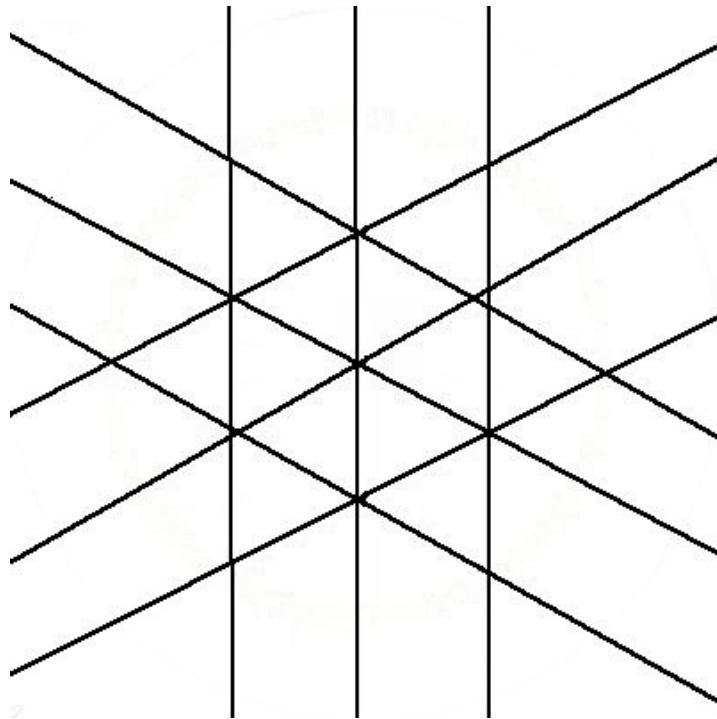


Along The Lines

A Guide to Living Stav



by
David Stone

Along the Lines
A Guide to Living Stav
Author - David Stone

Published by:
Ice and Fire Ltd.
Unit 1, Rope Walk
Parrett Works
Martock
Somerset
TA12 6AE

Copyright – David John Stone March 2013

www.iceandfire.org.uk

Contents

Introduction	1
Bind Runes	
Introduction	2
Exploring the Principal Bind Runes	3
Digging Deeper	9
The Working System of Bind Runes	15
Working with Bind Runes for Yourself	17
Making Bind Runes	19
The Esoteric Bind Rune	22
The Havamal	
Introduction	23
General Lessons of the Havamal	26
Interpreting the Havamal	28
Commentary on the Havamal	30
The Nine Mighty Spells	98
Conclusion	101
Appendices	
Examples of five translations of the Havamal	102
My complete transcript of the Havamal	104
Further Reading	116

Introduction

I have subtitled this book ‘A Guide to Living Stav’, but in fact there are very few ‘instructions’ on what someone should do in order to ‘Live Stav’. This is because, by its very nature, Stav is a system for finding your *own* way in life. A more accurate subtitle, therefore, would have been ‘A Guide to Using Stav to Find Your Own Way to Living Stav’. Rather a mouthful.

So, how to guide you to find your own way? By addressing an imbalance in the way people perceive Stav. Due to the extensive martial orientation of regular Stav training, many people have come to regard Stav as ‘just’ a martial art, and can’t conceive of it being employed in any other way. Even among people who realise there is ‘other stuff’, there are many who regard them as separate activities, when in fact Stav is a complete system that teaches a few simple* lessons that can be applied to any life situation. Learning these lessons and, above all, applying them to your life as a whole is the key to living Stav.

Every aspect of Stav reflects these lessons, although it’s difficult to realise this until you have some idea of what they are. This is one of the problems with regarding Stav as ‘a martial art’, or ‘a healing system’ or even ‘a mind-body-spirit system’: these aspects limit the perception of Stav and isolate its lessons to a series of specific activities and pre-conceptions. What this book offers is a chance to look at Stav through a more day-to-day angle. This demonstrates how the principles of Stav fit into the sort of situations we are likely to come across, which helps us learn how we can apply them to *other* situations we come across.

The principle tools I have chosen for this are the four Principal Bind Runes (Craft, Ethical, Healing, Esoteric) and the Havamal of Nordic tradition. What follows is my own interpretation of how these tools fit into Stav, and thus into everyday life. This book is the result of 12 years of studying and practicing Stav, and I can’t claim to have mastered it yet. So, instead of a master telling you The Answer (if such a thing even exists), consider this the work of a fellow traveller sharing *his* answer with you, in the hopes that it guides you to find *your* answer.

NOTE: Throughout this book I make extensive use of Stav terminology. Since this work is intended for those with a reasonable degree of knowledge and experience of Stav, I have made no attempt to explain these, except where it is relevant to the subject under discussion.

* Simple to *learn*, simple to *understand*; but takes a life time to *master*.

Bind Runes Introduction

Bind Runes in Stav

Within the Hafskjold Stav tradition, bind runes are lesson mnemonics and meditative mandalas that are formed around the Hagl rune – the rune of the Hafskjold family. They are most usually drawn with each rune as an extension of the radial line that it's on. (Fig 1) I have adopted a slightly different layout for instructional purposes, which makes the individual runes more readily discernable and thus easier to interpret. (Fig 2) This is a perfectly valid way of drawing a bind rune, but bear in mind that it is not the traditional method.

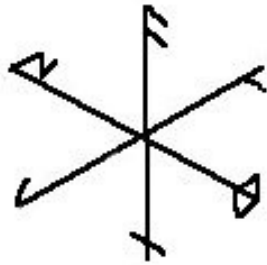


Fig 1

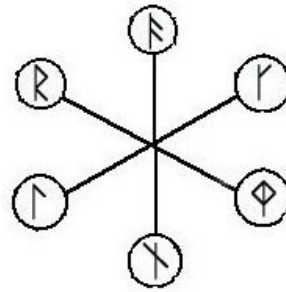


Fig 2

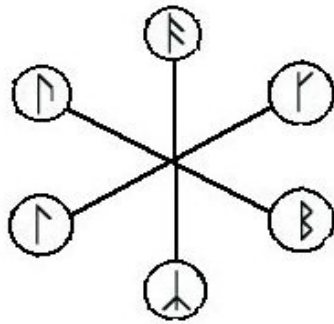
Bind runes come in two forms, opposing and progressive. Opposing bind runes have a relationship (usually complimentary) between the runes on either end of each radial. They can also have a general relationship between the top and bottom halves. A progressive bind rune generally starts with the top rune that represents the underlying purpose of the bind rune, and then progresses around the remaining five runes, each rune developing that underlying idea and leading into the next stage through the next rune.

The Four Principal Bind Runes of Stav

These bind runes relate to four of the five principles of Stav, the Karl, Herse, Jarl and Konge, and are referred to as the Craft, Ethical, Healing and Esoteric Bind Runes, respectively. In each case, the names of the bind runes, while relevant, are just convenient labels. The bind runes do not relate exclusively to crafts, ethics, healing or esotericism. Rather, each one relates to a series of lessons and examples pertaining to its class or principle, and the relationship to the others. They all allow for extremes of situations and how to deal with them.

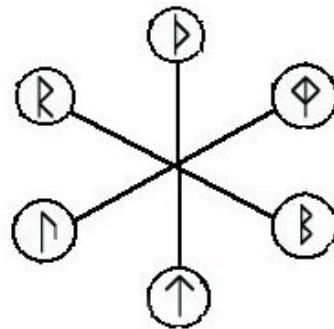
There are no absolute meanings, interpretations or answers to any of them, rather they are all for pondering upon. At the same time, they have standard explanations which can be used to keep us grounded within the principles they represent: just because there is no 'absolute' answer, doesn't mean that anything goes. Their structure keeps us within the bounds of Stav principles and anchors us to this while we seek out higher meaning to them.

Exploring the Principal Bind Runes



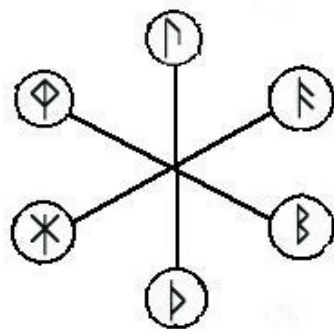
Craft Bind Rune

F Strength
 F Flexibility
 F Fire
 F Water
 F Leather
 F Textiles



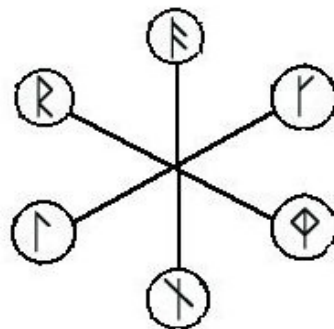
Ethical Bind Rune

F Protection
 F Self
 F Family
 F Ideals
 F Future
 F Final Issue



Healing Bind Rune

F Megin
 F Mott
 F Lokk
 F Seid
 F Tein
 F Seid
 F Myrk Galder
 F Ljoss Galder



Esoteric Bind Rune

Further details to follow

Some Analytical Data on the Four Principal Bind Runes

There are 24 runes in total, consisting of 12 separate runes of the Futhork:

ᚠᚢᚦᚨᚱᚴᚷᚹᚻᚾᚿᚰ

Five are from the first aett, two are from the second aett and five are from the third aett – every rune in the third aett is used.

None appear in all four bind runes.

4 appear in 3 bind runes: ᚠᚢᚦᚱ

4 appear in 2 bind runes: ᚨᚱᚴᚷ

4 appear in 1 bind rune: ᚻᚾᚿᚰ

4 appear in 0 bind runes: ᚢᚦᚱᚴ

Of the runes that appear in three bind runes, all four appear in the Healing Bind Rune.

Of the runes that appear once, all of them are in different bind runes to each other.

ᚠ and ᚢ oppose each other in both the bind runes they appear in.

There are: 2 Trel runes, which both appear twice; two Karl runes; three Herse runes; two Jarl runes, which each appears once; two Konge runes, that each appear three times; one unclassified rune, that appears once.

The Craft Bind Rune contains three runes that appear three times, two that appear twice and one that appears once.

The Ethical Bind Rune also contains three runes that appear three times, two that appear twice and one that appears once.

The Healing Bind Rune contains four runes that appear three times, one that appears twice and one that appears once.

The Esoteric Bind Rune contains two runes that appear three times, three that appear twice and one that appears once.

The Craft Bind Rune at its Simplest

This bind rune offers some basic advice on crafts and craftwork that a Karl should know and be able to turn his hand to. This assists him in his role of Freeman and allows him self-reliance, rather than having to adopt the more Trel-like attitude of always relying on others.

ᚠ represents the ash tree and symbolises Strength – understanding strength, and building it into constructions so that they are up to the job.

ᚢ represents the yew tree and symbolises Flexibility. A rigid long bow is of no use – it has to be flexible. Also, construction must have a degree of flexibility – a ship's hull flexes with the movement of water, a tower gives a little to the force of the wind. If they didn't, they would break.

ᚦ represents Fire, used to make things hot and/or dry – the heat of the furnace, the kiln, the oven etc.

ᚱ represents Water, used to make things cold and/or wet – cooling metal, damping clay, mixing dry flour to pliable dough etc.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Fire and Water can also represent Farming, with the heat and light of the sun and the cool freshness of rain and dew.

┐ represents Leather, used for tough, protective items – boots, gloves, armour etc. Also working with horn.

ᚷ represents Textiles, used for more refined, decorative and pliable items – cloaks, blankets, veils etc.

Leather and Textiles can also, very loosely, represent animals and plants respectively, in the sense of what we can get from them: labour, milk, meat, leather; medicine, vegetables, fuel, fibres. These tie in with the farming aspects of Fire and Water.

The Craft Bind Rune is an opposing bind rune. Its elements oppose and balance each other, and remind us that either one is not good on its own. For example, Strength will break without flexibility, Flexibility will warp and fold without strength etc.

The Craft Bind Rune as a whole can be regarded as the balance between Primal needs and Cultured needs. ᚦᚧ represent primal, ᚦᚷ represent cultured. Strength is a primal need – things *must* be strong to survive, while flexibility is a luxury that comes with prolonged existence. Fire has been used for many thousands of years for heat, light and protection, and offers one of the basic requirements for warding off exposure and hypothermia. The power of water for transport and as a motive force (as the Laug rune poem) is a product of imagination to conceive a need beyond your basic requirements. Anyone who can catch an animal can utilise its skin, but the acquisition of fibres – whether animal or plant – and then spinning it into thread, and then being able to weave, knit, crochet or sew with it requires a refinement of thought.

The Ethical Bind Rune at its Simplest

This bind rune offers the Herse advice on when it is ethical to fight – which is summed up by ᚷ as protection: any conflict must be to *protect* something or someone. It is a progressive bind rune, so ᚷ provide the basic purpose of the bind rune, and each element is a level at which the Herse must operate to protect what needs protecting. At all times, the Herse must adopt the *highest* level that is needed, even at the expense of the levels beneath it.

The Herse must protect:

ᚬ his own life, needs, wishes, morals. These must be sacrificed if necessary to protect:

ᚷ the lives, needs, wishes and morals of members of his community. These must be sacrificed if necessary to protect:

ᚦ the ideals of the community (for example, its laws or rules). These must be sacrificed if necessary to protect:

ᚧ the future integrity of the community from extinction. This must be sacrificed if:

ᚦᚷ maintaining the community becomes contrary to the purpose of its existence. The example most often cited for this one is when the Hafskjold family chose to resist the

German occupation of Norway during World War Two, even if that resistance meant the death of the family line. This was because, to have *not* resisted, would have destroyed the essence of what it meant to *be* a Hafskjold.

Each level must be stronger than the one before, because the Herse has to be prepared to sacrifice what he had previously fought to protect.

In this literal interpretation, each element of the Ethical Bind Rune embodies the classic response of each Class: the Trel (⚔) only considers himself, the Karl (⚡) has wider responsibilities, the Herse (⬆) considers the community, the Jarl (⬆) considers the higher purposes of life, the Konge (⚡) must be prepared to do whatever must be done. Therefore, this bind rune could also be considered the Class Bind Rune, a mnemonic for all the classes.

The Healing Bind Rune at its Simplest

This bind rune offers some basic information on healing skills that a Jarl should know and be able to turn his hand to. Like the Ethical Bind Rune, the Healing one is intended to be used in the service of others, rather than of the self.

⚡ represents Mott, the physical body, the strength of muscle and bone, and embodies physical healing such as first aid, bone setting, surgery etc.

⬆ represents Megin, the subtle energy that ebbs and flows throughout the body, and embodies energy healing such as laying on of hands, remote healing, acupuncture etc.

⚡ represents Tein Seid, the knowledge of herbs and plants, and embodies medicinal healing such as potions, ointments, tablets etc.

⚔ represents Lokk Seid, the mystical ability to send the mind/spirit on a quest to gather information from worlds beyond the physical. It embodies shamanic healing forms such as calling on gods to intervene, communicating with the spirit of sick individuals etc.

⚡ represents Ljoss Galder, outward knowledge, and embodies intellectual healing, such as counselling, problem solving etc, and is especially carried out by using the runes in various ways.

⬆ represents Myrk Galder, inner knowledge, and embodies a more mystical form of intellectual healing, such as faith healing, placebos, charms etc, where the sick person relies on the healers ability without knowing precisely what they are doing.

The Healing Bind Rune is an opposing bind rune and, as a whole, can be regarded as the balance between Exoteric and Esoteric needs. ⚡⚡⚡ represent exoteric, ⬆⚔⬆ represent esoteric. The Mott is totally outward and visible, and if it's bleeding or broken it has to be fixed. Tein Seid requires practical knowledge to know what plants to use, how to identify and prepare them and how to administer them. Ljoss Galder involves talking and discussing, bringing things into the light. These things are exoteric – they are open and rational and on the whole it is difficult to apply them without the sick person knowing about it.

Along the Lines by David Stone

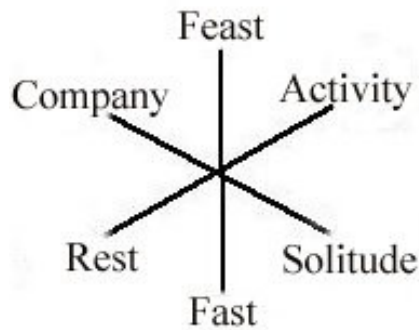
Megin is a subtle energy which modern science doesn't acknowledge exists. It can be sent and manipulated with no obvious sign. Lokk Seid, by its very nature, reveals its secrets only to the practitioner. Myrk Galder can involve carving runes and making charms with no one else's knowledge. These things are esoteric – they are hidden and secret and can easily be applied without the sick person's knowledge.

The whole of this bind rune is closely associated with magic, especially the esoteric half.

The Esoteric Bind Rune

Further details to follow.

The Lifestyle Bind Rune



Although not strictly a bind rune, the Lifestyle Bind Rune is nevertheless of importance when working with the main bind runes in detail.

This is an opposing bind rune, and can be regarded as the balance between Indulgence and Abstinence. Unlike the other opposing bind runes, though, there is no strict division. While most people would tend to consider Feast as indulgence and Fast as abstinence, it isn't that simple: anorexics, for example, indulge in fasting and abstain from

feasting. This sums up the primary lesson of this bind rune: extremities are not good to stay in. Go to them when needed, but come out of them when they've achieved their purpose.

We need to eat to live, but we need to refrain from eating to stay healthy.

Without activity we get nothing done, but without rest we become exhausted.

Without company we become isolated and lonely, but without solitude we can't develop ourselves.

This bind rune can be used in two ways. One is balancing the *quantity* of our lifestyle choices. If we are *hungry*, if we are *tired*, if we are *lonely*: these are simple imbalances that can be easily rectified by going to the other end of that line. This is good for immediate or short term solutions. Just as important, though, is the *quality* of our lifestyle choices. If we are *always* hungry, if we are *always* tired, if we are *always* lonely: these are more complicated imbalances that can need a deeper solution than simply eating, resting or socialising.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Any imbalance should be looked at through both elements of that line, and through both aspects of quantity and quality. For example, if you're always tired, it might be that your activity is too great, or your rest is too little (quantity), or it might be that your activity is leeching energy in more subtle ways, or your rest is disturbed and broken (quality).

Remember these principles of extremity and balance, quantity and quality, when investigating all other bind runes, including the progressive ones.

An interesting point regarding Hagl as used in forming bind runes is that there is no horizontal line. This suggests that, while extremes are bad if used to excess, there is no universal middle ground. This is an important lesson in Stav: you need to be either totally committed, or moving from one commitment to another. Even inaction must be committed inaction, not born of uncertainty. The horizontal line suggests a static position where you are motionless, trying to be both and so failing to be either.

Digging Deeper into the Bind Runes

In this section, I refer to the bind runes by their Class names to differentiate between the simpler interpretations of the bind runes as Class *activities*, and the more complex interpretations of them as Class *principles*. I also hope to lead people away from the idea of Karl as ‘farmer/craftsman’, Herse as ‘warrior/policeman’ and Jarl as ‘healer/priest’ in Dark Age settings, and into an understanding of them as ordinary and everyday people existing and co-existing within the modern world. Stav is not a re-enactment society, and can only be fully appreciated when considered as relevant to, and existing within, then everyday world in which we all live, work, play and die.

The Karl Bind Rune

While none of the Classes can really be regarded as ‘better’, the Karl is perhaps the most important one from a practical Stav viewpoint, in that it represents the step into independence, away from the innocence and ignorance of the Trel and into a wider world of self responsibility. While all subsequent steps are also important, and can take things to much wider and more worthwhile places, without that first step, nothing will happen. For this reason, the Karl Bind Rune could also be regarded as the Development Bind Rune. It is particularly relevant to self-development, but its lessons can be applied to any form of development, as we will see.

✚ Strength - ✚ Flexibility

Strength is required in any act of development, especially when developing the Self into something new. By their very nature, people tend to opt for the line of least resistance, or even to actively resist change. This is true even when the change will bring improvements. It can be due to fear – of the unknown, of changed responsibilities – or to laziness and a reluctance to push against inertia. Both are Trel responses, which the Karl needs to shake off unless he is to revert back to Trel. Strength – both physical strength and strength of will – is required. The determination to hold firm to the goal and not to bend or waver.

In light of all this, flexibility would appear to be the antithesis of the Karl. However, strength will only take you so far. By its very nature, rigidity is a weakness that can cause even the very strong to break if enough pressure is applied to it. With the best will in the world, we can’t always do things exactly as we would like to. There has to be give and take if we are to work with others. The flexibility of the Karl Bind Rune is the flexibility of informed choice – knowing when to bend and how far to bend. The danger of flexibility lies not in breaking, but in bending too far – being too compliant with the wishes of others – and moving so far off the course you had chosen that you inadvertently start heading for goals that are not your own.

From this it can be seen that the Primal and Cultured aspects of this bind rune still hold true. Strength, the primal force, is always needed, and for some developments it is all that’s needed – the determination to succeed. Flexibility is a more cultured concept,

Along the Lines by David Stone

stepping away from your own desires to consider the needs of others. By flexing in the right ways, you can actually become stronger.

This 𐌲 - 𐌰 line is the Jarl line of this bind rune, and relates to the focus on the final goal.

𐌲 Fire - 𐌲 Water

Fire is the raw passion that enflames the spirit, excites the mind and fires the body. It is the desire that gets you up in the morning, that hits you in the guts and makes you want to go and *go* and *GO*. Like all fire, though, it needs fuel – you need something to burn, and something to burn with. This fire can rise quickly and die quickly and so must be used whenever it arises, and be nurtured, coaxed, fanned when it's fading, because it is difficult to light a fire with cold wood.

Water is the coolness of intellect that considers its options and its needs and works with relentless patience to achieve them. Just as a wave breaks and is only foam and spray, and yet can erode away a granite coastline over time, so the water of this bind rune sees the bigger picture, the longer term goals. It can also see potential problems and quench the spirit of fire, just as the fire of passion can boil away the water of reason.

Fire is the primal force and is always needed for any form of development, and sometimes it is all that is needed, especially for short-term goals. Water is the more cultured concept of stop and think and can be used to focus the fire more precisely. It needs the fire, though. Thinking achieves nothing without action.

This 𐌲 - 𐌲 line is the Karl line of this bind rune, and relates to the spirit of approach towards the final goal.

𐌲 Leather - 𐌲 Textiles

Leather represents the ability and willingness to make do. In order to achieve any form of development, something has to end, and sometimes it must end before a proper replacement has manifested. Therefore, an attitude of 'make do and mend' is needed if the goal is to be reached. You have to get the job done so that, even if it is not pretty or perfect, it will at least suffice. Think of an untreated animal skin: it will keep the wind and rain off your naked body. It suffices.

Textiles represents the ability and willingness to always do the best job you *can* – just because you can't make (or afford) designer clothing doesn't mean you have to resort to raw animal hides. Consider your needs and requirements and don't neglect them, even if you can't fulfil them perfectly. Do your best, always aim for the highest you can realistically achieve. Sometimes it will be adequate, sometimes it will be fantastic. This line of the bind rune is represented by the three parents in the 'Song of Rig': Trel's parents were stuck in the 'Leather' aspect, unable or unwilling to rise above basic requirements; Jarl's parents were in the epitome of the 'Textiles' aspect, and would have been reluctant to surrender any part of their perfection; Karl's parents had a happy medium, always working for the best, but able to cope with less.

The 𐌲 - 𐌲 line is the Herse line of this bind rune, and relates to adaptability to circumstances.

The Herse Bind Rune

The Karl Bind Rune has enabled the Self to develop through primal and cultured methods. The primal aspects are more personal, more self-oriented, while the cultured aspects are more socially oriented, dealing with your image and relationships to others. The Herse Bind Rune takes this second aspect further, moving away from the self and into responsibility for the wider community. For this reason, the Herse Bind Rune can be regarded as the Duty Bind Rune.

The Herse is widely regarded as the Warrior Class of Stav, and this is a perfectly valid image. However, when combined with the heavy emphasis Stav places on martial arts, it tends to make people overlook the vast range of responsibilities the Herse holds, and to see him as ‘just’ a soldier. Because of this, I have decided to address the Herse Bind Rune from a non-*martial* perspective, although the Herse always deals with *conflict*.

The ‘community’ that the Herse takes responsibility for protecting can mean very many things, and the individual Herse need not be responsible for all of them, or even very many. A family is a community, and the wider aspects of a household. A neighbourhood, village, town, district, county and country are all communities that need the same protection, just on a different scale to each other. Different circles that people move in are all communities: friends, colleagues, working environment, clubs, groups, movements. All of these are communities that require Horses to protect them and discipline them if they aren’t to fall apart. Bear these different communities in mind when considering the duties of the Herse.

The Herse Bind Rune is a progressive bind rune: you start with the concept at the top and this is developed and expanded upon as you progress around.

Þ Protection. This creates the image of Mighty Thor, standing ready with his hammer to protect the community, and this type of protection is an important part of the Herse’s work. However, Thor is not just a thug who beats up giants. He is very much a people-god, protecting the common person, blessing marriages and generally ensuring everyone is all right. Swift to anger, swift to laugh, Thor embodies the Herse role of protector but not dominator. The Þ rune also represents thorns – a thorny hedge as protection, but also the warning prickly that reminds us of our vulnerability, and warns that protection always comes with a cost. The Herse must be prepared to meet that cost.

⚡ The first level of protection the Herse approaches is himself. Essentially, this rune represents the Herse working on his own Karl Bind Rune to further his own life, needs, wishes etc. (Hence the use of a Karl rune for this Trel-like position) This is the very lowest level, the one the Herse deals with only when all the higher ones are secure. It is also telling of the Herse’s level of advancement that the absolute *least* he will do is all the work of doing the *best* he can.

