

The Way of Compassion



*Humankind has not
woven the web of life.*

*We are but one thread
within it.*

*Whatever we do to the web,
we do to ourselves.*

*All things are bound together.
All things connect.*

Native American saying

Autumn is a time of change. All the horses are coming home from the summer pastures. Firewood, hay and straw; everything goes into houses. And everything happens at the same time, just like in spring. What is to be harvested and prepared for winter. What must be done, before everything goes to rest.

It has been an intense year. One can't help but think of the history of the Hashemite Jordanian horses with the seven bloodlines. Seven different challenges to the human ego, on the way to expand the self and become part of a greater whole. The fifth line in particular, *adaptation to new circumstances*, feels relevant at this time of the year. But perhaps it is best to start from the beginning, as the horses themselves argue that none of these lines is relevant, without the interconnection between all of them.

This story has been told many times by now, but the more you practice something, the more it deepens. And it's always good to have reminders.



So many different species describe how humans have chosen to stand a little aside. We may see ourselves as herd animals, but other species don't seem to see it that way. Rather, they see us as a species that lives in groups. And the difference has to do with the *web*.

Eldvaki, one of Funny's students, talks about two kinds of emptiness. One is an opening. The expanded self, which includes all living things. The space within becomes infinite once one has surrendered oneself to the world. The world cannot be inside of me, unless I give myself back to the world. Surrender and participation cannot exist without each other.

The other kind of emptiness, which looks a bit like frosted glass, is just that; *emptiness*. No opening at all. The self does not exist. No expansion is possible. The environment and the individual remain separate. There is no empathic connection between them. And around this impenetrable emptiness the ego is created. The image of ourselves; a reflection without content.

How can we break this isolation and step into life, into the web? So that we can share this existence with all other life. This is what the seven bloodlines are all about.

"These horses, they are like stars. Like comets in the night sky". That's the legend of the Hashemite horses. It's said that they carry messages, intended to help humanity.



The first line; **courage**. As much courage as it takes to step into impermanence. Just the thought that everything we experience, all our relationships, everything we've ever owned or had access to, everyone we love - it's all going to disappear. It's an impossible thought. Yet we get up every morning and take this enormous risk; to dare to be alive.

Courage is also the expression of the creation of the self, the synthesis of body and soul. Once matter has been animated and given life, something unique is created. The self, the essence of a being, which is completely new every time. The only one of its kind.

The self cannot exist in the world without a reflection. Someone needs to see you, straight through, as you really are - and in this way awareness of your own existence is anchored. The certainty *that you exist*. And so, the individual rises from nothing. What didn't exist before, suddenly comes to life. The new creation - the consciousness awaking.

Courage is about daring to stand up for yourself. And about understanding the difference between the self's search for closeness - versus the ego's need for confirmation. Without a self, there is no traveler, no path, and no continuation of the story.

If the task of the self is to free itself from the constraints of isolation, and instead turn towards the world and take it all in. Then the human must break his self-centeredness and place himself in the middle. At the meeting point between spirit and matter.

The second line; **combat and protection of the defenseless**. Protection of one's own vulnerability. Here combat is not a feeling. It's not anger, but rage. And rage is a primal force. An instinct, arising at the moment it's needed. The horses that represent this line speak of the importance of feeling worth of preservation, and worthy of preserving someone else. A society without this quality becomes harsh and cynical. The right of the strong will prevail, and there is no room for any vulnerability.



Vulnerability is like the living space itself. That which makes us reachable. We must trust the world, somehow, even though it's impossible. I have met so many individuals who have stood right on the edge and somewhere deep inside chosen between life and death.

I think of Keilir, an Icelandic horse, who couldn't make up his mind. *To live, or to die?*

He was so sick at the time. The body was an unwieldy and painful burden. Why would he give everything he had to try to survive? The feeling of that struggle was like climbing the highest mountain in the world. Why would anyone give themselves to it, when you are going to die in the end anyway?

It was not possible to argue against it. At the same time, there must be another story, as a counterbalance. Otherwise, he wouldn't still be alive. *Why do you want to live?* Keilir's only answer to that question was: because of the unpredictability. The excitement and curiosity of not knowing.

Am I worthy to step into this life? Do I have the courage to stay alive, when time will inevitably come to an end? Am I ready to give my life to the continuation of this story? Do I dare to surrender myself to the web? The body's reflexes and instincts to survive, to fight for the continuation of life. But not just for myself, but for life as a whole. For something greater than the individual.

It is as if we are made up of small sequences of time. Spirals of time, like detached stories. Without meeting points, without linking them, they are meaningless. *We exist for each other.* There is no other way. We hold the space, so that continued life will be possible.

Just like the trees..



