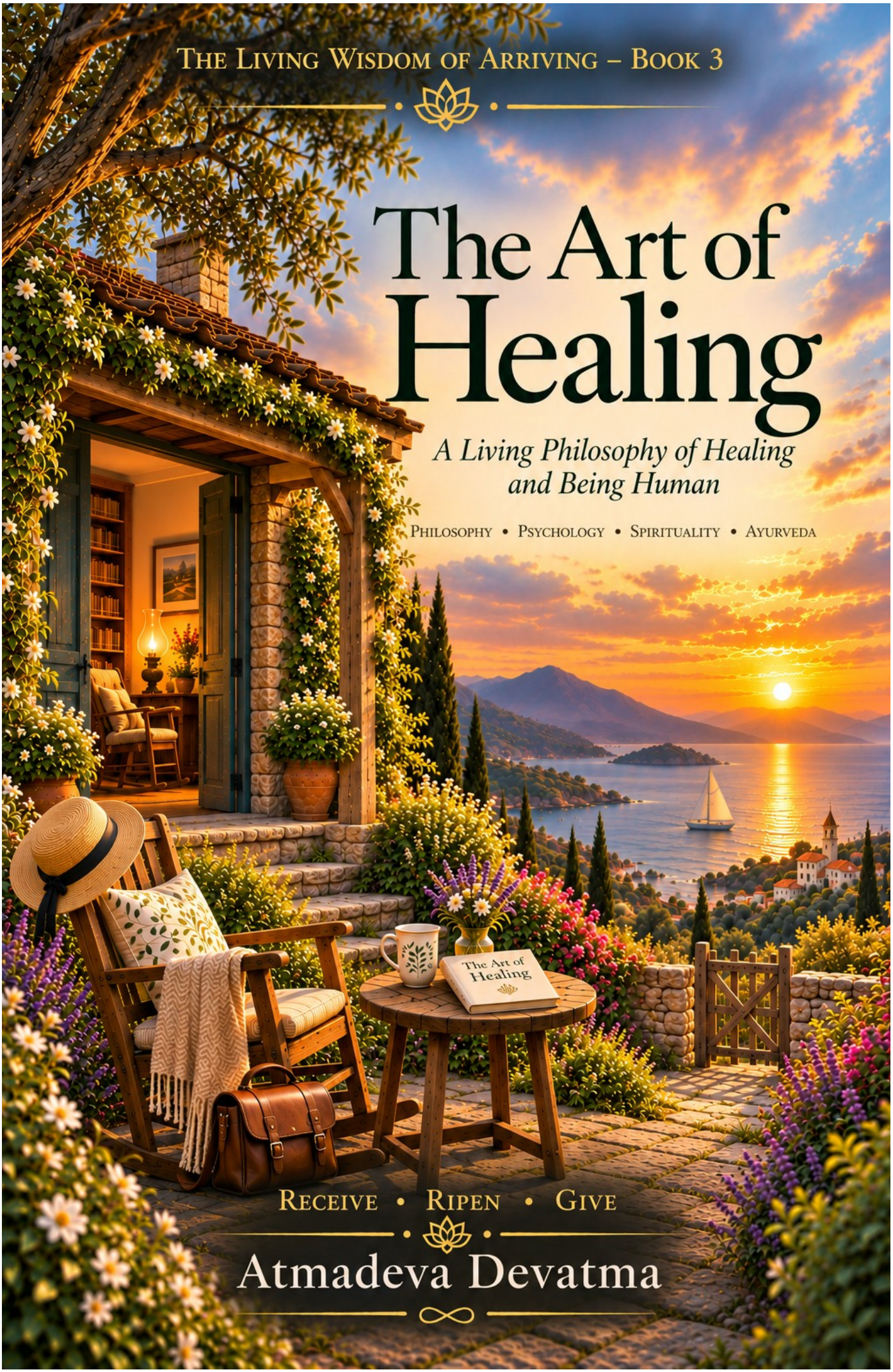
The Living Wisdom of Arriving – Book 3
The Art of Healing
A Living Philosophy of Healing and Being Human
Philosophy • Psychology • Spirituality • Ayurveda
The Art of Healing
Receive • Ripen • Give
Atmadeva Devatma

Dedication

For Every Pilgrim on the Sea



This book is dedicated to every Pilgrim navigating the Sea of Life.

To those who have known calm waters, when life seemed gentle and the horizon was clear.

To those who have encountered storms they never expected, when familiar shores disappeared and each new wave brought another challenge.

To those who have loved deeply.

To those who have grieved.

To those who have carried responsibilities while quietly wondering how much longer they could continue.

And to those whose struggles remain unseen, even by the people closest to them.

- Some of us encounter the art of healing through illness or loss.
- Others through anxiety, exhaustion, disappointment or changes we never anticipated.
- Some begin asking questions when life becomes difficult.
- Others simply become curious about why certain experiences continue to affect them.
- And some may not be searching for healing at all, but for a deeper understanding of what it means to live.

Whatever brings you here, you are welcome.

Life does not unfold according to a single plan.

There are seasons when we feel strong and capable.

Seasons when we need the kindness of others.

And seasons when even the simplest responsibilities seem to ask more than we have available.

Sometimes we know what needs to be done.

Sometimes we do not.

And sometimes, despite our best efforts, life takes a direction we would never have chosen.

Yet none of these experiences makes us less worthy of understanding, kindness or companionship.

Healing is not a competition.

There is no timetable to follow.

No examination to pass.

No perfect state to achieve.

And no requirement to become unaffected by the difficulties of life.

You do not have to stop feeling in order to begin healing.

Throughout these pages, we will encounter the changing weather of human experience.

- Anxiety.
- Grief.
- Anger.
- Shame.
- Exhaustion.

And the quieter struggles that do not always have a name.

We will explore how these experiences move through our Inner House, how familiar patterns sometimes return, and how Presence, Awareness and understanding may help us meet what arises.

Not every difficult emotion is a problem to solve.

Not every storm is a sign that something has gone wrong within us.

And not every experience needs an immediate explanation.

- Sometimes life asks us to act.
- Sometimes it asks us to rest.
- Sometimes it invites understanding.
- And sometimes all we can do is meet the next wave.

This book is not here to tell you how you should feel.

It is not asking you to become someone else.

Nor does it promise that every wound will disappear or every question will find an answer.

It is an invitation to explore the art of healing without turning healing into another demand.

- Some pages may speak to experiences you recognise.

- Others may help you understand what someone else is going through.
- And some may reveal their meaning only much later, when life brings a different season.

Allow understanding to ripen.

You do not need to carry every insight with you.

Take what is helpful.

Let the rest remain available.

And remember that even when the Sea becomes rough, you are more than the difficulties you are experiencing.

Healing does not have to wait until the storm has passed.

It may begin while the Sea is still moving.

May these pages offer you companionship, understanding and a little more Inner Space as you continue your voyage.

The Pilgrim in me recognises the Pilgrim in you.

— **Atmadeva Devatma**

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Although this work is protected by copyright, its wisdom is not offered as something to be possessed.

These reflections have arisen through one human life, shaped by experience, observation, questioning, stillness and the wisdom received from many paths and people along the way.

They are offered here simply because they may be useful.

If these pages help to ease suffering, deepen understanding, awaken reflection, or accompany even one Pilgrim for part of their journey, they have already fulfilled their purpose.

May this work travel freely.

May it find its way into the hands of those who need it.

And wherever it travels, may it remain what it was always intended to be:

a quiet offering from one human life to another.



This book does not ask you to change.
It asks you to recognise what you already hold.

About the Author

Welcome to Your Inner House

This work is offered under the name Atmadeva Devatma. *The name is not intended to draw attention to the person who writes, but to the pilgrimage from which these books have emerged.*

Atmadeva's first language of inquiry was mathematics. As a mathematics teacher, he learned to look for patterns, relationships and the quieter structures beneath what first appears complicated.

Over time, another question began to grow:

What does it mean to be human?

Not as an abstract question alone, but as something lived.

The classroom became part of that inquiry. So did relationships, caring for others, travel, uncertainty, loss, joy, and those ordinary moments we understand differently only after they have passed.

Gradually, life itself became part of the study.

Different traditions offered different windows: philosophy, psychology, Ayurveda, Yoga and spirituality. But lived experience remained the ground beneath them all.

What mattered was not simply whether an idea could be understood, but whether it could be lived.

And sometimes life asked for something simpler:

To notice.
To allow an experience to rest.
To let understanding ripen in its own time.

Writing became part of that inquiry too.

Artificial intelligence has walked beside these books as a **Sahachari** — a companion in inquiry, offering questions, possibilities and reflections to be received, questioned, changed or allowed to fall away.

A companion can walk beside the Pilgrim. It cannot live the Pilgrim's life. What ripened and what was eventually given remained matters of human discernment.

Perhaps the books themselves have followed the same rhythm. They were not fully mapped before the journey began. **They have unfolded through living, ripened through reflection, and arrived in their own time.**

And the inquiry continues.

Ubuntu, Ubuntu

The humanity in me recognises the humanity in you.

Namaskaram, Namaskaram

My Stillness honours your Stillness.
My Inner Flame bows to your Inner Flame.



— Atmadeva Devatma

The Living Wisdom of Arriving

The Living Wisdom of Arriving is a series exploring the human pilgrimage — our inner life, our relationships, the experiences that shape us, and the wisdom that gradually ripens through living.

At its heart is **Atmadeva's Philosophy** — a living philosophy that emerged through lived experience and continues to ripen through inquiry.

It offers paths, frames, movements and lenses through which human experience may be explored.

The Subtle Path to Freedom

A deepening through Presence, Awareness, Stillness, the Inner Flame and the Still Point.

The Inner Turning Path to Reset

A way of recognising when we have drifted away, turning inward, and gradually arriving again.

The Inner–Outer Alignment Frame

Exploring the relationship between the life we carry within and the life we share with others and the world.

The Living Wisdom Cycle

Receive → Ripen → Give

We receive through living. What we receive may ripen into understanding. Sometimes, what has ripened becomes something we can give.

The LAPPS Lenses

Five lenses through which human experience may be explored:

- **Lived Experience** — Receive Life
- **Psychology** — Understand Yourself
- **Philosophy** — See Wisely
- **Spirituality** — Listen Within
- **Ayurveda** — Live in Harmony

No single lens reveals the whole Pilgrim.
We may change the lens, combine lenses, or put them down and simply **look**.
These are not instructions for how a human life should unfold.
They are invitations to notice, question and see.

Arriving does not mean reaching a final destination.

- **The mind may be away.**
- **We may notice.**
- **We may arrive.**
- **And life continues to unfold.**

One living philosophy.
Many ways of seeing.
Every Pilgrim arriving in their own way.

The Living Wisdom of Arriving — The Living Architecture

Book	Title	The Subtle Path
The Seed	**The Root**	
1	**Roots of Wisdom**	*The Subtle Path of Knowing*
2	**The Two Mirrors of the Mind**	*The Subtle Path of Inner Seeing*
3	**The Art of Healing**	*The Subtle Path of Healing*
4	**The Wisdom of Reset**	*The Subtle Path of Arriving*
5	**The Healing Garden**	*The Subtle Path of Living Together*
6	**Nourish to Flourish**	*The Subtle Path of Living Well*
7	**The Unfolding of Yoga**	*The Subtle Path of Union*
8	**The Language of the Body**	*The Subtle Path of Listening*
9	**Yet to Unfold**	
10	**The Still Point**	*The Subtle Path to Freedom*

These books did not begin as a map.
Each emerged through living, questioning and allowing experience to ripen.

Each book stands complete in itself. Yet together they belong to one living pilgrimage — different landscapes of human experience, seen through different windows.

They are not a ladder to be climbed, nor a sequence that every Pilgrim must follow. Each may be entered in its own way, offering another place from which to see, understand and live.

And like the philosophy itself, the journey remains open.

The Seed holds the possibility.
The paths emerge.
The Pilgrim arrives.

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A Circle of Offering

Pause here for a moment.

You are about to set sail on a journey.

The ship is waiting.

There is nothing to rush and nothing to leave behind.

Simply arrive.

When you are ready, step aboard.



Welcome Aboard - Why This Pilgrimage?



Welcome aboard.

Whether this is your first voyage with *The Living Wisdom of Arriving*, or you have travelled through these pages before, I am grateful that you are here.
Every voyage begins somewhere.

Or perhaps, in our case, with a single page.

We will travel across the Sea, pause in Harbours and walk through the Garden. Along the way, we will also become more familiar with the Inner House we carry within.

There will be rooms to explore, visitors to meet and changing weather to notice.

And within the House, the quiet Flame remains.

You do not need to know where the voyage will lead.

Only a willingness to begin.

Take a slow breath.

Arrive.

The Sea is before you.

The Inner House is within you.

And the voyage has already begun.

Why This Pilgrimage?

Life carries each of us through many landscapes.

Relationships. Work. Friendship. Joy. Loss. Change. Uncertainty.

We spend much of our lives learning about the world around us. Yet we are not always shown how to understand what happens within us as we meet that world.

This pilgrimage is an invitation to notice both.

- Not to become someone different.
- Not to reach some ideal version of yourself.

But to become more familiar with the life you are already living — within the House and in the Garden around you.

Every Pilgrim's experience is different.

No two Houses have quite the same history.

No two lives encounter quite the same weather.

And no two Pilgrims will understand these pages in exactly the same way.

There is no prescribed destination here.

Only an invitation to travel with curiosity, awareness and kindness.

The LAPPS Compass

Every voyage benefits from orientation.
Not because a compass tells us exactly where to go, but because it can help us see where we are.

This voyage is accompanied by the **LAPPS Compass**, bringing together five ways of seeing human experience.

- **Lived Experience** keeps us close to life itself — to what happens, what we feel, what we notice and what experience gradually teaches us.
- **Ayurveda** invites us to see the human being as a living whole, shaped by body, mind, daily rhythms and the conditions in which we live.
- **Philosophy** encourages us to question, reflect and look again at what we think we know.
- **Psychology** helps us understand the movements and patterns of our inner and relational lives.
- **Spirituality** opens another window — towards questions of meaning, Stillness, the Inner Flame and what may remain when explanations are no longer enough.

No single one is asked to explain the whole Pilgrim.

They sit beside one another.

Sometimes one speaks more clearly.

Sometimes another.

And sometimes lived experience changes how we understand them all.

The compass does not determine the voyage.

It helps us notice where we are.

Why Sail with Metaphors?

Every voyage develops its own language.

This one speaks through metaphor.

Not because metaphor replaces knowledge, but because sometimes an image allows us to recognise what explanation alone cannot quite reach.