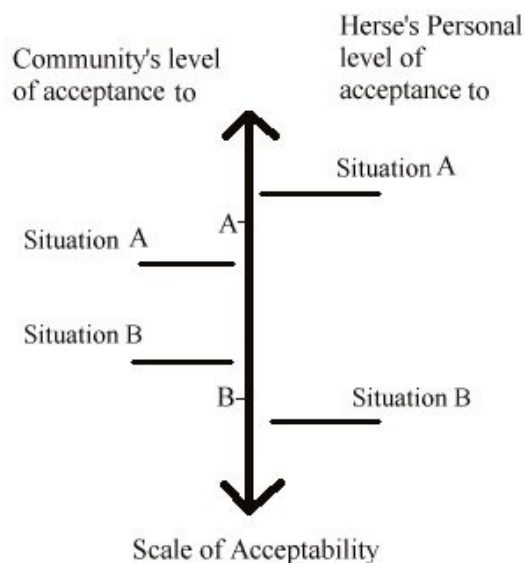
⌘ Like a father who goes without to ensure his children are fed, or sacrifices his own desires to fulfil the wishes of his family, the Herse must always be on duty, ready to abandon his own life – literally and metaphorically – for the needs and wishes of the community members.

↑ Like a father punishing a disobedient or over demanding child, or a teacher enforcing his authority on a recalcitrant student, the Herse must be prepared to forbid the needs and wishes of community members to maintain the ideals of the community (for example, laws, rules, social obligations)

⌋ Like a councillor calling for amendment of rules and the development of new ones, the Herse must be prepared to fight for change within the fundamental structure of the community, if it poses a threat to the integrity of the community. By adhering to out-dated laws and concepts, the community can stagnate and disintegrate.

⌋ At the heart of every community is a single, unbreakable principle that the entire community exists to serve. It is never exactly the same from community to community, and often it isn't even recognised until it is threatened. Whatever it is, the Herse has to be prepared to sacrifice the community as a whole before it is violated – because violating it would *be* the death of the community.

Each level of the Herse Bind Rune must be stronger than the one before, and the Herse's devotion to duty must be equally stronger at each level, in order to be willing and able to sacrifice what he had previously struggled to protect. At each level, the Herse has to make changes to the previous level/s and stamp his authority over them. He then has to be able to back up his authority in the event of it being questioned or challenged. The Herse must also be able to stamp and prove his authority regardless of his personal feelings: he must tolerate things he would rather stop, and forbid things he would rather allow, depending on the level of the community's ideals. The scale shows this



graphically: the Herse must forbid activities at position A, despite them being within his personal tolerance, and he must allow activities at level B, despite them being greater than his personal tolerance.

The levels a Herse needs to go to, and the extent to which he takes them, depends on the type of community. Most won't need to go beyond protecting its ideals (⌋ - ↑) with occasional looks to the future and change of purpose, such as an AGM or Thing (⌋). Major changes would be rare, and the destruction or dissolution of the entire community (⌋) would only come up in exceptional circumstances.

Although, in actual fact, the '⌋' aspects of this bind rune can come up without being realised. When a community undergoes a schism, people say the community has 'split'. In fact, this underlying principle has probably been violated, preventing people from

continuing together. The community hasn't split, it is *gone*, and two new ones have

appeared in its place. One reason why fledgling communities – especially in the form of activity groups and private clubs – fizzle out can be because the fundamental principle of it either wasn't strong enough to hold it together, or because it was unknowingly violated, which destroyed the viability of the community. In either case, the presence of a strong Herse to recognise the problem would have allowed the community to be properly 'killed' so everyone could move on smoothly – hence the use of Hel's rune for this position.

The Jarl Bind Rune

The Self has been developed at the expense of the luxuries of the Trel's innocence and ignorance; the community has been developed and protected at the expense of the individual; Now the Jarl must care for matters even at the expense of the community.

The Jarl is widely regarded as the Priest Class of Stav, and this is a perfectly valid image. However, when it is combined with the attitude of Healing as the 'alternative to martial arts' of Stav, it makes people overlook the vast range of responsibilities the Jarl holds.

Where the Herse deals with community issues, the Jarl returns to individual issues. Like the Red Cross who treat everyone, even enemies; like the priest who ministers to everyone, even criminals and those of a different faith, so the Jarl must rise above the political concerns of the community (the place of the Herse), and of himself (the place of the Karl) and deal with the less tangible, less apparently rewarding, matters. This bind rune can be considered the Renewal Bind Rune: it allows people the luxury of returning to a Trel state temporarily, through dependency on the services of the Jarl, so they can begin to rebuild themselves through the Karl Bind Rune.

Þ Mott.- ᚦ Megin

Mott represents physical actions on the part of the Jarl, situations where he actually *does* something (as opposed to prayer and advice, for example). Such things could be cooking, washing, providing a service. Additionally, it is where his action does *physical* good for the recipient such as first aid, providing clothing.

Megin represents the spirit with which the Jarl works: his attitude, mood, motivation. These will have a positive or negative effect on his work, and so it also represents the spiritual gifts the Jarl bestows on his recipients, how he makes them feel about themselves, about him and about his ability to help them.

Mott is the exoteric end of this line, the part that can be seen and touched and counted. Megin is the esoteric aspect, the hidden, intangible element. Together, the Þ – ᚦ line is the Herse line of this bind rune.

ᚦ Tein Seid – ᚫ Lokk Seid

Tein Seid represents awareness of the inherent strengths and weaknesses within situations and people, and being able to encourage development by drawing that power out. This creates the benefits of improved self opinion within the individual, improved reputation for the individual, and an over-all improved situation for all concerned. It is most noticeable where there is a big limitation to overcome, such as a mentally

Along the Lines by David Stone

handicapped person whose skill at football is drawn out and is therefore better able to join in and be accepted; or someone with a stammer being encouraged to develop their poetry writing skills and thus revealing they have something worth saying. The principles apply to all people and all situations, even when it isn't so graphic as this.

Lokk Seid represents the detached frame of mind that allows the Jarl to maintain an over-view of the situation. This is needed to be able to remain non-judgemental, to see beyond the shortcomings of those who come to him in order to see their inherent worth. It is the Jarl's ability to put aside his ego and do what is required, rather than following a personal agenda. Lokk Seid can also relate to meditation and personal prayers the Jarl might employ to help him in his work.

Together, the $\text{ᚷ} - \text{ᚰ}$ line is the Karl line of this bind rune.

✖ Ljoss Galder - ᚷ Myrk Galder

Ljoss Galder represents the Jarl's visible role within the community, a role which includes, but is not limited to, the Mott aspects of physical work. This can be the rituals and prayers he might lead, classes he might teach, books he might write. It represents the advice and counselling he offers, his role of friend and confidant, his awareness of people's names, families, jobs etc so he can relate to these in conversation. It is his outward application of his inner knowledge and philosophies.

Myrk Galder represents this inner knowledge and philosophy, both his own and those of the community. It is his ability to observe, remember and deduce, to read the inner workings of people and situations and see where they are going. It is the ability to use this knowledge to make plans and lay ginnings so he can lead people by creating a situation where they want to go that way for themselves. Myrk Galder also includes the ability to create public rituals and prayers, to plan classes etc.

Together the $\text{✖} - \text{ᚷ}$ line is the Jarl line of this bind rune.

The Konge Bind Rune

Further details to follow.

The Working System of the Bind Runes

The Karl, Herse and Jarl Bind Runes do not work in isolation, but rather form a working community that strives to improve itself as a whole and as individuals, by minimising the Trel level within it.

Karl Bind Rune: To Develop the Self and Keep the Trel at Bay

One way of working with the Karl Bind Rune is to consider it as a self-help or problem solving tool. Here is a way of using it in this way to achieve a long-term goal.

First, consider your goal. What is it? Define it. This definition only needs to be short: “Get fit” is pretty vague, but that’s OK, it’s only the Point at the centre of the Web. We’re now going to build a Web from that Point by working with the Karl Bind Rune.

┆ What is it about this goal that hits you in the guts and makes you go “Yes! *That’s what I want*”? What is it about the goal that makes you want to leap out of bed and get straight on with it? Find this fire. Without it there will be no passion to keep you motivated.

┆ What can you *do* that will bring you ever closer to this goal? What obstacles are there, and how might they be overcome?

┆ What are you prepared to surrender, sacrifice, give up, to achieve this goal? *Are* you prepared to sacrifice anything? What *won’t* you give up?

┆ How can you *realistically* cope with this loss? What can replace it, or how can you work around it?

┆ What are your strengths? How can you utilise them to achieve this goal?

┆ What are your weaknesses? How might they hinder you? How could you work with them to achieve this goal?

Be aware of the ever-present Trel. What are your fears and hang ups? They do exist – if they didn’t you would have already achieved this goal. So, in the spirit of seeing Reality, consider these fears and hang ups honestly, so you will know where they are likely to come up.

Consider all these points. Answer the questions honestly, come up with questions of your own. Make a specific plan of action based on this information. Go back to you Fire and feel the desire burn within you.

You now have a Web to work with.

Note that word: WORK. You will achieve nothing if all you do is create the plan. You also have to follow the plan, commit to the plan, and keep following it. Use the Karl Bind Rune regularly. Go through its points to remind yourself of what you’re aiming for and why you want to achieve it. Long term goals, by definition, take a long time to achieve, and things will change along the way. Remember it is impossible to keep the fire of passion burning indefinitely, but if you fan the embers often, it can be built up more quickly.

This way of using the Karl Bind Rune can be adapted and altered to suit the goal you desire. Use this one, or find your own method, but remember to keep to the elements of the bind rune: they were developed to help us, so make use of them. The important thing, always, is to work through problems and move onwards to development and improvement. Failure to do this is to return to the status of Trel.

Herse and Jarl Bind Runes: For When the Karl Bind Rune Fails

The Karl Bind Rune is the one you follow yourself, applying it to *your* requirements. The Herse and Jarl Bind Runes are ones that you use on others, or others use on you, to get back on course for following the Karl Bind Rune. It is difficult – if not impossible – to apply the Herse or Jarl Bind Rune on yourself, because if you need one of them, then you are lacking in its gifts. If you can't solve your problem using the Karl and Lifestyle Bind Runes, then you need someone to apply the Herse or Jarl ones to you.

The Herse and Jarl Bind Runes are both 'duty' and 'renewal'. The Herse is more visibly Duty, and the Jarl is more visibly Renewal, but each one contains both. *Both* require the sacrifice of the Self to be truly effective (hence the Duty), but the Herse sacrifices himself for the community, even at the expense of the individual, while the Jarl sacrifices himself for the individual, even at the expense of the community. Up to a point, the Herse sacrifice is more rational – there is a logical reason for it – while the Jarl sacrifice is more irrational – there is an emotive reason for it.

Compare the Herse who clears slums and sets up schools and clinics in the improved area, to the Jarl who sets up a soup kitchen to feed the homeless in a similar area. Both are providing a needed service, but the Herse is looking to the community while the Jarl is looking to the individual. Who is to say which is 'right' or 'better'? The improvements might seem more practical and have more overall benefits, but requires a great deal of time, manpower and resources, can tear existing communities apart and introduce laws which care less for the indigenous population. Caring for individuals can revive their spirit and enable them to improve their own community, but can also turn people into leeches who rely entirely on handouts and won't do anything for themselves.

Both Herse and Jarl Bind Runes deal with people who are failing to live in accord with the Karl and/or Lifestyle Bind Runes. The Herse deals with them if their failure affects other people or the community as a whole; the Jarl deals with them if their failure affects only themselves and their dependents. The Herse also deals with the 'leeches' who have taken the Jarl's gifts with no intention of improving themselves; the Jarl also deals with the dispossessed 'victims' of the Herse's work. This creates a cycle of dealing with both community and individual issues, in which both are given the opportunity to fix their problems and get going again. Hence, they are both about Renewal.

Everyone needs to live the Karl and Lifestyle Bind Runes for themselves, and everyone needs to be prepared to adopt the Herse and Jarl Bind Runes as required. Any of the three can also be used as a vocation to aspire to, but all three will still be required at times.

Working With the Bind Runes

All of the bind runes are mnemonics, and all are to be meditated upon. There are no absolutes, no definitive meanings for any of them. The only power or gift that can be obtained from them are the powers and gifts that we extract. Like the eighteen rune charms of the Havamal, it is the lessons learned and wisdom gained through interpreting and working with them and living their principles that gives them their purpose.

How to work with the bind runes is a personal thing. Some people prefer to work more cerebrally, on an esoteric level and develop them into ideas and visions. Other people prefer to work more physically and develop them into practical activities. Both approaches are valid, as it is the lessons gained by you that are the true indicator of success.

At all times, however, consider the principles of the class associated with the bind rune, and the principles of Stav as a whole. Try to see beyond the straight forward and consider how it can be applied in general – there's a whole world of experience beyond crafts, martial arts and healing. Consider ridiculous ideas and situations to help you break the mould. For example, how could the Karl Bind Rune be applied to travel? How could the Herse Bind Rune be applied to washing the dishes? How could the Jarl Bind Rune be applied to cooking dinner? All these things are contained within the bind runes. This is part of what is meant by Stav being a living system.

As an example, let's take a look at the washing dishes scenario, and see how the Herse Bind Rune can apply to it:

▷ Having clean dishes can protect you from food poisoning and other illnesses that can come from bacterial growth. It can also protect your reputation, lest you be seen as a slob who never washes his dishes.

◈ The Herse sees the benefits to himself of having clean dishes, and so he washes his own dishes, the ones he will use again, and leaves the rest.

↳ The Herse realises other people are also in danger from dirty dishes and so takes it on himself to wash up for everyone.

↑ The Herse exercises his authority to teach others due respect for clean dishes, and gets his kids to wash them.

┘ The Herse takes steps for future hygiene by organising a rota, working out efficient use of dishes and ensures a good stock of Brillo Pads and Fairy Liquid.

↯ The Herse sees the fundamental flaw in the whole Dirty-Wash-Dirty-Wash cycle, throws out all his dirty dishes and buys disposable ones.

Of course it's silly. However, it is also a valid application of the Herse Bind Rune. Have a look at the others, and come up with scenarios of your own to get a feel for how bind runes can be applied to everyday situations.

The definition of each element of the bind rune is not 'what the bind rune means.' People can get hung up on the meanings and overlook the lessons of the bind rune as a *whole*. Each bind rune embodies aspects of the principles of Stav. Each one is a facet of a greater whole, and each one is an infinite source of information and inspiration.

Some Games to Play with the Bind Runes

Consider a progressive bind rune as an opposing bind rune, and an opposing bind rune as a progressive bind rune;

Replace each rune with its meaning, or deity, or rune song, or any other aspect and then explore how *those* aspects relate to the meaning of that position on the bind rune, and to each other;

Meditate on the bind rune as a series of ideas;

Meditate on the bind rune as a single image;

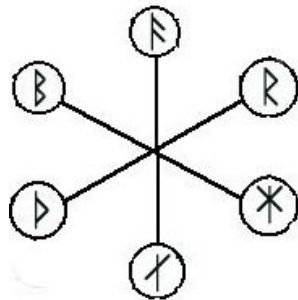
Ponder on the fact that there is no Trel Bind Rune, also that there is no couplet for the Trel in the Havamal, stanza 144;

Consider that each bind rune, being based on a Hagl rune, is the centre of the Web of a situation. Explore the situation as a whole to discover the relevance of the bind rune within it, rather than looking at the bind rune as 'six points' or 'three opposing lines'.

Making Bind Runes

One of the best ways to really get into the heart of how bind runes work and how the elements connect to one another is to make bind runes that relate to events, activities, problems and ideas, and then use them as mnemonics to remind you of what you are doing, and as a meditation tool to ponder on the issues of it. I'm not going to go into extensive detail on how to make bind runes, because they vary so much from person to person and issue to issue. Instead, I will go through a bind rune that I made, with notes on the process I used and some general tips and pointers at the end.

The Skaldic Bind Rune, developed to consider the major points required for working as a skald (Nordic term for bard).



Skaldic Bind Rune

- ⚡ Mead of Poetry
- ⚡ Potential
- ⚡ Inspiration
- ⚡ Work
- ⚡ Presentation
- ⚡ Completion

I had spent a lot of time on the Druid Network on-line forum and several people had been wanting a 'method' for tapping into Awen (druidic term for inspiration). This set me thinking about what inspiration *is*, where it comes from, how we receive it. I didn't get any definitive answers to those questions, but I did come to realise that there are several stages to producing a poem, story, painting etc, each of which are related to Awen. Most important - which some people don't want to accept - there is a process of *work* involved: Awen doesn't plop ideas into your head whole and complete. Rather there is a spark, a germ of inspiration, that sets the process off. This process, starting with the Seed of Inspiration, is what the Skaldic Bind Rune expresses.

Briefly, the process involves pondering and playing mentally with the seed to make it grow, begin to write notes or draw preliminary pictures, and bring it into the open – for example, by reading a poem-in-progress out loud, you can get a feel for the flow and rhythm and pick up on any problems that reading inwardly wouldn't reveal. This whole process needs to roll round and round until the final, finished, product is created.

This process created the basis for the Skaldic Bind Rune in my mind. These three tasks suggested three of the Classes: mental work is Jarl, physical work is Karl, expressing outwardly is Herse. This suggested a progressive, Class-based bind rune (similar to the Ethical Bind Rune). I already had the Karl, Herse and Jarl aspects, so I considered the Trel and Konge. The Trel aspect suggested itself as a starting condition, the 'Skald at Rest', with an open mind that allows itself to be possessed by others. The empty page, blank canvas, un-worked clay. The Konge aspect then suggested itself as a

Along the Lines by David Stone

finished condition, the ‘Skald at Rest’ again, but this time resting from having finished. This gave me the completed bind rune:

Mead of Poetry. This is the origin, *where* the inspiration comes from. We don’t know what it is, or where it is, or how we receive it, but we know it comes.

Potential, Trel aspect. The Seed of Inspiration has to fall into fertile ground, a mind that is ready and able to receive it. Nothing *happens* at this stage (The Trel does nothing), but the potential for *something* has come into existence.

Inspiration, Jarl aspect. This is the realisation of the inspiration received, and the mental process by which the seed is grown into something tangible.

Work, Karl aspect. Ideas are fine, but unless we bring them into a form others can participate in (through Galder) they will come to nothing.

Presentation, Herse aspect. Once the idea has been given form, it has to be presented to the world. The most beautiful painting, the most moving poetry, are nothing if they are stuck in a drawer and never seen.

[Note, these three classes seem to be out of order. In fact they are not. This is the logical sequence by which the process works, but it goes around and around several times, not just once – Jarl Karl Herse Jarl Karl Herse Jarl Karl Herse Jarl etc.]

Completion, Konge Aspect. The completion of a project is an event that warrants acknowledgement. A lot of work, energy and emotion has gone into it, and time should be taken to enjoy the fact of having a finished project. After that, though, it needs to be put aside so you can return to the Trel state and receive the next Seed of Inspiration from the Mead of Poetry.

This progressive bind rune was also designed to reflect the opposing Jarl Bind Rune, since the skald is a Jarl-like skill.

Mead of Poetry reflects Megin, an unknown, esoteric power that we have little or no control over, but grants us great benefits. Opposite this, Work reflects Mott, the ‘get down and dirty’, physical, exoteric process of getting on with things.

Potential reflects Lokk Seid, the empty yet receptive mind that opens itself to unknown powers and receives we don’t know what from we don’t know where. Opposite this, Presentation reflects Tein Seid, the use and application of the gifts granted into the exoteric world, utilising both knowledge and physical work.

Completion reflects Myrk Galder, a hidden experience, but one rich with the benefits of the work. Opposite this, Inspiration reflects Ljoss Galder, the process of working out the ideas for presentation.

As for the runes I selected to represent these ideas, I decided to use Class runes – a Trel rune for the Trel aspect, a Jarl rune for the Jarl aspect etc. This is a limitation I wouldn’t recommend for general use, but it does present an interesting exercise in limiting choice and so forcing you to dig deeper into the nature of the aspects, and the meanings of the runes, which is always beneficial.

𐌹 was chosen because Odin won the Mead of Poetry, spilled out the Poet’s Quarter on Earth and deals it out to worthy skalds.

Along the Lines by David Stone

𐌷 was chosen for its Journey aspects, symbolising the beginning of a new journey. Also, Hel is the goddess of rebirth as well as death.

✖ was chosen for the *suddenness* with which inspiration strikes and the total change it can make to a skald's life.

𐌺 was chosen for the reflection of working with the seed of inspiration to obtain its bounty, with the hard manual work needed to win the bounty of the Earth.

𐌰 was chosen as a representation of the loudness and open *presence* that the god Thor brings to mind – aspects you will need in order to present your work to a potentially hostile audience. This rune also offers a sense of protection for when you are 'on stage'.

𐌴 was chosen for the 'comfort of home' aspect of completion – going home after a days work, returning to your family for support and encouragement. There is also the aspect of this being a temporary haven; that you will need to release that comfort and go out on your own again.

So. That is a brief description of how I pieced the Skaldic Bind Rune together. It is worth noting that I had a specific 'problem' in mind – how to define and itemise the workings of inspiration. I wasn't trying to 'make a bind rune'; I was trying to solve a problem. Making it into a bind rune helped refine it in my mind and led to a more concrete answer than I might otherwise have found.

Some General Pointers to Making a Bind Rune

Have a specific idea/situation/problem to work with. Don't make a bind rune because you *want* to make a bind rune. Make one because you *need* a bind rune. It will work much better if it has a definite purpose.

Consider whether you want a progressive or opposing bind rune. Which would suit your purposes more? Progressive is more step by step, while opposing is more a consideration of the whole. They can also reflect or complement each other.

Go through your idea thoroughly; look at it from different perspectives.

Allow it to develop. Don't force a bind rune into shape – if it's leading you a different way to you expected, go with it and see what you learn. The whole idea of the Trel as a starting point full of potential but no action came to me through this process.

As it develops, draw a Hagl in the centre of a page and make notes about each element in the relevant position. This can help make it a whole entity in your mind and lead you to make additional connections between elements.

Don't get hung up on whether or not your bind rune is *right*. Instead, consider whether or not it *works*.

The Esoteric Bind Rune

By now, many people will be saying “Why isn’t there any information on the Esoteric Bind Rune? What is that one all about?”

Information on the Esoteric Bind Rune has traditionally been kept secret in the Hafskjold Stav tradition, and I’m not about to break that tradition. All I will say is that there is an answer, and it is well worth the effort of exploring. Consider stanzas 63, 79 and 163 of the Havamal, and the commentary I’ve offered on them. Also, ponder the clues Ivar gave me when I asked about this bind rune: All the bind runes are mnemonics, and all are to be meditated upon.

Good luck!

The Havamal Introduction

I have long been interested in the Havamal as a poem and source of mythology, but also in the fact that it is so closely related to Stav. When I first began practicing Stav in the mid 90s, the Havamal was considered the most important text within the system – a fact that seems to have faded in recent years. Because of this, I have been looking at the Havamal from the Stav angle, and at Stav from the Havamal angle, and a couple of years ago I came to the conclusion that the Havamal is, essentially, a ‘handbook’ of Stav. By following the advice of the Havamal, you live Stav, whether you know anything about Stav or not. With knowledge of the principles of Stav, you can glean further details from the stanzas of the poem, and extract deeper meanings to both the Havamal and the principles of Stav. This allows us all to develop ourselves in general, as well as ‘learning Stav’, and shows us how we can help others and where we need help ourselves.

Once I had realised this, I began pondering the idea of producing an introductory work to show others what I’d figured out, and help them to find their own interpretations of this fascinating poem. This presented two main problems: which translation to use, and the fact that quoting it in its entirety was potentially a violation of the translator’s copyright. As I considered this, I also began pondering on the different translations: the same text (the Codex Regius) had produced all these variations (see appendix one). While they all say the same basic thing, who is to say which one is more ‘correct’? The problem with any written form is that the words (by the very nature of the medium) become fixed and are open to interpretation and misinterpretation. This is less the case in an oral tradition, where the words are fluid and can be altered and clarified to give the listener a much more clear idea of what is really being said – rather than what the reader *thinks* is being said. The up-shot of all this is that I decided to create my own version of the Havamal, expressing what I think it is saying.

I want the reader to be clear of what this means: I haven’t made a new translation, and I haven’t invented anything or forced any stanza out of shape to make it fit my ideas. What I did was to take two translations of the Havamal (By Henry Adams Bellows and Carolyne Larrington) and go through them stanza by stanza and line by line, interpreting each and writing my own version of the combination. On occasion, the two translations have diverted in interpretation, and I’ve had to make a choice of which one to follow, or opted for my own. On other occasions they were so identical that I’ve used their exact phrasings. I’ve made no attempt to keep track of these here – I’m writing a Stav-Havamal commentary, not a literary thesis. Readers are welcome to go through the different versions and form their own opinions. Indeed, both Stav and the Havamal encourage such independent work into finding one’s own Reality, and I’m certainly not getting in the way of centuries-old wisdom.

Introduction to the Havamal

The name ‘Havamal’ comes from the phrase ‘Hova mol’ in stanza 111 which means ‘the speech of Hov.’ Hov is translated as ‘The High One’ – Odin – and the phrase became the title for the whole poem and is generally interpreted as ‘Sayings of the High One’ The only surviving source of the the Havamal in its entirety is the 13th century Codex Regius, though the poem is believed to date back to the 800s in written form and further back in oral tradition. The poem is referenced in Eyvindr Skaldaspillir’s ‘Hokoharmal’, written in 960.

