

Midsummer Greetings 2023



Every day we are engaged in a miracle, which we don't even recognize.

Thich Naht Hahn

Early this spring, the weather-sensitive horses announced that there could be a drought this summer. However, late summer/early autumn had something mild, friendly and pleasant about it. Like calm rain. This would be relevant for the particular area we live in.

Now the drought is here, and as in previous drought years, the horses have split up the herds into many small groups. In more mixed years, they aim to graze as many as possible together. They move around a lot, graze for a short time and then move on. During droughts they move less, graze in smaller groups and leave more dry axes to better shade and protect the undergrowth.

How can they know all this? And how is it that their instincts have such immediate flexibility in relation to circumstances?



It seems to all be related to water. Everything that lives have some relationship with water. It is water that connects our stories. Through the water vapor in the air, we cannot help but touch each other's memories. The water circulating in our bodies is only on loan. And gently we walk around the paddock - at the behest of Celeste the horse - to practice sensing the water veins deep in the ground.

Water rises and falls, depending on the temperature, thus creating pressure. Many other species seem to sense this in a very sophisticated way. And so, the fluctuations of the weather become understandable, possible to experience. Body and mind need to be one, and we need to be in a completely equal relationship with the world - for any of this to be possible.

This is the kind of immediate insight that summarizes a common reality. An existence that we also share in our consciousness with all other life.



I am sitting under the canopy of the large oak trees outside the croft at Tågeröd. Monika, a woman who lived there for much of her life, had just passed away. Now her funeral was being held in the place she loved most. The trees hold the space, with a palpable sense of reverence.

Monika was the first person to invite me into her house when I came to Tanum twenty-eight years ago. That house, made of redwood, under the shade of the big oak trees. Now she is no longer here, at least not physically. There is so much I would like to tell her. She was uncompromising, adventurous and almost a little frightening in her total honesty and raw force. Almost always barefoot.



How do grazing animals know when it is time to move on? When has the life-giving grazing and trampling on the ground to strengthen the roots of the grass instead become a burden? Celeste's students practice sensing the exactness of that boundary, in their encounter with the soil, the microbes, the grass individuals and the water, as well as the moisture in the soil layers.

Are we ever ready to let go? When I meet Monika under the canopy of the trees, she seems to be completely free of all ties. The place and all the people who were close to her; the intensity of that love is undiminished, enormous even, in this free form. There is no contradiction in loving and letting go.

Horses tread softly on the forest path between Jaren and Putten. Old farm names, whose meaning has been forgotten. The large herd at Yngve's farm on Jaren has now split into three groups. All according to the wishes of the grass and the water.



A forest of these trees is a spectacle too much for one man to see.

David Douglas



Monika wanted to end her life with a forest party, and so it was. Songs and stories follow each other under the treetops. Memories, tears and laughter. Bare feet in yellowed grass. We who are there are reminded that we wish to meet more often. The time is short and intense.



During the hottest period in the middle of the day, the horses stand completely still on an already trampled surface. The rest of the grass is resting. I think it's because they get tired from the heat, but that's not the case. The intense heat and the reduced humidity in the air and soil stops the growth of the grass, and grazing the grass at the same time to keep it down even more, would create an imbalance.

When a few clouds move in and the air pressure and temperature temporarily change, all the horses moves out over a larger area - as if on a given signal.



Helping to preserve the flow of water seems to be one of the most life-enhancing things you can do. The valleys of Jaren are home to a wide variety of flowers. The horses graze in a constant relationship with those being grazed, it is not a competitive relationship. Not if the conditions for natural behavior exist.

The grass is cut at the right height to provide shade for the surrounding plants. But also to bring in just the right amount of sunlight.

If there are too few individuals of a particular plant species, the lack of variation will weaken both the individual and the species as a whole. If there are too many, variation is reduced due to lack of space. Reduced variation seems to be something that is to be avoided at all costs. The unique expression is emphasized through the precise movement of the muzzles, gently touching the blades of grass.



The release of horses at Sigvard's upper pasture, one late afternoon in June. As we walk over the mountain this time, the feeling is different. We are now moving towards a different story. There is room to dream. Even if anything can still happen until the takeover in October, the feeling in the ground is different. There are many of us walking together now, it is no longer a single story. The path leading across the mountain is also the continuation of a long-awaited journey to Jordan. A new chapter opens, with a transformative deepening of the seven lines - and the history of the Hashemite horses.

So many aberrations, repetitions and dead ends on the way here. Sigvard's upper pasture was the very first pasture outside Friskeröd's farm. And here we are again, with a group of expectant horses and new students.

There is a history that we all carry, though we may not remember it anymore. So says Qamar el Leil, one of the older mares in Jordan - who long ago gave us the concept of the *way of compassion*.

It's late, a dark and starry night at the stables. Sharifa A and I are sitting on a bale of hay, each with a cup of coffee. We barely manage to stay awake. Not because we are that tired, or because the hour is late. But because sometimes there is a special kind of tiredness taking over, when you receive a story that touches you deeply.



