be fun, if it's possible, if the internet connection... But the people who can't come, maybe someone is, you know, say: 'Okay, I would like to perform an online ritual', at the same time. And it doesn't need to be done hybrid or streaming, but just parallel. [Jochem: Ah!] But at least then there is during the same days something for people who can't go there. And that's, that's pretty simple to do.

#### 45:00 Jochem

Yeah, brilliant. Absolutely agree.

#### 45:02 Frigga

And then it doesn't matter if you're only with 3, or 4, or 5 people online. [Jochem: Yeah] You are with a couple of people together, and you have that feeling of connection, and you have the feeling that you are part of the gathering. Especially if it's also, of course, being part of the programme of the gathering. And it's promoted by the organisation of the gathering. [Jochem: Yeah] And although it's parallel, it's really part of it.

#### 45:28 Jochem

That's great. Or at least - and I think more organisations are doing this already since Covid-19 - is sometimes physical events, sometimes online events. So divide between both ways, because some people don't do online events, other people don't do physical events. So you can, by offering both, either parallel either in a different way, gives you the opportunity for more people to choose the kind of events they like to go to, or are able to go to.

#### 46:09 Frigga

You give people choice.

#### 46:12 Jochem

Yeah. There is one thing which pops up in my mind. We talked about in the pre-chat about books or courses, and then all the things they offer in the sense of tools or rituals and things that cost money. And even that, maybe we have some suggestions about how people with little money can have alternatives. For example, I remember the suggestion, being heathens, mead is of course important. But we don't need mead, although it is nice to drink. But you could use water as well, which is much cheaper. And you don't need to go to a shop to buy it, but you can have it from your tap at home. Are there other suggestions we can give to people to make it more accessible money wise?



#### 47:14 Frigga

Yeah, you can go, if that's possible for you, go outdoors. Go into a park after a storm, and you will find lovely branches. Which means you have lovely pieces of wood and you can make stuff yourself. You don't need that expensive feather from across the world. Or you don't need gemstones. I mean great to have gemstones, but I also find lovely pebbles. You know, the tiny ones, with lovely colours and lovely decorations. You can use them as well.

I'm an animist, also. So if you find a lovely pebble, you can connect with the pebble and you can call upon the spirit of pebbles, or stones, or whatever, and power that piece of stone as well with, for the purpose you need. You can decorate it with rune. [Jochem: Yeah] Which means that you can make of a ordinary, very plain, simple pebble just something as beautiful as a very expensive gemstone. [Jochem: Nice] It is using your imagination. [Jochem: Hmm]

#### 48:23 Devon

I'm thinking... If someone is less creative... That with some other books, I've noticed - and maybe that's an idea for this subject as well - that in books there's sometimes a sentence about: 'if you want to learn or read about more possibilities to execute this and that, go to this website, or YouTube channel, or wherever.' To see more things, or read more things, where you can gather your own things, or: 'Oh, this might work for me, or this might work for me, or...'

But also maybe in general, like a lot of things, seem to be happening outside. Why aren't there more examples for how to do things in the house? And also I live one storey up, so I don't really have contact with the ground beneath me. People can live 8, 12 storeys high and not be able to go downstairs, and learn a bit more how to ground yourself and connect yourself with the earth. Because in a flat you're actually sort of floating above the earth, but you're not touching it! You know, just a little bit more possibilities for various situations. Just mostly one, a one way direction: This is possible for groups, this was for solo.

Yeah, maybe something like a sentence: 'You can find more information there and there, or...'

Yeah, something like that, I don't know. Just to make it more visible that there are more options than stated status in the course and the book.

#### 49:47 Jochem

Good idea, thank you.

#### 49:48 Frigga

Yeah, I always get back to making things. Even a piece of paper will work. That's what I often say to people. I work a lot with yarn and making cords. I think I might be a bit famous for my cords for all kinds of situations. You know, doing an online ritual I ask people to make a cord, to use colours for this and that. And then they say: 'But I don't have yarn.' 'Do you have a piece of paper in the house? Yeah, just cut that in long, you know, and make a braid with pieces of paper.'

#### 50:19 Devon

That's helpful, indeed. Like for me it is relatively new. I don't have those switches yet for: 'Oh, they mean this. How can I do that differently?' [Jochem: Yeah]



### 50:29 Frigga

Often you can use paper! Just make a simple drawing on a paper. I mean, make a drawing of a stone on the paper. And it doesn't need to be a high quality or whatever. No, just make a circle. And for you it's a stone.

### 50:45 Jochem

I have been involved in walking labyrinths for a while. And it's just recently I learned that you can draw one on a piece of paper, or a print one if you draw, and walk it with your fingers. And it has the same effect as going to a huge field, draw it on the field, and walk it. So it can be as simple as this: Just a piece of paper, a pen, draw, walk with your fingers and do magic. It was really great to learn that trick.

### 51:24 Frigga

We have the gift of paper. [Laughs]

### 51:26 Jochem

Yes. [Laughs]

### 51:27 Frigga

If you have a piece of paper and a pencil, and you have runes, or the ogham, whatever symbols you like, you can draw something. I think the first rune set I made - I still have it somewhere - is of paper. At one time we were somewhere and a person needed a runic reading and we didn't have any runes. 'Do you have paper?' And we just cut it in 24 pieces, and wrote the name of each rune, and we could work. It is often that we think too complex, and too difficult, or in how to do it right. [Jochem: Yeah] Afraid of making mistakes. And I say: What mistake can you make?