The Havamal in its entirety is actually formed of several different poems and is written in various different metres. The most common metre is Ljodahattr, which is widely associated with wisdom verse in Northern poetry. The major poetry breaks are:

Stanzas 1 to 79, referred to as Gestathattr, the “guest’s section”, pertaining especially to manners and other behaviours necessary by guest and host. It could also be regarded as the ‘general living’ section, offering advice on all manner of things required to help you live with others while improving yourself.

Stanzas 80 to 95 are a series of stanzas and short poems of general advice, particularly relating to the Stav principle of seeing Reality, which lead onto one another by allusion to life, love and desire.

Stanzas 96 to 102 present a story featuring Odin that relates especially to the last stanzas of the previous section, in which Odin is the victim.

Stanzas 103 to 110 are a story featuring Odin as the perpetrator.

Stanzas 111 to 137, referred to as Loddafnismal, largely reflects the advice of stanzas 1 to 79, in the form of words of wisdom from Odin to Loddafnir.

Stanzas 138 to 145, referred to as Runatal, tell the story of Odin’s sacrifice on Yggdrasill to gain the runes, and how this led him to further wisdom and power.

Stanzas 146 to 163, referred to as Ljodotal, is a list of 18 charms known to Odin. The poem concludes with the closing stanza, **164**.

There are various reasons why the Havamal might have been put together in this way. Maybe poets, when reciting, inserted sections of other poems as illustrative points, and these were then included in future recitations. Maybe scholars specifically sought out comparable advice and inserted them.

Whatever the reason, due to the number of different poems, poem fragments and metre changes, some editors have re-arranged stanzas for literary purposes, concluding that these positions make more ‘sense’. For example, in the Bellows’ translation, stanzas 39 and 40, 62 and 65, 88 and 89 were transposed, stanzas 76, 78, 79 and 80 were re-arranged, and stanza 164 was inserted as stanza 138, as the concluding stanza of the Loddafnismal. However, *are* these literary ‘mistakes’, or have the poems been deliberately married together in this specific order? The Havamal is not only a literary work, it is also a mystery poem, and as such there may have been reasons for the stanzas to have been put into the order they appear in within the Codex Regius. Perhaps the whole poem has been put together, word leading to word, idea leading to idea, to create an immense kenning as well as a poem.

Along the Lines by David Stone

We can't know. The answer is lost in history. And so, like the Trel who has nothing to lose and becomes Konge, *any* answer may be right. With this in mind, let's explore the lessons of this kenning and learn what Odin is saying to us.

The General Lessons of the Havamal

Although the Havamal has a huge range of advice and lessons, these can largely be summed up as awareness of three Webs: your own, the Web of your community and the Webs of everything else.

Awareness of your own Web involves being aware of your current situations on physical, mental and spiritual levels, and either maintaining or improving them - don't let them drop if it's avoidable. An important part of this is to Do and to Try, and not to fear failure or resent correction.

Awareness of Community Webs and Outside Webs largely combine. They can be summed up by the message that we live in a harsh, hostile world so: keep your friends; make new friends; don't make enemies if you don't have it; treat non-friends respectfully but warily; watch out for your enemies and respond to them in kind. This builds up and strengthens the community Web – a structured Web of interconnected people, situations and relationships (which are all Webs themselves), all supporting each other.

Awareness of own Web:

- 1) Own presence on all levels
- 2) How you connect/interact with others
- 3) Develop Hamingja
- 4) Follow Wyrð

Relationship between own Web and community Web

- 5) Maintaining connections (people and situations) Karl, applied by you and to you
- 6) Helping others – Jarl, applied by you.
- 7) Dealing with problems – Herse, applied by you
- 8) Receiving help – Jarl, applied to you
- 9) Receiving correction – Herse, applied to you

Relationships between own Web and community Web with Outside Webs

- 10) Creating new connections – Jarl
- 11) *Not* creating enemies – Karl
- 12) Dealing with enemies - Herse

(In the context of this list, the Karl, Herse and Jarl principles are primarily for relating to other people, which requires subtlety, grey areas and fudging zones. The Trel and Konge are primarily for developing yourself, which you either *are* or are *not* doing – there is no grey area.)

These twelve general lessons can be regarded as being related to the twelve triangles contained within the image of the Web. Therefore, these lessons are an intricate part of the Web in its entirety.

Each stanza of the Havamal has a number of these general lessons that are particularly relevant, and these are listed after the commentary for each stanza. It should

Along the Lines by David Stone

be remembered that these are not the *only* lessons the stanza can teach, nor are the ones listed the only ones that apply to that stanza. Rather, they are intended as a means of linking the Havamal to one of the most important principles of Stav – seeing and being aware of the Web and how it relates to you and your actions. In this way, the reader can begin making his own connections to other principles of Stav. Further discussion on the Havamal and the principles of Stav follow the commentary in the section ‘The Nine Mighty Spells.’

An additional lesson that the Havamal offers, which is in some ways contrary to Stav but closely tied to working with the Web and Reality, is the acceptance of Orlog’s decrees. Some things are inevitable and unchangeable. While Stav – and Life in general – encourages always to Do and to Try, sometimes a situation has to be accepted, and it’s better to do so gracefully.

There is a prayer that asks for power to change what is changeable, strength to accept what is unchangeable and wisdom to know the difference. The Havamal offers several stanzas that deal with each part of this prayer.

Interpreting the Havamal for Yourself

In the commentary that follows, I have not given much time to the literal meanings of the stanzas, since the purpose of this is as an introduction to digging beyond that. I haven't ignored the literal meaning, I simply haven't always written about it here. When interpreting the Havamal for yourself, don't ignore the literal meaning entirely – sometimes it can give the very answer you need – but don't *only* look at it.

Bear in mind that this poem was composed many centuries ago, and represents a specific culture, with different beliefs, concepts and understandings to us. Also, it was aimed primarily at the lordly and warrior segment of society. Nevertheless, the advice contained within it is universal, provided these constrictions are allowed for. Very often, the literal advice contained within its stanzas, while perfectly valid in itself, is irrelevant when put into a modern cultural context – when was the last time you had to thatch your own roof, sail a ship across the sea or fight for your life in a battle? Therefore, the advice should not be taken literally but gleaned for underlying meaning: what is the modern equivalent that most people *would* find themselves needing to do? Thatching your roof could become, for example, ensuring you have this month's rent money, and you know where next month's is coming from. Sailing a ship could be maintaining a car and fighting in a battle is possibly dealing with a difficult and potentially catastrophic problem at work. We are, thankfully, less likely to starve, freeze or die in battle in these days and in this culture, but we remain human and with the same fundamental needs and problems as existed hundreds of years ago.

Consider the bind runes and what they mean in relation to the advice of the Havamal. I have mentioned in a couple of places where a bind rune, or one aspect of it, is relevant, but there are many, many more examples. In this way, the bind runes help you interpret the Havamal, and the Havamal help you interpret the bind runes.

Be aware, that there are many occasions when the Havamal appears to contradict itself. For example, stanza 57 says a wise man should speak out, while stanza 7 says he should remain silent.. This implies a fundamental lesson of both the Havamal and Stav: there is no single truth to anything under the sun. There are *times* when you should and must speak out, and *times* when you should and must be silent. Wisdom is knowing which is right, and when.

Therefore, an important aspect of interpreting the Havamal is to not assume there is only one underlying meaning. Think about what each stanza is saying and how that can be applied to different situations. Also, don't assume that any interpretation is absolute: you will interpret the stanzas in such a way that you learn the lessons you need *at that time*. In this way, the entire Havamal becomes a gigantic kenning, or a rune reading on a massive scale, and will offer slightly different meanings each time you turn to it.

This holds true of the interpretation and commentary I offer here: it is not the definitive meaning of the Havamal. I present it in order to share my thoughts and experiences of the Havamal – and I sincerely hope people find them of value – but more importantly, I hope it will make you think about what the Havamal is saying to *you*, and

Along the Lines by David Stone

help you discover your own meanings and lessons through it that can be applied by you within your own life,.

Commentary on the Havamal

Stanza 1

At all doors before going through
Be wary and watchful
Carefully look about you
For you can't be certain where foes may lurk ahead

Straight forward advice to watch where you're going – look before you leap. However, it has far wider connotations. It isn't only about looking through a door for enemies, it's about being aware of everything around you at all times. People: where they are and where they're going – are you going to bump into someone – and also what their intentions are – are they going to clash with your intentions? Also look out for objects and obstacles, too: a 'foe' can just as easily mean a bit of loose carpet that can trip you up. Therefore, this stanza gives advice to learn your place in your Web and where all other people, objects and intentions are, in relation to you, within your Web. Whether these things are a threat, and asset or are neutral to you, you still need to know.

On a deeper level, doorways are metaphorical as well as physical. Starting a new venture, a new job, a new home, a new relationship, a new philosophical idea are all 'doorways' through which we walk in our lifetimes. All of these need to be treated with caution and respect, not so much in order to *avoid* danger or harm, but that we recognise and acknowledge its presence, so we can deal with it without it taking us by surprise.
Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 2

Blessed is the giver a guest has come
Where may the stranger sit
Swift is he who with his sword shall try
To make proof of his might

Two conflicting ideas here, both part of the Nordic world: the honour of being a host and receiving guests; the swiftness of using force and violence to prove worth. In this it teaches us to live in peace but to be prepared for battle. Even if we attack no one, it doesn't follow that no one will attack us, and we must be equally ready to receive a stranger as friend or foe, based upon his actions. This echoes the principle in Stav martial arts of waiting for one's opponent to commit to the attack before responding. This stanza, however, teaches us to treat all strangers as guests until and unless they make an aggressive move. Thus, our own actions are of peace, giving others no reason to attack us unless they have or make a reason.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 10 11 12

Stanza 3

Fire is needed by he who comes in
From the cold chilled to the knees

Along the Lines by David Stone

He needs food and clothes
After journeying in the mountains

The literal advice of this stanza is so obvious that it almost *has* to be metaphoric. Thus, the ‘cold’ is a more esoteric concept of isolation or misunderstanding. One is reminded of the story of the spy who came in from the cold, and the prodigal son who was welcomed back after straying. Therefore, the fire required is human love and compassion and the chilled knees is the awareness of its absence.

The second half of the stanza is comparable with the first, but also has connotations of spiritual travelling, through Lokk Seid and, more commonly, utsette. This demonstrates the fact that once you have come back from a spiritual journey, you need to take care of your physical body – which is also part of *you* – which may have been neglected. Also, dealing with physical needs will help ground you and bring you more fully back from the spiritual realms.

Havamal Lessons: 6

Stanza 4

Water is needed by the visitor come for a meal
And a towel and a warm welcome
If he would remain welcome and be welcomed again
He must act wisely and well

Obligations of host and guest: the host to greet and care for the guest, the guest to respond and behave himself. Again, there are allusions to strangers meeting and accepting one another, and for welcoming back someone who has strayed, physically, mentally and spiritually. In a hostile world you want to keep your friends and make new ones – it’s a cold and lonely world if you have no friends. Thus, the second half speaks to host as well as guest – be careful, be sensitive to needs. Don’t lose a friend over some trivial event or misunderstanding.

Havamal Lessons: 5 6

Stanza 5

Wits are needed when travelling widely
Though all is easy at home
The witless man becomes a laughing stock
If he would match wits with the wise

It is easy to become settled into a fixed pattern of life if there’s no change. While this is not an inherently bad thing, one must be aware that things can change suddenly and when/if they do one needs to be ready to respond. Therefore, by making changes, trying new things and taking chances when things are stable will leave you better prepared should you be forced by circumstances to make changes, try new things or take chances. Better to gain knowledge and experience when there’s no pressing need than to suddenly find yourself competing with experts while only having half an idea of what you need to know.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Also, if you are going to do anything that requires a sound knowledge of a subject, then make sure you *have* a sound knowledge. How many people read a single book and then start practicing herbalism or reflexology on other people? They will quickly come unstuck due to a lack of solid founding knowledge, and anyone who does have a sound knowledge in the subject will at once see them as an amateur and a fraud. Therefore, study and gain knowledge, practise and gain experience. It will take longer, but will serve you far better.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 6

No one should be boastful of his keenness of mind
But with caution keep it close
To the wise who keeps his counsel when a guest in a home
Ill fortune and shame rarely come
For no friend is more trustworthy
Than tried and tested wisdom

There is no gain in being overly proud and singing praises of your abilities. They are far more useful when they are applied in the proper way and brought out in little bits as and when they are needed. No one likes a braggard – his own arrogance negates any respect people might feel for his skill and knowledge.

There is another reading for line three: not only is it wise to be respectfully quiet of your own knowledge, but *keeping* your counsel also implies following your own words – practicing what you preach. Then you don't need to declare your knowledge because everyone can see it for themselves. Also, because everyone can see you living your own wisdom, it demonstrates that it is sound and can cope with the rigours of everyday life.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5

Stanza 7

The wise guest who attends the feast
Sits with silent attention
He hears with his ears sees all with his eyes
Thus cautiously does the wise man learn

Don't leave this advice only for feasts – it can be applied in any and all situations. It pertains to awareness of the Webs around you and of applying Galder to the situation. Active listening is an important part of this – really listening to the other person, not merely waiting for your turn to speak, and responding to what they say rather than following your own train of thoughts all the time. However, this is only part of Galder. It also involves looking, reading body language, seeing how people respond and react to each other as well as to you. Read into the situation and trust your instincts (an aspect of Seid), while remaining grounded and aware that your supposition may be wrong – be prepared to change your ideas should the need arise.

In doing this, you become aware of what is going on around you; you can pick up enough information to be able to deduce what people are thinking and talking about, and

Along the Lines by David Stone

enough snippets of the subject to enable you to throw in intelligent remarks that will make people think you know more than you do – a form of ginning that gets you accepted while you are still learning what’s going on.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6

Stanza 8

Worthy indeed is he who attains for himself

The goodwill and praise of others

It’s less safe to rely on wisdom

That lies in another’s heart

Living to your wisdom and following the Line of your Wyrð that you have chosen will make you worthy of respect. No fanfares, no newspaper headlines, you will quietly go about your life, earning the respect of those who connect with you, teaching some and learning from others. And you, like others, will come to respect people you connect with who also follow their line, even though it’s not your line. Leave their line for them and your line for you and you will each reach your destination.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Stanza 9

Worthy indeed is he who keeps

His reputation and wits all his life

For bad advice a man often gets

When he follows another’s heart

Merging into the idea of stanza 8, this pertains to someone who is able to walk his talk all his life. This doesn’t mean he has no crises in his life; but rather that he is able to adapt, to regain his balance and continue to follow his line, even if he’s had to redirect it to keep it consistent with the new things he’s learned. Your Wyrð is evolving all the time, and one Line which served you well may become irrelevant for you later in life. For this reason, no one can follow another’s Line and if they try, or are forced to, it will cause resentment and anger and disrespect for one another.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 10

No better burden can be taken on travels

Than a good store of wisdom

It will prove better than wealth on the unknown paths

And provides a refuge from grief

Literally taken, this is good advice: don’t go on a journey without some knowledge of how you’re going to make your way, how to live in the environment you’ll be entering, how to recognise the warning signs and know how to respond.

Likewise, metaphoric journeys: the journey of life requires knowledge and is an on-going learning process. On Seid journeys, the knowledge you have will help keep you

Along the Lines by David Stone

from straying completely away from the physical world and will help you to return afterwards. Even though Seid is an irrational practice and works in *spite* of Galder knowledge, by truly *understanding* and *knowing* the things you've learned through Galder, they become part of *you*, part of your Web and will, therefore, be with you in the Seid trance, surfacing as required, even if you are not consciously aware of it.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 11

No better burden can be taken on travels
Than a good store of wisdom
He couldn't have worse provision for carrying
Than over-indulging in ale

Ale comes up quite often in the Havamal and while it can be taken literally, it should be regarded metaphorically as any form of over indulgence. When the Havamal was written, they didn't have the substances we do today that we can get addicted to. They didn't have the technology – the films, television, games, internet – that people can lose themselves in and seek to escape the trials and responsibilities of Reality. They had ale. Therefore, references to ale are references to anything that can ensnare and beguile the senses and takes one away from Reality and into fantasy.

The wisdom spoken of in the first two lines gives the proviso of responsibility: a little is fine. Feel free to indulge and take pleasure from your chosen vice, but maintain control. It's over indulgence that is the problem (and different vices – and different people – require different amounts for it to be an over indulgence). Stay in control of your vice. Do not let your vice take control of you: that is a Trel response, the antithesis of Stav.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 12

There is less good than is generally believed
In ale for the folk of Earth
For the more he drinks the less does man
Hold his mastery of his senses

Continuing the theme of indulging in vices, now it is taken further with the implication that even a little is not such a wonderful thing. Again, no mention is made to abstain – that's a personal choice no one can make but oneself – but the given wisdom is that it is better not to partake, and certainly not to over indulge.

The last two lines imply more than becoming drunk/high/stoned and losing mastery of the senses. It speaks of a deeper, more sinister, loss of senses through dependence and addiction. Once the craving for a vice reaches a certain level, it begins to take control of your life, your mind, your thoughts. You become a Trel to its commands and are no longer master of your own destiny.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 13

Over ale hovers the heron of forgetfulness
Ready to steal men's wits
With the heron's feather I lay fettered and
In Gunnlod's home was held

Emphasis is laid on the dangers of over indulging in vices. Loss of wits, loss of memory. Again, things go deeper than the outer words: Forgetfulness implies more than loss of short term memory, whether temporarily or permanently. It warns of forgetfulness of yourself, of your duty, of your very essence as an individual person. The vice can become the only reason to exist, at the expense of all else. Everything you have done, everything you have achieved, everyone who trusts in you – all lie forgotten.

As if part of a twelve point plan, here Odin admits his dependence on a vice and how he succumbed, to his cost, in the hall of his enemy. Of course, the 'hall of an enemy' can be seen in many ways and implies any situation where your over indulgence is to your disadvantage – at the works party, talking to the boss; when driving; when surrounded by business rivals; when failing to impress the special person you've had your eye on...It is easy to find yourself in the hall of your enemy when your wits and senses are scattered.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 14

Drunk I was and more than drunk
When with Fialar the wise
It's the best of drinking if afterwards
One brings back his wisdom

This is the last of four stanzas on this subject of over indulgence – although not the last word on it in the Havamal. It begins with another confession of succumbing. The two people mentioned between stanzas 13 and 14, Gunnlod and Fialar, are both connected with the story of the Mead of Poetry (more on this in stanzas 104 – 110). Fialar is one of two dwarfs who killed Kvasir and made his blood into the mead; Gunnlod is the giant who stole the mead from them, and from whom Odin bought/stole it in his turn.

However, the reference to Fialar *the Wise* implies he helped Odin in his predicament, which seems unlikely from the killer of Kvasir. As it happens, Fialar is *also* the name of the cockerel who will crow to warn the gods of the start of Ragnarok. Perhaps Odin, having succumbed to his vice, saw Fialar approaching and, fearful that Ragnarok was upon him, received a wake-up call. Realising he would be useless in his present condition, he began the arduous crawl to rid himself of his dependency.

Thus, he is the embodiment of the last two lines: coming back to wisdom doesn't only refer to sobering up or coming down, but a deeper understanding of one's dependency on a vice and the commitment to make a change.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 3

Stanza 15

Silent and wise should a king's son be
And bold in the face of battle
Brave and cheerful should every man be
Until the day that death shall claim him

Any leader, in whatever capacity he leads, needs to embody the traits that he represents more than those who follow. Authority is meaningless if those under him have no respect for him, or faith in his ability to lead them. Thus a Stav teacher should know and understand Stav, but also *live* Stav, and be seen to do so. Only then can he speak with true authority.

Everyone, whether leader or follower, should attempt to live up to their own strengths and abilities at all times. To always be furthering themselves in ways they find fulfilling, stretching themselves and finding their limits. There is always more we can do or achieve – if there wasn't, we'd already be dead.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 7

Stanza 16

The fool believes he will live forever
If he does not face the fight
But old age will not spare him
Even if the spears do

Continuing the theme of stanza 15, the 'fight' here implies the fight of life, the ongoing challenge of living to the full. The fool thinks there will always be more time – tomorrow, next week, after Christmas, soon. There is no guarantee. Death comes inevitably and suddenly. And even if you are still alive tomorrow, next week, after Christmas, not only has the intervening time been lost, but time causes abilities to fade, muscles to weaken, bones to become fragile. There's little point leaving things until you are sixty that should have been done at twenty. *Now* - the only instant in which we truly exist - is the time to do things, whether we are twenty or a hundred and twenty.

Havamal Lessons: 1 4

Stanza 17

The fool stands gaping when he visits
He mutters or stays silent
But should he take a drink his mouth opens
And the measure of his mind is known

This stanza speaks of shyness. Some people are shy, some are not, there is no shame in it. However, someone who knows they are shy should work to overcome this trait. Then, not only will they gain the benefits of increased confidence, they will also gain the lessons learned during their struggle to turn a weakness into a strength. The fool

Along the Lines by David Stone

knows he is shy but makes no attempt to counter it and waits for others to approach him, while putting up boundaries that discourage them.

Drink raises its evil head again, either literally as alcohol or in its form as any vice. It's a well known phenomenon that often someone who is normally shy will open up when they've imbibed. Then they will either babble like a fool because they have nothing to say, or they reveal their depths and their wisdom because they are no longer intimidated. The use of such 'Dutch Courage' can be beneficial in aiding a shy person to overcome their shyness, but warning should be taken from stanzas 11 to 14. Even if you make good use of it, it is the alcohol that is giving you confidence, not your own improving nature. Use it, but don't come to rely on it.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 4 5

Stanza 18

Only he who has wandered wide
And journeyed far is aware
How great is the mind that guides one
Who is sharp of wit and wise

Living to the full and gaining life experience gives one a broad mind and intense knowledge and awareness. As Odin journeyed, physically and spiritually, he asked questions and gathered information. So should we all. Then our minds will sharpen, we will have knowledge, wit and wisdom.

This not only relates to physical journeys. 'Wandering wide' can involve broadening our outlook, examining matters – in the news, in books, at talks and events – that we would normally ignore or dismiss. 'Journeying far' can also mean digging deeper – take nothing at face value and do not accept the first interpretation without looking for a second. Do your own research and find out what it means to you, then you will have gained wisdom, not merely ingested raw data.

Havamal Lessons: 1 4

Stanza 19

If you don't refrain from mead then drink in moderation
Speak with purpose or be still
None who's just will consider you rude
If you go early to your bed

'Do' or 'do not', there is no room for dithering. But if you 'do', then do so wisely and with purpose, not merely for sake of doing it. Going to bed early – or when you *need* to – is good literal advice, but it goes further. Know your limits and stop when you reach them, whether this is drinking mead, discussing philosophy, gambling or anything else you do. It is better to acknowledge and admit that you can't take any more, or have reached the limit of your knowledge or strength or money, than to push on and risk harming yourself or making a fool of yourself without cause. And likewise, respect the

Along the Lines by David Stone

limits of others and don't try to force them to go further – although this doesn't stop you from teaching or training them to be *able* to go further, if they are willing.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 20

The greedy man unless he checks himself
Will eat his way to life long trouble
This man when among the wise
Is scorned for his weakness

As with ale, this stanza is good advice on the literal level, but also refers to the dangers of over indulgence in general. Whereas stanzas 11 to 14 refer more to drug and activity related indulgence – things which are not actually *needed*, merely desired – this warns of indulging too heavily in things we do need. We need to eat or we'll die, but eating too much, or eating the wrong things, will cause us trouble. This stanza reminds us of the Lifestyle Bind Rune: we need food, activity and company, but we also need abstinence, rest, solitude. Over indulging in any to the exclusion of its counterpart – or even to the exclusion of other aspects of the bind rune – will cause us no end of trouble. The phrase 'unless he checks himself' places responsibility squarely on the one doing it, both for doing it, and for finding a way of stopping.

It is easy to scorn someone who does this – and we all do it to some extent. When we see someone indulging too much in one aspect of the Lifestyle Bind Rune, it is easy to spot it. It sticks out in their life as an obvious imbalance. But stanza 133 reminds us that no one is so wicked as to have no worth: their problem is not the extent of their essence.
Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 4

Stanza 21

Cattle know when it's time to make an end
And they leave the pasture then
But the foolish man will never know
The limits of his belly

Continuing the theme of indulgence, it is given to everyone that they know their limits – even the beasts of the fields know them. The danger comes when we over look or ignore our limitation, or when we *do* know our limits, but the over indulgence has become more important to us than maintaining our own status quo. This has plainly become a Trel situation and the one in it has to work very hard, and become dedicated to doing something about it, in order to break free of it.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 22

He is wretched and weak of mind
Who mocks all things

Along the Lines by David Stone

For he never learned what he ought to know
That he is not free from fault

We've all met this type of person, who isn't happy unless they've found ten things wrong with the world and the people around them before breakfast. It also harks back to mocking other people for their weaknesses: this person would mock the one who knows his limits and stops (stanza 19) and he'd mock the one who doesn't know his limits and continues (stanzas 20 and 21). If we are truthful to ourselves, we have all been this mocking person, and have all been mocked by him. Therefore we should remember our own failings before we criticise others so that, rather than mocking, we can each support one another as we *all* strive to regain equilibrium.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6

Stanza 23

The fool lies awake at night
Fretting over many things
He's worn and weary when morning comes
And his woes are as bad as they were

The Reality of our lives is Now – the only point in time and space that really exists. The past is done and must be accepted, the future doesn't exist yet, though we are shaping its path in the Now. Remember: Do or Do Not. To 'do not' doesn't mean to do nothing. To 'do not' is a positive action, not a negative one. To fret over worries is to do nothing – a negative action that achieves negative results. Remember the Lifestyle Bind Rune: to fret over worries is neither Activity (to Do) nor Rest (to Do Not). Make a decision: the problems are not affecting you *now*, so rest; or, if you can't rest, then *do* something about the problems, something that will change or improve them, or even something that will allow you to put them out of your mind and so let you rest.