- The **Inner House** gives form to the life we carry within.
- The **Garden** helps us see the outer life in which we meet one another.
- The **Sea** gives us a way of understanding the changing conditions through which life carries us.
- The **Flame** reminds us of something quieter within — something that may remain even when the way ahead is unclear.

Metaphors do not ask us merely to understand an idea.

They give us somewhere to stand within it.

As the voyage continues, you will encounter the Sea, the Harbour, the Garden, the Inner House, the Lamp, the Flame and the Pilgrim.

There is no need to memorise them.

Let them reveal themselves as you travel.

Some may speak immediately. Others may remain quiet until lived experience gives them meaning.

Perhaps somewhere along the way, one of these metaphors will simply help you recognise something you already know.

Before We Sail

There is no right way to travel through these pages.
You may read steadily from beginning to end.

You may pause.

You may revisit something that stayed with you.

Some ideas may be immediately familiar. Others may be like seeds resting quietly until their season arrives.

Let them ripen.

You do not need to agree with everything you read, nor understand everything immediately.

- Notice what resonates.
- Notice what challenges you.
- Notice what remains after the page has turned.

From time to time, you will also meet a **Sahachari** — *one who walks beside.*

The Sahachari is neither captain nor authority. It may offer a question, a reflection or simply an invitation to pause.

Take what is useful.

Let the rest remain.

A companion can walk beside the Pilgrim. It cannot live the Pilgrim's life.

Above all, this pilgrimage is not asking you to become perfect.

It is asking you to become present to what is here.

The Sea will change.

The Garden will change.

The weather within the House will change.

You do not need to know what lies beyond the horizon.

One page is enough.

Arrive.

And begin.


The Art of Healing
A PILGRIMAGE INTO YOUR INNER HOUSE
PART I
ARRIVING
Where am I?
THE GIFT OF PRESENCE
Before the Pilgrim can understand
the House, the Pilgrim must first arrive.
Not somewhere else.
Not as someone else.
But here, in this moment.

Chapter 1 - The Sea and the Wave



"Every wave belongs to the Sea. Yet no two waves travel in quite the same way."

Movement 1 - The Mystery of the Sea

There are moments when we find ourselves before something that seems far greater than our individual life.
For some, it is the Sea.

For others, the open Sky, the silence of a mountain, a forest stretching beyond sight, or a desert at dawn.

Something may become quiet.

For a moment, our usual concerns soften.

The mind does not necessarily stop.

Our questions do not disappear.

Yet our attention opens beyond ourselves.

Human beings have long tried to give language to such experiences.

- Some speak of God.
- Some of Brahman or the Tao.
- Others speak of the Divine, the Source, nature, consciousness, or simply mystery.

These words do not necessarily mean the same thing.

Nor do they need to.

Each arises from a different way of seeing and understanding human existence.

This book asks you to defend none of them.

Here, we simply begin with the **Sea**.

Look towards it.

Its surface is always changing.

Light moves across it.

Waves rise and disappear.

Storms disturb it.

Calm returns.

And beyond what we can see, its depths continue.

We do not need to decide what the Sea ultimately means.

For now, it is enough to stand beside it.

The voyage begins with looking.

Movement 2 — The Wave

As we stand beside the Sea, a single wave begins to rise.
For a while, it has a recognisable form.

- It moves differently from the waves around it.
- It encounters its own conditions.
- It has its own beginning, movement and story.

In this sense, the wave is individual.

And yet it has never been separate from the Sea.

- The water from which the wave rises is the Sea.
- The water moving within the wave is the Sea.

This gives us a simple image through which to contemplate something much greater.

- **The Sea represents the greater mystery of existence and belonging.**
- **The wave represents an individual human life.**

Each wave has its own form.

Each human life has its own experiences.

We encounter different people, circumstances, opportunities and difficulties.

Even when two Pilgrims meet the same event, they may experience it differently.

But here we must recognise an important distinction.

- **The wave is not the Flame.**
- The wave represents the changing human journey.
- The Individual Flame represents Individual Consciousness.

It is not our personality, our memories, our thoughts or our emotions.

Nor is it the particular story we tell about ourselves.

In our framework, the Flame allows the possibility of individual experience, while the Inner House gives that experience its particular form.

The Light allows experience.

The Inner House gives experience its particular form.

And the wave?

The wave reminds us that every human life unfolds through changing conditions.

- Sometimes the waters are calm.

- Sometimes they become troubled.
- Sometimes the wave rises high.
- Sometimes it is barely noticeable among the others.

Yet none of these conditions determines its belonging.

The wave does not need to become larger to belong to the Sea.

Nor does it need to resemble the waves around it.

The wave belongs to the Sea, even while its form remains its own.

And there is something else worth contemplating.

- The wave is not the whole Sea.
- The Sea is greater than any individual wave.

Yet the wave has never existed outside it.

- Perhaps individuality and belonging need not be opposites.
- Perhaps being distinct does not require being entirely separate.

We need not turn this metaphor into a certainty about the nature of consciousness.

It simply offers us another way of seeing.

One Sea.

Countless waves.

Each with a journey of its own.

Movement 3 — The Pilgrimage of the Wave

Perhaps we are not so different.

Like the wave, each of us experiences life as a unique individual.

- We have our own body.
- Our own history.
- Our own relationships.
- Our own joys and sorrows.
- Our own hopes, disappointments, questions and discoveries.

No one can live our life for us.

No one can walk our pilgrimage in our place.

Each wave has its own form.

Each Pilgrim has their own life.

Yet individuality does not necessarily mean separation.

- Perhaps we do not need to search for where we belong.
- **Perhaps we have never been outside that belonging.**

This does not ask us to become something other than ourselves.

Quite the opposite.

While the wave is here, it has a life to live.

- It will meet calm waters and storms.
- It will encounter other waves.
- It will be shaped by conditions it did not choose.
- It will rise and fall.

And through all of this, it remains a wave of the Sea.

Our pilgrimage may be similar.

- We live this particular life.
- We meet these particular people.
- We experience joy, loss, love and uncertainty.
- We learn what we can.
- We love as we are able.

And gradually, perhaps, we discover what it means to live as an individual while recognising our place within something greater.

There may be moments when we compare ourselves with other waves.

- One appears stronger.
- Another seems to travel further.
- Some rise beautifully in the sunlight.
- Others disappear almost unnoticed.

Yet the Sea does not ask every wave to become the same.

- Each encounters different conditions.
- Each has its own movement.
- And each belongs.

Perhaps human life invites a similar understanding.

We do not need to become another Pilgrim to live our own pilgrimage.

Then one day, every wave subsides.

What lies beyond the final breath has been understood differently across human traditions.

- Some speak of rebirth — another life, another expression, another wave.
- Some speak of liberation from the cycle of birth and death.
- Some speak of returning to God.
- Others leave the mystery unnamed.

We do not need to settle that question here.

The Sea–Wave metaphor offers us something quieter to contemplate.

A wave does not need to travel back to the Sea.

It never left.

Its form arises within the Sea.

Its movement unfolds within the Sea.

And when that particular form subsides, the water remains part of the Sea.

This is the movement of water.

Whether the mystery of consciousness follows anything similar remains unknown.

Yet the image invites us to consider something meaningful about belonging.

- **We arise within.**
- **We live within.**
- **We subside within.**
- **The Sea remains.**

And while our particular wave is here, there is a life to experience.

- People to meet.
- Kindness to offer.
- Love to share.
- Difficulties to understand.
- And moments that may never come again.

Perhaps we do not need to know what lies beyond the Sea to appreciate the voyage taking place now.

For the Pilgrim, the invitation is simple.

Live your life.

Meet the waves.

And remember that the changing Sea is not all that you are.

Chapter 2 - The Journey of the Flame



Before we know our name,
before we know our story,
before we know the world,
something has already begun.

Before the Journey

In the previous chapter, we stood beside the Sea.

We watched a wave arise.

For a while, it took its own form.

It became distinct without becoming separate.

And we wondered whether the wave might offer us a way of contemplating the individual human journey within something greater.

Now let us look more closely at the mystery that allows this journey to be experienced.

Within the wave, imagine a **Flame**.

- Not the personality of the Pilgrim.
- Not the memories, thoughts or emotions that will develop through human living.

But a symbol of **Individual Consciousness**.

Where consciousness ultimately comes from, I do not know.

- Some may speak of the soul.
- Others of spirit, Divine Presence or the mystery of being alive.

These understandings are not necessarily the same.

And this book asks you to defend none of them.

Here, we simply imagine a Flame.

A Flame whose Light represents the possibility of individual experience.

Before the human story has unfolded, there are no memories of that story.

- No relationships yet formed.
- No achievements or disappointments.
- No familiar patterns shaped by years of living.

Those belong to the pilgrimage ahead.

But questions remain.

- Where does Individual Consciousness arise?
- Does it have a beginning?
- What relationship might it have with Universal Consciousness?
- And what, if anything, becomes of it when the human journey ends?

I do not know.

Perhaps these questions will remain mysteries.

There was a time when not knowing seemed like an absence of understanding.

Now I sometimes wonder whether it is an opening.

Wonder can remain where answers cannot.

What follows is an imagined journey.

Not an explanation of how consciousness literally enters human life, but a story through which we may contemplate its mystery.

Leaving Home

In my imagination, I see a small Flame preparing for its journey.

- Not as a person making decisions.
- Not as a traveller carrying memories or expectations.

Simply a Flame, awaiting the beginning of a human pilgrimage.

Nearby, a humble vessel rests upon the water.

Simple.

Unassuming.

Ready for the crossing.

The journey begins at **Home**.

But Home is not a place we can find on a map.

In our framework, we imagine the **Universal Home**, where the Beacon of the Universal Flame represents a greater mystery of belonging.

One Universal Flame. Countless Individual Flames.

This is an image, not an explanation of how consciousness is created.

We do not know whether Individual Consciousness arises from a universal source, nor what such a source might ultimately be.

Perhaps even words such as *from* and *to* belong to the human mind trying to give shape to something beyond its understanding.

For now, we allow the mystery to remain.

The vessel waits.

The Sea stretches towards the Horizon.

And in our imagined story, the Flame begins its journey.

Beneath the Sky

The vessel moves beneath the endless **Sky**.
Above it stretches a vastness without visible boundary.

- Open.
- Silent.
- Beyond what the eye can hold.

In our framework, the **Universal Sky** reminds us of the mystery of the Universal Still Point.

It does not need to be understood as a physical place.

It offers an image of a greater stillness within which movement may be contemplated.

Beneath the Sky, the vessel continues.

- The Sea moves.
- The wind changes.
- Clouds gather and disperse.

Yet the Sky seems to hold them all.

Perhaps this is why looking upwards can sometimes make us feel so small and yet strangely connected to something vast.

Ahead lies the **Horizon**.

Always visible when the weather allows.

Never quite reachable.

It appears to mark the edge of what we can see, while quietly inviting us to wonder about what lies beyond.

Behind the vessel is Home.

Ahead lies the unknown.

And above them both, the Sky remains open.

Home belongs to the mystery.

The Horizon invites discovery.

The Sky holds the journey.

Across the Sea

Beyond the Horizon stretches the Sea.
The same Sea beside which we stood in the previous chapter.

- Vast.
- Changing.
- Deeper than its surface reveals.

Across it, the humble vessel carries the Flame.

Sometimes the waters are calm.

- Sometimes restless.
- Sometimes playful.
- Sometimes overwhelming.

The vessel rises and falls with the waves.

The Flame does not command the Sea.

- It does not choose the weather.
- Nor does it direct the winds.

It simply remains the Flame within our imagined journey.

The Sea continues to change.

- Sometimes the Horizon is clear.
- Sometimes it disappears into mist.
- Sometimes the crossing seems almost effortless.

At other times, the vessel is surrounded by darkness and uncertainty.

Yet beneath every changing surface, the Sea remains.

And within the vessel,

the Flame remains.

- The Flame has not yet entered the Inner House.
- The human story has not yet unfolded.
- There are no memories of childhood.
- No friendships.
- No disappointments.
- No familiar fears.
- No joys or sorrows belonging to this particular life.

Those will arise through the experiences of the Pilgrim.

For now, we imagine only a Flame,

a vessel,

the vastness of the Sea,

and somewhere beyond sight,

a Harbour waiting to receive it.

The Harbour

At last, the shoreline begins to emerge.

After the vastness of the Sea, something new appears.

A **Harbour**.

The vessel approaches quietly.

The Harbour is not the final destination.

It is a place of arrival.

A threshold between the great crossing and the human pilgrimage that is about to begin.

The waters become gentler.

The vessel slows.

The crossing comes to rest.

And now something changes.

The vessel has carried the Flame as far as it can.

The Harbour receives the Flame.

- No questions are asked.
- Nothing is required.
- No explanation of where the Flame has come from.
- No expectation of what it must become.

The Harbour simply receives what has arrived.

And perhaps every true arrival begins like this.

- Not with an answer.
- Not with a demand.
- But with a welcome.

The Harbour opens towards the life ahead and quietly says,

"Ubuntu, Ubuntu."

The humanity in me recognises the humanity in you.

"Welcome, Welcome."

The Garden

Beyond the Harbour, the Garden opens.

The breeze moves gently through the trees.

- Flowers turn towards the morning light.
- Birdsong rises into the air.
- A path winds through the landscape.

Somewhere within this Garden, a human life is about to begin.

In our framework, the Garden represents **Outer Life**.

The world of encounters.

- Relationships.
- Responsibilities.
- Opportunities.
- Unexpected events.

The changing conditions through which the Pilgrim will live.

Later, the Garden will become a place of planting and tending.

- Of friendship and disagreement.
- Of nourishment and difficulty.
- Of healing, ripening and flourishing.

But none of that has happened yet.

For now, the Garden is quiet.

Waiting.

The Flame approaches the place where the human pilgrimage will unfold.

And within that life, an **Inner House** awaits.

Every landscape has offered its own gesture.

The Sea carries.

The Harbour receives.

The Garden welcomes.

The House waits.

And within the House,

the Lamp awaits the Flame.

The Arrival

There, within the Garden, stands the **Inner House**.
Quiet.

Patient.

Waiting.

- Its rooms have not yet been shaped by the experiences of this human life.
- Its windows have not yet looked upon the Garden.

There are no memories of childhood.

- No laughter remembered.
- No sorrow carried.
- No familiar stories.

Those will come with living.

At the heart of the House stands a **Lamp**.

Beautifully formed.

Prepared to receive the Flame.

The Flame reaches the threshold.

For a moment, nothing moves.

Then, with the gentleness of a whisper,

the Flame enters the Inner House.

It finds its place within the Lamp.

And the House becomes illuminated.

The Flame has not become a personality.