### 52:08 Devon

Well, that's what I learned recently as well. I was very thinking about: Am I doing this right? Am I doing this right? How do we do that? And trying to memorise. And of course, with a foggy brain, memorising stuff is not going to happen. And then I thought: No, it's not about memorising stuff, but your intention, and your your feeling, and your spirit. What you put into what you're doing. And then it doesn't really matter what you do.

### 52:34 Jochem

Exactly. Doing magic is about intention and a lot of tools are just that: It's tools to help you focus. And a lot of people need them, which is fine, but a lot of people don't need them, which is fine too. And for some people it's just part of the ritual and they like doing it, which is fine as well. And others don't like it or don't have the money for it, which is fine too. Yeah, the basics is just intention, and that is enough to do magic.

### 53:12 Frigga

Yeah. I mean, it is knowing what magic is, and that you need to think very careful about what you do. *There* things can go wrong, if you do just out of the blue and don't think at all. But that's learning to work with magic is that you have to think up front about what you do. And you can do it as simple as you want, and then I talk about rituals, you know, for the main festivals and stuff like that. But even for seidr.



When I start thinking about it, you know, I have a lot of fantasies: 'Oh, I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that!' And I make it very complicated. And then slowly: 'Why? Why should I do it so complex?' And it becomes more simple, and simple, and simple, and getting back to the basic. I mean, standing in a circle. And then of course, you talk about group, but... Go back to what Jochem said. Magical tools or ritual tools can help you focus. And it is dress to impress. And it's fun to decorate a room with a lovely hammer and a lovely horn.

#### 54:20 Jochem

Oh yes, it is fun.

#### 54:21 Frigga

But with our online rituals, we don't share horns. Everybody has their, just their glass or their cup of tea, and it works perfectly for a sumble. You can... And that's also with pieces of paper, and that's according the lines that about the labyrinth that you can walk it with your feet. You can make pieces of paper with the runes, you can put them in a circle and you have your circle. And you can, if you want that, imagine that you stand in a circle with other people, with ancestors, with spirits, with the gods.

#### 54:57 Jochem

Nice that you say this. I was just going to ask you: A lot of people say that you can't do rituals online, or you can't do magic online, but you've been performing the Flame of Frith ritual for some years now, online. Maybe you can share a bit about that.

#### 55:17 Frigga

Even before that I have doing online or on the telephone all kind of rituals, specific a lot of seidr. With a good friend. But indeed, when the pandemic started and there was... Suddenly we were finding ourselves in a lockdown. Dan Coultras from England wrote something about doing a healing ritual, and I had it in mind. So I contacted him: 'Hey, can we combine?' And then the online Flame of Frith Healing Ritual started, which we first, I think year or one and a half year, did every week. And now, for a year, one and a half year, it's two weekly. And it's a small group: It's often 4, or 5, or 6 people, really a core group. And it would be great if more people show up, of course. We do it every two weeks, and it is sometimes: Oh no, not again! [Laughs]

#### 56:09 Jochem

Laughs.

#### 56:10 Frigga

You know. But 'Not again?' Of course! Because otherwise I will start missing it. And it's the same ritual. Or Jochem, you are part of it. [Jochem: Hmm] It's the same ritual. It's mainly text. I also call it a heathen prayer circle.

#### 56:27 Jochem

Which is nice.

#### 56:27 Frigga

[With a sigh] Yeah. It is praying.





### 56:30 Jochem

One of the things I like very much about it, is that you always start with: Imagine you're standing in a circle with all the people present, and all the entities not physically present, but being present as well. And that is how we cast a circle. Which is as real as casting circles I have seen in physical rituals. [Frigga: Yeah] So to me it's still doing magic.

### 57:01 Frigga

Yeah, it is. And every time, even we do it every two weeks, once we're finished, you know, we're sitting there for a couple of minutes. And I have the need to thank people, because every time again it's special. [Jochem: Yeah] So don't compare. Online has its own possibilities as well as being in the flesh together. Of course that's great, because you can hug one another. And it's often that there is a bit more time before and afterwards. But it is... You can share, I mean, we do the sumble, we share things. And that feels as if you are... Whether it's people from America, or England, or the Netherlands, or whatever. You are there together.

### 57:47 Jochem

Yeah. Maybe this is a good point to close. Do you have any closure comments?

### 57:56 Frigga

I think I said it before: Please be aware of things. That it's not always possible... Whether it's... Yeah, be aware of that there is much more possible. But also how can you be an ally to people?

### 58:12 Devon

Yeah, indeed. Think of that there are people living in other situations than yourself. And then you can include everybody.

### 58:21 Jochem

That's a brilliant last comment. Thank you. I would like to thank you both for today. Our next episode will be the season finale in which we will talk about how to be an ally, with some of our former special guests. It promises to be another interesting episode, so please join us next time. Bye bye!

### 58:41 Devon

Bye bye. And thank you for having me.

### 58:45 Jochem

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[end tune]

### 58:59 Jochem

*Let's switch to English [Frigga: Yeah] before we start the episode, in Dutch and then realise, at the end: Oh damn! [Frigga laughs]*



59:08 Devon

*[Laughs] Because we can start all over again. [Jochem: Yeah! Laughs]*