Then, rested, you will be better able to deal with the problems when (and if) they enter into your Now.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 24

The fool takes to be friends
Those who laugh when he speaks
He doesn't notice when among the wise
That he is despised by them

Awareness is needed at all times to be able to read the mood of your companions, students or audience. Just because they seem to be listening and appreciating what you say doesn't mean they are taking anything in. They may find what you are saying is ridiculous and makes no sense to them, or you may be speaking on a level that is too simple or too advanced for them. Granted, this is a two way process and they could tell you if there's a problem, but remember stanza 15: the speaker needs to have mastery over what he is saying and be able to gauge how people are reacting, then he can adjust his

Along the Lines by David Stone

dialogue accordingly. Unless, of course, he is *trying* to promote this particular response, in which case he *is* a master of his speech: a Konge can appear to be a Trel, if that is his desire.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 25

The fool takes to be friends
Those who laugh when he speaks
But he learns the truth when he comes to court
And few will speak on his behalf

Taking the theme of stanza 24 further, the speaker who has not gauged his audience well and thinks he has their attention will get a rude awakening when he comes to rely on their knowledge or support. While this is a warning to the speaker/teacher, it is also a warning to the audience/class. When/if he finds out they are not supporting him, there is a good chance he will break from them, and then they will lose the (perhaps genuine and necessary) wisdom that they could have gained from him. The two-way process mentioned in stanza 24.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5

Stanza 26

The fool thinks he has knowledge
On his own in the corner
But he knows not what answer to give
When others ask him questions

This stanza is related to stanzas 24 and 25, but also stands on its own. It is easy to think you've mastered something when you are the only witness and judge. Many people learn something and think they are masters of the subject, only to discover that many others also know what they've learned, and much more besides. The true test of knowledge is to experience life through it, put its tenets and philosophies to the test. Also, interacting with others who share the same or similar knowledge to bounce ideas off each other.

Remember, the 'others asking questions' is more than just students asking for information. It was a test of skalds – which Odin frequently employed – to ask questions they already knew the answers to, to see if the other also knew. This is touched on in more detail in stanza 63.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Along the Lines by David Stone

Stanza 27

The fool when with others
Had better to stay silent
His ignorance will be his secret
Unless he talks too much
But the man who knows nothing
Does not know he's talking too much

This is a form of *ginning*. By not admitting ignorance, people will assume you know what is being talked about. You are then able to sit quietly listening and begin to pick up the subject. It is even possible to pick up enough to be able to throw an appropriate comment or observation into the mix, thus strengthening the *ginning* – which is actually becoming *less* of a *ginning* and more a Reality. Of course, the illusion is shattered if you make a wrong or inappropriate comment, and the man who doesn't listen carefully and fails to apply what he hears to what he already knows is leaving himself wide open to making a mistake. (see also stanza 7)

Of course, there is nothing inherently wrong with not knowing a subject and asking for information. However, there are various reasons for employing this *ginning*. One is vanity or pride – a desire to be seen as knowledgeable and not needing to be taught. Not especially laudable, perhaps, but understandable if you're with people who would belittle you for not knowing. Another reason is that, when two knowledgeable people are discussing a mutual subject, they talk about it in a very different manner to if they were teaching, and a quick witted listener will learn more about the subject in this way than from spending hours in a classroom. This is also the reasoning behind getting an apprentice to sweep the workshop or classroom – they are fulfilling a necessary task, while picking up information from silently watching and listening.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 28

Wise he seems who questions well
And who also answers well
A secret can not be kept
That sons of men are passing around

This alludes again to the skaldic knowledge test, as well as a general learning environment. One problem with teachers telling their students to ask questions is that until the student knows something about the subject, they don't know what they don't know, and so have no idea what to ask questions *about*. This also goes back to the idea of gauging your listeners: just because they aren't asking questions doesn't mean they understand. Therefore, the teacher needs to ask *them* questions regularly to see if his students are able to answer them. If they can't he needs to rethink his teaching methods. Sometimes students simply can't (or won't) learn. In this case the teacher needs to understand this fact and not waste the time of the *rest* of the class for the sake of this one.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Lines three and four are both a warning and an assurance to knowledgeable people. If you want people to know, you must tell them and pass the word around and ensure it's heard. If you don't want people to know, then don't tell them. This sounds obvious, but it's amazing how often people keep things secret and then get annoyed when no one knows their ideas, or tell people secrets and are then annoyed when it spreads around.

A half-way point – how to tell *and* keep a secret – is through kennings: to reveal facts in a hidden or coded form so that anyone who wants the information must unlock it for themselves, and anyone who can't be bothered won't learn the answer. This also connects to questioning and answering well – anyone who can ask or answer a kenning will seem wise indeed.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 29

Senseless words are often spoken
By the man who cannot be silent
A wagging tongue unless it is guarded
Brings trouble upon its owner

It is often observed that those with the least to say, say it at the greatest length. Verbal diaphora can cause no end of trouble. Not only the obvious problems of a lack of respect – or even physical violence - due to boring or offending people, and the diminished standing that results from talking on a subject you don't know to people who *do*, there are more subtle dangers too.

It is often overlooked that words are very powerful. A form of Galder, spoken words manifest a Reality in the minds of those who hear. Words, in the form of stories, songs and prayers are well known to create certain emotions, certain frames of mind. Used wisely, words can evoke the power of the listener to manifest individually, assisting everyone to travel closer to Orlog. Used callously, words can turn people into mindless zombies, buying wholly into the Reality created by the speaker.

Used indifferently or carelessly, as implied by the 'wagging tongue', words can confuse the mind, especially if they think or assume that the speaker knows what he is talking about. This gives a double meaning to the caution of guarding the tongue: the speaker should be sure of what he's saying and be prepared to accept responsibility for the outcome of his words; but also, the listener should be prepared to accept responsibility for what they allow into their mind, and take nothing at face value.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 30

Make of no man a mockery
Although he sits in your hall
Wise many seem if they are not questioned
And quietly sit in peace

Along the Lines by David Stone

In light of stanzas 27 to 29, don't assume that someone who doesn't spout wisdom is a fool. Maybe he knows nothing but is wise enough not to reveal it, maybe he knows his limits and won't cross them, or maybe he knows his own power and neither needs nor wants to reveal it.

Any form of assumption is the antithesis of Stav, a lazy way of avoiding having to put in the work to discover the Reality of the situation. Mocking a wise man as a fool will make the wise man see you as a fool. Mocking a fool as a fool is degrading and unworthy of a wise man, and so reveals you to be a fool.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 5 10

Stanza 31

Wise is the man who draws back
If he sees he is mocking another
For little knows he who mocks and laughs
If he's laughing surrounded by foes

This takes the lesson of stanza 30 and cautions to always be alert to your words and actions, and to desist if they are making you stray in a direction that will lead you into trouble. 'Trouble' in this instance is a situation where you will have to accept responsibility for words or actions that you don't want responsibility for. These are the foes that surround you, not just the friends of the one you're insulting: your reputation, your own level of self worth, your moral standing. Is what you're doing worth losing or damaging any or all of these? If not, stop. An honourable withdrawal and an honest apology will strengthen you within the community, and in your own heart, far more than blustering onwards.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10

Stanza 32

Many men though are friendly
Yet fight with their friends at a feast
For mankind there will always be strife
With guest sounding off against guest

People are different. They are all individuals and as such there are going to be disagreements, contradictions and quarrels even among the closest of friends. This is inevitable. It is going to happen – unless one cow-tails to the other, which is contrary to Stav. Therefore, don't worry when it happens, but learn from the experience. Address your differences, resolve your difficulties and resume your friendship.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 7 9

Stanza 33

Eat early is the normal advice
But late if attending a feast
Lest, hungry, you gobble and wolf down the food

Along the Lines by David Stone

And never have speech with the rest

Consider the situations you are heading towards and prepare yourself in advance as much as possible. That way you are less likely to be overwhelmed by what's going on around you, and you will be better placed to interact with the situation and both give and receive more from it.

An example of this is training in martial arts (when done properly) so that when and if a hostile situation arises, you will be better prepared to recognise it for what it is, and be able to deal with it rather than just blindly react.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 10

Stanza 34

Long and hard is the road to a bad friend
Though he lives on the route that you take
But straight and short is the way to a true friend
Although he lives far off

The 'friends' can be taken literally: people will cheerfully cross countries to meet someone they really want to be with, but won't even cross the road for someone they don't care for. However, the 'friends' can also imply life situations. People will put up with any inconvenience or hardship for a situation they truly love (such as the ideal job, partner etc), but will resent even the benefits of a situation they loathe.

So, why are so many people stuck in situations they loathe? Why isn't everyone enjoying the challenge of living their most loved situations? It's a Trel response, brought on by accepting a Reality someone else has created, and/or not being prepared to accept responsibility for their own actions. A review needs to be made, and either become satisfied with the current situation, or make the effort to create the desired one. More on this in the next stanza.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 35

Away must one go not remaining a guest
In one house forever
Love becomes loathing when he stays too long
In somebody else's home

Continuing the theme of stanza 34, the 'house' can imply a life situation. Always remain aware and alert to the ever-changing Web of Reality. What was your most loved situation last year may become stale next year. When a situation becomes a chore rather than a challenge, it's time to face Reality and consider where you are going. Do you need to change the situation to suit you, or change yourself to suit the situation? Either one can be a valid response.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 36

A place of your own is better even if humble
A man is the master in his home
Just two goats and coarsely thatched roof
Are better by far than begging

This echoes the theme of stanza 34 about developing and creating the situation you love. How ever humble your dreams may seem to others, they are *your* dreams, and so they deserve the work and attention to make them Reality. Better to work on your own humble dreams than someone else's grandiose ones. Begging is continued in stanza 37.
Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 37

A place of your own is better even if humble
A man is the master in his home
His heart will bleed if he has to beg
For every morsel of food

This develops the ideas of stanza 36, which ends with the idea of begging. Begging, in this instance, can be related to the concept of living in a situation that you loathe, as many people do. The sense of unhappiness and despair that comes from being in the wrong situation can eat away your very ability to make positive changes.

This can be regarded, in Stav terms, as being off you Line. It is the purpose and duty of all people to work with their strengths and develop their weaknesses, and can be perceived as guiding the Line of your Wyrd towards your connection to Orlog. 'Begging', in this light, implies having strayed, to not be moving towards Orlog: by *not* having played to your strengths; by giving in to your weaknesses; by becoming distracted by a goal not relevant to your aims. Regaining sight of your goals and moving towards them, even by a small amount, is better than 'begging'.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 38

Away from his weapons in open ground
No man should step a foot
No one is sure when the need for a spear
Will arise from the path ahead

Maintain awareness of the situation around you and be prepared for sudden changes. Have plans in place and keep them fresh and relevant, so that if the need arises you are already prepared and know what to do. This can range from stock piling food and

Along the Lines by David Stone

fuel against prolonged shortages to taking an umbrella if it looks like rain. Prepare for the worst, hope for the best.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 39

I have found no man so free with gifts or food
That he would not be glad of a gift
Nor one of such wide-reaching wealth
That he hated an offer to him

Always make an offer in exchange for services or assistance, even if they are done for free. That person has put himself out on your behalf, and an offer of a gift in exchange expresses your gratitude and strengthens the bonds between you. Failing to make an offer can cause resentment and weakens the bonds between you, especially over a prolonged period.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10

Stanza 40

If wealth a man has amassed
Let him not suffer need
Often a foe receives what was planned for a friend
For much goes worse than we expect

Just because someone has had success and is doing well, doesn't mean they will never have problems and require assistance. Then, the measure of their reputation and standing in the community will determine the level of assistance they will need – one reason (albeit a selfish one) for helping others when *you* are able. 'Wealth' in this instance can represent spiritual wealth and achievement, and success on more subtle levels, not just material gain.

The 'foe', as always, can represent many sorts of problems and dangers, such as illness, death of a loved one, and things out of our hands, like a change in the law. By heeding the advice of stanza 38, a successful person can minimise the impact when it comes but, with the best will in the world, some things are worse than expected, or just take us totally by surprise. Then support is needed and should be asked for.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10

Stanza 41

Friends shall gladden one another with gifts and arms
That much is plain to see

Along the Lines by David Stone

The longest friendships are those of gift-givers
For as long as they are fated to live

This takes the idea from stanza 39 and broadens it to between friends – friends should give gifts *because* they are friends, no other reason is needed. The gifts in this instance can be more symbolic, as well as physical. Being aware of a friend's situation and doing what is needed to help improve it through assistance and support is the type of gift one friend gives another. Sometimes just knowing that a friend knows and cares about your situation can lift your spirits.

Havamal Lessons: 3 5 6

Stanza 42

To his friend a man should prove a friend
And gifts with gifts repay
But mocking shall be met with mocking
And treachery repaid with lies

This stanza doesn't refer to the mocking or treachery of a friend (a true friend *wouldn't* mock or be treacherous). Instead, it advises to treat people according to their worth. Be friendly and make friends where possible, but don't waste your friendship on those who don't return it, or who are openly hostile. Like stanza 32, this one also warns of the inevitability of strife and disagreement. As long as you follow the advice of the Havamal, you have no reason to blame yourself if others don't like you. Just see the Reality of the situation, work with them accordingly and keep your friends close.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 43

To his friend a man should prove a friend
And also to the friend of his friend
But no friend should any man be
To the friend of one of his foes

In actual fact, it is quite possible to not get on with the friends of your friends, and to enjoy the company of the friend of an enemy. This stanza, therefore, speaks less of friendship and more of loyalty, and of strengthening the communal Web around you. If you openly dislike the friend of a friend, you will put your friend on the spot where he either has to please both, or cut one (or both) off. Either way, the Web has been weakened. Likewise, being friends with an enemy's friend is putting *him* on the spot. Not only could you be cut off, he might even undermine you to help his better friend, your enemy.

These ideas are further explored in stanzas 44 to 46.

Havamal Lessons: 5 10

Stanza 44

If you have a friend whom you fully trust

Along the Lines by David Stone

And want nought but good from him
Then share thoughts with each other and gifts exchange
And go often to meet him

This is your true and bosom friend, the one you may tell your secret hopes, fears and shames to, knowing they won't be ridiculed or spread around. This is part of what's meant by 'share your thoughts'. Also, it refers to honesty to tell them when they are wrong or out of line, just as when they are doing well ('he is no true friend who only gives pleasant speech' – stanza 124). Going often to meet him not only refers to social visits, but also requests for advice and opinions, and to give them freely in return.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9

Stanza 45

If you've another friend whom you hardly trust
Yet want nought but good from him
Then speak fairly to him but think falsely of him
And treachery repay with lies

This is the sort of every-day friend, working colleague, friend of a friend, with whom you are friendly but do not share an intimate relationship. Treat them fairly and well, but don't put unnecessary trust in them, either for support or privacy. Since you are friends, the rule of gifts applies, but be wary if they begin to treat you with less respect and be prepared to deal with the situation accordingly.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Stanza 46

As for he whom you hardly trust
And whose thoughts you do not share
You may laugh with him but guard your thoughts
And repay his gifts in kind

These are casual acquaintances, who you know but have little contact with. Trust, let alone confidence, doesn't enter into such a relationship. Treat them amicably – there's no sense in making an enemy without reason to – but watch how they treat you. Be prepared to swing either way if they make a move, whether towards friendship or hostility, and respond in kind.

This stanza speaks of the general rule in Stav for dealing with situations: remain balanced, don't anticipate or assume, and respond to the Reality of their actions, not to what you think/want/expect will happen. As with all other situations, you are also free to

Along the Lines by David Stone

make the opening move, whether to launch an attack or offer the hand of friendship, or any other action, but always be ready to respond to what *really* happens in response.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Stanza 47

Once I was young and wandered alone
And knew not the path I trod
Rich did I feel when I found a comrade
For Man is the joy of Man

This speaks of the Lifestyle Bind Rune in general, but specifically the Solitude-Company line, emphasising the over dose of solitude needing the balm of company. It also speaks of the single life and then of finding a life-partner (remember, 'Man' almost always refers to 'human'). The stanza emphasises the fact that, while we need both company *and* solitude, we are gregarious creatures at heart and need regular contact with others. However much of a loner you may be, however much you crave a hermit's life, remember to include *some* contact with your fellow man. It will enrich your solitude to do so.

Havamal Lessons: 2 5 10 11

Stanza 48

Brave and noble hearted men live the best lives
Seldom do they know anxiety
But the coward knows fear of all things
And the miser reluctantly returns a gift

This is the embodiment of following your Line, of guiding your Wyrd by your strengths to lead you to Orlog. It requires nerve, there are risks, it can go wrong. If you truly follow your strengths, then even if it goes wrong it will be more a challenge than a problem, but to not do it in *case* it goes wrong will end in nothing being achieved and a sense of missed opportunities in the future.

The noble hearted will share what they have learned, and in so doing they repay the gifts of those who helped them to learn. The miser takes the gift of learning but gives nothing back, or only reluctantly, thereby denying anyone else the lessons he has learned and showing disrespect for those who opened their knowledge to him.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 49

My clothing I gave in the field
To graven wooden men
Worthy they deemed themselves all dressed up
For the naked man lacks worth

This stanza has several possible meanings. It might relate to the veneration of idols, which were once given clothes and food as offerings to the deities they represented,

Along the Lines by David Stone

and so this stanza could be taken as doing duty to ones god/s. Alternatively, it might refer to Ask and Embla, the first man and woman, who were fashioned from the wood of an ash and an elm respectively. Thus, the clothing given can be taken to imply all the gifts of the world and of the gods, and the stanza can be taken as a prayer of thanksgiving for these gifts.

However, neither interpretation is consistent with the purpose of the rest of this section of the Havamal, that of giving advice to live by and to adhere to the principles of Stav. Therefore, a third interpretation is to help the less fortunate – to give, if you can afford to, to those who have nothing. Along the lines of charity beginning at home, it is as well to help the lesser members of your community as this can only strengthen the overall Web of the community. By helping someone to help themselves, you help them to help the community and everyone benefits. However, watch out for the miser and don't continue to give to those who take but make no return.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 4 5 6 7

Stanza 50

The fir tree dies on the open hill
Its bark and needles fall
Thus is a man whom no one loves
Why should his life be long

This relates to stanza 47 and the need for company, and also to the 'one who has nothing' of stanza 49. Someone who is alone, unloved and cut off from the community might as well be dead for all the benefit they are giving to or getting from the world. This is not to imply a hermit's life is unworthy, but that an exchange needs to be made, a process of give and take with your fellow men if life is to have full value.

Also, this stanza is an admonishment to the lonely and unloved: a tree on an open hill has no choice – you do. If you want company and to be loved, then you must change your situation. You may ask for help, but you – and no one else – must make the first move and be prepared to follow through.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10

Stanza 51

Hotter than fire between bad friends
Does affection burn for five days
But come the sixth that passion cools
And the love fades into ashes

Along the Lines by David Stone

More than just friendship, this stanza refers to any new situation – a new relationship, a new idea, a new project, a new way of life and more. There is always a burst of excitement, a surge of energy that raises it up and carries you along with it. This is also called the honeymoon period and the real test of it comes once that initial burst of enthusiasm has ended. If the new situation is worthwhile, it will have generated enough energy to continue past this point. If it isn't worthwhile, if it only has power during the initial excitement, then the energy will dwindle and the situation will falter and fade away.

The one who is truly proficient at seeing Reality will be able to tell whether it has enough independent fire to sustain itself, and can decide whether more work is needed, or whether to just let it die.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 52

No great thing does any man need to give
Often a little is praiseworthy
With half a loaf and a shared cup
I made a firm friend

A little is a lot to those who have nothing. This stanza, though, speaks of more than physical charity. It is about doing things for people with no expectation of return. Little kindnesses that will cost you nothing but may give a great deal to the recipient. Again, it's about not making enemies if you don't have to, making new friends wherever possible and strengthening the communal Web around you. If everyone is looking out for everyone else, then no one can be taken by surprise and assistance will always be available.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 5 10

Stanzas 53 to 56 are all linked

Stanza 53

Of small sands come small seas
Thus small are the minds of men
For all men are not equal in wisdom
But all men are half wise and half not

The wisest man doesn't hold the answer to all things and his mind has limits – indeed, compared to the infinity of Orlog, the mightiest mind is tiny, as is the mind of a fool compared to his. Even the mightiest mind has its share of error and folly.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 54

Along the Lines by David Stone

A measure of wisdom should each man have
But never too wise let him be
For he lives the fairest life
The man whose wisdom knows bounds

Therefore, don't worry that you don't and can't know or do all things. Accept your limitations as part of your Reality, part of your strengths and weaknesses, and use them accordingly. No one can be All Great, so strive to be the greatest that you can.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 55

A measure of wisdom should each man have
But never too wise let him be
For a wise man's heart seldom knows joy
If wisdom too great he does win

Like a wine taster whose pallet is so finely attuned he can't enjoy a glass of wine unless it's perfect, so everyone should take care that their beloved skill does not engulf them and rob them of the pleasure it once gave. To seek perfection is no bad thing, but be happy with your work even if it falls short.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 56

A measure of wisdom should each man have
But never too wise let him be
No man should know his fate in advance
If his life is to be free from sorrow

It is our fate that we can't see the way our lives are going. This is necessary if we are to learn anything. By not knowing where our choices will take us, we learn and develop by making the choice and stepping into the unknown. Our strength lies in our ability to take pleasure in life despite the uncertainty of our future. If we knew where we were going and how to get there, then there would be no achievement in arriving.

Stanzas 53 to 56 speak of Odin's sorrow. He struggled and worked and sacrificed to gain wisdom and knowledge and in doing so created his own misery – fore knowledge of the death of his son, the decline and destruction of everything he had built up, and his own inevitable death at the hands of enemies he had made for himself. Thor, the amiable oaf, knew less than Odin, but took more pleasure in his life.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 57

A brand is kindled by a brand and burns
One fire is lit by another
So men by their speech are known to men
And the foolish are known by their silence

Along the Lines by David Stone

This refers to the give and take of humankind in general and within the community in particular. More than just their speech, people are known for their actions in general and for their lack of action. Neither is 'good' or 'bad' – sometimes action is needed, sometimes inaction. To give to another is good, but to become known as a soft touch who'll give to anyone is bad. See the Reality and respond accordingly.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10

Stanza 58

He must rise early the man who seeks
The goods or life of his foe
The idle wolf gets little meat
Nor the sleeping man success

Plan your goals and be prepared to do what is needed to achieve them. Don't trust to luck over important things. You will achieve nothing if you don't do anything.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 59

He must rise early who has few workers
And go earnestly about his work
Much gets neglected by the lazy riser
Wealth is half won by swiftness

Closely related to stanza 58, this relates to the day to day work that needs to be done, rather than specific goals. Work on the essentials first, then the rest of the day is yours to do with as you please, secure in the knowledge that your work for the day is done.

This idea can also be applied to big jobs that will take a long time to complete and are so big that you are overwhelmed by them and don't know where to start. Break it down into achievable goals and decide to accomplish one goal per day. Once you have achieved that goal, the rest of the day is yours, and you are secure in the knowledge that you have fulfilled your commitment. If you chose to do another goal, that's a bonus.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 60

Of fire wood and thatching bark
His requirements a man should know
And know how much wood he will need for a month
And half a years full use

Closely related to stanzas 58 and 59. This relates to your awareness of the Web of your surroundings and needs. In order to plan your jobs and goals, you need to be sure of just what it is that you need, and how much of it you require. There's little point beginning something if you don't have the commodities required to achieve it, or if you

Along the Lines by David Stone

won't be able to support yourself while doing it. Therefore, plan out your requirements and make these your priority. This will give you a solid foundation to work from.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 61

Be washed and fed when going to the courts
But don't worry too much about your clothes
Let no man be ashamed of his shoes or clothes
Or of his horse even if it be poor

Look after yourself. Washing, grooming and eating are basic preparations when going out in public that can be done by anyone. By not doing them, you show a lack of self respect, and if you don't respect yourself, why should anyone else? Therefore, look after your needs and don't skimp on them. That said, *don't* worry about the things you can't change, or can't change immediately. Remember the advice of stanza 36: if what you have is the best you can currently achieve, then don't be ashamed of it, however much more others may have.

This advise stands for less physical needs, too. It relates to general preparation, and an awareness of your situation and circumstances, and a satisfaction with what you have. Even if you plan to have more some day, be satisfied and proud of what you have now.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 62

The eagle snaps and turns its head
When it comes to the ancient sea
So is a man in the midst of a crowd
And has few to speak for him

Unlike sea eagles that hunt for fish, most eagles don't fly out into the open sea where there is nowhere to settle and nothing to eat. Therefore, this stanza warns of the feeling of bewilderment at finding oneself in an unknown and potentially hostile environment with no back up plan. Like the eagle turning its head, the only thing to do in such a situation is retreat – or hope for the best. Thus it is a totally Trel situation.