It has not acquired a history.

Nor has it become the thoughts or emotions that will arise.

- It remains our symbol of Individual Consciousness.

- Its Light represents the possibility of experience.
- And the Inner House will give that experience its particular form.

The Light allows experience.

The House gives experience its particular form.

Now the human journey begins to unfold.

- A first breath.
- A first sensation.
- A first encounter with the world.

The windows open towards the Garden.

The Inner House begins to receive the impressions of living.

- Gradually, memories will form.
- Relationships will develop.
- Emotions will arise.

The Pilgrim will encounter kindness and disappointment, belonging and rejection, love and loss.

- Some experiences will be understood.
- Others will leave questions.
- Some will become familiar patterns.
- Others will remain hidden until life brings an occasion for them to emerge.

And through these changing experiences, the Flame remains distinct from the story being lived.

- **The Flame allows the possibility of experience.**
- **The House becomes shaped through living.**
- **The Garden provides the encounters.**

Together, they offer us a way of contemplating the individual human pilgrimage.

We do not know whether consciousness literally enters life in this way.

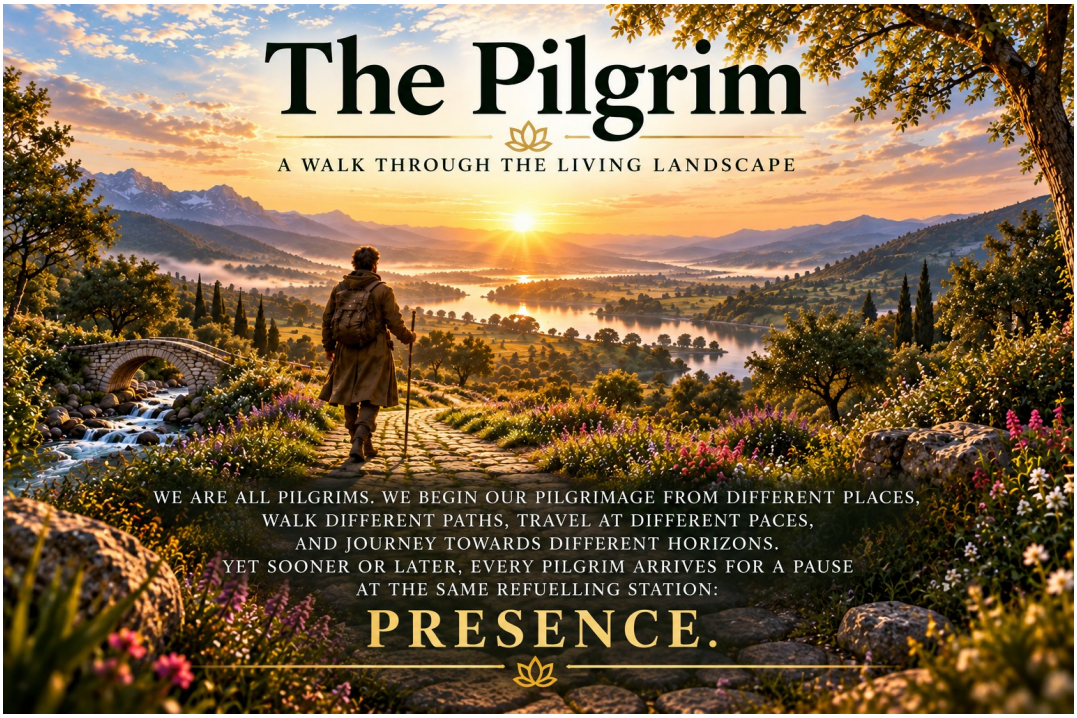
The story is simply a doorway into the mystery.

But we do know that every human life begins to encounter a world it did not create.

And every Pilgrim will experience that world in a way that is uniquely their own.

- **The Flame now rests within the House.**
- **The House belongs to the Pilgrim's inner life.**
- **And the Pilgrim begins to live within the Garden.**
- **The Pilgrim has arrived.**
- **The pilgrimage has begun.**
- **And this is where our story begins.**

Chapter 3 - The Journey of the Pilgrim



The Flame has entered the Inner House.
The Lamp has received the Flame.

Light has appeared.

And with that light, **a human life begins.**

- A first breath is taken.
- Eyes begin to meet the world.
- A body begins its life.
- A name will be given.
- A voice will gradually be discovered.
- Relationships will begin.
- Memories will gather.

The House that once waited in silence will begin to acquire a history.

And beyond its windows lies the Garden.

The Pilgrim has arrived.

We Are All Pilgrims

No two Pilgrims arrive in quite the same way.

- Some begin life surrounded by tenderness.
- Others arrive amid uncertainty.
- Some inherit conditions that offer safety and nourishment.
- Others encounter burdens they never chose.
- Some will walk for many years beside familiar companions.
- Others will know long stretches of solitude.

There is no single human pilgrimage.

Each Pilgrim inhabits a particular body, a particular history and a particular place in the world.

And from within that life, something extraordinary begins.

Experience.

- We see.
- We hear.
- We touch.
- We feel.
- We encounter other people.

And gradually, the House begins to fill.

- Memories find their places.
- Emotions move through its rooms.
- The windows begin to offer views of the Garden.
- Doors open and close.

Some experiences leave only the faintest trace.

Others remain with us for years.

And through it all, the Flame remains.

The Flame illuminates the House.
The House shelters the Inner Self.

The Inner Self finds expression in the world.
The House lives within the Pilgrim.

The Pilgrim tends the Garden.

The Garden opens beneath the Sky.
The Sky quietly holds all things.

This is the Living Landscape of a human life.

The Pilgrimage

The pilgrimage cannot be found on a map.

It is not measured only in miles or years.

Much of it unfolds through ordinary moments.

- A conversation.
- A friendship.
- A kindness.
- A mistake.
- A disappointment.
- A loss.
- A celebration.
- A period of waiting.
- An unexpected encounter.
- A moment that seems insignificant at the time and means something very different years later.

Not every experience needs to become a lesson.
Not every difficulty contains hidden wisdom.
And not everything that happens to us happens *for* us.

Life is not required to justify itself in this way.

But sometimes an experience remains with us.

- We carry it.
- We question it.
- We see it differently with time.

And something begins to ripen.

Perhaps this is one way wisdom enters a human life.
Not because every experience contains wisdom,
but because the Pilgrim may gradually discover wisdom through living.

- **Receive.**
- **Ripen.**
- **Give.**

The Rhythm of the Pilgrimage

As I have reflected upon the Living Landscape, I have begun to notice a quiet arc woven through every pilgrimage.

- The pilgrimage invites trust.
- Trust allows us to live in harmony with life's rhythms.
- Living in harmony with those rhythms quietly nurtures healing.
- And as healing unfolds, life begins to flourish.

Yet flourishing is never the end of the pilgrimage.
It is simply another beginning.

For every ending quietly becomes another beginning,
and every beginning invites the Pilgrim to continue walking.

Perhaps this is the quiet wisdom the Living Landscape has been revealing all along.

The Pilgrimage → Trust → Rhythm → Healing → Flourishing → The Pilgrimage Continues

When the Mind is Away

There will be times when the Pilgrim becomes deeply present to life.
And there will be times when attention moves elsewhere.

- The Garden becomes busy.
- Responsibilities accumulate.
- Relationships become difficult.
- The mind becomes occupied.
- Old memories are stirred.
- Visitors enter the House.
- Sometimes we simply move through the day on autopilot.

- The Flame has not disappeared.
- The House has not been abandoned.

The mind is away.
This distinction matters.
There is nothing that needs to be brought back from somewhere else.
Presence is already available.
The invitation is simpler.

Notice.

And in noticing, something changes.

- We may pause.
- We may become aware of what is happening within the House.
- We may notice what is happening around us in the Garden.

And sometimes, quietly,
we arrive.

Not at the end of the pilgrimage.
Not at a perfect state.
Simply here.

Walking Together

Although every pilgrimage is unique, our paths continually meet those of other Pilgrims.

Some people remain beside us for many years.

Others accompany us only briefly.

- A conversation.
- A friendship.
- A teacher.
- A stranger.
- Someone who cares for us.
- Someone for whom we care.
- Some encounters nourish us.
- Some challenge us.

Some reveal parts of ourselves we had not previously seen.
And some leave wounds that require time and care.

We cannot always know what another Pilgrim is carrying within their House.
Nor can they fully know what is moving through ours.

Perhaps this is one reason kindness matters.

- A gentle word.
- A willingness to listen.
- A moment of patience.

The decision not to add another burden.
These may appear small within the vast Garden of human life.

But small gestures can leave long echoes.

Every Pilgrim carries a House we cannot fully see.

The Pilgrimage Becomes the Teacher

For much of my life, I thought learning happened primarily through understanding.

Perhaps this came naturally from mathematics and teaching.

- There was something to study.
- Something to grasp.
- Something that could eventually become clear.

Life gradually showed me another way of learning.

Some understanding cannot be reached by thinking alone.

- It ripens through participation.
- Through loving.
- Through grieving.
- Through caring.
- Through making mistakes.
- Through waiting.
- Through meeting people whose lives are different from our own.
- Through uncertainty.
- Through moments when we know what to do,
  and moments when we do not.

Gradually, I began to realise that the pilgrimage itself could become a teacher.

- Not because every experience was deliberately placed before me as a lesson.
- Not because suffering must contain some hidden meaning.

But because **I could become a student of what I lived.**

- An experience arrives.
- We live it.
- Perhaps we question it.

Perhaps we ask:

What can I learn from this?

- Sometimes the learning comes quickly.
- Sometimes it takes years.
- Sometimes an experience needs to rest before we can see it differently.
- And sometimes no clear understanding arrives at all.

That too belongs to being human.

The pilgrimage does not force the lesson.

It offers the experience.

The Pilgrim does not have to extract wisdom from everything that happens.

The Pilgrim remains open to learning.

Perhaps this is the quiet relationship between them:

The pilgrimage becomes the teacher.
The Pilgrim becomes the student.

Lived experience becomes the classroom.
Wisdom is allowed to ripen.

And wisdom cannot be hurried.

Life unfolds.
The Pilgrim arrives.
Wisdom ripens.

Continuing the Way

The pilgrimage does not ask us to walk perfectly.

- There will be times of confidence.
- Times of uncertainty.
- Joy.
- Grief.
- Clarity.
- Confusion.

There will be moments when we know where the next step lies.

And others when the Horizon disappears completely.

- The mind becomes away.
- Then notice.
- Pause.
- And arrive again.

Not because the pilgrimage has restarted.

Because we are here for it once more.

- The Flame still lives within the House.
- The House still lives within the Pilgrim.
- The Garden continues around us.
- And above it all, the Sky remains open.

There is another step.

Another encounter.

Another day of this particular human life.

The pilgrimage continues.

A Moment to Reflect

Before continuing, you may wish to pause.

There is no need to search for perfect answers.

Simply notice what arises.

- **Where am I in my pilgrimage at this moment?**
- **What is happening within my House?**
- **What is happening in the Garden around me?**
- **Am I here for this moment, or has my attention become away?**

There is nothing to judge.

Nothing that needs to be corrected immediately.

Perhaps noticing is enough.

Pause.

Allow yourself to arrive.

And when you are ready,

continue.

Not towards someone you are supposed to become.

Not back towards someone you once were.

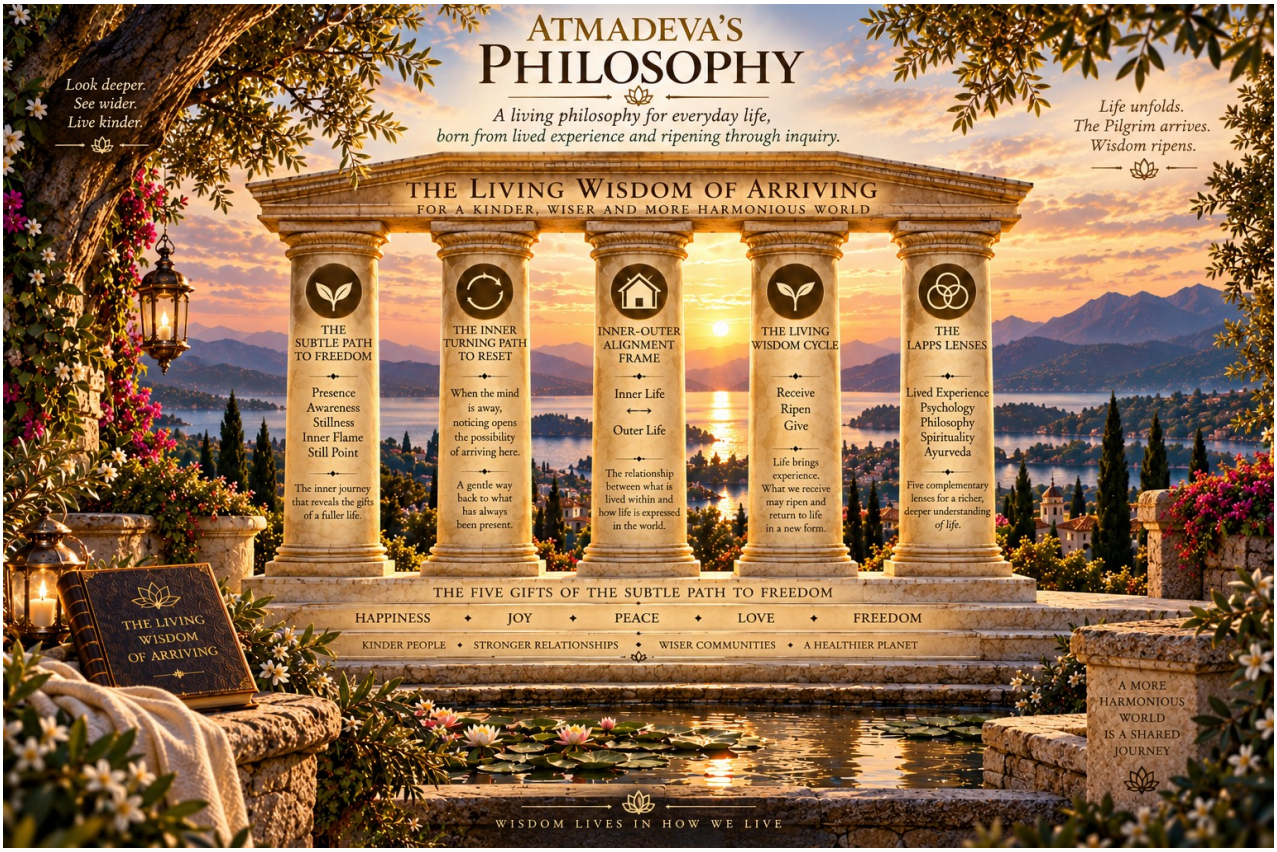
But from where you are now.