When we finally stand on our own two feet, the threads and ties to the outside world are tied. **Friendship**, the strongest and most fragile threads there are. The horses that represent this line speak of a delicacy, like a fingertip feeling. If the threads of the web of life could be sensed, might they feel like that? Like a gentle, barely perceptible touch.

When these horses speak of friendship, as a complete surrender, it's based on the self being anchored first. Then respect for the integrity of oneself and others. Otherwise, there is no inclusive extension of the self that can include the other. In that case, the reverse happens instead, and the encounter becomes a projection. A reflection that turns in on itself. The self - the synthesis of body and soul. Not as a point, but as an opening.

If no one meets you there, and sees you for who you are inside, the self will remain unconscious. There is no realization of the unique essence, and one begins to engage in adaptation instead. One is shaped, from the outside in - instead of the other way around.

This creation, as an illusory reality without a spiritual anchor, could be called the ego. This ego is always dying and exists only as an idea.

Nor can the ego create any genuine relationships. The environment consists mainly of blind projections, like pawns in a game to ensure one's own survival. The loneliness in this place is endless. Hence the insatiable need for confirmation.

Friendship, as a respectful longing for intimacy. Like outstretched threads of thought. Like encounters, created out of pure curiosity. A hen once conveyed the difference between a human's way of communicating, compared to a chicken's. On both occasions, the encounter with a tree was seen. The human saw the tree, and the experience of the encounter then returned in the form of an explanation. The human understood that she saw a tree.

When the hen saw the tree (as in a prism of many, compound fields of vision), the experience returned in the form of a sensation. And when the image of the tree met the feeling of the tree - then a sound arose in the hen. As an immediate expression of the combined experience. Suddenly it became perfectly obvious why other species don't lie. Not only because they can't, but also because it would be completely irrelevant.

You can't build relationships with the world around you if you don't start from your own center. If you are not at the center of your own unique essence. And we can't meet either, if there is not a permissive, possible space. Both in terms of one's own integrity, and the joint preservation of outer space.

Friendship, like the mycelium of fungi, links life stories in real time. The experience and the sharing happen simultaneously all the time. This kind of friendship is based on the fact that there are no differences in value whatsoever. In this way, we do not lose ourselves in the handover.

When the self is manifested, as well as the living space, and we have stepped into the web - then enters what for many species is the most essential part of this existence: *everyday life*.

We humans so often search for purpose and meaning, while other species stand by and watch. Why do we search for meaning *beyond life itself*? Perhaps it's because of our perception of linear time. The expanding self moves in all directions, simultaneously. Outward, opening up to the world. Which is thus contained within. A closed self, like the palpable emptiness of the ego, offers no such opening. We thus lose our presence in the moment, and seek to move on - outwards.

The fourth line is about **perseverance**. It reminds us of everything we take for granted. We have climbed up to the (hopefully) long, flattened plateau that is our own lifetime. And how do we actually choose to use this unfathomable gift?

Here the focus is on the transport distance, the destination is not relevant at all. Here are all the everyday details. The repetition. All the chores and tasks, which are only noticeable if *not* performed. All that is hidden beneath the surface. The sand and stones that gently carry up the water at the lakeshore. All the breaths and heartbeats, the rhythms we got used to.



Life in the stables in Jordan. Like in any other stable; cleaning, feeding, moving horses between pastures, brushing, and trimming hooves. Some are ridden, others treated for various injuries. The hazy light slowly changing between morning prayer and sunrise.

"Man's role is to serve creation. Serve these horses with the reverence the task demands. You have no idea how good it will do you." So said one of the ancestors, who sometimes visits the stables. As a reminder of a bygone era, and an ever-ongoing daily routine.

The future human, emptied of content, carries the whole of creation inside him. That is ***the way of compassion***, as the Hashemite horses describe it.

Using our time may mean making ourselves available.

If we are not present, there can be no expansion, and without it - no empathy. Without the empathic, immediate experience of how our actions affect others, we also never experience the deeper joy of service to creation. And then the opposite occurs instead; *personal gain*. As the only possible driving force.

This is how humanity distinguishes from creation. This is the basis of our isolation. Here is the pain and fear of exclusion and abandonment. And somewhere there, the struggle for survival arises. We do not feel the impact of this on our surroundings, because the door, which leads both out and in, is closed.

And although the self cries out for this opening, for genuine meetings, love and intimacy - we are terrified to open that door. Shall we step inside, or not? All these strategies we have rehearsed, for so many generations; do they become meaningless then? Who are we, deep down, without all these patterns? Funny usually says that if there is anything we could value to do with our time, it's breaking these limiting patterns. All the tangled threads which bind us to the idea of an identity. All the inner truths by which we are unconsciously guided.