By extension, therefore, the stanza advises to do the opposite: be aware of the Web of your situation and where it is leading, while utilising the advise of the Havmal to lay plans and back up plans, and have the support of your community.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 63

Along the Lines by David Stone

All should be ready to question and answer
Who want to be deemed of the wise
Give thoughts to one be wary of two
If three know then it's known to all

This speaks of the responsibility that comes with wisdom or skill (if you want people to know you have it): to be ready at all times to learn and to teach. It also refers to the knowledge game Odin often played and that skalds follow, of asking questions you already know the answer to, in order to test the knowledge of the other. This explains the last two lines: there is no merit in knowing things that many people know. The last two lines can also pertain to giving knowledge: the best way to learn is to find out the answer for yourself, but there is a time when information should be given. If the knowledge is esoteric, however, it should only be given to someone who truly merits it – ‘give thoughts to one’, who might also be a personal apprentice. Giving the answer indiscriminately – the two and three – weakens its purpose by making it ‘knowledge’ rather than ‘wisdom’. It also denies the recipients the gifts they would have gained by coming to the knowledge for themselves.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6

Stanza 64

The man who is wise in counsel
Should make measured use of his power
For when he fares among brave fighters
He learns that none is the boldest of all

The first two lines relate to stanza 63, regarding caution in how and to who you give information. Taken with the last two, it speaks of humility: be proud of your abilities – all abilities, not just wisdom – but don't be arrogant. There will always be people who are better than you in some aspect, and why deny yourself the gift of their strength by alienating them?

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10

Stanza 65

Often the words that one speaks to another
Will bring him an ill return

Relating to stanzas 63 and 64, this cautions of the danger of revealing your heart by expressing yourself. This is part of the whole aspect of galder: expressing what is within you in an external form that others can share in, will always be a potentially painful and dangerous activity, since it allows others a glimpse inside your most personal Web. It can also be a richly rewarding activity, for the same reason.

Along the Lines by David Stone

There will always be people who disagree with you. Sometimes because of genuine moral/political/artistic/philosophical/etc reasons; sometimes due to honest misunderstanding; sometimes due to malice or a refusal to consider an alternative viewpoint.

As always, a negative stanza like this one gives caution to be aware of this unpleasant fact, but not to let it stop you. Fore warned is fore armed: by knowing this potential outcome, you can incorporate it into your plans and backups and be ready to deal with it when – and if – it arises.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 66

Too early to many places I have come
But at others much too late fared I
The drink was all gone or not yet brewed
The unpopular man rarely gets it right

A caution that not only must you be constantly aware of your own Web and situation, but also aware of the Webs and situations around you, and of those you are going into. Utilise your wisdom and employ the arts of galder to deduce what the situations are likely to develop into from your knowledge of what they were and what they are. Then be prepared for those situations while remaining fluid enough to adjust to what really happens.

If you achieve all that, you will arrive as the drink is being poured to the chorus of ‘good timing!’ Of course, it is metaphoric drink being referred to, being the climax, crisis or purpose of the situation that you need to be there for.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 67

To men’s homes they’d invite me all over the land
When I needed no food at the time
Or two hams would hang in my trusty friend’s house
Where I had eaten one

There is a caution here to be aware of two types of friends. One is the type who wants to be *seen* to be your friends, but who don’t really care about you. They make magnanimous offers which are empty and are only made because they know the offer won’t be taken up, or they withdraw it once it is accepted. The second is the true friend, who makes no show to anyone else, but is always there when needed – they’ve got two hams ready in case you turn up unexpectedly. This is, therefore, a twofold caution: to be aware of your friends and what their motives are towards you; and to be aware of your *own* dealings with friends – which of the two are you to *them*?

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 6

Stanza 68

Along the Lines by David Stone

Fire is the best gift to men
And to catch the sight of the sun
Also health if a man can keep it
And living a worthy life

There is an analogy to requirements for a life well-lived here:

Fire symbolises the basic requirements of life – food, shelter, company etc,
without which life is intolerable or even impossible.

Catching a sight of the sun symbolises freedom and potential, the chance to strike
out and make a place for oneself in the world.

Health symbolises the maintenance of life, the ability to ebb and flow and accept
change while still living the life you want.

The worthy life is the culmination of all this, the success of completing it so that,
at your inevitable death, you can look back with satisfaction and no regrets, so that Death
will gain a prize in you, and Life will weep at your departure.

All five classes fit into all of these parts, but there is a broad analogy for each one
as a single class:

The first is the Karl, looking after the basic needs and taking care of the self.

The second is the Herse, entering into a wider world and taking responsibility for
more than just personal requirements.

The third is Jarl, dealing with the more esoteric needs that come with change and
experience, which require acceptance rather than resistance.

The fourth is the Konge, fulfilment, culmination and acceptance of the Final
Change.

The Trel has no place within this analogy, as it represents the failures and doubts,
the set-backs that intimidate one into not working to keep going.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4 5

Stanza 69

No man is all wretched however bad or ill-fated
Some gain joy from sons
Some from their kinsmen others with wealth
And some from their worthy deeds

Here is the one who allows the Trel to take possession of his life. The stanza is a
reminder that, however far you have wandered from the Line of your Wyrð, there is still
worth within you. Never give up entirely on the chance to get back on track. Focus on
your joys, on your strengths and begin again. If you fail again, begin again. And again.
As often as is necessary. You are never so far gone that you can't begin to do better and
re-route your life by your Wyrð towards Orlog.

Havamal Lessons: 2 5 6 7 8 9 10

Stanza 70

It is better to live than to be a corpse

Along the Lines by David Stone

It's the live man who gets the cow
I saw the pyre blaze for the rich man
And he lay dead before his door

Life is the time to do anything you want to do. Once you're dead it's too late. Whatever you believe happens after death, and whatever *actually* happens, this life is all that we know we've got. This also reminds us of a major lesson of Stav, that *Now*, the infinitesimally small moment between the future and the past, is the one moment that we should be aware of and utilise to its greatest potential. It is the only point in space and time that *can* be used: the future hasn't arrived yet, the past is already gone. Now is the time to Do.

[Note: The first line of this stanza - in the original manuscript - can be better interpreted as "It is better to live, *and a worthy life*" instead of "than to be a corpse". The 'corpse' aspect is an amendment made in 1818 by Rask (cf Bellows)

The implications of the stanza are of a *worthy* life, whereas the amendment suggests it is better to be alive regardless of the quality of life. Alternatively, "than to be a corpse" could imply the Trel life of drifting aimlessly and achieving nothing. Seen in this way, the two lines mean exactly the same thing.]

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4 6 7 8 9

Stanza 71

The lame man rides a horse the handless drives herds
The deaf can fight and win
The blind man is better than one burned
Nothing can be done by a corpse

This ties together stanzas 69 and 70, showing that even insurmountable problems such as loss of limbs, deafness, blindness, terminal cancer, which can not be rectified should not stop someone from living to the fullest of their ability. Life remains the time to get things done, and it's a Trel response to give in to weakness. The pyre or grave comes all too soon.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4 6 7 8 9

Stanza 72

It's better to have a son even if he's born late
When his father is already dead
Memorial stones seldom stand by the road
Save that one kinsman honours his kin

Along the Lines by David Stone

This stanza speaks more about a metaphorical son: the legacy that you leave after yourself, based on your reputation, the deeds you have done and the work that you leave behind. The degree to which you succeed in your goals is less important than what you actually *do*. The memorial stones, likewise, are not literal reminders of *you* as an individual person, but the degree to which you affected the world and the various Webs by your presence and actions. The kinsmen of this stanza, similarly, are not your blood-kin, but the ones you have connected with and, especially, the ones inspired by you to continue along the path you started. This is explored further in stanzas 76 and 77.

The message of having this son late in life is, of course, another indication that it's never too late to start doing better.

[As an aside, the word that is translated as 'kinsmen' is 'froendr', which would appear to share a root with our word 'friend'. This is interesting in that it implies a true kinsman is, first and foremost, a true *friend*.]

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10

Stanza 73

Two may conquer one the tongue may slay the head
Within every fur coat I look for a hand

'Two may conquer one' speaks of force of arms, but also of skill. In Reality, one may conquer two, but in doing so, he shows himself to be superior in skill and is, therefore, the greater – he is 'two' because he is greater.

'The tongue may slay the head' speaks of another disarming skill – skilled speech. The wise and/or cunning application of galder can start or end a war with a word or the stroke of a pen, without the speaker lifting a hand in combat.

The 'fur coats' denotes all people, while the 'hand' is their skill, warning to take no one at face value. The old, doddering man on the bench may be just as dangerous as the youthful thug, but for different reasons. Likewise, if you learn someone's skill then you can use that knowledge to your own advantage, as well as it being used against you.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 6 7 12

Stanza 74

He welcomes the night who can rely on his fare
Short are a ship's yards
Changeable are autumn nights
Often the weather changes in five days
And more so in a month

This warns of the general dangers of the world and reminds us of the fact that many things are out of our control. The ship, small on a mighty sea, is a vivid image of our small securities in a wide and changeable world. This fact can't be changed, but it can be accepted and planned for, with provisions and contingency plans laid in place before hand. Therefore this stanza speaks of awareness of Webs and adaptability to their change.

Along the Lines by David Stone

‘Welcoming the night’, however, could also speak of the acceptance of the Ultimate Change, in which case ‘his fare’ could refer to one’s assurance of having done the best possible to guide his life towards Orlog.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 75

A foolish man knows not
That wealth can fool many
One man is wealthy another is poor
Yet none should scorn him for that

Not only wealth, but any material possessions. Having a big library doesn’t mean the owner is well read. Having a flash car doesn’t mean he’s a good driver. Therefore, judge people for their nature and character, not their possessions. The fact that many people *do* judge by possessions is evident from the existence of this stanza, and is further reinforced in stanza 78.

A more metaphorical interpretation of ‘wealth’ is an ‘ability’. Some people are able to turn their hand to many things, others struggle over simple things. Again, the ability to turn one’s hand doesn’t automatically imply a ‘better’ person, merely a skilled one. It is how that skill is used, and the character of the user, that reveals a better or worse person.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 76

Cattle die and kinsmen die
And so the self must die
But a worthy name never dies
For the man who has good renown

A reminder of the ever-present inevitability of death, but also of change: cycles end and new ones begin, projects, relationships, jobs etc all vary and change, ebb and flow and sometimes disappear entirely. Therefore, the ‘worthy name’ can be remembered before physical death, in the legacy left by a worthy participation in the cycle, after they have moved on. A more literal instance of memory after physical death is explored in stanza 77.

Havamal Lessons: 5 10

Stanza 77

Cattle die and kinsmen die
And so the self must die
One thing I know which never dies
The fame of each dead man’s deeds

You need to have done something *really* spectacular for your literal fame to last more than two or three generations, yet this stanza speaks of *all* people, and of fame

Along the Lines by David Stone

never dying. The way this paradox works out is to relate to the Nordic concept of Time, as embodied by the three Norns: all that is, all that is becoming, all that should be. The important thing here is that there is no Norn to represent what is ‘past’. Everything that has ever happened still exists – it ‘Is’ – by virtue of the fact that it has shaped the way the world has ‘Become’. Therefore, every person – by the mere fact of their having existed – has, and is, changing the way the world develops. This stanza can thus be seen as a caution to make sure you sow worthy seeds in your present, so that in your future the worth you have sown will be part of Reality.

Havamal Lessons: 5 10

Stanza 78

I saw well stocked folds among Fitiung’s sons
Now they bear the beggars staff
Wealth is as swift as a winking eye
The most unreliable of friends

‘Fitiung’ is not known as a character outside this poem. However, in Bellow’s translation, he interpreted it as ‘the Nourisher’ and representative of the Earth. Therefore, Fitiung’s sons can be regarded as all people on the Earth.

The literal interpretation of the stanza follows up the ideas in stanza 75, that the worth of a person shouldn’t be judged by so fickle a means as wealth. It also reinforces the advice of stanza 74, that many things in life are out of our control: a storm can destroy crops and ships, animals succumb to illness, banks fore-close and stocks crash. We do have a measure of control over our fortunes, but even this control can be wrecked by one bad decision or incorrect advice. All good reasons for maintaining your reputation and building strong relationships – in case you ever need a more reliable friend than wealth.

The analogy of ‘wealth’ as ‘ability’ also holds true here, as it did in stanza 75. Our abilities change as we progress through life. Injuries and illness can rob us of physical and mental prowess, as can the inevitable aging process. More reason to maintain reliable friends, and also to remain aware of the Reality of your changing Web, so you can counter the effects, or prepare for the inevitable.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 10 11

Stanza 79

If by chance a foolish man might get
The love of a woman or else wealth
His pride waxes but not his wits

Along the Lines by David Stone

And he goes on buried in conceit

This stanza cautions against the dangers of gain without work. It is many people's dream to win the lottery or have their ideal partner presented out of the blue, or to come into property or gain sudden understanding, and there is nothing inherently wrong with wanting – or getting – them. However, any mighty gift such as these needs to be earned if we are to fully appreciate it and get the most from it. Then we can use the gift with wisdom and respect, knowing the worth of it from the effort it took to achieve it. Receiving the same thing out of the blue with no effort on our part can result in a lack of respect for it, causing us to squander or misuse it. In addition, by planning and working for it, we are more likely to achieve it – or something else – than if we just wish for it.

There are also people who will believe they are inherently better people for having received it – or, that they received it *because* they are better people. Such arrogance will further lead them to squander and misuse their windfall.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 80

Certain is that which you asked of the runes
Of the Mighty One
Made by the greatest gods
Coloured by the Master Skald
Safest and best to keep silent

This stanza is a promise and a caution for reading runes. What you get from them is determined by the purpose and skill behind your use of them. You won't be using the very same runes that were carved and coloured by Odin, but the runes you use must have the same intent and purpose as if they *were*. What are your reasons and motives for questioning through them? What is your stake in the answer? It is easy to read and interpret in a manner that is relevant to your own needs and desires. How objective are you truly being?

Unless you are very sure that your reading is objective and without fear or favour, then it's best to keep it to yourself and meditate on it further. If you *are* sure, then you can be certain that it *is* the true reading, and go with it.

This stanza also refers to runes in their role as 'mysteries': anything you are attempting to read, interpret or understand can be applied to the caution and promise of this stanza.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 81

Give praise to a day at evening
To a woman when she's in her grave
To a weapon when tested
To a maid when married
To ice when crossed
To ale when it's drunk

This stanza is, essentially, the Nordic equivalent of the proverb “don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched” and is a reminder to be constantly aware of the Reality of the current situation. Do not become complacent just because all seems well right now – enjoy it, but don’t assume it will always remain so.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 82

In the gale chop wood
In fair winds cross the sea
At dusk sport with maidens the day has many eyes
Use a ship for speed and a shield for defence
A sword to strike and a maiden to kiss

This stanza ties in with stanza 81, but approaches it from a different direction. Here, the advice is to be aware of the current situation and act according to its strengths and weaknesses: there’s little to be gained in attempting to sail in a gale, but you can still chop wood. Therefore, if your plans for the day involved sailing, postpone it and do something relevant to the Reality of the situation you find yourself in.

Be ever ready to change and adapt to Reality, and utilise what you have in the best way to fit your needs and the situation.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 83

By the fire drink ale
On ice go on skates
Buy a horse that is lean and a sword that is tarnished
Fatten the horse at home and the dog in your house

The first two lines appear to be related to the advice of stanza 82, and apparently unconnected to the rest of the stanza. However, their presence in this stanza suggest that their lesson is to be incorporated into the rest of the verse: be aware of the situation and ready to adapt. Get what you can, even if it isn’t perfect: you can work to make it precisely what you need by taking the situation and both adapting it to fit you, and yourself to fit it. At the same time, though, it gives warning not to get any old thing: the horse is *lean*, not weak; the sword is *tarnished*, not corroded. The underlying strength can be coaxed out with care and attention.

Along the Lines by David Stone

This reflects the Stav lesson of changing a Web by being aware of its current Reality and working with it along its own lines.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 84

The oath of a maid let no man trust
Nor that a woman speaks
For upon a whirling wheel their hearts were made
And fecklessness lies in their breasts

This is one of the apparently sexist stanzas that annoy a lot of people, and needs to be understood in context: the advice of the Havamal was originally aimed at the warrior and noble classes, a very *male* oriented company. As such, the individual members may never have had much contact with women apart from family members, and had little experience of women as intelligent - even cunning - people, and needed to be cautioned and advised against letting their guard down.

In this context, the stanza can be read as being a caution against any person – or any situation – that appears desirable, but about which you know little or nothing. Find out about it, whether through questioning or direct experience, take nothing at face value and don't rely on anything until it has demonstrated its constant reliability.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanzas 85 to 89

These appear to be a single poem of general caution, reflecting the advice of stanza 84 about examining each situation for its own dangers, by giving examples of universal dangers. Individually, they speak for themselves, and on the whole don't require caution to be given, since they are the sort of common sense, obvious dangers that anyone should recognise. Therefore, the whole set of stanzas is more like a general warning to be constantly vigilant, as danger can potentially be encountered at any place and any time.

That said, here are some words on the individual items listed, which can offer insight into other situations. As you read them, consider how the situation described could apply to other situations that you are more likely to come across these days.

Stanza 85

In a breaking bow or a burning flame
A wide mouthed wolf or a croaking raven
A grunting boar or a broken rooted tree
A turbulent sea or a boiling kettle

A breaking bow has an inherent flaw: a hidden knot or over-stretched fibres. A bow can break suddenly, with no warning, but others may creak or crack before breaking,

Along the Lines by David Stone

so take heed of the warning and be prepared to discard it and take up another the moment it does break.

A flame is potentially a benefit and a hazard at the same time, and so needs to be treated with utmost respect.

A wolf pointing its open mouth at you is a situation that requires immediate, deciding action. It is also worth noting that the wolf, Fenrir, who killed Odin, had a mouth that stretched from the ground to the sky – a wide mouthed wolf indeed.

A croaking raven can give away your position, or alert you to a possible intruder. Also a portent of death.

A grunting boar is getting excited or angry and should be treated with caution – know the signs.

A broken rooted tree can be any situation with a fundamental weakness – including poorly-laid plans.

A turbulent sea is a troubled situation that can become worse.

The danger of a boiling kettle is contained, but may spill or spurt unexpectedly.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Stanza 86

A flying arrow or falling wave

Ice new formed or a coiled snake

A woman's bed talk or a broken sword

The sport of bears or the sons of kings

Both the arrow and the wave are situations out of your hand, whether you shot the arrow or someone else did.

The ice in this instance isn't a simple frost, but a thick coat that, when strong, can bridge chasms or water. Newly formed, though, it is soft and weak and can hide hazards rather than bridge them.

A coiled snake can shoot out its attack very fast and over a surprising distance – while appearing to be asleep. When a snake is in a very tightly coiled mass, rather than a neat ring, it is scared and liable to attack if threatened.

The woman's bed talk reflects stanza 84, reminding one to be wary of an enticing situation with no assurance of its Reality.

Like the bow, a sword may break suddenly or crack and become weakened. A broken sword, unlike a bow, *can* still be used, but you must change the way you use it.

Bears at play can be amusing and look friendly and cuddly. Never be taken in by such an illusion.

A king's son, like any other person who holds power, can be apparently on your side, but suddenly change, depending on the political climate. As well as a general warning to beware of such change, this line is also advice to learn the game if you're going to play with politicians.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Along the Lines by David Stone

Stanza 87

A sick calf or a stubborn slave
A flattering witch or a freshly killed foe

A sick calf can't be relied upon to become a healthy cow – it might die young, or grow into an infertile, sickly or poor milk producing adult. Note, there is no advice on whether to kill it or let nature take its course – that's up to the individual. Just don't pin any major hopes on it.

Likewise, a stubborn, independent minded slave (servant/employee/assistant) can't be relied upon to give good service. While it may be commendable for *them* to use their own mind, if your plans fail because they decided to do something different to you wanted, you could be ruined.

A flattering witch is a soothsayer who only gives good news and favourable predictions. While this may be very good for the ego, it is more beneficial to receive the truth – even if bad – so you know where you truly stand.

A freshly killed foe may not be dead. Likewise, a situation that's ended may not be as finished as you think.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Stanza 88

Do not trust too much in an early sown field
Nor too soon in a son
The field needs good weather and the son good sense
And either can be denied

An early sown field is a situation you have created, and are responsible for. The son is a situation someone else is responsible for, but in which you have a stake. Either way, wait for it to prove itself before placing undue reliance on it, since even the best laid plans can fall apart due to circumstances beyond your control.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Stanza 89

A brother's slayer if met on the open road
A half-burned house or a too swift horse –
The mount is useless if one leg is hurt –
None should be so trusting as to trust in all of these

People will generally behave themselves in front of witnesses, but be wary of meeting someone you know is deceitful/underhand/criminal without witnesses.

A half-burned house can still provide shelter on a cold night but, like the broken-rooted tree, has an inherent weakness that disrupts its integrity.

A too-swift horse implies a situation that is pulling you along faster than you want to go, or you are intentionally moving too fast into a situation. Either way, it is your responsibility to take control of the situation – or at least your part in it – lest a leg gets broken.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Note, in the final line of this section, it says no one should ‘trust in *all* of these’ (my emphasis). This is an indication that sometimes you may find yourself in a situation where you *have* to trust in one of them, as there is no alternative. Just be aware that it’s a dodgy situation to rely on, so don’t make a habit of it, and don’t rely on several at once.
Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Stanza 90

The love of women who have false minds
Is like travelling over ice with an unshod horse
That is a badly broken frisky two year old
Or like steering a rudderless ship in a storm
Or hunting a reindeer while lame on slippery rocks

As with stanza 84, this should be taken more broadly than just applying to women. The ‘love’ is the promised, and expected, outcome of the relationship and the expectation of mutual trust. The false mind, clearly, is the non-intention of the other to fulfil their part. The rest of the stanza expresses how rocky, unreliable and potentially dangerous such ‘love’ is, but gives no practical advice on how to watch out for such falseness. Constant awareness of the Web is the only way, paying attention to the warning signs and not becoming blinded by your faith in their goodwill.

With the feminine aspect of ‘women’ and the implication of ‘travelling’, this stanza can also be a warning against travelling in the feminine arts of Lokk Seid unless you are sure of what you are doing. The ‘false mind’ – dubious motives, poor preparation etc – can lead to unpleasant mental and spiritual experiences, and/or difficulty in ‘returning’.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3

Stanza 91

I can speak clear for I have known both
Men’s hearts can be fickle towards women
When we speak fairest then we think most false
We work deceit against the wise mind

As a quid pro quo, there is now mention of men’s falseness to women. Again, though, it should be taken in a broader means, implying that sometimes we must be the predator of stanza 90 in order to further our own ends, even with a situation that we had entered into with every intention of fulfilling. This stanza, by its very existence, implies that this situation can arise. When and if it does, Stav rules apply: do it with purpose and accept the consequences. Don’t be a Trel and quibble over responsibilities: if you aren’t prepared to accept the consequences then honour your original agreement.

This is an aspect of the konge mindset, that has to make the decision to sacrifice all, if that is what’s needed – as ‘Rei’ on the Ethical Bind Rune.

As with the feminine aspects of stanza 90, the masculine aspects of this stanza can be indicative of a more galder approach to a situation. We ‘speak’ – present ourselves

Along the Lines by David Stone

through Galder – in a manner than gives a shield to our true intentions, and cause even the wise to be taken in by our ginning.

It is notable that the first line states ‘I (Odin) have known both (men’s and women’s hearts)’. This speaks on all levels: Odin has known many people – men and women – and gained understanding of their ways; he’s disguised himself in many forms and travelled as different people; he is proficient with arts of both galder and seid – masculine and feminine arts, respectively.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 4 7 12

Stanza 92

He should speak soft words and offer wealth
Who wishes for a woman’s love
And praise the form of a beautiful woman
He wins who woos the best

Again, this stanza speaks of more general intentions than just love play, although the use of the metaphor does indicate the level of desire for the situation. There are elements of galder and ginning here, and of being aware of the Web of the situation to know how to play the ginning. This is not to imply that such situations always call for such trickery, or that anyone speaking flatteringly always has a hidden agenda. It does mean that if you really need/want/desire a particular situation, you must be prepared – and *able* – to read and work with the Web appropriately, in order to bring it about.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 10

Stanza 93

No man should find fault ever
With another for loving
Often the wise is beguiled when the fool is not
By desire for a beautiful girl

We’ve all known friends and acquaintances, both men and women, that this stanza applies to: suddenly the world turns and the sun rises by the existence of their latest desire. Everything else falls by the wayside and you only hear from them in the rare moments when they come up for air. Find no fault with them, for if you haven’t been there yourself, chances are you will be there in the future. There is also the – sadly frequent – occasions when they need a friend once the bubble has burst. Don’t alienate a friend for their love-smitten neglect of you.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6

Stanza 94

No man should find fault with one
Smitten by that which smites many
Wise men often makes fools of themselves
When swayed by a mighty desire

Along the Lines by David Stone

Almost identically worded, this stanza reinforces the advice of stanza 93, but broadens it to include desire as a whole. The fire of love/lust is easy to comprehend, but people can become just as lost in desire for other things, including less tangible things. Sometimes called ‘obsessions’ if they go too far, this desire can cause people to make fools of themselves, put themselves in danger and bankrupt themselves. Any form of desire or obsession causes an imbalance, as observed in the Lifestyle Bind Rune, but they can be much more subtle, and much harder for someone on the outside to understand. Nevertheless, the advice remains the same: don’t alienate yourself from a friend just because of this desire.