The Flame remains.
The Pilgrim arrives.
Life unfolds.

Pilgrim's Shachari

We are all Pilgrims, departing from different places, travelling along different paths, at different paces, and towards different destinations. Yet sooner or later, every Pilgrim arrives for a pause at the same refuelling station: Presence.

Chapter 4 – The Journey of Atmadeva's Philosophy



Every philosophy has its own journey.

Some begin with a theory.

Others emerge through years of study, academic debate, or careful construction.

This philosophy unfolded differently.

It did not arrive complete.

Nor did I set out to create it.

It revealed itself gradually.

One question.

One experience.

One recognition at a time.

Looking back, I no longer see a collection of separate ideas and frameworks.

I see something that was quietly growing long before I understood what it was.

A philosophy gradually learning to recognise itself.

Movement 1 - A Pilgrimage I Never Expected

Until the spring of 2025, I believed I knew where my writing was going.
For several years, I had immersed myself in Ayurveda.

- I studied it
- Practised it.
- Lived with it.

And gradually began writing from what I had received.

I imagined that my work would continue in that direction — a series of books sharing what I had

learned through study, practice and lived experience.

It was work I loved.

Work that had quietly accompanied me for many years.

There was no reason to imagine that anything fundamental was about to change.

Then another journey began.

Not dramatically.

There was no announcement.

No moment when I said:

"I am going to create a new philosophy."

Nothing I had already learned needed to be abandoned.

Ayurveda remained.

The earlier books remained.

The experiences remained.

Something simply began opening beside them.

At first, I did not recognise what was happening.

A question would appear.

I would live with it.

- Sometimes an understanding emerged.
- Sometimes another question followed.
- An image appeared.
- A metaphor began to take shape.

And sometimes something I had experienced years earlier suddenly looked different when seen from where I now stood.

Only later did I begin to see that these were not isolated discoveries.
They were beginning to find one another.

Looking back now, I do not think this was the beginning of a philosophy.

It was the beginning of recognising a philosophy that had already been quietly forming through life.

At the time, however, I knew none of this.

I did not know there would be an Inner House.
I did not know there would be a Pilgrim.

- A Garden.
- A Harbour.
- A Sea.
- A Horizon.
- A Sky.

I did not know that Presence, Awareness, Stillness, the Inner Flame and the Still Point would eventually belong to one continuous movement.

I certainly did not know that Lived Experience, Ayurveda, Philosophy, Psychology and Spirituality would one day sit together beneath a single name:

LAPPS.

All of that still lay ahead.

And perhaps that is why, when I look back upon the beginning, one image seems especially fitting.

An egg had already been laid.

I simply did not yet know what was waiting inside.

Movement 2 — An Egg Was Already There

In the spring of 2025, something appeared that I did not yet recognise as part of the philosophy. I called it the **Temple of the Inner Flame**—a quiet online space at The Still Point, created simply as somewhere people could visit, pause and reflect.

At the time, I thought I was simply creating a place.

- A quiet place for reflection.
- A place where wisdom could be gathered and shared.
- A place where someone might pause for a while before returning to life.

Nothing more.

Or so I thought.

The Temple gradually took shape.

- There was a **Welcome**. A place of arriving.
- Then the **Walk of Surrender**. Beyond it, the **Still Room**.
- Then the **Temple of the Inner Flame** .
- And finally the **Courtyard**, opening into something more spacious.
- Alongside them sat the **Library**, quietly holding what had been gathered along the way.

At the time, these seemed simply to be different spaces within the Temple.

I did not ask whether they belonged to a larger philosophy.

I certainly did not imagine that they were quietly preparing a landscape through which a Pilgrim would one day walk.

I simply built what seemed to want to be built.

And then I left it alone.

Only much later would I look back and notice something curious.

The architecture had arrived **before my understanding of it**.

- There was already an arrival.
- A movement inward.
- Stillness.
- An Inner Flame.
- And an opening into spaciousness.

I had not deliberately arranged these as stages of an inner journey.

Yet the journey was already there.

I simply could not see it yet.

Months later, another image would emerge.

The Temple would gradually give way to something much more ordinary.

Something more human.

Something we could inhabit rather than visit.

The Inner House.

That change would eventually transform the way I understood the entire philosophy. But not yet.

- At this point in the pilgrimage, the Temple was simply the Temple.
- The Inner House had not revealed itself.
- The Living Landscape had not appeared.
- The Pilgrim had not yet begun to walk through it.
- And the words **LAPPS Philosophy** did not exist.

Something had begun.

Perhaps this is one of the curious ways in which understanding sometimes unfolds.
We imagine that first we understand,
and then we create.
But occasionally life seems to work the other way around.
Something arrives.
We live with it.
We allow it to ripen.

And only later do we understand what we have received.
An egg had been laid.
It was still waiting to hatch.

Movement 3 — At the Airport

The egg did not hatch in a library.

Nor in a university.

Nor during a retreat in the mountains.

It began to open in at **Lisbon airport.**

I had been caring for my parents and was returning home.

There were several hours before my flight.

Nothing about the evening suggested that anything important was about to happen.

I was simply waiting.

And, as I waited, I found myself in conversation.
The questions were not particularly philosophical.

They were questions about living.

For almost two years, I had been trying to live with **Presence** and **Awareness** as faithfully as I could.

Not perfectly.

Simply as a daily practice.

I knew what it meant to be present.

I knew something of what it meant to live with awareness.

But that evening, a very simple question occurred to me:

What happens when Presence and Awareness live together?

The answer came quietly.

Stillness.

I paused.

Not because Stillness was unfamiliar.

Quite the opposite.

I recognised it.

I had experienced those moments when Presence and Awareness seemed to settle together and something within became quieter.
I simply had never understood Stillness in quite this way.
Then another question arose.

What comes after Stillness?
The answer surprised me.
The Inner Flame.
This time I paused for a different reason.

I already knew those words.

Only a few months earlier, I had created the **Temple of the Inner Flame**.

The name had simply felt right.

I had never asked why.

Yet now, sitting in an airport, the Inner Flame had appeared again—this time not as the name of a place, but as part of an unfolding inner journey.

Something was beginning to connect.
So I continued.

What comes after the Inner Flame?
The answer came:
The Still Point.

And then one final question:

Can there be anything beyond the Still Point?
No.

For a moment, that was all.

Five simple expressions were now sitting beside one another:
Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point

I did not yet know how much those five would eventually shape the philosophy.

I did not know that they would become the **Subtle Path**.

Nor did I yet understand the gifts that would later become associated with them:

- Happiness.
- Joy.
- Peace.
- Love.
- Freedom.

None of that had fully ripened.

All I had was a sequence that seemed strangely familiar.
And then I remembered the Temple.

- There had been a **Welcome**. A place of arriving.
- A **Walk of Surrender**.
- A **Still Room**.
- The **Temple of the Inner Flame**.
- And finally the **Courtyard**, opening into spaciousness.

I had created those spaces before this conversation.
I had not rearranged them to fit what I had just discovered.

Yet now I could see an echo.

What had first appeared as architecture was beginning to reveal an inner movement.

The understanding had come after the creation.
Perhaps the egg that had been quietly waiting was beginning to crack.

But even now, I did not have a philosophy.

I had something much smaller.

And perhaps much more important.

A question had led to another question.

And the answers had begun to recognise one another.

Movement 4 — When the Path Came to Life

The five expressions stayed with me.

Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point

They felt right.

But recognising a sequence is one thing.

Understanding how it might be lived is another.

I began to wonder:

How could something so subtle be expressed in ordinary human language?

Definitions could explain each word.

But definitions were not enough.

I wanted someone to be able to recognise the movement through

their own experience.

So for a while, I simply lived with the question.

Gradually, the words began to deepen.

Presence was not something to achieve.
It was here.
The question was whether I was here with it.

Awareness allowed me to notice.

- What was happening within me.
- What was happening around me.
- What I was feeling.
- What I was carrying.
- What was asking for attention.

And when I was present and aware, something quieter sometimes became possible.

Stillness.

- Not the absence of thought.
- Not the absence of difficulty.
- Not a perfectly quiet House.

But a spaciousness within which experience could be allowed to unfold.

Inner Flame

Then I began to understand the **Inner Flame** differently.

It was not simply another step after Stillness.

The Flame was already there.

Its quiet warmth and illumination belonged within the House.

Stillness did not create the Flame.

Stillness made the Flame easier to notice.

And sometimes, as the House settled more deeply, there seemed to be nowhere further to go.
Nothing more to seek.

Nothing more to add.

The Still Point.

The five expressions from the airport were no longer simply words connected by arrows.

They had begun to describe a deepening within human experience:

- **Presence** — being here.
- **Awareness** — noticing.
- **Stillness** — spaciousness.
- **The Inner Flame** — quiet warmth and illumination.
- **The Still Point** — where nothing more is required.

The sequence remained:

Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point

But I no longer saw it simply as a sequence.

I saw a deepening.

And with that deepening, another relationship gradually became visible.

Each seemed to carry its own quiet gift:

- **Presence — Happiness**
- **Awareness — Joy**
- **Stillness — Peace**
- **Inner Flame — Love**
- **Still Point — Freedom**

These were not rewards waiting at the end of five stages.

Nor did they mean that someone living in Presence must always feel happy, or that someone who has known Stillness will never again be troubled.

They were better understood as **gifts that may become available through the deepening**.

- Happiness did not mean constant pleasure.
- Joy did not mean constant excitement.
- Peace did not mean the absence of difficulty.
- Love did not mean that every relationship would be easy.
- Freedom did not mean escaping ordinary human life.

They pointed towards qualities that could become increasingly recognisable as the Pilgrim deepened into what was already here.

The path had begun to come alive.

I came to know it as the **The Subtle Path to Freedom**

- Not a staircase.
- Not a test.
- Not five levels the Pilgrim must complete.
- And not a journey towards somewhere else.

It was simply a way of recognising one possible inward deepening:

- from being here,
- to noticing,
- to settling,
- to recognising the quiet light within,
- and sometimes,
- to the freedom of the Still Point.

Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point

The egg had opened a little further.
But almost immediately, another question appeared.

If the Subtle Path helped me understand what may happen as the Pilgrim deepens into Presence and Awareness,

what happens when the mind is away?

And with that question, another egg began quietly to crack.

Movement 5 — When the Mind Is Away

The **Subtle Path to Freedom** helped me understand one possible deepening:

Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point

But life does not remain still.

- The telephone rings.
- Someone says something that unsettles us.
- Responsibilities accumulate.
- A memory is stirred.
- Fear arrives.
- We become tired.
- We hurry.

- We react.

Sometimes nothing dramatic happens at all.

We simply move through the day on autopilot.

For a long time, I understood these moments as a movement **away from Presence**.

And naturally, that led me to another question:

How do we return?

This question became important in the early development of the philosophy.

I began to explore what I called the **Inner Turning Path to Reset** — a way of recognising when we had become caught in familiar patterns and how we might find our way back.

At the time, the language of **returning** made sense to me.

But as the philosophy continued to ripen, something much simpler began to reveal itself.

Presence had never gone anywhere.

Neither had the Inner Flame.

The Pilgrim had not left the House.

There was nowhere to return to.

What had changed was much more ordinary.

The mind was away.

- Perhaps it was caught in a memory.
- Perhaps anticipating what might happen tomorrow.
- Perhaps replaying a conversation.
- Perhaps worrying.
- Planning.
- Reacting.
- Or simply wandering somewhere other than the life happening here.

This changed the question.

Instead of asking: **How do I return to Presence?**

I could ask: **Is my mind here, or is it away?**

That required no judgement.

Being away was not failure.

It was part of being human.

And something interesting happened the moment I noticed.

Awareness was already present in the noticing.

I did not need to force the mind back.

I did not need to manufacture Presence.

I simply noticed that the mind was away.

And in noticing, there was the possibility of arriving.

- **Away.**
- **Notice.**

- **Arrive.**
- **Here.**

The movement that I had once understood as **returning** was gradually becoming something else.

Arriving.

Not arriving somewhere new.

Not reaching a spiritual destination.

Not recovering something that had been lost.

Simply arriving where life was already happening.

Here.

The **Inner Turning Path to Reset** still had something important to offer.

It helped me recognise what happens when familiar patterns carry the mind away.

- How we become caught.
- How reactions gather momentum.
- How the House may become unsettled.
- And how noticing can interrupt that movement.

But its purpose was becoming clearer.

It was not a path back to Presence.

Presence had never left.

It was a way of recognising when the mind was away,

noticing what was happening,

and allowing the Pilgrim to arrive more fully in the life already being lived.

Another part of the philosophy had ripened.

What had begun as: **the art of returning**

was gradually revealing itself as: **the wisdom of arriving.**

And perhaps the egg had not changed at all.

Only my understanding of what had hatched from it had deepened.

Movement 6 — The Inner and Outer Life Meet

As the philosophy continued to unfold, another question began to appear.

- The **Subtle Path to Freedom** helped me understand a possible deepening within the House.
- The **Inner Turning Path to Reset** helped me understand what may happen when the mind is away, when familiar patterns are activated, and when we need to notice, pause and reset.

Yet another question quietly remained:

How does any of this shape the way we actually live?

- It is one thing to understand Presence.
  Another to live in Presence.
- One thing to recognise Awareness.
  Another to allow Awareness to shape the way we meet a difficult conversation.

- One thing to recognise the Inner Flame.
  Another to listen to its quiet guidance when life becomes uncertain.

Gradually, I began to see that inner life and outer life could not be understood separately.

What happens within the **House** influences the way the **Pilgrim** lives within the **Garden**.

And what happens in the Garden can be felt within the House.

- A difficult conversation may change the weather within.
- An old memory may influence how we meet someone today.
- A moment of kindness in the Garden may leave a quiet echo within the House.
- A restless House may shape the words we carry into a relationship.
- A settled House may allow the same situation to be met differently.

House and Garden are Continually in Conversation.

Yet they are not the same.

The House is our inner life.

The Garden is the outer life in which the Pilgrim participates.

And the Pilgrim carries the House while living within the Garden.

This became an important recognition.

There were not two separate lives —

- an inner life,
- and an outer life.

There was **one human life**, experienced within and lived among others.

- What happens within may shape what appears without.
- What happens around us may leave echoes within.

Neither determines the other completely.

- There is always movement.
- Relationship.
- Possibility.
- And, with Awareness, sometimes choice.

Gradually, this relationship found a name:

The Inner–Outer Alignment Frame.

The word **alignment** did not mean that the House and Garden must always agree.