Qamar el Leil conveys an image of the moment of creation. Whoever we are and however we were created, this moment is the same for all of us. Whether we were born, sprouted, hatched, or otherwise divided to become new, independent forms of life. In this moment you see the creator (who you cannot see, but still somehow sense), who is waiting to receive you with extreme curiosity and fascination. There are no words to describe the intensity of this excitement. The experience of a completely new, unique life is the greatest gift ever imagined. At that moment, nothing else exists. And without the limitations of time and space, it happens all the time. *The single encounter*. The reception, when you step into life.

Imagine if we could look at the world with a glimpse of that unconditional curiosity. And imagine if we could see ourselves that way.

In the end, it is all about friendship. All stories move towards that essence. The image of the creator and the creation meeting in equal wonder. We must take full responsibility for our actions and intentions. While constantly surrendering - so that the creative force can work through you.



A few days later, the children and I are sitting with the big herd of mares, listening to their stories. They explain that there is a story that they always tell their foals, as soon as they are born. When they can stand up and one sees that they are healthy. The aim is for them to recognize their unique place in history.



They conveyed an image of a man with a distinctive look, sharp features - as if he had been chiseled out of the sandstone mountains. Assessing by his clothing, he looked like a warrior of some kind. The date was impossible to determine, but it was clear that he must have lived a very long time ago.

Suddenly there was a thunderous sound. Like a lightning strike, yet not. The roar was deeper somehow. The ground shook, as if by hundreds of galloping horses. But they rather ran because of that sound; it was not they who caused it.



The man could hardly believe his eyes. Out of a cloud of dust emerged countless numbers of the most beautiful and powerful horses he had ever seen. He realized that they were not just earthly creatures. They were like a God-sent gift. And they carried with them glimpses of eternity. *Like stars, or comets in the night sky.*

The next image shows how these horses gradually stop and remain in the area around this man. And so it was, that he took on the honorable task of listening to and their stories. He even seemed to have taken notes, just like we do now.

It has always been so, explained the mares in the herd. For as long as they had been around, this unique contact with humans - at different times in history - had been consolidated. It was fascinating to see how other people marveled at these stories, throughout time. And without Sharifa A's role in this, none of this would ever have been possible. It is she who, in addition to meeting all their natural needs, also maintains the *path*, the prayer; the contact with the source.

She opens the door so that the stories can be sensed. And she does so, above all, by seeing all these individuals as completely equal family members. And just like here, it is no longer only about the horses. Other species make themselves known, as we humans gradually open up our separate the essential self from the ego, and so begin to practice letting the world in.

Taeal! Come! Shouts one of the grooms. A foal had been born, and now they wish for us to come and see him too. We realized, in a dizzying moment, that we must have heard this story at the same time as the newborn foal.



In our first conversation, the newly born foal describes the essence of his being and how it could be expressed in a name. Then you see how the outer expression, the vibration, the sound - the voice of the world - meets the inner, unique self. And when this happens, it is as if the circle is complete. When the inner meets the outer, when you are fully seen, the protective shell that constitutes your personal integrity is also created.



Could this be a meaning of baptism?
The name, not as a framing, but a recognition. A reminder of our innermost essence.

Dawn is like dusk, it separates night from day.

Monika's friends and family are singing along with the trees on the hillside.
We come and go. Our unique names become memories, imprints in history.

The fire is like ice, it burns against my skin.

For a brief moment, we can perceive the world through our senses.

Death is like the beach, it separates land from sea.



Grief is like joy, it defies my reason.

We are thrown between hope and despair. Man's greatest gift to creation (according to Bobo, the horse) - the ability to empathize. The blind pain when we lose touch with our origins. The fine line between the desires of the ego and the self's indomitable desire for more life.

*Can you sense that there is a limit?
I see it turning.*

*Can you feel the earth turning?
One day at a time.*



Foto Carina Albertsson

Friends of Mio, scattered all over the world. Thank you for your invaluable support. Both in everyday life, in the maintenance of the space - and for keeping the dream of a kinder world alive.

One step at a time. Conversations with the mountain, the stones, all the invisible species in the soil, the grass in the pastures and the moss by the marsh. The pine trees, the lichens and the old oaks by the lake. The horses, the chickens, the stream and the big chestnut tree. The bees and all the variety of different insects. All these encounters are constant. Like tiny glimpses of reminders in a marvelous world.

Listen! There is a voice that cannot be heard, yet it is felt in every fibre of your being. Listen, while there is still time. Listen in between the lines, so that you may hear what has so far remained unsaid.

The whole world is made up of stories, which slowly make us take shape. We emerge in moments of encounter. Listen, so that the whole world may be contained in a single breath.

*Many thanks and happy summer,
with warm wishes from all residents
of Friskeröd!*