Havamal Lessons:1 2 3 5 6

Stanza 95

The mind alone knows what lies in the heart
A man alone knows his mind
No sickness is worse for the wise man
Than to lack the longed-for joy

This stanza clarifies the situation of stanza 94: only the individual concerned truly comprehends the form and intensity of his own situation – or, more to the point, only the individual can do anything about it. An obsession for a longed-for joy can be a Trel response of giving in to the desire, or it can be a Konge response of dedicating the self to all possible action to achieve it. Both can look the same to the outside observer, who has to trust that the individual is in control. This doesn’t mean that advice or assistance can’t be offered or asked for, just that ultimately it is *their* responsibility.

Havamal Lessons:1 2

Stanza 96

This I found for myself when I sat among reeds
And long awaited my love
The wise maiden was as life to me
And yet I didn’t get her

Stanzas 96 to 102 give a story loosely illustrative of stanzas 90 to 95, with Odin’s foiled attempt to win a longed-for prize, and him pining for her alone in the reeds. The reeds – the wild, straggly growth at the very edge of water – indicate a metaphorical other-world location, implying that he was stuck, neither Doing nor Not Doing, and caught in the Trel position of stanza 95.

Havamal Lessons:1 2 3

Stanza 97

I found Gilling’s daughter on her bed
Slumbering radiant as the sun
Empty would be a noble life to me
If it lacked that fair form

Along the Lines by David Stone

There is a debate over who is the victim and who is the villain of this story. What business did Odin have being in the lady's bed chamber without her knowledge or permission? (As implied by the phrasing he '*found* her'.)

Stanza 98

"Odin come again at evening tide
If a woman you would win
Evil for us if anyone knows
Of such a tryst as this"

This reflects the advice of stanza 82, line 2. However, it is also notable that she doesn't respond "take me now, big boy," but "go away and come back later." She names him Odin – she knows who he is and daren't refuse him, but manages to wriggle out of any obligation she might have to succumb to his *droit de signor*.

Stanza 99

Away went I hopeful of love
And heedless of wisdom's voice
So surely I believed that soon I would win
Her heart and her body my joy

The Fool strikes even Odin – he *knew* something was wrong, and dismissed it, like many a love-lorn loon

Stanza 100

So I came later in evening's gloom
But the warriors were all awake
With torches burning and carrying brands
Thus led my path to desire

This should have warned him of the degree of his welcome. It also shows that, much as he desired the lady, he wasn't prepared to fight or negotiate or even trick his way in to her – it was an empty desire with no real foundation to it.

Stanza 101

So I came later at dawn's blue gloom
When all there lay asleep
A dog I found bound to the bed
Where the lovely one had lain

Along the Lines by David Stone

Creeping back like a thief in the small hours, he found he had been thwarted by a trick worthy of Odin himself: Billing's daughter had kept the letter of her promise while twisting the spirit of it. She kept her promise that he would win a 'woman' by leaving a bitch on her bed for him.

Stanza 102

Many fair maids when you know them better
Are fickle of heart to their wooers
This did I learn when I sought to seduce
That maiden wise with wiles
All mockings were mine from that crafty maid
And I won naught from the woman for me

At the end of all this, Odin emerges sadder but wiser and relates the wisdom of his lesson.

As with all the sex related stanzas, this story is also illustrative of wider issues, in this case the danger of trying to trick someone who is himself a trickster. Like poachers making the best game keepers, they know all the tricks and will spot you coming. The wisdom to be gained is knowing who you can and – more importantly – who you *can't* deceive.

Stanza 103

At home a man should be cheerful and merry with his guests
But wise and shrewd in himself
A good memory and elegant speech
Are needed of those who would be wise
A fool he is called if he has nought to say
For that is the mark of the witless

Keeping one's own counsel and not revealing cares and concerns to just anyone – only those you trust – while maintaining an unconcerned, cheerful countenance to the outside world is no small feat. Nevertheless, it is an important skill, especially for someone responsible for dependents, to keep them from worrying about matters they can't change.

Wit, and a large repertoire of relevant speeches, questions and anecdotes ensures there will always be a conversation opener, while a memory for names, faces, news and what the other person is talking about is always essential. These are all the gifts of the Mead of Poetry, yet need to be worked for and worked at – a task the fool will not undertake.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6

Stanzas 104 to 110 tell the basic story of how Odin won the Mead of Poetry. However, it is also a reverse-situation of the story told in stanzas 96 to 102: Now Odin is the one making the trick and leaving others to grieve for their loss. As with stanza 91, this

Along the Lines by David Stone

reminds us that sometimes we must be prepared to do what would otherwise be despicable if that is the only way to gain what is needed. Stav philosophy, unlike the philosophy of some religions, does not require that its practitioners be saints, to be constantly working for the good of others. It does, however, insist that its practitioners take responsibility for *every* word and deed they put out into the world, and face the consequences of them. This is touched upon further in stanza 110.

Stanza 104

I met the old giant and I have returned
I gained nought from silence there
With many words I achieved my will
While staying in Suttung's hall

Here, Odin takes the advice of stanza 103, being merry, cheerful and flattering while hiding what is really on his mind.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 7 12

Stanza 105

With the mouth of Rati I made space for my passage
And gnawed through the stone
Above and below lay the paths of giants
And thus I risked my head

Rati is the awl used to bore a hole through the mountain to the hidden chamber. Odin 'risked his head' now (rather than at any time during the rest of his stay) because whatever pretty words he might use, he had no legitimate business being in that chamber, or to have made that tunnel. He was now committed and had to take his plan to its conclusion.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 7 12

Stanza 106

Gunlodd gave me from a golden stool
A drink of the magical mead
A harsh reward I made in return
For her open heart
And her troubled spirit

In exchange for three nights with Odin, Gunlodd offered three draughts of mead. The harsh return is that those three draughts emptied the three containers of all their content, which is not what Gunlodd had expected to happen. Gunlodd should have specified a quantity – three pints, or three horns full. Instead, she was flattered by Odin and accepted his terms, trusting that he would respect her charge.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 7 12

Stanza 107

Along the Lines by David Stone

The cheaply-bought beauty I enjoyed to the full
Little does the wise man lack
For Odrerir has now been brought up
To the sanctuaries of men on Earth

Odin paid a price that was no sacrifice to him, and gained all for it. Odrerir is referred to as both the mead itself and one of the three containers that held it (the other two containers were jars, Son and Bodn. Odrerir was a cauldron). The mead being brought to men's sanctuaries refers to the small amount that Odin spilled (some authorities say it dribbled from his mouth, others say he urinated it). That little amount of mead is called the Poets Quarter and is the source of all Skaldic inspiration among men, save those rare individuals who are granted a sip of the full mead.

Odrerir means 'stirrer of inspiration (cf Larrington)
Havamal Lessons:1 2 7 12

Stanza 108

I seriously doubt that home I'd have come
Away from the giants courts
If Gunnlod had not helped me that maiden good
In whose arms I'd been entwined

If anyone else had guarded the mead, Odin might not have got away with it – imagine the situation if *Billing's* daughter had been on guard! (Stanzas 96-102) There is also the implication that Odin had taken a gamble, gone in without knowing who or what was on guard, emphasising the lesson of stanza 95 and the lengths people go to in order to achieve their desires.

Havamal Lessons:1 2 7 12

Stanza 109

The following day the frost giants fared
To the High One's hall for advice
They asked if Bolverk were back with the gods
Or if Suttung had slain him there

The fact the giants asked if Bolverk were *back* with the gods implies they knew he was really Odin. Whether they knew before hand is uncertain. Now they learned that, far from slaying Odin, Suttung was himself slain.

Havamal Lessons:1 2 7 12

Stanza 110

I thought Odin had sacred-sworn on his ring

Along the Lines by David Stone

Who now will trust his word
Suttung he betrayed at the feast
And Gunnlod he left to weep

Swearing on a ring was a sacred form of oath-taking, the ring usually being a sanctified and stained arm ring. Now Odin has the consequences of his actions. While there was never much love lost between the gods and the giants, the giants now knew absolutely that Odin is not to be trusted, since he broke a sacred oath.

Although, arguably, Odin paid at every step of the way – with a whet stone for the nine thralls, with the work of nine thralls for access to Suttung's hall, with three nights of passion for the Mead, and he only took the three draughts that had been agreed – he nevertheless tricked and connived every situation to his own advantage. He knew the greedy thralls would kill each other for the whet stone and ensured they would by throwing it into their midst. He held Suttung's brother honour bound to pay his wage by getting him access to the Mead against his brother's wishes. He knew Gunlodd's price was cheap, and he betrayed her trust by taking all the mead and then leaving her to her fate. Whether Odin or the giants are more justified is a moot point. Odin's actions were totally Konge, doing what had to be done in order to achieve his aims, at any cost. This is the lesson of Rei in the Ethical Bind Rune.

Havamal Lessons:1 2 7 12

Stanza 111

It is time to proclaim from the High Skald's seat
Located at the Well of Urd
I saw and was silent I saw and I considered
And heard the speech of men
Of runes I heard speech, wise counsels were not lacking
At the Hall of the High One
In the Hall of the High One
Thus was the speech I heard

All the stanzas from here on are the words of Odin as recited to Loddafnir (see below).

The High Skald's seat is Odin's hall, Valhalla. It could also refer to Hlidskjalf (literally High Shelf), the seat where Odin sat to observe all that was happening in the world.

The Well of Urd is one of the three outlets for the Well of Wyrð, that Yggdrassil is rooted in (see also stanza 138). The Norns sit there while they weave the Web of Wyrð for the world.

'Saw and was silent', 'saw and considered'. Loddafnir is following the advice of stanza 7 and various others: looking, listening and learning. He knows he has nothing worth saying, and so sits in respectful silence. This can also refer to the silence of the mind required by meditation: listening for wisdom through Seid means.

Along the Lines by David Stone

‘At the Hall of the High One, In the Hall of the High One.’ Repetition in such poems usually implies importance is attached to the words. The High One is mentioned twice, giving authority to what follows. ‘At the Hall’, ‘in the Hall’ implies Loddafnir was no eavesdropper skulking outside and listening through a window, but was part of the proceedings, with every right to be there and to hear the words. Using the meditation/Seid angle, it also implies that he is fully connected with the source of this wisdom, and this is true revelation not wish fulfilling fantasy.

The name Loddafnir comes from two words: Lodd, translated as ‘rags’ and Fafnir, a man who killed his father to gain his fortune, denied his brother any share, and finally turned into a dragon, guarding a hoard he took no pleasure from until killed by a man his brother hired. Therefore, ‘Loddafnir’ can be translated as someone who has gone from riches to rags by living as a dragon, now being taught how to do better by heeding the following advice. This also reflects the lesson of stanza 69, among others, that there is always time to change your ways and do better.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 11

Stanza 112

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not rise at night save to look around
Or should you need to visit the privy

‘Profit if heard’, ‘great gain if learned’: the advice needs to be heeded and adhered to. Just to know it isn’t enough, it needs to be lived, made part of your inner self. This is true of all aspects of Stav, that practical application is necessary as well as theory.

The stanza speaks of commitment to action: once a course of action has been embarked upon (in this case sleep, but it holds true for all activities) do not veer from it except for necessities. Keep focussed on the Line of your intent until such time that the line ends or veers from your course.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Stanza 113

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Take heed not to sleep in a witch’s bosom
Lest her charms ensnare you

Remember that repeated words are important. Just because these stanzas begin with the same words almost every time is not a reason to ignore them: for each stanza, remember the significance of these lines as explained in stanza 112.

This stanza echoes the advice of stanzas 84 and 90. The ‘witch’ is anyone who has power over, or can take power from, you. Following this idea, it also refers to not

Along the Lines by David Stone

giving power away by becoming too intimate – in the form of personal information and desires – to someone in authority over you. There's a fine distinction between who can and who can't be told, and how much they may be trusted, which is ultimately for *you* to decide. Also remember, a 'witch' can be a powerful ally as well as a deadly enemy. Sometimes you can feed them snippets of information of your choosing to manipulate how they try to manipulate *you*.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 11

Stanza 114

She will bring your mind to believe
You have no care for the courts or meetings of men
Food you'll hate and joy you'll lack
And sorrowfully fare to sleep

The dangers of the 'witch' as an enemy. Giving power to someone gives them control of your Web so you'll fall into the ginnings they weave. This can also be taken to imply not taking anything said by the media at face value, but to be aware of its underlying motives and look at it from alternative angles. See stanza 128.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 7 12

Stanza 115

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Never seek another man's wife
If you wish your secrets to tell

Don't entrust intimate details with anyone who's loyal to someone else. This is echoed in stanza 163. Again, feeding them false or selected information can be a way forward for you.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5

Stanza 116

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
If on mountains or fjords your path should lie
Look well to your journey's food

Be Prepared. Know what you are going into and make provision in advance. 'Mountains' and 'fjords' indicate difficult journey through uninhabited land – a situation that you aren't sure of and can't rely on outside help.

In addition, mountains and fjords are 'in between' places, which can refer to spirit travel through Seid or Utsette. Again, preparation in advance can help you during this journey, and aid your return afterwards.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 4

Along the Lines by David Stone

Stanza 117

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not let an evil man learn
Of any misfortune to you
For an evil man will never give you
A good thought for your confidence

As with the ‘witch’ of stanzas 113 and 114, don’t give ammunition to an enemy – a literal enemy, or anyone you can’t be sure of trusting. He will use it against you if he possibly can, maybe by weakening your standing with those you consider friends, or by holding it over you as a threat.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 11 12

Stanza 118

I saw a man take a mortal wound
Through an evil woman’s words
A poisoned tongue brought his death blow on
Yet no word of truth was in it

The results of failing to take the advice of the preceding stanzas. The ‘death’ need not be literal, but can imply loss of reputation, loss of standing or job. Whether the wronged party made defence or not, the deceit was believed – the ginning was more attractive than the Reality. This also suggests that some people will always be ready to believe the worst, regardless of evidence to the contrary.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 4 6

Stanza 119

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
If you have a friend who you truly trust
Fare often to visit him
For brambles grow and tall grass waves
On the scarce-trodden road

With this and the next couple of stanzas, we enter the opposite situation, that of trustworthy individuals. Nurture any situation that brings you benefit. Indifference can be as destructive as animosity, as suggested by the brambles and tall grass. Be aware of the benefits of the situation and keep them blooming.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 11 12

Stanza 120

Along the Lines by David Stone

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Find a good man and hold friendly confidence
And learn healing charms through him always

‘A good man’ implies an intimate friendship with someone of the same sex as yourself – a real, true *friend* that you can share truths with, without the complications that come from a sexual relationship, or any relationship where one is superior the other. This is a meeting of true equals who will always tell the truth with no fear or favour.

The healing charm mentioned here is this Truth: being able to discuss the Reality of the situation with no ginning to soften it. Only by seeing the Reality can a solution (healing) come about. The friend of this stanza will give that truth. (This is what is meant when it’s said that a true friend will always give you what you *need*, not necessarily what you *want*).

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 7

Stanza 121

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Never be the first to break the bonds
Of friendship that holds you
Sorrow eats the heart if you can’t speak
Your thoughts to one who cares

It’s a harsh world out there, and there will always be more people who are indifferent to you than are friends. Therefore, don’t break off a friendship without very, very good reason, especially the sort of friendship described in stanza 120.

‘Friendship’ can also imply *any* form of amiable acquaintance, members of the various communities you are part of (eg, clubs, groups, work, family, drinking friends etc). It is always better to nurture friendship than animosity. However, it says ‘never be the *first*’. Thus the stanza acknowledges that sometimes friendships *will* end. This is inevitable, but it should never be hastened if there’s no need.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 10

Stanza 122

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
With a witless man you should never
Bandy words of wisdom

Only give where it is needed and where it will be appreciated. Don’t waste your time trying to teach someone who doesn’t want to be taught – he will gain nothing and you will only become frustrated.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 8

Stanza 123

For you will never get a good return
From a wicked man
But a good man will return you
Love for words of praise

Continuing the theme of stanza 122, some people will always argue and refute what you say, while contributing nothing worthwhile to the discussion. There is no point debating with these people, and less in arguing with them, for you will gain nothing but frustration, while they obtain a perverse pleasure from your ire.

A worthy person, even if they don't agree with you, will debate the point fairly, giving reason and opinion while listening to, and learning from, what you have to say. Thus the 'praise' of line four is not empty flattery, but honest respect for one another's knowledge and opinion.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 10

Stanza 124

That is true kinship when you can speak
Your heart to another
Nothing is so bad as fickle words
He's no true friend who only gives pleasant speech

Echoing the friends of stanzas 119 and 120, this stanza emphasises the need for honesty in a true friendship, and the *need* that people have for a trustworthy confidant. Fickle words - which hedge and twist around the issue without committing to a final decision - are of no use to anyone, and are a Trel reaction to avoid conflict or responsibility. Compare the last line to the 'flattering witch' of stanza 87: sometimes the harsh truth is the best gift a friend can give.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 7

Stanza 125

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Don't spend even three quarrelsome words with a worse man than yourself
The better man had rather draw back
When the worse man wants to fight

There is no merit in defeating someone who can't compete with you or who is not worth competing with. This stanza speaks of the Jarl response of not connecting and letting things slide, rather than meeting them head on. Compare this with the Trel

Along the Lines by David Stone

response of stanza 124 to see how your reason for action plays a role. Also compare this stanza with the advice of 127. In each situation you must consider which response is more relevant.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6

Stanza 126

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Be a shoemaker or maker of shafts
For no one but yourself
If the shoe is ill made or the shaft not true
Then evil will men speak of you

This is a Karl aspect of looking after one's *own* needs, and only using skills for others once they have been developed beyond amateur level. This doesn't mean to imply that you mustn't do anything for anyone else unless you are a professional, rather than you must make sure they understand the degree of competence that they will receive. This is also advice to learn and develop skills in general, which includes inherent strengths that are part of one's personal Wyrð. In this way, everyone is constantly working, improving and developing in all aspects of life.

Havamal Lessons: 3 4 5 11

Stanza 127

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Where you recognize evil acknowledge and declaim it
And give no truce to your foes

This stanza speaks of the Herse requirement of duty and accepting responsibility of behalf of others. Where the Jarl might overlook a jibe, and the Karl only look out for himself, the Herse defends the members of his community. This includes physical attacks, and abuse, as well as situations of a more ethereal nature, such as challenging lies of omission, half-truths and implied faults as well as blatant insults, lies, law suits etc.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 7 12

Stanza 128

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Never know joy from what is wicked

Along the Lines by David Stone

But from goodness and approval be glad

This echoes the advice of stanza 127, but furthers it by advising to acknowledge and praise what is done well and kindly. All too often, faults get picked up on, but successes are overlooked or ignored, and people end up thinking there is *nothing* good in the world, and the good job they've done makes them *unhappy*, because it's gone unnoticed. All people, but especially those in charge, should make a point of noticing and commenting upon goodness.

Ignoring goodness can also be used as a panning to purposefully demoralise people. For instance, news reports these days are almost always bad news, with little or no attempt to remember the goodness that is also happening in the world. People focus on the bad news and become depressed at the sorry state of the world, not realising what else is also happening.

Havamal Lessons: 2 5 6 10

Stanza 129

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not look upwards when battle is raging
(To panic the sons of men come)
Lest you become bewitched

This can be taken as a warning against sudden panic during battle, brought on by looking up and seeing Death – Valkyries collecting the fallen, arrows and other missiles raining down on you. In a more modern context, it means don't look at, or for, *other* difficulties when you're in a difficult situation already. Rather, deal with the situation *directly* at hand, and once it is accomplished you will have a breathing space to look for the next.

Where the advice of stanza 1 could be 'look before you leap', the advice of this stanza is 'he who hesitates is lost.' Conflicting advice, but each one is vital when used in the right situations.

To not 'look up' can also imply that one shouldn't rely on providence to get you through – pray before hand, but during the conflict trust to your *own* skills. This also reminds us that 'Heaven helps those who help themselves'.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 130

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
If you want the love and confidence of a good woman
And get pleasure through her
Make good promises and keep them truly

Along the Lines by David Stone

No one loathes good when they get it

As always, stanzas speaking of ‘women’ (or, people of the opposite sex) can relate to people and situations you do not know very well and can’t easily relate to (see commentary on stanza 84). The advice that ‘no one loathes good when they get it’ is general good advice that can apply to all sorts of people and situations. The penultimate line is also good advice to deal fairly and well, deliver what is promised, and don’t promise what you can’t – or don’t want to – deliver. This way you develop a reputation as being fair and trustworthy, which will encourage others to respond in kind.

As with all situation, however, watch out for the Reality of the response you receive and don’t be blinded by your *own* honesty into assuming everyone you deal with is honest.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10 6

Stanza 131

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice

It will profit you to hear it

Bring you great gain if you learn it

I tell you to be cautious but not fearful

Beware of drink and another man’s wife

And thirdly beware thieves don’t out wit you

With all situations, watch out for the Reality of the developments and responses and don’t be blinded by your own ginnings of what you want, hope or need the situation to be. Use this awareness wisely: gauge situations, weigh up the pros and cons before deciding to commit. Know the difference between *potential* danger, and *inherent* danger (danger, risk, difficulty), and your needs versus your desire. Keep your guard ready, but don’t be constantly *on* guard – cautious, not fearful.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 132

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice

It will profit you to hear it

Bring you great gain if you learn it

Never scorn or make mockery

Either at home or on the road

Not to scorn or mock is advice reflected elsewhere in the Havamal, implying the general trend should be to make and keep friends wherever possible. The stanza as a whole reflects the need for consistency. People often have different personas in different situations, and sometimes this is necessary to fit in or get a job done. However, you should be *yourself* as much as possible in all situations. Too many disguises and personas

Along the Lines by David Stone

cause difficulties when people from different situations meet, if you are one person to one group and a different person to the other.

It also implies consistency across the scale of society, to treat all people equally. It is often observed that a person's character can be read by watching how they deal with their subordinates, equals and superiors. By truly respecting members of each, without condescension or flattery, your own character will be more worthy of respect.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 10 11

Stanza 133

Often it is not known of those in the hall
What kind of man or whose kin
None are so good they have no fault
Nor so wicked as to be of no worth

This continues the advice of stanza 132 on all its levels. While first impressions *are* important, it is also important to remain flexible when forming second, third and further impressions. Other people also have different personas, and the impression first given may not have been for your benefit. While general assessments can be made, it is very difficult to gauge the true inner person on first attempt, or who their friends and associates are.

The last two lines remind us of the infinite variety of patterns within the Web, and how we should always look beyond our own impressions, to see the Reality within.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 10 11

Stanza 134

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not scorn the grey haired sage
Often do the old speak good truth
Often from shrivelled skin comes skilful counsels
Though it hangs with the hides
And skulks with the pelts
And is blown with the cheese bags

This continues the theme of overcoming prejudices against anyone different, and reinforces the idea that age brings the wisdom of experience. The last lines speak of the fringe members of society, with the suggestions they shelter in the attics and cellars and store cupboards – the peripheries of the house that aren't considered to be 'within' the house (community).

This also implies wisdom recalled from the fringes of Reality, through Seid, or even through Galder by exploring new ideas. This expands the Web of awareness, and suggests that the one who brings such wisdom has inherent worth, despite their appearance or characteristics.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 8 10

Stanza 135

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not curse your guest or drive him out
Treat the man well who's in want

[Remember the importance of these repeated words words: 'Profit if heard', 'great gain if learned'. Remember that this repetition is to drive the lesson home: all this advice needs to be heeded and adhered to. Just to know it isn't enough, it needs to be lived, made part of your inner self. This is true of all aspects of Stav, that practical application is necessary as well as theory.]

As has already been observed before, making and keeping friends in a harsh world is more important than making enemies over trivialities. Developing and strengthening your community Web also develops and strengthens the individual Webs of all concerned, and on all levels: Physical, by having company and support to hand; Mental, through the challenge of new conversation and opinions; Spiritual, from the merging on a higher level through shared understanding, and enhancing one another's Hamingja.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 5 7 10 11 12

Stanza 136

Powerful is the door which is opened
For all who seek aid
Give a ring or ill the words
That will be called down on you

This stanza speaks of the Nordic custom of giving hospitality to all who ask, and of the potential danger of letting in social parasites and enemies along with those who are truly in need. Also, the danger of diminished reputation should you stop, having started.

However, remember the door of stanza 1, representing movement to new ventures and situations. The power of being able to open such doors to others is great indeed, not only for the knowledge and wisdom that such an act calls for, but also for the reputation that brings people to you, and their trust in your ability and honour to lead them truly. Thus, the 'ring' given is your trustworthiness and honour in dealing fairly with them and not taking undue advantage of their vulnerability.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 5 6 10

Stanza 137

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it

Along the Lines by David Stone

Bring you great gain if you learn it
When ale you drink seek the power of earth
For earth cures drunkenness as fire cures sickness
Oak for constipation an ear of corn against magic
Rye cures rupture the moon cures rage
Earthworm for a bite the hall against household strife
Grass cures the scab and runes against evil
Soil is used against the flood

This is a particularly bizarre stanza that defies any simple interpretation. It has been suggested that it pertains to household remedies and charms, but this doesn't sit quite right – for example, how could you use 'the hall' in a remedy or charm? Come to that, how are *any* of them to be used for remedies and/or charms. Oak, for instance: do you chew the leaves; make an infusion of the leaves, acorn or bark; where a wreath of oak branches; a necklace of acorns? It is all very vague, and the list of ailments and problems is not very comprehensive, nor do they relate to one another.

There are some logical connections. Earth to cure drunkenness could imply a horizontal surface – lie down and sleep it off. A fire can warm a sick room and promote healing. Soil can be used to build dykes or fill sand bags against flood. The hall could, possibly, imply a community meeting to sort out the problem. However, the moon is more usually blamed for *promoting* rage than for curing it, and none of the others have any obvious connections.