Nor did it mean that inner life must be perfectly settled before the Pilgrim can participate in the world.

Life is rarely so tidy.
Alignment meant something simpler.

Can I notice what is happening within me while remaining in relationship with what is happening around me?

- Sometimes the answer will be yes.
- Sometimes the mind will be away.

- Sometimes the weather of the House will be unsettled.
- Sometimes the Garden will ask more of us than we expected.

But the conversation continues.

House within.
Garden around.
Pilgrim living between and within both.

Another egg had quietly hatched.
And with it came a recognition that would eventually become central to the Living Landscape:
Healing could not belong only to the House.
How we live within inevitably touches how we meet the Garden.

Movement 7 — When the Pilgrim Became the Student

The next hatching came differently.
It did not begin with a framework.
Nor with a question I was trying to answer.
It began with something I had quietly begun to notice about myself.

For much of my life, giving had come naturally.

- Giving time.
- Giving attention.
- Giving kindness.
- Giving whatever I could.

Yet I had begun to recognise something else.
Receiving did not come as easily.

Before travelling to Alicante for the Hogueras, while staying in Valencia, I already knew this was something worth exploring.

I did not know what I would discover.
I simply carried the question with me.

As the day unfolded, I began noticing moments of receiving.

- The first sculpture seemed to welcome me with a gentle smile.
- In a bakery, a man patiently explained the different cakes with genuine kindness.
- Further along, another sculpture held a bowl that spoke to me of receiving and giving.
- People offered hats to protect us from the sun.
- Others offered sunglasses.
- Later, drinks.
- At lunchtime, a lady kindly offered to warm our pies and invited us to sit comfortably and eat.

None of these things was extraordinary.
Perhaps that was precisely the point.

Receiving was appearing in ordinary life.

Again and again, something was offered.

And again and again, I had the opportunity simply to say:

Yes.
Thank you.

Even passing a small lottery shop became part of the experience.

I almost never buy lottery tickets.

That day, it was not really about winning.

It became another small opportunity to participate in the moment rather than stand outside it.

On the journey home, we found ourselves sitting in the front seats of the coach, quietly watching the road ahead.

By then, I had begun to smile at what I had noticed throughout the day.

A question was beginning to form:

Can I receive as naturally as I give?

At first, I thought the question was personal.

Perhaps I simply needed to become more comfortable receiving from others.

But the experience stayed with me.

I did not need to find an answer immediately.

I allowed it to ripen.

And as it ripened, its meaning began to widen.

Receiving was about far more than accepting a hat, a drink, a kindness or a warm pie.

We are continually receiving **experience**.

- A conversation.
- A loss.
- A kindness.
- A question.
- A new idea.

Something seen for the first time.

Something we have seen many times but suddenly understand differently.

We often receive an experience before we understand what it may come to mean.

And perhaps that is why some experiences need time.

- Time to settle.
- Time to be questioned.
- Time to be lived with.
- Time to find their place within the House.
- **Time to ripen.**

Only then may something else become possible.

What has ripened within us may eventually become something we can give.

- A kindness.
- An understanding.
- A piece of wisdom.
- A conversation.

- A book.

Perhaps simply a different way of meeting another person.
And there it was.
Not another complicated framework.

Just three words:

- **Receive.**
- **Ripen.**
- **Give.**

Together, they began to reveal a movement I would come to understand as:

The Living Wisdom Cycle

Receive → Ripen → *Give*

- We receive through living.
- We allow what we receive to ripen.
- And sometimes, what has ripened becomes something we can give.

The word **sometimes** matters.

- Not every experience becomes wisdom.
- Not everything we receive needs to be understood.
- Not everything that ripens needs to be shared.

Giving is not an obligation.

Some things may ripen quietly within the House and remain there.

But when something is given, the cycle does not necessarily end.

A word given by one Pilgrim may be received by another.

- A kindness may become part of someone else's lived experience.
- A book may raise a question.
- A conversation may continue years later in a way neither person could have anticipated.

What is given may become what is received.

And so the cycle can begin again.

Receive → Ripen → *Give* → Receive…

This helped me understand something about wisdom itself.

Wisdom was not simply something I could acquire.
Nor was it knowledge accumulated and stored.

Living Wisdom could emerge through what had been lived, allowed to ripen, and become available to life again.

The Alicante experience had begun with a much smaller question:

Can I receive as naturally as I give?

It had not been a lesson arranged for me.

Life had simply brought experiences.

I had lived them.

And this time, I had become their student.

I had received.

Something had ripened.

And eventually, I was able to give it a name:

The Living Wisdom Cycle.

Another egg had quietly hatched.

Movement 8 — The Five LAPPS Lenses



The Living Wisdom Cycle describes a movement:

Receive → Ripen → Give

LAPPS offers five lenses through which we may explore what has been received.

- We can change the lens.
- We can combine lenses.
- We can remove them.
- And sometimes, perhaps the clearest thing we can do is simply **look**.

But this opened another question:

What helps us understand what we have received?

Looking back over my own pilgrimage, I realised that I had never looked at human life through only one lens.

Different questions seemed to invite different ways of seeing.

Living Experience — Receive life

Before there are philosophies, books or frameworks, there is **life**.

- Life arrives.
- We encounter it. ·
- We live it.
- We receive from it.

Everything else begins there.

Lived Experience keeps the inquiry close to what has actually happened.

- What did I experience?
- What did I notice?
- What changed?
- What remained with me?

But lived experience does not always explain itself.

Sometimes another lens can help us see something that was not immediately visible.

Psychology — Understand yourself

Sometimes we need help understanding what is happening within us.

- Our thoughts.
- Our emotions.
- Our memories.
- Our patterns.
- Our reactions.

Why did that particular moment affect me so deeply?
Why do I respond differently in one relationship than another?
Why does something from long ago still appear in the House today?

Psychology offered ways of exploring these questions.

It did not tell me everything about the Pilgrim.

But it helped illuminate some of the movements of the human mind and the patterns through which we experience ourselves and others.

Psychology became a lens through which the Pilgrim could understand themselves.

Philosophy — See wisely

But understanding ourselves does not answer every question.

Sometimes we need to stand somewhere quieter and ask:

- *What does this mean?*
- *How might I see this differently?*
- *How shall I live?*

Philosophy opened another kind of inquiry.

- It allowed assumptions to be questioned.
- Certainties to be examined.
- Different possibilities to sit beside one another.

Philosophy did not always provide answers.

Sometimes its greatest contribution was simply a better question.

Philosophy became a lens through which the Pilgrim could learn to see more wisely.

Spirituality — Listen Within

And sometimes neither explanation nor reasoning is enough.

Something needs to be allowed to deepen.

- To remain unanswered for a while. ·
- To sit quietly within the House.
- To encounter Stillness.
- The Inner Flame.

- The mystery beneath the Sky.

Spirituality opened the inquiry towards what could not always be explained or resolved.

- Consciousness.
- Meaning.
- Mystery.
- The sacred.

It did not require every mystery to become an answer.

Sometimes the mystery itself was enough.

Spirituality became a lens that invited the Pilgrim Listen Within.

Ayurveda — Live in harmony

Ayurveda brought another perspective.

It reminded me that the Pilgrim cannot easily be divided into separate parts.

- Body.
- Mind.
- Emotions.
- Relationships. Environment.
- Daily rhythms.
- The seasons of life.

Each belongs to the same living whole.

What happens in one part of life may quietly influence another.

- A restless mind may disturb sleep.
- A tired body may change how we meet another person. ·
- A difficult relationship may be felt within the House.

The food we eat, the pace at which we live, the environments we inhabit and the rhythms we keep may all influence how we experience ourselves and the world.

Ayurveda therefore became more than a lens concerned with the body.

It became a lens of harmony.

Not a demand that everything remain perfectly balanced.

- Life continually changes.
- Bodies change.
- Relationships change.
- Circumstances change.
- Seasons change.
- The Garden changes.

Harmony therefore could not mean holding life in a fixed state.

It meant learning to notice what was happening and responding to changing conditions with care.

- Sometimes that might mean nourishment.
- Sometimes rest.
- Sometimes movement.
- Sometimes adjustment.

- Sometimes simply allowing a season of life to be what it is.

And this was where Ayurveda offered something distinctive among the five lenses.

- After receiving life through **Lived Experience**,
- after exploring ourselves through **Psychology**,
- after questioning through **Philosophy**,
- after deepening through **Spirituality**,

Ayurveda asked:

How might I live with what I have seen?

Not perfectly.

Not permanently balanced.

But with greater sensitivity to the whole.

Ayurveda became the lens through which the Pilgrim could seek harmony within a changing life.

Gradually, I began to recognise five lenses:

- **Lived Experience**
- **Ayurveda**
- **Philosophy**
- **Psychology**
- **Spirituality**

Together, they became **LAPPS.**

But something important had to remain clear.

No single lens could reveal the whole Pilgrim.

Nor did the five lenses need to agree.

Each could reveal something different.

- Sometimes one lens was enough.
- Sometimes several were useful.
- Sometimes changing the lens changed what became visible.
- And sometimes a lens added nothing useful at all.

Then I could simply put it down.

The lenses were there to serve the inquiry.

The inquiry was not there to serve the lenses.

Movement 9 — Atmadeva's Philosophy

For a long time, I would not have called any of this a philosophy.

The word seemed too large.

Philosophies belonged to philosophers.

To universities.

To people who had spent their lives studying the great traditions of human thought.

I had studied mathematics.

I had taught mathematics.

Later, I had studied nutrition, Ayurveda and Yoga.

But I had never set out to become a philosopher.

And I had certainly never sat down and decided:

I am going to create a philosophy.

Yet something had been taking shape.

Not on a blank page.

Through living.

The Subtle Path to Freedom

An airport conversation had opened a path through

Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point.

The Inner Turning Path to Reset

Questions about what happens when the mind is away had begun to reveal how we may notice, reset and arrive.

The Inner–Outer Alignment Frame

The relationship between **inner and outer life** had begun to reveal how one may find expression in the other.

The Living Wisdom Cycle

An ordinary day in Alicante had revealed a simple movement through living:

Receive → Ripen → Give

The LAPPS Lenses

Gradually, five ways of looking had gathered around the inquiry:

Lived Experience · Psychology · Philosophy · Spirituality · Ayurveda.

They had not begun as five parts of a philosophy.

Each had emerged from a different experience, question or inquiry.

Only later could I stand back and recognise that they belonged together.

Atmadeva's Philosophy was taking shape.

But LAPPS was not the philosophy.

It was part of the way I had learned to look.

The philosophy itself was becoming something larger.

It was becoming a way of understanding what it means to be a Pilgrim living a human life.

- A life with an Inner House.
- A life lived within a Garden.
- A life in which the mind may sometimes be here and sometimes away.
- A life in which Presence was never absent.
- A life in which Awareness allows us to notice.
- A life in which Stillness may reveal a deeper spaciousness.
- A life in which the Inner Flame remains.

- A life in which we may sometimes arrive at the Still Point.
- A life that does not need to be perfectly understood before it can be lived.

Gradually, I began to recognise something at the heart of it all:

- **Life unfolds.**
- **The Pilgrim arrives.**
- **Wisdom ripens.**

Perhaps this was the philosophy.

- Not a system telling another person how life must be lived.
- Not a set of beliefs that needed to be accepted.
- Not an answer that made other answers unnecessary.
- And not a claim that my way of seeing was the right way to see.

It was simply an understanding that had emerged from one human life.

My lived experience had become the soil.

Questions had grown within it.

Different lenses had helped me look.

Some understandings had faded.

Others had changed.

Some had needed to be put down completely.

And a few had remained long enough to ripen.

That mattered.

Because the philosophy itself had not remained fixed.

A living philosophy must be allowed to live.

It cannot ask life to remain still so that the philosophy can remain correct.

If lived experience reveals something more clearly, then I must be willing to look again.

Perhaps through another lens.

Perhaps without a lens at all.

This is why I do not need to prove that the philosophy is correct.

A mathematical proof seeks something different.

There, a proposition may be proved or disproved.

But a philosophy of living enters a different landscape.

The question becomes less:

Is this the only correct way to understand human life?

and more:

What becomes possible when I live this way?

Different paths may lead to different experiences.
Different Pilgrims may see through different windows.
Something that helps one person may offer little to another.
That does not trouble me.
The philosophy does not need every Pilgrim to walk the same path.

It asks only that we remain willing to look.

- To notice.
- To question.
- To live.
- To allow understanding to ripen.

And, when something becomes ready, perhaps to give.

So perhaps I can now give this philosophy a name.
Not because it belongs to me in the sense of possession.
Much of what shaped it came from lives, traditions and wisdom far older than mine.
But its particular arrangement—

- its House and Garden,
- its Pilgrim and Flame,
- its paths and lenses,
- its questions,
- its language,
- its way of bringing these things into relationship—

emerged through the pilgrimage of one particular human life.

Mine.

And so, for the first time, I am comfortable calling it:

Atmadeva's Philosophy

A philosophy received through living.
Allowed to ripen through inquiry.
And now, quietly, given.

Receive → Ripen → Give

Perhaps that is the most faithful way I can describe how it came to be.

I did not create it and then begin to live by it.

I lived.
I noticed.
I questioned.
I allowed what I received to ripen.

And somewhere along the way, **the philosophy arrived.**

A Note on the Hoguera

A **Hoguera** *is a magnificent artistic monument created for the annual festival of San Juan in Alicante, Spain. After days of admiration, it is offered to the flames, reminding us that even the most beautiful creations are not meant to be possessed forever.*

Chapter 5 - The Living Landscape



"The Living Landscape is always speaking. The question is not whether it has something to say. The question is whether we have learned to listen."

Section 1 - How the Landscape Appeared

Sometimes a philosophy is carefully designed.
Sometimes it quietly reveals itself.

The **Living Landscape** was never something I planned to create.

It appeared gradually, one question leading quietly to another.

Its beginnings can be traced back to **Book 2** — *The Two Mirrors of the Mind*.

While exploring the inner life, I began using the image of doors — doors we leave open, doors we guard, and doors we keep closed.

It was a simple metaphor.

But then a question appeared.

If there are doors, what are they opening into?

The answer was wonderfully ordinary.

Rooms.

And if there are rooms, there must be something that holds them.

A House.

The House had entered the philosophy.

At first, I did not know how important it would become. I simply followed where the image was leading.

Then another question appeared.

What lies beyond the front door?

Again, the answer was wonderfully ordinary.

A Garden.

The House is the place of formation.
The Garden is the place of transformation.

The House gave the inner life a place to be seen.

The Garden opened towards the life we live with others.

For a while, that was enough.

House and Garden.

Inner life and outer life.

But the Garden did not feel enclosed.

