

## *Na Ródannaí Meala: The Honey Roads*



### Materials:

- \*Sticks - twigs or popsicle/craft sticks  
- 2 per person
- \*A piece of coloured thread for each person - long enough to tie the sticks together
- \*Honey
- \*A big bowl of warm water
- \*An altar holding the four elements (incense for Air, candle for Fire, a bowl of water, a bowl of soil)
- \*Drums and beaters
- \*A washed bone for each participant
- \*A small white cloth for each participant
- \*A bowl of bee-friendly seeds - enough that each participant may take a few
- \*Bags or containers for the seeds



## **Honey Roads Ceremony Outline**

### **Introduction**

- \*The context and magnitude of the plight of the Bees at this time*
- \*Setting the context with part of the Tradition story of how the Bees came into being, and the rhythm of the Grey Drummer*
- \*The need for our Wild Hearts*
- \*Brief overview of what we will do together in the ceremony*

### **The Honey Roads**

- \*Calling the spirits - singing to the Honey Roads of the Bees in every direction*
- \*Arriving Here and Now - 'X' marks the spot*
- \*X is a crossroads - we are calling to a moment of change, and a new way of being*

### **Forgiveness**

- \*Honouring the elements*
- \*Acknowledging that human beings have poisoned the elements*
- \*Calling the Ancestors to help us remember how to honour and respect the elements*
- \*Participants come forward to use Honey & Holy Water to say 'I'm sorry', and to bring sweetness to us for a new way forward*

### **Unity**

- \*The Bees are Unity. The Bees are Communion. The Bees live and act as one, on behalf of all.*
- \*Honey to awaken our drums and to awaken our own song of Unity and Communion*
- \*Singing and drumming together...letting our voices unite us, and sing that strength to the Bees - that they may endure this time of crisis and vanishing*

### **New Beginnings**

- \*Ceremony, song and prayer...are not enough. Each of us must **do** something in the world to make change.*
- \*We come together to symbolically and literally wash clean the seeds of Bee friendly wildflowers (in Honey & Holy Water). Each participant takes seeds away...to plant on balconies, in gardens, in back alleys - to do something to renew the Honey Roads for the Bees.*



## Honey Roads Ceremony Notes:

### Introduction:

The Bees are vanishing at an alarming rate. The human population on the planet has doubled since 1950. The number of honey producing colonies (in the US) has declined by 50% in the same period of time.

Human beings are studying this. We call it Colony Collapse Disorder. We attribute it to global warming, parasites in the hives, the unexpected impact of pesticides and fungicides and genetically altered plants, or the use of cellphones.

But all this autopsy and forensic work is changing nothing. The rate of decline continues...the Bees are vanishing.

Any report on this escalating event orbits round in record time to what this costs human beings in terms of dollars...billions, crops, one in three bites of food...every report says somewhere 'Bees are vital as pollinators'...for human the food of human beings, is what is implied.

The Bees do not work for us. The Bees are a force of nature...Without the simple presence of the Bee, the world would have developed in a radically different way.

The stories of the S'aghic Tradition say that the Bee is the heartbeat of the Forest.

*When Methair Tei - the Earth - sings to the stars above, her song of longing is so powerful it becomes the Great Tree, Ygryddia.*

*Ygryddia too sings a song of longing to the stars. Her song, in all its beauty, comes forth from her roots. Her song of longing takes shape as a swarm of Honeybees. The Honeybees fly up into the branches of the Great Tree. And so, they form Grey Drummer, drumming the heartbeat of the world. The song continues, and the Ancestors descend and sing upon the Earth...as the mountains, the rivers, the trees, the fleet of foot and the flight of wings.*

*The Grey Drummer sits in the branches of the Great Tree even now; and it is said that if he stops drumming, the Bees die. If the Bees die, human beings will die.*



This ceremony is about stepping forward, and offering what we can to the Bees in this time of vanishing. One of the things Bees have as their unshakeable way...is that of being united. Everything that any individual Bee does is on behalf of the whole. There is - as far as we understand - no concept of 'individual' in the hive. And so we work together also.

The Bees never forget their wild hearts, their wild nature. Even when in residential neighbourhoods, the Bees are wild things. We also need to remember this. Wild things do not poison and foul their habitat. This ceremony is an invitation to the Wild Heart, to the song and hum of the wild in our everyday interactions with our world.

In creating this ceremony, the Bees sang to us in journey. They sang:  
*Re-build and do your best.*  
*Eat the sweetness first for there is always some sweet to take out of any destruction...*  
*Do not do this alone, sweetness is always best when shared.*  
*Remind each other of the sweetness when you forget and can only see the destruction....*

### **This Ceremony**

This ceremony is an invitation...to us forgetful two-legged ones... to remember what it means to live our lifetimes in such a way that everything done is on behalf of the greater good of all.