There are some clear connections to runes: earth to Ar, fire to Kreft, oak to Ur, moon to Mann. Others are more vague – 'corn' could be seen as a generic cereal crop and suggests barley for Fe or oats for As. Earthworm could represent Ar and/or Kreft. The hall could be As for Valhalla, but many of the deities had their own hall. Runes could be As for Odin, who discovered them, or Hagl for Heimdall who brought them to mankind. But then what of grass? Rye? Soil?

Given that this is the final stanza of the Loddafnismal, I can only conclude that it is intended as a mystery stanza, to be meditated and pondered upon for personal discovery. Search for meanings and answers within it. Make connections and see where they take you. In doing so, you can learn lessons and make connections that can help in other areas to you expected.

Stanza 138

I know that I hung on the windy tree
Hung for nine long nights
Wounded by my spear and offered to Odin
Myself to myself
On the tree that no man may know
The origin of its roots

This stanza begins the story of how Odin gained knowledge of the Runes through a self-sacrificial, trauma-led shamanic path in which he bridged the gap between Life and

Along the Lines by David Stone

what lies *beyond* Death. The tree he hung on was Yggdrasill, the World Tree, which means ‘Steed of the Terrible One’ (or Odin). Therefore, it obtained its name from this event where Odin rode it into the heart of its roots.

The image of the sacrificed god hanged from, or attached to, a tree is an image that crops up often in Indo-European and ancient Near-Eastern religions. It is a powerful image of sacrifice for a higher, or greater, purpose and embodies the epitome of both the Herse and Konge principles.

There are three roots to Yggdrasill, each being watered by one of the three outlets of the Well of Wyrd: Hvergelmir’s Spring in Nilfheim; Mimir’s Spring in Jotunheim and Urd’s Spring in Asgard. However, it is the Heart, the Origin of those roots that Odin sought out. The Tree is symbolic of the Web, and the Web is the manifestation of Orlog into this Reality. Thus, Odin’s quest was to learn the Heart of Orlog.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 139

No comfort did I receive from bread or horn
And downwards I looked
I took up the runes screaming I took them
And back from there I fell

Staring downwards, deprived of food and drink for nine days and nights, it has been suggested that Odin saw a glimpse of the Web – of Orlog herself – complete and whole. It was a traumatic image, as for any mortal come face to face with Eternity. He screamed and fell back, unable to bear the image for more than a glimpse.

But a glimpse was all he needed. He gained knowledge of the runes – the mysteries – of Orlog. The crude symbols we use are an attempt to express the inexpressible to those without the strength to bear the cursed blessing Odin received.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 140

Nine mighty spells I got from the son
Of Bolthor, Bestla’s father
And a drink I got of the mighty mead
Poured out from Odrerir

Even this knowledge wasn’t the be all and end all, though. Odin still needed the more crude knowledge of mortals to temper the knowledge from Orlog. The nine spells from his mother’s brother are discussed later, and relate to bringing Orlog’s knowledge into the everyday world where it can be used. The Mead of Poetry provided him with the eloquence to express his deep understanding in a form others could comprehend. The spells and the mead both enabled him to utilise the Galder arts to express the Seidic wisdom gained directly from Orlog.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 141

Then I began to quicken and gain wisdom
I grew and prospered
One word led to another word for me
One deed led to another deed for me

Then – and *only* then – did he begin to quicken. Only once he had found the relationship between Galder and Seid and could use each to enhance the other, did he find value in its gain. Not only did he gain wisdom of the ebb and flow of the natural cycles of cause and effect, he also gained a degree of control over each. He could choose which words and deeds would lead him to other words and deeds in directions he desired.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 142

The Runes you must find and the meaningful sign
A very great sign a full mighty sign
That the Master Skald coloured
And the Mighty Gods made
And the Lord Rune Master has carved

‘Sign’ is one interpretation of ‘rune’. A sign as a symbol and as a directive and as information, and also a sign as a portent, revealing more than its obvious meaning. These signs, and the runes themselves, we are charged by Odin to find out and understand for ourselves. Even though such mighty Gods and Skalds refined them, their mystery is there for all mankind to benefit from.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 143

Odin for the Aesir and Dain for the elves
Dvalin for the dwarfs
Asvid for the giants and all mankind
Some I carved myself

Dain and Dvalin are both dwarfs, implying that the earthy, lore-wise dwarfs grasped the power of the runes before the more airy and flighty Vanir and they taught all the light and dark elves. ‘Asvid’ means ‘All Wise’ and refers to Odin. This shows that, as the Lord Rune Master, he was obligated to teach this skill even to his mortal enemies, the giants. Arguably, Heimdall – in his guise as Rig the Walker – brought the knowledge of the runes to mankind, when he instructed Jarl in their use. However, since he must have learned from Odin, All Wise remains the ultimate instructor.

Along the Lines by David Stone

The last line is the most intriguing. We already know Odin carved Runes for the Aesir, the Giants and Mankind, yet here he mentions that he carved runes himself. This suggests two Stav lessons. First, Odin is always developing the runes and looking for new ways of working with them – not satisfied with any single answer, he is always seeking another way forward. Second, this is a further command of Odin that we carve our own runes – our own signs, our own ideas, and not to rely constantly on those of others.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2

Stanza 144

Do you know how to carve do you know how to interpret
Do you know how to colour do you know how to prove
Do you know how to offer do you know how to sacrifice
Do you know how to send do you know how to destroy?

These are the interpretations as provided by Ivar Hafskjold. This stanza is generally regarded as referring to the four classes of Karl, Herse, Jarl and Konge. There are many ways of regarding them, here is one.

Line one, a Karl lesson:

Do you know how to carve your own situation, your own web, and make it truly yours? Do you know how to interpret the other Webs around you and how they can affect, and be affected by, you Web? If not then learn – until you do know how to do these things you are not yet a Karl

Line two, a Herse lesson:

Do you know how to colour the situation, the Web, to stamp your authority, your responsibility, on it? Do you know how to prove your right of interference on Webs other than your own? If not then learn – until you do know how to do these things you are not yet a Herse.

Line three, a Jarl lesson:

Do you know how to offer the security of your own Web, unconditionally, as required? Do you know how to sacrifice your ego to maintain a detached stance on the situation of the Webs around you? If not then learn – until you do know how to do these things you are not yet a Jarl.

Line four, a Konge lesson:

Do you know how to send your Web directly into the heart of another Web and transform both? Do you know how to destroy your own Web, either in part or completely and without recourse? If not then learn – until you do know how to do these things you are not yet a Konge. (Note: this destruction can be literal, or it can imply a *total change* into something else.

Havamal Lessons: 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Stanza 145

Better not to ask than sacrifice too much

Along the Lines by David Stone

One gift will call for another
[or: By your receipts measure your gifts]
Better not sent than too much destroyed
So Thund carved of old before man's race began
Where he rose up when back he came

These are cautions against excessive, or ill thought out, use of the Jarl and Konge lessons of stanza 144, but also general advice comparable to that of the rest of the Havamal. Offering your security and sacrificing your ego are deeply intimate gifts – be certain you are giving them where they are truly needed, else your vulnerability will be exploited to no end. Likewise, the Konge's 'gift' is very invasive – is it called for, or would a lesser method serve better?

Thund is another name for Odin, who learned this lesson right back at the beginning of his existence and was always cautious of where and how he used these gifts.
Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Stanzas 146 to 163

These stanzas are probably the best known part of the Havamal for practitioners of Stav. They list the eighteen spells/charms/songs Odin learned, and which are commonly associated with the runes. However, I think they are better regarded as a summation of all the lessons of the Havamal, put into real-world situations. As such, they represent a vast treasure trove of knowledge and experience that, when learned and properly applied, will serve far better than eighteen spells: Eighteen spells allow you to do eighteen things; learning and applying the eighteen *lessons* will allow you to do an infinite number of things through your own power.

An important lesson to learn in this outlook is that there are no magic wands and no book of spells that will solve your problems. Whatever your belief in magic or deities, the fact remains that if you want a situation to change, then *you* need to do something to cause it to change, not merely dream about how you want it to be or wish for intervention by god, magic or human. *Do* pray, *do* cast spells, if this is your wont, *do* ask for help, but be prepared to put in physical and mental work as well as spiritual.

Stanza 146

I know the spells that kings wives don't know
Nor any man's son
'Help' one is called and help it brings
From pain and sorrow and all anxieties

The fact that king's wives don't know these spells might suggest that this knowledge is for lords – secrets known only to worthy men. However, taking the idea from before (eg stanza 84) of 'women' being outside situations and unknown agents, then these lessons become less 'secret' and more 'guarded'. This is further suggested from the phrase 'nor any man's son': it isn't restricted to any specific gender or class, rather it

Along the Lines by David Stone

implies that not just *anyone* should know the lessons – only those who have shown their worth to learn them. This is explored more in stanza 164.

The ‘help’ brought from this charm is indicative of the help obtained from friends and a sympathetic community who will support, comfort and aid you in times of trouble and grief, due to your having built up friendships and your reputation among them.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 5 8 9

Stanza 147

I know a second that all men shall need
Who wish to be physicians

This implies the knowledge, practical skills and experience of a healer, doctor, nurse, first-aider etc. While the ability to heal with a touch (if this was a magic spell of healing) would be of immense value, a thorough knowledge of the healing bind rune is a more realistic goal. It has the added value that the one being healed also takes responsibility in their own health.

Havamal Lessons: 6

Stanza 148

I know a third should I have need
Of fetters to bind my foe
Blunt I can make my enemy’s sword
No weapon or club will bite

Again, a literal spell to bind and blunt the weapons of your foes would be useful, but they would still be enemies, even if unable to attack. Also, remember how Loki found the chink in Baldur’s armour when he had been protected by such a spell. Far better is to bind your foes by making them not *want* to attack you, blunt their weapons by ensuring they aren’t turned on *you*.

This can be done by diplomacy and making deals and alliances, even making them your friends, or it can be done in a more Herse-like manner by asserting your authority to ensure they respond to your wishes and orders. Building up your reputation to a degree that they wouldn’t *dare* attack you is a ginning that skaldic eloquence could build up. However, be aware that, as always with the Herse, the ginning will only hold so long as your foes believe in your authority. Should the ginning ever be broken, or if someone chooses to challenge that authority, attack will follow.

Havamal Lessons: 3 7 10 11 12

Stanza 149

I know a fourth if men should clasp
Bonds upon my limbs
So great is this spell that forth I may walk
The fetters spring from my feet

Along the Lines by David Stone

The bonds break from my hands

This is a similar situation to stanza 148. A magical ability to spring fetters and open locks – or even using the skills of escapology and lock-picking – will not solve the underlying problems. You will escape, but will then be on the run, an escapee and not a free person. It is better to solve the problem by calling on friends for assistance and making a well thought out plea for justice. Then you may ‘spring the fetters’ by having your gaoler release you, and walk out free and vindicated. Fetters, of course, can imply any situation that is tying you down, holding you back, not merely physical bonds.

Havamal Lessons: 2 3 5 8 9 10

Stanza 150

I know a fifth if I see from afar
An arrow flying amidst the army
It flies not so swift that I can’t stop it
If my eyes can behold it

The important phrase here is ‘if I see from afar’. In the literal sense of an arrow, if it’s seen it can be avoided or taken on a shield, and harks back to the principle in Stav martial arts of keeping your wits and responding to the actions of your opponent, rather than making the opening move. On a broader level, seeing a dangerous or troublesome situation as it’s forming – while it’s ‘afar’ – allows you time to circumvent it or prepare to meet it. But if you *don’t* see the arrow or the situation, it will take you by surprise. Nevertheless, the ‘attack’ is honest – it’s done openly, unlike the situation in stanza 151.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5

Stanza 151

I know a sixth if a man seeks to harm me
With the roots of a sap-filled wood
So the harm he meant for me
Shall be consumed by his own evil

Spells were sometimes carved on the roots of trees and plants, and ‘sap-filled’ implies the plant is still alive to give power to the spell. Therefore, this stanza implies knowledge of having been magically attacked and being able to counter it. However, the sap-filled roots can also imply an attack through poison or drugs – or *any* subtle, underhand attack made secretly. Either way, the stanza suggests knowledge of having been attacked in such a way, and the ability not only to counter it, but turn the tables on the attacker. This could be either by manipulating events so the outcome falls on them, or by bringing what they’ve done to light and publicly shaming them.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 7 12

Stanza 152

I know a seventh if I see in flames
The hall over my companions heads

Along the Lines by David Stone

It can not burn so wide that I can't quench it
I know the spells to sing

Once again, the key point is 'if I see'. There are no magical fire-extinguishing spells to put around a house, rather there needs to be watchfulness, and plans laid for dealing with the emergency. And not just fire: watchfulness and contingency plans should always be part of life, so everything that can be done will be done to counter any crisis when it arises. Everyone knowing the plan and pitching in together will save just as much as a wizard with a fire extinguisher in his wand.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 8

Stanza 153

I know an eighth which is most useful
For all to learn and know
Where hatred flares between heroes sons
I can swiftly set things straight

This calls for diplomacy and the Jarl-like ability to detach from the situation and see it objectively so you can issue justice and resolve the matter to mutual satisfaction – or, at least, in a way that will benefit the community as a whole. This stanza also implies being aware of the tensions and frictions within the community Web, and to be already working on solutions, in order to be able to swiftly step in.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 7

Stanza 154

I know a ninth if I should have need
To protect my ship on the deep
The wind I can calm upon the waves
And lull the sea to sleep

This stanza can imply intense knowledge and experience of sailing, coupled with knowledge of weather lore, to be able to deal with current circumstances and to foresee potential situations in order to prepare for them. Also, it suggests similar awareness of *any* situation that can be affected by circumstances completely out of your control. Even though you can't prevent or alter such circumstances, it is still within your power to prepare for them as well as you can and do your best during them, so that the full force of the event doesn't overwhelm you and you can face it calmly.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 12

Stanza 155

I know a tenth if I should see

Along the Lines by David Stone

Witches playing up in the air
I can work it that back they can't come
To their own shape
Thus showing their true spirit

This relates back to the magical, underhand attacks of stanza 151, only this time it is carried out in the open manner of stanza 150 (if I should see). Countering the magic/psychic/subtle attack requires just as much awareness of the situation, but here the object is to prevent them from doing it again. It's done openly, so there's no shaming them, and they know that you know, so there's little chance of successfully turning the tables on them. The only recourses left to you are diplomacy or force to bring them in line, while ensuring everyone knows their nature and so can prepare to deal with them accordingly.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 7 8 12

Stanza 156

I know an eleventh if I must lead
My loyal friends to battle
I chant to the shields and in strength they go
Safe to the field
Safe from the field
Safe again to their homes

Loyal friends: these are the ones you have gathered about you by working with the advice of the Havamal and developing your reputation. These are the ones you can call upon and trust them to support you in your need. To keep the battle analogy of the stanza, you then need to be a good general and tactician, ensuring your 'troops' know what is needed of them, so they continue to trust and respect you after the 'campaign'.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 8 12

Stanza 157

I know a twelfth if I should see
A hanged man swing from a tree
I can so carve and colour the runes
That forth he fares and talks with me

This has several interpretations. One is having the ability, through Galder, to deduce the circumstances of the dead man in a Sherlock Holmes manner, to know who he was and what he did, as if he'd 'told' you. Another is the Seid ability to commune with spirits and to speak with him in a more literal manner.

The mention of 'carving' and 'colouring' the runes harks back to stanza 144. This implies taking a situation that is finished and dead, and having the ability to revive it – to

Along the Lines by David Stone

carve it into your own Web and into the form you want it to be, and then to colour it with your authority to make it truly yours.

A fourth interpretation comes from the image of the man hanging on a tree: symbolizing Odin on his shamanic quest for the runes. It implies that two people embarked on a spirit journey can meet on a different plane of Reality and travel and converse together, even if they are separated by many miles on the physical plane.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 10

Stanza 158

I know a thirteenth so I may pour
Water over a young warrior
And he will not fall though in the midst of battle
He won't fall beneath the swords

This is closely related to stanza 156. The ability to earn the trust and respect of the younger, up and coming, generation by giving attention to, and taking interest in them. The pouring of water is a form of baptism, bringing him into your family and Hamingja. In a more modern context, it can represent making him an 'apprentice', allowing him into the 'grown up world' and allowing and encouraging him to develop himself, while maintaining a degree of authority over him.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 3 5 6 10

Stanza 159

I know a fourteenth if I have to name
The mighty gods before men
I know the difference between Aesir and Elves
Few who are fools can know this

This suggests a thorough knowledge of mythology/religion/philosophy, to the degree of being a 'priest' for the community, willing and unafraid to call on the gods on behalf of the people and yourself, in whatever form you perceive the gods to be. Also, a thorough understanding of the runes, bind runes and all the lessons of Stav and the Havamal.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 7 10

Stanza 160

I know a fifteenth that the dwarf Thiodrerir
Sang before the doors of Delling
Might he sang before the gods and elves
And wisdom to the Master Skald

Like several people mentioned in the Havamal, Thiodrerir is not mentioned in other stories.

Along the Lines by David Stone

‘Delling’ is the father of Day, and so Delling’s Door could be perceived as Dawn, sunrise. Dwarfs are among the greatest lore-wardens of mythology. On several occasions, gods and dwarfs have challenged each other to riddle games to test their knowledge. The great trick was for the god to keep the dwarf matched knowledge for knowledge and wit for wit until sunrise (Delling’s Door) at which the dwarf would turn to stone. The god would then gain the dwarf’s treasure or thwart his mischief.

Thus, this stanza speaks of a similar knowledge as stanza 159, but couples it with the wit and skaldic skills necessary to speak confidently with a master lore warden.
Havamal Lessons: 1 2 6 7 12

Stanza 161

I know a sixteenth should I seek to have
A wise woman’s heart and love
I can turn the mind of the white-armed woman
And change all her thoughts

‘White-armed’ implies a *noble* lady, and ‘woman’ (rather than ‘maiden’) implies a *married* lady. While this stanza can refer to the ability to flatter and woo a lady, it can also suggest the ability to take a situation and, through understanding of its Webs, turn it away from those who own it and into your control. The true skill of so doing comes from the fact that the ‘woman’ is both wise and married – the situation is fully established in the other persons control, and they or it are world-wise and watchful for challenge.

Havamal Lessons: 1 2 5 6 10

Stanza 162

I know a seventeenth so that seldom
Shall a young maid shun me
Of these spells Loddafafnir
You will long seek vainly to win
Yet they’d be good for you to get them
See you well if you would learn them
Help you if you had them

The arts of seducing maidens – or, taking a newly formed, hitherto unknown, situation and making it your own. Even though this would seem to be simpler than the task of stanza 161, there is the caution that this ability is hard to achieve, and even then they will ‘seldom’ shun you – there are no guarantees. The ‘woman’ of stanza 161 knows her mind, but this very fact may make her more amenable to your offers. The ‘maiden’ of this stanza may be flighty and reluctant to place her loyalty.

Havamal lessons: 1 2 5 6 10

With both stanzas 161 and 162, the true power of success lies in the seduction. To use the analogy of women, he isn’t *taking* them, he’s making them want to *give*. This remains the same with the Webs of situations: the ‘loyalty’ must be freely given to you,

or else there's the danger of it breaking away at any moment, as the bonded foes of stanza 148 could have.

[Note. Despite the recognised Loddafnismal poem only being stanzas 111 to 137, this sudden reference to Loddafnir, after an absence of 25 stanzas, implies that this is *all* still a continuation of the words proclaimed from the High Skald's seat begun in stanza 111.]

Stanza 163

I know an eighteenth which I will never tell
To maiden or another man's wife –
The best is what none but ones self knows
Of what comes after the spell –
Save only that one woman in whose arms I lie
Or else should be my sister

The one woman who holds all his trust – not the maiden or stolen wife of stanzas 161 and 162, but his true life partner. This implies that he *would* pass on his secrets to his wife (unlike the kings of stanza 146), a total opening of himself to her. As well as 'the wife' this also implies the one situation that you have developed through the advise of the Havamal, where you feel totally at ease and able to fully relax and let your guard down, to be totally yourself. The Sanctuary that everyone needs.

It is interesting that he would tell his sister – Odin received the nine mighty spells from his mother's brother – or maybe his uncle *told his sister*, and she passed it on to Odin. Thus, if you can't pass your secrets along your own line (eg, to children or apprentices), pass them along the line of your family Hamingja (eg within your community).

However, what is most striking about this stanza is that it tells us of a person or a situation, to whom, or in which, it is permissible to divulge the meaning of this eighteenth charm, but *there is no charm mentioned!* The stanza actually states that it is better when nobody knows the purpose of the spell except ones self. Therefore, it must be for us to work out what the eighteenth lesson is for ourselves. See also the Esoteric Bind Rune.

Stanza 164

Now are the words of the High One done
Spoken in the High One's hall
Useful to the sons of men
Worthless to the sons of giants
Luck to him who recites luck to him who learns
Profit to those who understand
Luck to those who hear

Outwardly this is just a closing stanza to create a specific ending, rather than the poem just trailing off. It gives praise to the skald and well wishes to the audience. As ever, though there is more to it, and it forms the final lesson of the Havamal: here's the

Along the Lines by David Stone

advice, now it's up to you to do something with it. It also gives the conditions for who will or won't receive the wisdom, as mentioned in stanza 146. Not everyone who reads or hears the Havamal will think any more on the words; not everyone who hears the lessons will learn them; not everyone who learns the lessons will follow them. Good luck is wished to all, but profit will only come through understanding. As Loddafnir was told: 'it will profit you to hear it, bring you great gain if you learn it.' By extension, the knowledge will not profit you if you ignore it, bring you no gain if you forget it.

We are told here that the knowledge will be useful to the sons of men, but worthless to the sons of giants. Here, the 'sons of men' are those willing to put in the work to learn and apply the knowledge, while the 'sons of giants' are those who are not willing. Symbolically, giants here represent the past, that which is ending. Although they are ancient, wise and powerful, and actually came into existence before the gods, their time is limited. It is men and gods who continue after Ragnarok, not giants.

Therefore, the advice is worthless to the sons of giants – or, more accurately, one who finds the advice worthless is a 'giant' *because* he finds it worthless. Of course, like Skadi and other giants who joined the gods, they can turn and become sons of men by accepting the advice and living in accordance with it.

There's hope for us all!

The Nine Mighty Spells

In stanza 140, Odin tells us that he received nine mighty spells from his maternal uncle, and received skaldic skills from the Mead of Poetry. These, combined with the knowledge of Orlog, Reality and the Runes that he earned through his sacrifice on Yggdrasil, form his magic and wisdom training. We know this because stanza 141 tells us that once he'd got them *all* he began to quicken and prosper.

Study of the runes and their use in revealing Orlog and Reality are part of Stav training. Some means of developing skaldic skills through means of Galder and Seid are explored in the Skaldic Bind Rune. But what of the Nine Mighty Spells? No mention is made, before or after, of these vital lessons that Odin learned. Nevertheless, the fact that they are mentioned in the context of other attainable mysteries suggests that these are also available to us. Therefore, we have to follow the advice of stanza 142 and find, for ourselves, the meaningful, very great and full mighty sign of the Nine Mighty Spells.

Nine is a number that crops up a great deal in Stav and Nordic mythology. For example, there are nine lines in the Web, nine worlds, Thor took nine steps after slaying Jormungand, nine breaths (usually) in the stances. And, of course, nine mighty spells. Like the 18 charms of the Ljodotal, though, the nine mighty spells are less likely to be nine spells than nine *lessons*. Nine lessons that open up an infinite array of possibilities, rather than nine spells that allow you to do nine things.

There are, for example, nine fundamental lessons within Stav:

- 1) Ability to see Reality / Webs
- 2) Skill in working along Lines
- 3) Following your Wyrð
- 4) Developing your Hamingja
- 5) Understanding Class Principles
- 6) Skill in working with Galder
- 7) Skill in working with Seid
- 8) Skill in working with Mott
- 9) Skill in working with Megin

Everything else in Stav comes from combinations of these. For example, kenning is the ability to see Reality and work along the lines of Webs. Ginning is careful application of Galder using your knowledge of, and ability with, Webs. Martial arts are an application of working along lines with Galder and Mott – and, more subtly, with Seid and Megin. Anything involving other people requires knowledge of the Class Principles, develops the Hamingja (either in a positive or negative way), and invariably involves Galder, otherwise there is no connection.

Therefore, one interpretation of the Nine Mighty Spells is the knowledge and application of the lessons of Stav.

Along the Lines by David Stone

Along similar lines (pun intended), there are nine ways of experiencing and expressing the Web:

Of the Self:

- 1) Surroundings
- 2) Physical body
- 3)) Mind
- 4) Spirit

Of the community (familiar external Webs):

- 5) Physical presence
- 6) Mental workings
- 7) Spiritual leanings

Of the world (unfamiliar external Webs)

- 8) Physical presence
- 9) Mental Workings

(You can't know the spirit of the unfamiliar)

All of the Stav lessons above relate to combinations of these: seeing and working with Webs is in all of them; following Wyrð in all of the Self ones; developing Hamingja is all of them; anything to do with people and Class Principles relate to numbers 5 to 9; Galder and Mott are the physical and mental Webs; Seid and Megin are the mental and spiritual Webs.

Therefore, one interpretation of the Nine Mighty Spells is the knowledge and application of seeing the Web.

The twelve general lessons of the Havamal tie in with the nine lessons of Stav and the nine methods of experiencing the Web:

(Remember, these are generalisations, intended to promote personal study in the links between the Havamal and Stav. It wouldn't be unrealistic to suppose *all* the lessons applied to *all* others. The following lists are the more relevant connections, but they are not definitive.)