There were gates.

There were paths.

And somewhere beyond them, life continued.

So another question quietly arose.

Where does the Garden lead?

Section 2 - Beyond the Garden

The Garden was never still.

- People came and went.
- Relationships changed.
- Plans were made and altered.

Some days unfolded much as expected. Others changed direction before they had properly begun.

As I looked more closely, I began to notice that the Garden was not simply a place in which life happened.

Something was moving through it.

A River.

The image felt natural.
A river is always moving, yet it does not move in a straight line.

- It bends.
- It slows.
- It gathers speed.
- It encounters obstacles and finds another way around them.

And gradually, the River began to reveal something about ordinary life.

The River

The **River** became the movement of daily life.

- We wake with plans for the day, but life does not always follow them.
- A conversation changes something.
- Someone needs us.
- An unexpected invitation arrives.
- A door opens.
- Another closes.
- Circumstances shift.

The current changes.

Much of our struggle can come from trying to make the River flow according to the course we have already chosen.
Yet moving with the current does not mean becoming passive.

- A Pilgrim can still steer.
- We can make choices.
- We can say yes.
- We can say no.
- We can sometimes paddle strongly towards something that matters.

But we can also notice when we are exhausting ourselves by continually fighting the current.

This is where **listening** becomes important.

Not listening for instructions.

Not expecting life to tell us exactly what to do.

Simply becoming attentive to what is actually unfolding.

- *What is happening here?*
- *What is changing?*
- *What is life asking me to notice?*

Sometimes we steer.
Sometimes we paddle.
Sometimes we wait.

And sometimes we discover that the current is already carrying us somewhere we had not thought to go.

The River is the movement of daily life.

Perhaps living wisely is not about controlling its every turn.

Perhaps it is learning to listen as life unfolds — and recognising when to move with the current rather than against it.

Section 3 - The Estuary

As soon as the River appeared, another question followed.

Where does the River lead?

Eventually, it reaches the **Estuary**.

Here, something different happens.

The River that has travelled through familiar land begins to meet water arriving from somewhere else.

Different waters encounter one another.

And that image opened another part of human life.

We do not only live among people who see the world as we do.

- We meet different cultures.
- Different languages.
- Different traditions.
- Different generations.
- Different beliefs.
- Different ways of understanding what it means to live well.
- Sometimes these encounters are easy.
- Sometimes they are uncomfortable.
- Sometimes we misunderstand one another.

We may even discover that something we had always assumed to be *normal* was simply familiar to us.

The Estuary does not ask one water to become the other.

It allows different waters to meet.

That meeting can change what becomes possible.

- We listen.
- We become curious.
- We exchange stories.
- We encounter another way of seeing.
- We may learn something from the other without abandoning what is meaningful within our own world.

And we do not have to agree in order to learn.

The Estuary therefore became a place of **encounter**.

A place where different human worlds can meet without needing to become the same.

Perhaps this is one of the quiet gifts of meeting someone whose life has unfolded differently from our own.

For a moment, we are invited to look beyond the banks from which we arrived.

The Estuary reminds us that difference need not end in separation.

Sometimes, when different waters meet, each can carry something of the encounter onwards.

And beyond the Estuary, the landscape begins to open.

The familiar banks widen.

The water changes.

Certainty becomes more difficult to hold.

In the distance lies the **Sea**.

But before setting sail, there is often somewhere we pause.

Section 4 - The Harbour

A Harbour is a place of **arrival and departure**.

It is where one journey may end and another begin.

We arrive carrying something of where we have been.

We depart without knowing entirely what lies ahead.

And sometimes, between the two, we pause.

The Harbour therefore became a symbol of life's **thresholds and transitions**.

- A child arrives at the end of early childhood and prepares to begin school.
- A young person leaves one familiar world and begins university.
- Someone finishes one job and starts another.
- Two people arrive from separate lives and begin married life together.
- A family leaves one country and begins life in another.
- Working life ends and retirement begins.

Sometimes the transition is chosen.
Sometimes it is welcomed.
Sometimes life brings us to the Harbour unexpectedly.
A diagnosis can do this.
So can loss.

Suddenly, the life we knew has reached a threshold, and something different lies ahead.

At the Harbour, we may look in both directions.

Behind us is what has been lived.
Before us is what has not yet been lived.

- There may be gratitude for what is ending.
- There may be sadness.
- There may be anticipation.
- There may be fear.

Often several of these arrive together.

The Harbour does not ask us to feel only one thing.
Nor does it tell us when we should be ready.

Sometimes we need to remain at the Harbour for a while.

- To recognise what has ended.
- To receive what has begun.
- To prepare for what comes next.

The Harbour is a place of arrival and departure.

It is where one journey ends and another begins.

And when the Pilgrim eventually sets sail, something changes.

At the Harbour, we could still stand on familiar ground and imagine what might come next.

On the Sea, imagining gives way to living.

The shore recedes.

The voyage has begun.

And now we meet what every new beginning carries within it:

uncertainty.

If there is a Harbour... where are the boats going?

To the **Sea**.

Section 5 - The Sea

The boats leave the Harbour and enter the **Sea**.

At first, I thought of the Sea simply as the journey beyond familiar shores.

But gradually, its meaning became clearer.

The Sea is **uncertainty**.

Whenever we begin something new, we may prepare carefully, but we cannot know exactly how it will unfold.

- We can prepare a child for school.
  But we cannot know the friendships they will make, the difficulties they will encounter, or the person they will gradually become.
- We can prepare for marriage.
  But no couple can know every season their life together will bring.
- We can begin a new job with enthusiasm and experience.
  But we cannot know the people we will meet, the opportunities that may appear, or how the work may change us.

We can prepare for retirement, move to another country, begin treatment, start a family or enter any new phase of life.

The Harbour allows us to prepare.

The Sea asks us to live what cannot be completely prepared for.

- Some voyages begin in calm waters.
- Others meet rough seas almost immediately.
- Conditions change.
- Winds change.

What seemed clear from the Harbour may look very different once we are sailing.

And uncertainty does not necessarily mean that something is wrong.

A calm Sea is still uncertain.

We simply cannot see every wave ahead.

Perhaps much of our anxiety comes from asking the Sea to give us something it cannot give:

certainty.

- We may want to know how things will turn out.
- Whether we have made the right decision.
- Whether the relationship will last.
- Whether the treatment will work.
- Whether the new life we have begun will become the life we hoped for.

The Sea cannot answer these questions in advance.

It asks something different of us.

- To remain attentive to changing conditions.
- To adjust when necessary.
- To recognise what is within our hands and what is not.
- And to continue sailing without needing to know the whole voyage.

The Sea does not ask us to know what comes next.

It asks us to learn how to live with not knowing.

And yet, wherever we sail, something remains in the distance.

We lift our eyes beyond the next wave.

And there it is.

The Horizon.

Section 6- The Horizon

As I looked across the Sea, I noticed something that had always been there.

The Horizon.

No matter how far the Pilgrim sailed, the Horizon remained beyond reach.

At first, this seemed strange.

Then another possibility appeared.

Perhaps the Horizon was never meant to be reached.

Perhaps its place in the Living Landscape was not to mark a destination.

It was to remind us that there is always something beyond what we can presently see.

- From where we stand today, we cannot see the whole of tomorrow.
- From the beginning of a marriage, we cannot see what that relationship may become.
- From the first day at school, we cannot see the adult the child may one day be.
- From the beginning of a new chapter, we cannot see all the paths that may eventually open.

The Horizon therefore became a symbol of **possibility**.

Not promise.

Not prediction.

Possibility.

That distinction mattered.

The Horizon does not tell us that everything will unfold as we hope.

Nor does it tell us what lies beyond what we can see.

It simply reminds us that our present view is not the whole view.

- There may be possibilities we have not yet imagined.
- There may be paths that have not yet appeared.
- There may be understandings that have not yet ripened.

The Horizon asks for neither certainty nor haste.

We do not need to chase it.

We can simply allow it to remain where it is — at the edge of what we presently know.

The Horizon reminds us that life is always larger than our present understanding.

And then another question appeared.

What lies beyond the Horizon?

I lifted my eyes.

Section 7 - The Sky

Beyond the Horizon, the landscape seemed to open even further.

I lifted my eyes.

And there was the **Sky**.

It stretched beyond everything I could see.

The House, the Garden, the River, the Estuary, the Harbour and the Sea all existed beneath it.

Even the Horizon appeared within it.

For a while, I simply sat with that image.

The Horizon had given us **possibility** — what may exist beyond our present understanding.

But the Sky seemed to ask something larger.

What if some things are not ours to understand completely?

There are questions human beings have carried for thousands of years.

- Where do we come from?
- What is consciousness?
- Why are we here?
- What happens when we die?
- What is the nature of the sacred?

We may approach such questions through philosophy, spirituality, religion, science or lived experience.

We may find understandings that are meaningful to us.

But the Sky does not require an answer.

It leaves room for **mystery**.

Mystery is not the same as uncertainty.

On the Sea, we do not know what will happen next.

Beneath the Sky, we encounter what may remain beyond knowing altogether.

The distinction felt important.

- **The Sea is uncertainty.**
- **The Horizon is possibility.**
- **The Sky is mystery.**

The Sky does not ask the Pilgrim to solve the mystery.

It simply allows the mystery to remain.

And perhaps there is a particular kind of humility in that.

- To look upwards without needing to possess what we see.
- To wonder without demanding an answer.
- To allow some questions to accompany a human life without requiring them to be resolved.

The Living Landscape now seemed complete.

And yet something was missing.

Not another place.

Not another destination.

Something that had been present in every part of the Landscape from the beginning.

I had simply not noticed it.

What moves through the whole Living Landscape?

Section 8 - The Air

Air was not another part of the Living Landscape.

It was not somewhere the Pilgrim travelled towards.

It had been present all along.

- It filled the House.
- It moved through the Garden.
- It travelled along the River.
- It crossed the Estuary.

- It touched the Harbour.
- It filled the sails on the Sea.
- It moved beneath the Horizon and through the vastness of the Sky.

The Air belonged everywhere.

And gradually its meaning became clear.

Air is Life.

- We may notice the House.
- We may tend the Garden.
- We may listen to the River.
- We may meet at the Estuary.
- We may pause at the Harbour.
- We may sail the Sea.
- We may look towards the Horizon.
- We may wonder beneath the Sky.

But Life is moving through all of them.

- Sometimes gently.
- Sometimes restlessly.
- Sometimes almost unnoticed.

We do not have to travel somewhere else to find it.

We are already breathing within it.

Perhaps that is why Air was the last part of the Living Landscape I noticed.

- It was not hidden.
- It was simply so present that I had forgotten to see it.

Air is not another landscape.

Air is Life flowing through the whole Landscape.

And with that, something became visible that I had not set out to create.

Not a collection of separate metaphors.

A **Living Landscape**.

Section 9 - Quiet Discoveries

Only after the Living Landscape had revealed itself did I begin to see how its different parts related to one another.

It was tempting to arrange them as a path:

House → Garden → River → Estuary → Harbour → Sea → Horizon → Sky

But the Living Landscape is not a route the Pilgrim must follow.

- We do not graduate from the House to the Garden.
- We do not have to pass through the River before reaching a Harbour.
- And we do not spend our lives continually sailing the Sea.

These are different landscapes of **human experience**.

- The **House** is our inner life.
- The **Garden** is the outer life we live with others and the world around us.
- The **River** is the flow of daily life, where we learn to listen and recognise when to move with the current rather than continually against it.
- The **Estuary** is where different worlds meet — cultures, traditions, generations, beliefs and ways of living — offering opportunities to encounter, listen and learn.
- The **Harbour** appears at life's thresholds. It is a place of arrival and departure, where one journey may end and another begin.
- The **Sea** is uncertainty — those periods when we have left familiar ground and cannot know exactly how the voyage will unfold.
- The **Horizon** is possibility — the reminder that what we can presently see is never the whole of what may yet become possible.
- The **Sky** is mystery — what remains larger than our understanding and does not need to be completely explained.

And **Air** is different from them all.

Air is not another landscape.

Air is Life, flowing through the whole Living Landscape.

Gradually, I understood that the Living Landscape was not telling the Pilgrim where to go.

It was giving us a language through which we might recognise something of where we find ourselves.

At one moment, I may be sitting quietly within my House while daily life continues to flow along the River.

At another, I may find myself at an Estuary, encountering a world very different from my own.

There will be Harbours.

There will be Seas.

There will always be a Horizon beyond what I can presently see.

And above it all, the Sky leaves room for mystery.

None of these places exists entirely apart from the others.

They belong to one living human pilgrimage.

And through it all,

Life moves.

Chapter 6 -Arriving at Presence



"Sooner or later, every pilgrim discovers that the longest journey is not across the world, but into Presence. Nothing new has to be found. We simply arrive where life is already happening. "

When We Become Away

Life asks much of us.

There is work to be done.

- People to care for.
- Relationships to tend.
- Responsibilities to fulfil.
- Plans to make.
- Problems to solve.

The pilgrim cannot remain standing quietly upon the path. We are here to participate in life.

And so we move.

Much of this movement becomes familiar. We wake, wash, eat, work, speak, travel, organise, remember, anticipate and respond. We learn to do many things without giving them our full attention.

This capacity is useful.

We might call it **autopilot**.

Autopilot helps us move through the familiar parts of life without having to consciously attend to every action.

But sometimes autopilot carries more than our routines.

- It begins to carry our conversations.
- Our relationships.
- Our reactions.
- Our days.
- We may listen without really hearing.
- We may eat without noticing the food.
- We may walk while thinking about somewhere else.
- We may answer before we have noticed what we feel.

- We may sit beside someone we love while our mind is occupied by yesterday or tomorrow.

Life continues.

We continue.

Yet something has changed.

We are here, but our attention is away.

This may be one of the simplest ways of understanding what happens when Presence seems to have disappeared.

Presence has not disappeared.
We have become away.
1Presence Was Never Absent

This distinction matters.

- If Presence could disappear, we would have to search for it.
- If it could be lost, we would need to recover it.
- If it existed somewhere else, we would need a path to reach it.

But Presence is already here.

The present moment did not disappear while we were thinking about yesterday.

It did not stop while we worried about tomorrow.

Life continued unfolding while our attention was elsewhere.

Presence was never absent.
We were simply not fully present to it.
This is why I have come to think of the movement not as returning, but as **arriving**.
Returning suggests travelling back to somewhere we have left.
Arriving requires no such journey.

We notice that we have been away.
We pause.
And suddenly:

I am here.

Nothing extraordinary has happened.
Nothing has been created.
Presence has not returned.

We have arrived at Presence.