It is also an invitation to ask forgiveness. Whatever debate goes on about the bottom line in why the Bees are vanishing...it comes down to the ways in which human beings have come to live here on the planet. We have created legacies of poison in the four elements that sustain us all. We have poisoned the winds, the fire, the waters and the earth. Change begins with recognition of our own part in this...with the words: "I'm sorry. I have forgotten. This sweetness brings remembrance to my heart."

Finally, it is an invitation to come together...for a moment of unity, of being united in a common purpose...for a few minutes once a month. "Our hearts/drums beat as one, my heart to yours, my drum to yours." This ceremony is about holding our deep sadness at the state of things while at the same time, strengthening a deep sense of hope and determination. As it is in the old story - the song of longing is the beginning of everything. We sing and drum our longing.



Part 1) **The Honey Roads - Na Ródannaí Meala** (*phonetics: na-road-a-nay-mala*)

There is a beautiful line in an old Gaelic song that goes

***Tá na ródannaí meala ag na beach in ins gach aird den sliabh***

The translation: The bees have honey-roads in every cardinal direction from the mountain.

(Have the participants tie their 2 sticks together to make an 'X')

We begin by singing to the Honey Roads...they surround us in every direction, for around us in every direction the bees travel. We sing to the Honey roads of the North, the East, the South and the West. The Honey roads above, and below. The Honey Roads that led us here and now.

*(Lead simple singing and toning to the directions, calling in the spirits)*

We forgetful two-legged ones... need to remember what it means to live our lifetimes in such a way that everything done is on behalf of the greater good of all. This is a matter of life and death.

The Bees live this at each moment of their lives. The Bees travel the Honey Roads all around us - filling themselves from the beauty of the world, and transforming what they gather inside their own bodies into honey.

We each hold in our hands an 'X'...our own map of the Honey Roads, with ourselves here at the centre. This 'X' is also a crossroads...and at human crossroads - we are free to change direction, able to see that the possibilities are right in front in front of us to choose a different road as a species.

That is what this ceremony is all about.

Part 2) **Forgiveness**

This ceremony is also an invitation to ask forgiveness. Whatever debate goes on about why the Bees are vanishing...it comes back to the ways in which human beings have come to live here on the planet.



The word ‘forgive’ is actually an instruction manual. We have the concept of ‘forgive’ in our heads, and all sorts of associations with that idea.

But all that compound word means...is to **Give For** something else.

*(Build the altar. Set dishes to hold the four elements. Incense for air. Water, soil for earth, a candle for flame.*

*In the centre of the four elements, place:*

*\*a dish of water mixed with honey,*

*\*a dish of honey,*

*\*a small number of seeds,*

*\*some pollen (you can buy this at a health food store).*

The Great Song sings us in the winds, in the flame, in the water and in the soil.

We human beings have created legacies of poison in the four elements that sustain us all. We have poisoned the winds, the fire, the waters and the earth. Change begins with recognition of our own part in this.

We are human beings. This is not about blame or guilt...it is about stepping out of this pattern. And one of the most powerful ways of doing this begins with taking responsibility, and the words

I’m sorry. *Tá brón orm.* (phonetics: tah-bron-arm)

I have forgotten. *Rinne me dearmad ar.* (phonetics: rihn-ya-mah-jarm-a-dor)

I will remember. *Cuimhneoidh mé* (phonetics: kiv-no-may)

The lives of the Bees are a dance between the sweet and the sting. The words ‘I’m sorry’ sometimes sting...but sweetness is here also. There is sweetness in remembering that we are not alone.

To forget is a literal dismemberment - a tearing apart of that which was always meant to be together...whole...which is what the word ‘Holy’ speaks of. Our forgetting has dis-membered us and the world around us. We re-member - put ourselves back together - and we do this together.

We re-member together with each other...and we re-member with the Ancestors. Our Ancestors knew how to live their lives on behalf of the greater good of all. And so, as we remember together, we ask the presence of the Ancestors, and their song to help of not just remember - but to do things differently.



*(Pass around the bowl of bones. Each participant takes a small bone.)*

A bone is a moment in time. A bone is a moment of eternity, held in the passing of time. Our bones wrap around our beating hearts. Bones can endure on the earth for millions of years...but the beating heart is here only for a moment in time. We hold this bone to our hearts - for our hearts never really forget. Our bones are made of the same stuff as the bones of our Ancestors. Our Ancestors knew how to live their lives on behalf of the greater good of all. They knew how to live with unity.