If we dissolve these bonds and expand the experience of time, then the next step will be so much easier. **Adapting to new circumstances.**

Up to this point, existence has been about connecting body and soul, thereby manifesting the individual life. The connection itself consists of consciousness. The one who awakens. The one who sees that I see, and registers every feeling and sensation.

The path of consciousness into the body and out into the world is now entering a new phase. Gradually we are moving towards an even greater opening in time. The transition between linear and non-linear time. It is not possible to let go of something that is not fully experienced. On the other hand, when something is fully experienced, it is impossible to hold on to it. Time brings us towards this point, whether we like it or not. The phase where consciousness moves away from the body and all that we have built so far - towards the soul, the invisible, limitless and immeasurable.



The horses belonging to this line talk about the importance of letting time work. Accepting ageing and individual death. And thus giving space for the next generation to come forward, and manifest existence on their own terms.

Rakan, one of the older stallions, said, "We don't need any more monuments. We need more fully experienced lives. Which are then left, without noticeable traces, when that time comes". This line will help us through our life crises, if we choose to dare to let go.



The time when all this was written down.

But what if we don't move towards a conclusion, Funny reminded. What if time doesn't slow down and stop. Perhaps we are moving towards an opening. A liberation of the self. And if we see it that way, we will inevitably move towards the next line; **trust**.

I soon realized that I had completely confused the concepts, when I expected the horses representing this line to be calm and harmonious. There was no calmness here at all, but a brute force like no other. Trust was described as the force that swings all doors wide open. Like a tidal wave, completely uncontrolled.

Once you have accepted the shift of consciousness from body to soul, so many fears and other habitual defense mechanisms disappear. Suddenly you have nothing to lose - at all. It's now that you give yourself to the world, without reservation. One has accepted that one owns nothing and all the personal is dissolved.

Trust is about *dedication*. What I was looking for, in the absence of this quality, was safety. The ego's desire to be preserved requires as much predictability as possible. This vigilance becomes an obstacle to the final expansion of the self, once you have dared to surrender.

Without trust, there is no opening between the world and the individual. All that remains is repetition. Like a hermetically sealed room. Like the world, before **Tane**. The tall and mighty tree, which in the Maori creation myth rose up to separate heaven and earth - thus creating *the space of life*. The self represents synthesis and separation. Courage. The preservation of the space of life. Aggressiveness and protection of vulnerability, allowing each life to breathe and take in the world. Friendship; the desire for closeness in order to be part of a larger context. The manifestation of time and the dissolution of time.

All this culminates in the one, great, all-encompassing love. The one to which everyone bears witness, who at some point stepped out of time and peered behind the invisible veil that separates us. **Compassion.** The innermost, most basic building blocks of existence.

Qamar el Leil, whose name describes the moon that shines at night, described the moment of death as travelling through a web, like a sieve. Here all personal experience fell away - just as it did in adapting to new circumstances - and was returned to the world. Every experienced second of life was gently taken up in this enormous bank of experience. For the benefit of the living. While the soul went on, straight into timelessness.

I recognized that road, as if I had walked it a thousand times before. For other species, this cycle seems obvious. The encounter with an unconditional love and an empathetic presence beyond description. The only thing described that follows the soul to this point, besides consciousness, is our *intentions*. In the light of this total love, not as a feeling but as a state, one sees the whole of experienced life. But not only from one's own perspective. Compassion also opens up to the insight of how one's actions have affected the environment. According to the Hashemite horses, this whole journey is possible, even within the constraints of time, during the course of one's life. Every event presents such an opportunity.



Funny, who now represents the line of perseverance, absolutely loves this whole cycle. Eventually, everything will dissolve, including the memory of consciousness. And we fall into a complete oblivion about ourselves and the world.

Then the miracle; that which no one can explain. Out of this boundless love, which by its very nature cannot distinguish anything - out of this which is devoid of all limiting definitions - arises the defining, individual life. Herein lies the great mystery of life.



And so it starts all over again. The new self, to be manifested in the world, on its journey back to timelessness. It is precisely the forgetting that Funny seems to see as the greatest gift. It is the one that makes each life the first and only one of its kind. It is the one that opens up new possibilities and gives us the chance to break all old patterns. But it is also the one that risks trapping us, in the treacherous web of repetition.

It's entirely up to us. Every fork in the road is a choice. Especially if our intentions follow us to the brink of oblivion. It's no worse than falling asleep at night. Then we don't know where we are going either. It is really only the repeated habit, and a fool's hope for yet another day, that makes us dare.

Courage and compassion. Participation and surrender. The road between is perhaps one of wordless longing.

"This longing, too large for heaven and earth, fits easily in my heart"

Rumi



Many thanks to the Hashemite horses and all other individuals, of every conceivable species. Thank you for your endless patience with us humans beings..