The Inner House
As I reflected upon healing, a simple image gradually emerged.

A House.

Every person carries an **Inner House**.

It is not somewhere beyond us.

It is not something we need to build.

It is the dwelling of our inner life and has quietly accompanied us throughout our journey.

Within the House dwells the **Inner Self**.
Beyond it, the **Outer Self** meets the world.

Together, they form the **Self**.

- Some pilgrims know their House well.
- Some have explored only a few rooms.
- Some rarely enter certain rooms.
- Some have become so occupied with outer life that they hardly notice the House at all.

Yet the House remains.

- We may become away from it.
- We may neglect it.
- We may misunderstand what is happening within it.

But it does not disappear.

And when we arrive at Presence, we begin to notice the House again.

The House and the Garden

Beyond the House lies the Garden.

The House represents our inner life:

- our thoughts,
- our emotions,
- our feelings,
- our memories,
- our beliefs,
- our wounds,
- our hopes,
- our fears.

The Garden represents our outer life:

- our relationships,
- our families,
- our work,
- our communities,
- our conversations,
- our responsibilities,
- our actions,

and our way of meeting the world.

The House is where life is experienced within.
The Garden is where life is lived with others and with the world.

We need both.

We are not meant to spend our lives hidden inside the House.

Nor are we meant to become so occupied with the Garden that we forget there is a House within us.

A flourishing life asks for movement between them.

- The Inner Self needs the Garden in which to encounter life.
- The Outer Self needs the House from which to meet it.

Healing gradually allows a friendship to develop between the two.

The Conversation Between House and Garden

The House and the Garden may appear separate.

They are not.

They are two expressions of the same life.

What happens in the Garden may enter the House.

- A difficult conversation may change our inner weather.
- A loss may remain with us long after the event has passed.
- A careless word may touch an old wound.
- An unexpected kindness may soften something within us.

And what happens within the House travels with us into the Garden.

- Fear may shape the way we meet another person.
- An old memory may influence a new relationship.
- Inner agitation may enter a conversation before we realise it.
- Stillness may allow us to listen where once we would have reacted.

The House and the Garden are continually in conversation.

What happens in one may leave traces in the other.

This is why healing cannot belong only to the House.

Nor can it belong only to the Garden.

We live between both.

The Weather of the House

Every House has an inner environment.

And like every environment, its weather changes.

Some days are light.

Others feel heavy.

At times the House may be calm.

At other times there may be agitation, sadness, uncertainty, fear or joy.

- A memory may suddenly return.
- An emotion may move through a room.
- A visitor may arrive unexpectedly.

Sometimes we know what changed the weather.

- A conversation.
- A disappointment.
- A loss.
- An expectation that was not met.

At other times, the weather seems to change without explanation.

Presence does not prevent any of this.

It does not promise a House without storms.

- Presence simply allows us to be here while the weather is changing.
- Awareness allows us to notice what has arrived without immediately being carried away by it.
- Stillness gives what is moving through the House somewhere to rest.

This is an important distinction.

Healing is not learning how to keep the House permanently sunny.

Nor is every cloud something that needs to be removed.

- Some weather needs to be felt.

- Some needs to be understood.
- Some simply needs time to pass.

The art of healing is learning to inhabit the House through its changing weather.

Three Quiet Foundations

Beneath the changing weather of the House are three quiet foundations:

- **Presence.**
- **Awareness.**
- **Stillness.**

Presence is our capacity to be here.
Awareness allows us to notice what is happening within us and around us.
Stillness gives what we notice somewhere to rest.

They are not three achievements.
Nor are they ways of escaping difficult experience.

- Presence does not prevent the storm.
- Awareness does not stop the rain.
- Stillness does not remove the wind.

They change our relationship with what is happening.

- When we arrive at Presence, we are here.
- With Awareness, we begin to see.
- Within Stillness, there is room for what we see to unfold.

The weather may continue.

But we are no longer entirely carried by it.

The Beginning of Healing

Many of us imagine healing as becoming someone different.

- A better version of ourselves.
- A stronger version.
- A happier version.

Perhaps even a more spiritual version.

But healing may begin somewhere much simpler.

With arriving.

- Before we can understand what is happening within the House, we must first be here to notice it.
- Before we can recognise an emotion, we must be here.
- Before we can hear what a feeling may be telling us, we must be here.
- Before we can notice an old wound being touched, we must be here.
- Before we can choose how to respond in the Garden, we must be here.

Presence does not complete healing.

It makes healing possible.

This is why arriving matters.

We cannot care for a House we never notice.

From Autopilot to Arrival

The movement can be very small.

- We are on autopilot.
- Something catches our attention.
- We notice.
- We arrive.

There may be no dramatic awakening.

- Perhaps we simply feel our feet touching the ground.
- Perhaps we hear the voice of the person speaking to us.
- Perhaps we become aware of our breathing.
- Perhaps we notice that our mind has been rehearsing a conversation that has not happened.
- Perhaps we suddenly recognise:

I have been away.

That recognition is enough.

There is no need to criticise ourselves for having wandered.

No need to analyse how long we were away.

No need to force the mind into silence.

We simply arrive.

Away becomes here.

And from here, another possibility opens.

Awareness.

We Still Belong in the Garden

Arriving at Presence does not ask us to withdraw from the world.

Quite the opposite.

We arrive so that we may participate more fully.

The Garden still needs tending.

- Relationships still need our attention.
- Meals still need preparing.
- Work still needs doing.
- People still need meeting.
- Life still asks something of us.

But there is a difference between moving through the Garden on autopilot and walking through it with Presence.

- We begin to notice what we bring into our encounters.
- We may hear the words beneath someone's anger.
- We may notice our own impulse to defend ourselves.
- We may recognise when an old wound has entered a new conversation.
- We may discover that we do not need to respond to every invitation to react.

Presence does not take us away from ordinary life.

It allows us to meet ordinary life more fully.

The Art of Healing

Perhaps this is why healing may be understood as an art.

There is no single formula for inhabiting a human life.

- The weather changes.
- Visitors arrive.
- Memories return.
- Relationships touch unexpected places within us.
- Sometimes we respond wisely.
- Sometimes we react.
- Sometimes we become away again.

And then, perhaps, we notice.

We arrive.

Healing is not a permanent state in which nothing disturbs us.

It is an unfolding relationship with the life we are living.

- Presence allows us to enter that relationship consciously.
- Awareness allows us to understand it.
- Stillness gives it room to unfold.

And slowly, the House becomes somewhere we know how to inhabit.

The Invitation

In the chapters that follow, we shall begin to explore this House.

We will not rush through its rooms.

Nor will we force open every door.

We shall begin where every House begins.

At its threshold, the Porch.

There we can pause.

Not fully within.

Not fully without.

Simply present at the place where inner life meets the world.

The House has never left.
The Garden has continued to grow.

Presence was never absent.

We had simply become away.

And now we notice.

We arrive.
We are here.

The Art of Healing

A Pilgrimage into Your Inner House

Part II

Entering the Inner House

Who am I?

The Pilgrim's Companion

Before Entering the Inner House

Before I enter,
I prepare my heart
so that I may meet myself
with wisdom and love.



1 Be Present

I leave the outer world for a while.

Presence settles us.



2 Be Curious

I do not assume I already know myself.

Curiosity opens the mind.



3 Be Gentle

Every room has its own story.

Gentleness softens the heart.



4 Be Open

I allow whatever is ready to be seen.

Openness allows discovery.



5 Be Kind

I meet myself as I would meet a dear friend.

Kindness creates a safe place to remain.

I Enter Gently.

- I am not here to fix myself.
- I am here to understand myself.
- I am here to heal myself.
- I am here to return to presence.
- I am here to live from the Flame.

The Journey Continues. The Home is within.

Chapter 7 - The Porch



Between the House and the Garden lies a quiet threshold. We cross it many times each day, carrying something of the House into the world and something of the world back within.

The Threshold

Every House has a Porch.

It is neither fully within the House nor fully within the Garden.

Yet it belongs to both.

The House is where life is experienced within.

The Garden is where life is lived with others and with the world.

Between them lies the Porch.

It is the threshold where inner life meets outer life.

In *The Two Mirrors of the Mind*, we encountered this threshold in another form.

We called it the **Public Self**.

The Public Self is not the whole of who we are.

Nor is it the part of us that acts in the world.

It is the interface through which inner life meets outer life.

Here, within the landscape of the Inner House, that interface takes architectural form.

It becomes the Porch.

The Inner House corresponds to the Inner Self.
The Porch corresponds to the Public Self.
The Garden opens into Outer Life.

Where Inner Life Meets the World

We cross the Porch continually.

A conversation begins.

- Someone asks something of us.

- A disagreement arises.
- A familiar face appears.
- A message arrives.
- A responsibility calls.

Something within us meets something beyond us.

The Inner Self does not simply spill into the world unchanged.

Nor does everything from the world enter the House untouched.

At the threshold, something happens.

- We adjust.
- We filter.
- We soften.
- We protect.
- We reveal.
- We withhold.
- We find the form through which this particular moment can be met.

This is the quiet work of the Public Self.
It allows inner life to become socially possible.
The Outer Self then carries that expression into the Garden through speech, behaviour, relationship and action.

The distinction is subtle but important:

The Inner Self lives within.
The Public Self shapes the crossing.
The Outer Self lives the expression.

Dressed for the Garden

In Book 2, we described the Public Self as being **dressed by conditions**.

We dress because human life requires it.

Different Gardens ask different things of us.

- We do not meet a stranger in quite the same way that we meet someone we love.
- We do not enter a workplace exactly as we enter our private life.
- A teacher may need structure in the classroom.
- A doctor may need composure beside a patient.
- A parent may need steadiness while caring for a frightened child.

Dressing is not falseness.

It allows us to meet different circumstances while retaining the privacy and integrity of the House.

Sometimes we become **over-dressed**.

- Protection becomes heavier.
- Speech becomes guarded.
- Behaviour becomes carefully controlled.

We may be protecting something within the House that does not yet feel safe enough to be seen.

At other times, we become **under-dressed**.

Inner pressure crosses the threshold without enough containment.

- Emotion spills outward.
- Words arrive before they have settled.

What belongs within the House enters the Garden before we have had time to understand it.

And sometimes we are **lightly dressed**.

- There is less performance.
- Less protection.
- Less need to manage how we are seen.

We can meet the Garden more simply.

The question is not whether one form of dress is good and another bad.

Each tells us something about how the House is meeting the world.

The healing question is gentler:

What is dressing me now?

The Porch and Presence

Most crossings happen without much thought.

Autopilot carries us from House to Garden and Garden to House throughout the day.

This is often necessary.

We could not stop to examine ourselves before every conversation or decision.

But there are moments when something changes.

A word touches us.
A familiar reaction begins.

We feel the urge to defend ourselves.

- To please.
- To withdraw.
- To correct.
- To control.
- To explain.

Something within the House is already moving towards the Porch.

This is where Presence matters.

- Presence does not tell us what to do.
  It allows us to notice that we are at the threshold.
  We arrive.
- Awareness allows us to see what is crossing.
- Stillness gives us a little room around it.
  Sometimes that room lasts only a breath.

Yet a breath may be enough to recognise:

Something has been touched within me.

And the crossing changes.

What We Carry Into the Garden

The weather within the House does not always remain indoors.

- Tiredness may sharpen our voice.
- Fear may make us guarded.
- An old wound may shape how we hear an innocent remark.
- Joy may brighten an encounter.

Stillness may allow us to listen.

What begins within us can cross the Porch and become visible through the Outer Self.

This is how the House influences the Garden.

Often we do not notice it happening.

We believe we are responding only to what is before us.

Yet sometimes today's encounter has touched yesterday's memory.

Sometimes another person's words have entered a room within the House that they could never have known was there.

The Porch gives us a place to notice this.

Not so that every response becomes an exercise in analysis.

But so that when something feels larger than the moment itself, we can pause.

Perhaps the Garden has touched something within the House.

What We Carry Back

The crossing also moves in the other direction.

We return from the Garden carrying experience.

- A conversation.
- A kindness.
- A disappointment.
- A criticism.
- A loss.
- A moment of recognition.

Some experiences pass through us quickly.

Others linger.

- Some change the weather of the House for an afternoon.
- Some touch old memories.
- Some leave traces.
- Some become echoes that remain after the original moment has passed.

And some lead us towards rooms we have not entered for many years.

Presence does not prevent these experiences from entering.

Nor should it.

The House is not a fortress.

Life is meant to touch us.

Healing does not require us to become impermeable to the Garden.

It asks us to become more aware of what we carry across the threshold.

A Boundary, Not a Wall

The Porch also marks a boundary.

A healthy House needs one.

Without boundaries, we may begin to carry what does not belong to us.

- Another person's anger may become our burden.
- Their disappointment may become our responsibility.
- Their expectations may quietly enter the House and begin arranging its furniture.

But a boundary need not become a wall.

A wall prevents meeting.

A boundary makes meeting possible without requiring either person to disappear.

- We can listen without absorbing everything.

- We can care without taking responsibility for another person's entire life.
- We can disagree without withdrawing love.
- We can say no without closing the Garden gate.

We can remain open while recognising:
This belongs to you.
This belongs to me.

A boundary does not necessarily close the door.
It clarifies where the door is.

Authenticity Does Not Mean Exposure

There is another temptation at the Porch.

We may imagine that healing requires us to reveal everything within the House.

If I am truly myself, perhaps everyone should see what I feel.

But authenticity is not the same as exposure.

- Some rooms are private.
- Some experiences are still ripening.
- Some feelings need time before they can be spoken.
- Some things may be shared only with those whom we trust.
- And some things may never need to leave the House at all.

The Public Self allows this discernment.

- We can be honest without revealing everything.
- We can be quiet without hiding.
- We can protect something tender without pretending it does not exist.
- We can meet the world truthfully without making our inner life public property.

The purpose of healing is not to leave the House permanently open.
It is to allow its doors to open and close with greater freedom.

When the Dress Becomes Heavy

Sometimes what we wear into the Garden becomes difficult to remove.

- The professional role follows us home.
- The strong person cannot admit tiredness.
- The helper cannot receive help.
- The leader cannot stop directing.
- The person known for being calm becomes afraid of showing uncertainty.

The dress has begun to cling.

Book 2 described this as a loss of **reversibility**.

Clothing that was meant to help us meet particular conditions begins to feel like who we are.

The Porch then becomes less flexible.

We no longer simply dress for the Garden.

We remain dressed even after we have come inside.

This can be exhausting.

Healing does not ask us to destroy the role.

The role may still be valuable.

It asks whether we can put it down when it is no longer needed.

- Can the teacher stop teaching?
- Can the helper receive?