Now we sing...to the bones and to the Ancestors - that they may remind us, and sing us out of our forgetfulness.

*(After singing for a time, now, step to the bowl of Honey and Holy water - saying)*

Here is a bowl of water - all water is Holy Water. The word 'Holy' means exactly that...whole. Complete in and of itself. Honey itself is Holy Water - holding within it all ingredients essential to sustaining life.

*(Now pour several swirls of golden honey into the bowl of warm water. Mix and swirl the honey throughout, and demonstrate what people will be coming forward to do.)*

Each of us will take a handful of Honey Water...hold it above the dish... and breathe into it the words 'I'm sorry. *Tá brón orm.* I have forgotten. *Rinne me dearmad ar.* I will remember. *Cuimhneoidh mé.'*

Then, put some of this Honey Water to the lips - tasting the sweetness of our own wild hearts, the part of each of us that remembers what it means to live an entire lifetime for the greater good of all.

We touch the wet fingers to the head - that this incredible mind may remember.

To the heart...that this wild fire in our chests sings louder of this - for our wild hearts never really forget. All forgetting happens between our ears.

And we rub the last of the sweet and wet into our hands...that our hands may remember, and weave this into all that we do and touch.

Now, rub the sweet into the bone we hold in the other hand. Our



Ancestors knew how to live their lives on behalf of the greater good of all. They knew how to live with unity. We invite the sweetness - and sting - of the song of the Ancestors to sing us out of our forgetfulness.

Finally, we wrap the bone in a simple cloth...set it on our altar, that the song may reach us each day.

*(Now, invite the participants to come forward one at a time. Walk each individual through this process. Those who stand in the circle drum and sing softly.)*

### 3) Unity

The bees are never disconnected from the Hive, from one another. We human beings can get so disconnected from each other. This is a chance to reach and connect.

*(Pass around a small dish of honey. Ask people to take honey on their fingertips. When all have honey, continue)*

Now, we place a touch of honey on the handle of the drum beater, that sweetness and remembering come into the rhythm of our lives.

We place a kiss of honey on the rim of the drum frame...that the spirit of this drum - who has carried each of so far, on so many journeys - may taste the sweetness also...and remind us of this each time we drum.

Now...we drum and sing a heartsong of sweetness, a drum song of strength. We weave a prayer of sound, sending strength to the bees that travel the Honey Roads to the north, east, south and west of us...that the Bees may journey with strength, that they may stay and grace us with their presence, wisdom and sweetness.

*(Sing and drum a prayer of strength out on the Honey Roads and deep into the hives, and also out into the places where the solitary species of wild bees dwell. When the singing and drumming have been enough, slowly let the song and rhythm fade into silence.)*

### 4) New Beginnings

We have spent some time with the Sweet and the Sting. But all the best intentions in the world mean nothing without action...without actually moving our bones and doing something - anything, even one small thing.



For we are as the Bees... alone, they can do little. But together - they can accomplish the impossible.

Here is a dish of seeds that will grow into Bee nourishing plants. Together, we remember...together, we do something to create change. Together, we wash the man made poisons from each of these.

*(Invite participants to come in close to the bowl of warm water. Together, wash the seeds. Symbolically clean them of all man made poisons.)*

*Plant some of the wildflower seeds in the ground together in a small circle - as a symbol of wholeness, that the blossoms to come might be a reminder to all who cross this particular place on the Honey Roads - that we were here, we remember, we have done something to make a difference...it is a symbolic prayer for wholeness and recovery for the Bees; a prayer for greater connection and mindfulness between human beings and the Bees, and a symbolic song that all of us be able to find our way to Home and Wholeness.*

We each leave here with the strength of what we have done together. And each of us take a handful of seeds. The seeds can be set aside for the growing season (if that season has passed). But each of us plants the seeds somewhere...on balconies, in gardens...creating a reminder of our commitment...and safe stopping places for the Bees as they travel the Honey Roads.

*Before breaking the circle - ask people to name one small action they will take to create a ripple of this out in the world. It could be something as small as planting their seed; buying one item from the Organic section of the grocery store; buying honey from a local beekeeper; turning off their cel for a block of time; signing a petition for change...one small action to reach out into the world.*

The bone can be placed on your altar at home, an invitation to the Song of the Ancestors to help you remember. Or, the bone can be planted - along with the seeds - as a reminder that everything we walk on, everything around us, everything within us...is song.

May your travels on the Honey Roads be filled with sweetness and strength.

*(Close the space, and send people on their way.)*