Along the Lines by David Stone

	Web Awareness	Havamal Lessons		Stav Lessons	Havamal Lessons
A	Own Surroundings	1,2	1	See Reality	1,2,5,10,11
B	Physical Body	1,2,8,9	2	Work with Lines	1,2,3,5,10
C	Mental Body	1,2,3,8,9	3	Follow Wyrð Develop	3,4
D	Spiritual Body Community:	1,2,3,4,8,9	4	Hamingja	2,3,4
E	Physical	5,6,7	5	Class Principles	3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
F	Mental	5,6,7	6	Galder	2,3,5,6,7,10,11,12
G	Spiritual	5,6,7	7	Seid	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,10,11
H	Other: Physical	10,11,12	8	Mott	5,6,7,8,9,10,12
I	Mental	10,11,12	9	Megin	1,4,5,6,8,10,11,12

Havamal Lessons	Relate to Web Awareness and Stav Lessons
Awareness of Own Web:	
1 Own presence	A,B,C,D,,1,2,7,9
2 Connection to Others	A,B,C,D,1,2,4,6,2
3 Develop Hamingja	C,D,2,3,4,5,6,7
4 Follow Wyrð	D,3,4,7,9
Relationship between own Web and Community Webs:	
5 Maintain Connections	E,F,G,1,2,5,6,7,8,9
6 Helping Others	E,F,G,5,6,7,8,9
7 Dealing with Problems	E,F,G,5,6,8
8 Receiving Help	B,D,C,5,7,8,9
9 Receiving Correction	B,C,D,5,8
Relationship with Outside Webs:	
10 Creating Connections	H,I,1,2,5,6,7,8,9
11 NOT creating enemies	H,I,1,5,6,7,9
12 Dealing with Enemies	H,I,6,8,9

Along the Lines by David Stone

Since all these tie in together, then everything in the Stav lessons, everything in methods of Web awareness and everything in the Havamal all ultimately boil down to “See Reality and Respond Accordingly.” The primary Stav Principle.

Therefore, one interpretation of the Nine Mighty Spells is to see them as the Nine Lines that form the One Web that allows us to see Orlog, know Orlog, reach towards Orlog.

Mighty Spells indeed.

Conclusion

I hope, in working through this book, that you understand why it is impossible to write a definitive book on how to ‘live Stav’. There are just *far* too many variables – different situations, different mindsets, different motivation – for any book to hope to cover them all. Nevertheless, Stav manages to apply to any and all situations, mindsets, motivations – and to all of them simultaneously, even the contradictory ones. It has been humourously observed that Stav both is and is not a paradox, but in fact this is a literal truth: humans, and life in general, are so paradoxical, so contradictory, that any life-system has to be as well, otherwise it couldn’t function adequately except in specific situations. Stav is both the rule, *and* the exception that proves the rule.

I also hope this book has helped you to see how Stav can be applied outside the classroom and campsite, within the normal structure of the everyday world. Do work with the ideas I’ve presented here, but above all look to find your own ideas of how Stav can apply to *you* and within *your* life. Stav is an extremely simple system – everything within it is contained in one Web, sixteen runes and five principles. All other things are just examples and suggestions of how to apply them to specific situations. And yet, for all this simplicity, Stav is complex enough to apply to every person that has, is and will be on the Earth, and to every situation that has, is, will, might and won’t exist within Reality. All you need are the keys to help you unlock it.

And, ultimately, all the keys are contained within the nine lines that form the Web. See Reality. Work with Reality. Everything else is just commentary.

Appendix One

Examples of five translations of the Havamal, stanza 1

By Larrington:

All the entrances, before you walk forward,
You should look at,
You should spy out;
For you can't know for certain where enemies are sitting
Ahead in the hall.

By Bellows:

Within the gates ere a man shall go,
(Full warily let him watch,)
Full long let him look about him;
For little he knows where a foe may lurk,
And sit in the seats within.

By Thorpe:

All door-ways,
Before going forward,
Should be looked to;
For difficult it is to know
Where foes may sit
Within a Dwelling

By Auden and Taylor

The man who stands at a strange threshold,
Should be cautious before he cross it,
Glance this way and that:
Who knows before hand what foes may sit
Awaiting him in the hall?

By Bray

At every door-way,
Ere one enters,
One should spy round,
One should pry round
For uncertain is the witting
That there be no foeman sitting
Within, before one on the floor.

And mine

Along the Lines by David Stone

At all doors before going through
Be wary and watchful
Carefully look about you
For you can't be certain where foes may lurk ahead

Appendix Two

My Interpretation of the Havamal

1 At all doors before going through Be wary and watchful Carefully look about you For you can't be certain where foes may lurk ahead	Thus cautiously does the wise man learn
2 Blessed is the giver a guest has come Where may the stranger sit Swift is he who with his sword shall try To make proof of his might	8 Worthy indeed is he who attains for himself The goodwill and praise of others It's less safe to rely on wisdom That lies in another's heart
3 Fire is needed by he who comes in From the cold chilled to the knees He needs food and clothes After journeying in the mountains	9 Worthy indeed is he who keeps His reputation and wits all his life For bad advice a man often gets When he follows another's heart
4 Water is needed by the visitor come for a meal And a towel and a warm welcome If he would remain welcome and be welcomed again He must act wisely and well	10 No better burden can be taken on travels Than a good store of wisdom It will prove better than wealth on the unknown paths And provides a refuge from grief
5 Wits are needed when travelling widely Though all is easy at home The witless man becomes a laughing stock If he would match wits with the wise	11 No better burden can be taken on travels Than a good store of wisdom He couldn't have worse provision for carrying Than over-indulging in ale
6 No one should be boastful of his keenness of mind But with caution keep it close To the wise who keeps his counsel when a guest in a home Ill fortune and shame rarely come For no friend is more trustworthy Than tried and tested wisdom	12 There is less good than is generally believed In ale for the folk of Earth For the more he drinks the less does man Hold his mastery of his senses
7 The wise guest who attends the feast Sits with silent attention He hears with his ears sees all with his eyes	13 Over ale hovers the heron of forgetfulness Ready to steal men's wits With the heron's feather I lay fettered and In Gunnlod's home was held
	14 Drunk I was and more than drunk When with Fialar the wise It's the best of drinking if afterwards One brings back his wisdom

Along the Lines by David Stone

15

Silent and wise should a king's son be
And bold in the face of battle
Brave and cheerful should every man be
Until the day that death shall claim him

16

The fool believes he will live forever
If he does not face the fight
But old age will not spare him
Even if the spears do

17

The fool stands gaping when he visits
He mutters or stays silent
But should he take a drink his mouth opens
And the measure of his mind is known

18

Only he who has wandered wide
And journeyed far is aware
How great is the mind that guides one
Who is sharp of wit and wise

19

If you don't refrain from mead then drink in
moderation
Speak with purpose or be still
None who's just will consider you rude
If you go early to your bed

20

The greedy man unless he checks himself
Will eat his way to life long trouble
This man when among the wise
Is scorned for his weakness

21

Cattle know when it's time to make an end
And they leave the pasture then
But the foolish man will never know
The limits of his belly

22

He is wretched and weak of mind
Who mocks all things

For he never learned what he ought to know
That he is not free from fault

23

The fool lies awake at night
Fretting over many things
He's worn and weary when morning comes
And his woes are as bad as they were

24

The fool takes to be friends
Those who laugh when he speaks
He doesn't notice when among the wise
That he is despised by them

25

The fool takes to be friends
Those who laugh when he speaks
But he learns the truth when he comes to court
And few will speak on his behalf

26

The fool thinks he has knowledge
On his own in the corner
But he knows not what answer to give
When others ask him questions

27

The fool when with others
Had better to stay silent
His ignorance will be his secret
Unless he talks too much
But the man who knows nothing
Does not know he's talking too much

28

Wise he seems who questions well
And who also answers well
A secret can not be kept
That sons of men are passing around

29

Senseless words are often spoken
By the man who cannot be silent
A wagging tongue unless it is guarded
Brings trouble upon its owner

30

Make of no man a mockery
Although he sits in your hall

Along the Lines by David Stone

Wise many seem if they are not questioned
And quietly sit in peace

31

Wise is the man who draws back
If he sees he is mocking another
For little knows he who mocks and laughs
If he's laughing surrounded by foes

32

Many men though are friendly
Yet fight with their friends at a feast
For mankind there will always be strife
With guest sounding off against guest

33

Eat early is the normal advice
But late if attending a feast
Lest, hungry, you gobble and wolf down the
food
And never have speech with the rest

34

Long and hard is the road to a bad friend
Though he lives on the route that you take
But straight and short is the way to a true friend
Although he lives far off

35

Away must one go not remaining a guest
In one house forever
Love becomes loathing when he stays too long
In somebody else's home

36

A place of your own is better even if humble
A man is the master in his home
Just two goats and coarsely thatched roof
Are better by far than begging

37

A place of your own is better even if humble
A man is the master in his home
His heart will bleed if he has to beg
For every morsel of food

38

Away from his weapons in open ground
No man should step a foot
No one is sure when the need for a spear
Will arise from the path ahead

39

I have found no man so free with gifts or food
That he would not be glad of a gift
Nor one of such wide-reaching wealth
That he hated an offer to him

40

If wealth a man has amassed
Let him not suffer need
Often a foe receives what was planned for a
friend
For much goes worse than we expect

41

Friends shall gladden one another with gifts and
arms
That much is plain to see
The longest friendships are those of gift-givers
For as long as they are fated to live

42

To his friend a man should prove a friend
And gifts with gifts repay
But mocking shall be met with mocking
And treachery repaid with lies

43

To his friend a man should prove a friend
And also to the friend of his friend
But no friend should any man be
To the friend of one of his foes

44

If you have a friend whom you fully trust
And want nought but good from him
Then share thoughts with each other and gifts
exchange
And go often to meet him

45

If you've another friend whom you hardly trust
Yet want nought but good from him
Then speak fairly to him but think falsely of him
And treachery repay with lies

Along the Lines by David Stone

46

As for he whom you hardly trust
And whose thoughts you do not share
You may laugh with him but guard your
thoughts
And repay his gifts in kind

47

Once I was young and wandered alone
And knew not the path I trod
Rich did I feel when I found a comrade
For Man is the joy of Man

48

Brave and noble hearted men live the best lives
Seldom do they know anxiety
But the coward knows fear of all things
And the miser reluctantly returns a gift

49

My clothing I gave in the field
To graven wooden men
Worthy they deemed themselves all dressed up
For the naked man lacks worth

50

The fir tree dies on the open hill
Its bark and needles fall
This is a man whom no one loves
Why should his life be long

51

Hotter than fire between bad friends
Does affection burn for five days
But come the sixth that passion cools
And the love fades into ashes

52

No great thing does any man need to give
Often a little is praiseworthy
With half a loaf and a shared cup
I made a firm friend

53

Of small sands come small seas
Thus small are the minds of men
For all men are not equal in wisdom
But all men are half wise and half not

54

A measure of wisdom should each man have

But never too wise let him be
For he lives the fairest life
The man whose wisdom knows bounds

55

A measure of wisdom should each man have
But never too wise let him be
For a wise man's heart seldom knows joy
If wisdom too great he does win

56

A measure of wisdom should each man have
But never too wise let him be
No man should know his fate in advance
If his life is to be free from sorrow

57

A brand is kindled by a brand and burns
One fire is lit by another
So men by their speech are known to men
And the foolish are known by their silence

58

He must rise early the man who seeks
The goods or life of his foe
The idle wolf gets little meat
Nor the sleeping man success

59

He must rise early who has few workers
And go earnestly about his work
Much gets neglected by the lazy riser
Wealth is half won by swiftness

60

Of fire wood and thatching bark
His requirements a man should know
And know how much wood he will need for a
month
And half a years full use

61

Be washed and fed when going to the courts
But don't worry too much about your clothes
Let no man be ashamed of his shoes or clothes
Or of his horse even if it be poor

62

The eagle snaps and turns its head
When it comes to the ancient sea

Along the Lines by David Stone

So is a man in the midst of a crowd
And has few to speak for him

63

All should be ready to question and answer
Who want to be deemed of the wise
Give thoughts to one be wary of two
If three know then it's known to all

64

The man who is wise in counsel
Should make measured use of his power
For when he fares among brave fighters
He learns none is the boldest of all

65

Often the words that one speaks to another
Will bring him an ill return

66

Too early to many places I have come
But at others much too late fared I
The drink was all gone or not yet brewed
The unpopular man rarely gets it right

67

To men's homes they'd invite me all over the
land
When I needed no food at the time
Or two hams would hang in my trusty friend's
house
Where I had eaten one

68

Fire is the best gift to men
And to catch the sight of the sun
Also health if a man can keep it
And living a worthy life

69

No man is all wretched however bad or ill-fated
Some gain joy from sons
Some from their kinsmen others with wealth
And some from their worthy deeds

70

It is better to live than to be a corpse
It's the live man who gets the cow
I saw the pyre blaze for the rich man
And he lay dead before his door

71

The lame man rides a horse the handless drives
herds
The deaf can fight and win
The blind man is better than one burned
Nothing can be done by a corpse

72

It's better to have a son even if he's born late
When his father is already dead
Memorial stones seldom stand by the road
Save that one kinsman honours his kin

73

Two may conquer one the tongue may slay the
head
Within every fur coat I look for a hand

74

He welcomes the night who can rely on his fare
Short are a ship's yards
Changeable are autumn nights
Often the weather changes in five days
And more so in a month

75

A foolish man knows not
That wealth can fool many
One man is wealthy another is poor
Yet none should scorn him for that

76

Cattle die and kinsmen die
And so the self must die
But a worthy name never dies
For the man who has good renown

77

Cattle die and kinsmen die
And so the self must die
One thing I know which never dies
The fame of each dead man's deeds

78

I saw well stocked folds among Fitiung's sons
Now they bear the beggars staff
Wealth is as swift as a winking eye
The most unreliable of friends

Along the Lines by David Stone

79

If by chance a foolish man might get
The love of a woman or else wealth
His pride waxes but not his wits
And he goes on buried in conceit

80

Certain is that which you asked of the runs
Of the Mighty One
Made by the greatest gods
Coloured by the Master Skald
Safest and best to keep silent

81

Give praise to a day at evening
To a woman when she's in her grave
To a weapon when tested
To a maid when married
To ice when crossed
To ale when it's drunk

82

In the gale chop wood
In fair winds cross the sea
At dusk sport with maidens the day has many
eyes
Use a ship for speed and a shield for defence
A sword to strike and a maiden to kiss

83

By the fire drink ale
On ice go on skates
Buy a horse that is lean and a sword that is
tarnished
Fatten the horse at home and the dog in your
house

84

The oath of a maid let no man trust
Nor that a woman speaks
For upon a whirling wheel their hearts were
made
And fecklessness lies in their breasts

85

In a breaking bow or a burning flame
A wide mouthed wolf or a croaking raven
A grunting boar or a broken rooted tree
A turbulent sea or a boiling kettle

86

A flying arrow or falling wave
Ice new formed or a coiled snake
A woman's bed talk or a broken sword
The sport of bears or the sons of kings

87

A sick calf or a stubborn slave
A flattering witch or a freshly killed foe

88

A brother's slayer if met on the open road
A half-burned house or a too swift horse –
The mount is useless if one leg is hurt –
None should be so trusting as to trust in all of
these

89

Do not trust too much in an early sown field
Nor too soon in a son
The field needs good weather and the son good
sense
And either can be denied

90

The love of women who have false minds
Is like travelling over ice with an unshod horse
That is a badly broken frisky two year old
Or like steering a rudderless ship in a storm
Or hunting a reindeer while lame on slippery
rocks

91

I can speak clear for I have known both
Men's hearts can be fickle towards women
When we speak fairest then we think most false
We work deceit against the wise mind

92

He should speak soft words and offer wealth
Who wishes for a woman's love
And praise the form of a beautiful woman
He wins who woos the best

93

No man should find fault ever
With another for loving
Often the wise is beguiled when the fool is not
By desire for a beautiful girl

94

Along the Lines by David Stone

No man should find fault with one
Smitten by that which smites many
Wise men often makes fools of themselves
When swayed by a mighty desire

95

The mind alone knows what lies in the heart
A man alone knows his mind
No sickness is worse for the wise man
Than to lack the longed-for joy

96

This I found for myself when I sat among reeds
And long awaited my love
The wise maiden was as life to me
And yet I didn't get her

97

I found Gilling's daughter on her bed
Slumbering radiant as the sun
Empty would be a noble life to me
If it lacked that fair form

98

"Odin come again at evening tide
If a woman you would win
Evil for us if anyone knows
Of such a tryst as this"

99

Away went I hopeful of love
And heedless of wisdom's voice
So surely I believed that soon I would win
Her heart and her body my joy

100

So I came later in evening's gloom
But the warriors were all awake
With torches burning and carrying brands
Thus led my path to desire

101

So I came later at dawn's blue gloom
When all there lay asleep
A dog I found bound to the bed
Where the lovely one had lain

102

Many fair maids when you know them better
Are fickle of heart to their wooers

This did I learn when I sought to seduce
That maiden wise with wiles
All mockings were mine from that crafty maid
And I won naught from the woman for me

103

At home a man should be cheerful and merry
with his guests
But wise and shrewd in himself
A good memory and elegant speech
Are needed of those who would be wise
A fool he is called if he has nought to say
For that is the mark of the witless

104

I met the old giant and I have returned
I gained nought from silence there
With many words I achieved my will
While staying in Suttung's hall

105

With the mouth of Rati I made space for my
passage
And gnawed through the stone
Above and below lay the paths of giants
And thus I risked my head

106

Gunlodd gave me from a golden stool
A drink of the magical mead
A harsh reward I made in return
For her open heart
And her troubled spirit

107

The cheaply-bought beauty I enjoyed to the full
Little does the wise man lack
For Odrerir has now been brought up
To the sanctuaries of men on Earth

108

I seriously doubt that home I'd have come
Away from the giants courts
If Gunnlod had not helped me that maiden good
In whose arms I'd been entwined

109

Along the Lines by David Stone

The following day the frost giants fared
To the High One's hall for advice
They asked if Bolverk were back with the gods
Or if Suttung had slain him there

110

I thought Odin had sacred-sworn on his ring
Who now will trust his word
Suttung he betrayed at the feast
And Gunnlod he left to weep

111

It is time to proclaim from the High Skald's seat
Located at the Well of Urd
I saw and was silent I saw and I considered
And heard the speech of men
Of runes I heard speech wise counsels were not
lacking
At the Hall of the High One
In the Hall of the High Onr
Thus was the speech I heard

112

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not rise at night save to look around
Or should you need to visit the privy

113

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Take heed not to sleep in a witch's bosom
Lest her charms ensnare you

114

She will bring your mind to believe
You have no care for the courts or meetings of
men
Food you'll hate and joy you'll lack
And sorrowfully fare to sleep

115

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Never seek another man's wife

If you wish your secrets to tell

116

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
If on mountains or fjords your path should lie
Look well to your journey's food

117

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not let an evil man learn
Of any misfortune to you
For an evil man will never give you
A good thought for your confidence

118

I saw a man take a mortal wound
Through an evil woman's words
A poisoned tongue brought his death blow on
Yet no word of truth was in it

119

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
If you have a friend who you truly trust
Fare often to visit him
For brambles grow and tall grass waves
On the scarce-trodden road

120

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Find a good man and hold friendly confidence
And learn healing charms through him always

121

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Never be the first to break the bonds
Of friendship that holds you
Sorrow eats the heart if you can't speak
Your thoughts to one who cares

122

Along the Lines by David Stone

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
With a witless man you should never
Bandy words of wisdom

123

For you will never get a good return
From a wicked man
But a good man will return you
Love for words of praise

124

That is true kinship when you can speak
Your heart to another
Nothing is so bad as fickle words
He's no true friend who only gives pleasant
speech

125

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Don't spend even three quarrelsome words with
a worse man than yourself
The better man had rather draw back
When the worse man wants to fight

126

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Be a shoemaker or maker of shafts
For no one but yourself
If the shoe is ill made or the shaft not true
Then evil will men speak of you

127

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Where you recognize evil acknowledge and
declaim it
And give no truce to your foes

128

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Never know joy from what is wicked
But from goodness and approval be glad

129

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not look upwards when battle is raging
(To panic the sons of men come)
Lest you become bewitched

130

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
If you want the love and confidence of a good
woman
And get pleasure through her
Make good promises and keep them truly
No one loathes good when they get it

131

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
I tell you to be cautious but not fearful
Beware of drink and another man's wife
And thirdly beware thieves don't out wit you

132

I advise you Loddafafnir see you hear my advice
It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Never scorn or make mockery
Either at home or on the road

133

Often it is not known of those in the hall
What kind of man or whose kin
None are so good they have no fault
Nor so wicked as to be of no worth

134

Along the Lines by David Stone

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice

It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not scorn the grey haired sage
Often do the old speak good truth
Often from shrivelled skin comes skilful
counsels
Though it hangs with the hides
And skulks with the pelts
And is blown with the cheese bags

135

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice

It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
Do not curse your guest or drive him out
Treat the man well who's in want

136

Powerful is the door which is opened
For all who seek aid
Give a ring or ill the words
That will be called down on you

137

I advise you Loddafnir see you hear my advice

It will profit you to hear it
Bring you great gain if you learn it
When ale you drink seek the power of earth
For earth cures drunkenness as fire cures
sickness
Oak for constipation an ear of corn against magic
Rye cures rupture the moon cures rage
Earthworm for a bite the hall against household
strife
Grass cures the scab and runes against evil
Soil is used against the flood

138

I know that I hung on the windy tree
Hung for nine long nights
Wounded by my spear and offered to Odin
Myself to myself
On the tree that no man may know
The origin of its roots

139

No comfort did I receive from bread or horn
And downwards I looked
I took up the runes screaming I took them
And back from there I fell

140

Nine mighty spells I got from the son
Of Bolthor, Bestla's father
And a drink I got of the mighty mead
Poured out from Odrerir

141

Then I began to quicken and gain wisdom
I grew and prospered
One word led to another word for me
One deed led to another deed for me

142

The Runes you must find and the meaningful
sign
A very great sign a full mighty sign
That the Master Skald coloured
And the Might Gods made
And the Lord Rune Master has carved

143

Odin for the Aesir and Dain for the elves
Dvalin for the dwarfs
Asvid for the giants and all mankind
Some I carved myself

144

Do you know how to carve do you know how to
interpret
Do you know how to colour do you know how to
prove
Do you know hoe to offer do you know how to
sacrifice
Do you know how to send do you know how to
destroy?

145

Better not to ask than sacrifice too much
One gift will call for another
Better not sent than too much destroyed
So Thund carved of old before man's race began
Where he rose up when back he came

146

I know the spells that kings wives don't know
Nor any man's son
'Help' one is called and help it brings
From pain and sorrow and all anxieties

Along the Lines by David Stone

147
I know a second that all men shall need
Who wish to be physicians

148
I know a third should I have need
Of fetters to bind my foe
Blunt I can make my enemy's sword
No weapon or club will bite

149
I know a fourth if men should clasp
Bonds upon my limbs
So great is this spell that forth I may walk
The fetters spring from my feet
The bonds break from my hands

150
I know a fifth if I see from afar
An arrow flying amidst the army
It flies not so swift that I can't stop it
If my eyes can behold it

151
I know a sixth if a man seeks to harm me
With the roots of a sap-filled wood
So the harm he meant for me
Shall be consumed by his own evil

152
I know a seventh if I see in flames
The hall over my companions heads
It can not burn so wide that I can't quench it
I know the spells to sing

153
I know an eighth which is most useful
For all to learn and know
Where hatred flares between heroes sons
I can swiftly set things straight

154
I know a ninth if I should have need
To protect my ship on the deep
The wind I can calm upon the waves
And lull the sea to sleep

155
I know a tenth if I should see

Witches playing up in the air
I can work it that back they can't come
To their own shape
Thus showing their true spirit

156
I know an eleventh if I must lead
My loyal friends to battle
I chant to the shields and in strength they go
Safe to the field
Safe from the field
Safe again to their homes

157
I know a twelfth if I should see
A hanged man swing from a tree
I can so carve and colour the runes
That forth he fares and talks with me

158
I know a thirteenth so I may pour
Water over a young warrior
And he will not fall though in the midst of battle
He won't fall beneath the swords

159
I know a fourteenth if I have to name
The mighty gods before men
I know the difference between Aesir and Elves
Few who are fools can know this

160
I know a fifteenth that the dwarf Thiodrerir
Sang before the doors of Delling
Might he sang before the gods and elves
And wisdom to the Master Skald

161
I know a sixteenth should I seek to have
A wise woman's heart and love
I can turn the mind of the white-armed woman
And change all her thoughts

162
I know a seventeenth so that seldom
Shall a young maid shun me

Along the Lines by David Stone

Of these spells Loddafnir
You will long seek vainly to win
Yet they'd be good for you to get them
See you well if you would learn them
Help you if you had them

163

I know an eighteenth which I will never tell
To maiden or another man's wife –
The best is what none but ones self knows
Of what comes after the spell –
Save only that one woman in whose arms I lie
Or else should be my sister

164

Now are the words of the High One done
Spoken in the High One's hall
Useful to the sons of men
Worthless to the sons of giants
Luck to him who recites luck to him who learns
Profit to those who understand
Luck to those who hear

If you enjoyed this book you may also find the following by David Stone interesting and useful.

Festivals of Stav

Daily Stav

More details and to order as ebooks at
<http://www.iceandfire.org.uk/elit.html>