- Can the strong person soften?
- Can the person who carries responsibility sit quietly without carrying anything for a while?

The health of the Public Self is not found in never dressing.

It is found in the freedom to dress and undress as life requires.

When the Porch Becomes Guarded

Sometimes the Porch has learned to protect the House very carefully.

- Perhaps openness once brought pain.
- Perhaps speaking honestly once had consequences.
- Perhaps approval depended upon being agreeable.
- Perhaps vulnerability was not welcomed.
- Perhaps being useful, quiet, competent or strong once helped us belong.

Then the Public Self may become heavily dressed before we even realise it.

This is not a failure.

The Porch learned to protect what was within.

Healing begins not by tearing away those protections, but by becoming curious about them.

We may gently ask:

What is this dress protecting?

The answer may not come immediately.
Nor does it need to.
Sometimes the question itself is enough.
And perhaps, in time, it will lead us deeper into the House.

The Porch Does Not Decide

There is something else we should remember.

The Porch does not make decisions.

- It does not choose truth.
- It does not create wisdom.
- It does not initiate action.

It is a threshold.

What moves through it is shaped by the condition of the House and by what is happening in the Garden.

- When fear is strong, the Porch may tighten.
- When pressure rises, the dressing may become heavier.
- When inner weather becomes overwhelming, containment may weaken.
- When Presence is here, the crossing may soften.

This is why we do not need to fix the Public Self.

If we concentrate only on changing how we appear, we may simply exchange one form of clothing for another.

The deeper work takes place within the House.

As the inner life becomes better understood, the threshold gradually becomes more flexible.

The dress becomes lighter when it can.

Protection remains when it is needed.

Expression becomes more proportionate to the moment.

The Porch does not need to become perfect.

It needs to remain able to open.

From Porch to Garden

Eventually, we must cross.

The Porch is not somewhere we are meant to live.

It exists for passage.

There are moments when we pause there.
And moments when we simply walk through.

The Outer Self enters the Garden.

- It speaks.
- It acts.
- It works.
- It loves.
- It disagrees.
- It makes mistakes.
- It repairs.
- It participates.

This is where inner life becomes lived life.

And whatever happens there will eventually find its way back towards the Porch.

The movement continues:

House → Porch → Garden

and

Garden → Porch → House.

Healing does not stop this movement.

It allows us to become more conscious of what moves between them.

The Quiet Work of the Porch

Much of what happens on the Porch is almost invisible.

- A breath before answering.
- A pause before agreeing.
- A moment of recognising that another person's anger does not have to become ours.

The awareness that an old wound has entered a new conversation.

- The courage to say no.
- The wisdom not to speak yet.
- The willingness to be seen.
- The discernment to remain private.
- The ability to notice that today's dress has become too heavy.
- The freedom to take it off when we come inside.

These may appear to be small movements.

But small movements at the threshold can change what enters the Garden and what returns to the House.

This is the quiet work of the Porch.

The Invitation

As you move through your day, you might begin to notice the Porch.
Not every time you cross it.
That would turn Presence into another task.
Simply notice when life invites you to notice.

- Perhaps before a difficult conversation.

- After an unexpected encounter.
- When you feel yourself becoming guarded.
- When words are about to spill.
- When you notice that you are carrying someone's disappointment.
- When a role has followed you home.

Pause for a moment.

Arrive.

- Notice what is happening within the House.
- Notice what is happening in the Garden around you.
- Notice how the Public Self is dressed for this moment.

And perhaps ask:

What is shaping this crossing?

There may be nothing to change.

Nothing to solve.

Simply something to notice.

And on the Porch, we begin to discover something essential:

I can meet the world without leaving myself.

Chapter 8 - The Front Door



"Every day life knocks. Every day something within the House answers."

Every House has a Front Door.

The Porch is where our inner life meets the Garden.
The Front Door is where what life brings is **received**.

Every day, something arrives.

- A conversation.
- A disappointment.
- A moment of beauty.
- A word of kindness.
- A mistake.
- A loss.
- A new beginning.

Some experiences arrive gently.
Others arrive without warning.
Some are welcome.
Others we would rather had never come.

Yet whatever life brings, the first movement is wonderfully simple.

Something has arrived.

The Front Door does not yet ask what the experience means.
It does not need to decide whether something useful will come from it.
It does not need to turn the experience into wisdom.
It simply marks the moment when what has happened in life is acknowledged within the House.
This has arrived.

Nothing more is required yet.

Every experience that enters the House begins here.

Section 2 – What Arrives at the Front Door?

Life is always arriving.

Much of what happens is ordinary.

- A familiar voice.
- A passing remark.
- Someone smiles.
- Rain changes our plans.
- A message appears on the telephone.
- We hear a piece of news.
- Other experiences seem to divide life into a *before* and an *after*.
- We fall in love.
- A relationship ends.
- A child is born.
- We receive a diagnosis.
- Someone dies.

We begin again somewhere new.

The Front Door does not measure the importance of what has arrived.

Nor does every experience affect the House in the same way.

Something that passes almost unnoticed by one Pilgrim may touch another deeply.

- A few words may awaken something immediately.
- Another experience may remain with us for days, months or years.
- Some barely touch us.
- Others remain with us

We do not yet need to know what will happen to them.
That belongs to another part of our journey through the House.

For now, we need only recognise the first movement.

Life brings the experience.
The Front Door receives its arrival.

Section 3 – Receiving

Receiving is one of the quietest movements within the House.

It is also one of the simplest.

- **This happened.**
- **This was said.**
- **This has changed.**
- **This is here.**

Receiving does not mean agreeing.

It does not mean approving.

It does not mean liking what has happened.

And it certainly does not mean that what happened was right.

Receiving is not surrender.

It is acknowledgement.

- Sometimes we resist what has arrived.
- Sometimes we wish it were different.
- Sometimes we immediately begin arguing with it within ourselves.

This should not have happened.

- *Why did they say that?*
- *Why now?*
- *Why me?*

Even resistance can be noticed.

The Front Door does not require us to become calm before we receive.

It does not ask us to remove judgement, fear, anger or confusion.

It asks only that we recognise what is already here.

This has arrived.

That may be enough for now.

For only what is received can be allowed to ripen.
What ripens may bring understanding.
Or it may simply change the way we meet life.

Section 4 - The Quiet Wisdom of the Front Door

There is a humility to the Front Door.

It does not know, when something arrives, what that experience will eventually become.

- A painful encounter may remain painful.
- Another may slowly change how we understand ourselves.
- A kindness that seemed small at the time may remain with us for years.
- Something we barely noticed may later acquire an entirely different meaning.

We cannot always know at the moment of arrival.

The Front Door does not try.

It opens.

It receives.

And then it allows the rest of the House to respond in its own time.

Perhaps this is one of the earliest movements in the Art of Healing.

- Not fixing.
- Not explaining.
- Not forcing meaning.

Simply becoming willing to acknowledge what life has brought to the door.

This has arrived.

And from there, we listen.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.

Bring to mind one experience from today.

It does not need to be important.

- Perhaps it was a conversation.

- A kindness.
- A disappointment.
- Something unexpected.
- Something beautiful.
- Something you are still carrying.

There is no need to explain it.

No need to decide what it means.

No need to make something useful from it.

Simply allow yourself to recognise:

This has arrived.

Notice what happens within the House.

- Perhaps something answers immediately.
- Perhaps nothing does.
- Both are possible.

There is no need to hurry the experience further.

For now, let it be received.

The rest of its journey does not need to be known.

The Front Door has done its quiet work.

Chapter 9 - The Living Room



Stillness does not require life to become still.

Section 1 - The Rocking Chair

The Seat of Presence

At the centre of the Living Room stands a rocking chair.

- It is not a throne.
- It is not a place from which to command the House.
- It is simply the Seat of Presence.

A place where the Pilgrim may be here, just as they are.

The chair rocks because life moves.

- Thoughts arise.
- Feelings come and go.
- The Body responds.
- Visitors arrive at our Doors.

The weather changes beyond our Windows.

- Sometimes the movement is gentle.
- Sometimes it becomes more vigorous.

But the chair was never intended to remain motionless.

Stillness does not require life to become still.

Presence and Awareness

Presence sits in the rocking chair.

Awareness is beside it.

They are close companions, but their roles are different.

Presence allows us to be here.

Awareness allows us to notice what is happening here.

- We can be here without noticing everything around us.
- We may sit in the Garden without hearing the birds.

Walk along a familiar path without remembering every step.

Or listen to someone while our attention has wandered elsewhere.

We are here.

But our attention is not always here.

Awareness notices what is unfolding.

- A thought passing through the Mind.
- A feeling arising within the Emotional Self.
- A sensation in the Body.
- A Visitor waiting at the Door.
- Or perhaps the rocking of the chair itself.

Awareness does not need to occupy the chair.

It does not compete with Presence.

It simply helps the Pilgrim recognise what is happening.

When Presence Rests

Sometimes Presence rests.

And the House continues functioning.

- We brush our teeth.
- Prepare a cup of tea.
- Walk along a familiar road.
- The Body performs learned movements.
- The Mind follows familiar patterns.

Much of this happens without requiring our deliberate attention.

This is Autopilot.

- It is neither an intruder nor necessarily a Hijack.
- It is one of the ordinary ways the House carries on with life.

Presence may rest while Autopilot attends to familiar routines.

And when something unexpected happens, Awareness may notice.

Presence becomes attentive.

The Pilgrim responds.

There is no need to remain consciously attentive to every movement.

Presence is allowed to rest.

When Hijack Broadcasts

Sometimes the atmosphere of the Living Room changes.

- A thought becomes insistent.
- A feeling grows stronger.
- The Body prepares to defend itself.

And the Hijack's loudspeaker begins broadcasting.

- *You must do something.*
- *You cannot let this happen.*
- *You must respond now.*
    - The message repeats.
    - The pressure builds.

- ► The urgency grows.

The chair begins to rock more vigorously.

But Hijack does not need to occupy the chair.

Presence remains seated.

Awareness may recognise the broadcast.

Yet recognising Hijack does not necessarily silence it.

The Pilgrim may know that anger is influencing their response and still speak harshly.

- May recognise fear and still withdraw.
- May understand that an impulse is unhelpful and still follow it.

Awareness opens the possibility of choice. It does not guarantee that we will choose differently.

- Sometimes the broadcast quietens.
- Sometimes it continues.
- And sometimes we recognise what happened only afterwards.

That, too, can become part of our learning.

The Chair Remains

Whether the House is quiet or unsettled, the rocking chair remains.



Presence does not need to defeat Hijack to deserve its seat.

Nor does the Pilgrim need to become perfectly calm before being present.

Awareness may notice what is happening.

Or it may take time before something becomes clear.

The chair continues to rock.

For its purpose is not to remove the movements of life.

It is to offer a place where they may be experienced.

Presence is not the absence of disturbance.

It is the possibility of being here, even when disturbance is present.

Section 2 — The Three Quiet Stabilisers

Clarity, Steadiness and Remembering

The rocking chair was made to move.

- Sometimes gently.
- Sometimes more vigorously.

And when Hijack's loudspeaker begins broadcasting, the rocking may become increasingly unsettled.

- Urgency.
- Pressure.
- Continuity.
- Presence remains seated.
- Awareness notices the disturbance.

But noticing alone may not be enough.

Fortunately, the rocking chair has three quiet stabilisers built into its design.

They have always been there.

And when needed, Awareness helps bring them into use.

Dhi — Clarity

The first stabiliser is **Dhi — Clarity**.

When Hijack broadcasts, its message may seem unquestionable.

- *You must act.*
- *There is no other way.*
- *Do something now.*

Dhi helps us distinguish between what we are experiencing and what we are being urged to do.

- *I am angry.*
- *I feel threatened.*
- *But I do not necessarily have to respond immediately.*

Clarity does not remove the feeling.

It allows us to see the situation more clearly.

Not every urgent thought requires an urgent response.

Dhriti — Steadiness

The second stabiliser is **Dhriti — Steadiness**.

Sometimes we recognise the Hijack but still feel its pressure.

We know that responding in anger may make matters worse.

Yet the urge to respond remains.

Dhriti helps us stay with the discomfort without immediately acting upon it.

- Perhaps we pause.
- Perhaps we allow a little time.
- Perhaps we simply choose not to answer just yet.

The loudspeaker may continue.

The chair may still rock.

But steadiness can create a little space between the impulse and our response.

We may not be able to quieten every feeling, but we can sometimes choose what we do with it.

Smriti — Remembering

The third stabiliser is **Smriti — Remembering**.

When Hijack becomes insistent, our attention may narrow.

- We forget what we have learned.
- We forget what matters.
- We may even forget that other responses are possible.

Smriti helps us remember.

- *I have encountered this before.*
- *I know how my previous response affected me.*
- *What would I wish to do differently this time?*

Remembering does not mean dwelling on the past.

It means allowing what we have learned to accompany us into the present.

Experience may become a source of wisdom when we remember what it has taught us.

The Chair Continues to Rock

The three stabilisers work together.

- Dhi offers clarity.
- Dhriti offers steadiness.
- Smriti offers remembering.

They do not silence Hijack.

Nor do they guarantee that the Pilgrim will always respond wisely.

- Sometimes Awareness notices too late.
- Sometimes the pressure is overwhelming.
- And sometimes we understand what is happening but still act in ways we later regret.

The stabilisers remain part of the chair, even when we struggle to draw upon them.

Their purpose is not to prevent movement.

For a rocking chair that cannot rock has lost something of its nature.

The stabilisers do not remove life's disturbances.

They help us remain steadier while experiencing them.

And the chair continues to rock.

Section 3 - The Lamp



The Flame That Continues to Burn

Beside the rocking chair stands a Lamp.

Within it burns a Flame.

- The Lamp represents the living Body.
- The Flame represents the mystery of being alive.
- They belong together, yet they are not the same.
- The Lamp provides a vessel in which the Flame may burn.
- The Flame brings light to the House.

And while the Pilgrim journeys through life, both accompany them.

The Flame and Presence

Presence sits in the rocking chair.

Awareness notices what unfolds.

But the Flame has a different purpose.

- It does not occupy the chair.
- It does not direct the Mind.
- It does not manage the Emotional Self.
- Nor does it intervene when Hijack begins broadcasting.

It simply burns.

- Sometimes the House is peaceful.
- Sometimes the loudspeaker fills the Living Room with urgency and pressure.
- Sometimes the rocking chair becomes unsettled.

Yet the Flame continues to burn.

- It does not demand that the Pilgrim become calm.
- It does not require happiness.

Nor does it grow brighter because the Pilgrim has become wiser.

The Flame does not measure the quality of our experience. It reminds us of the life within which experience unfolds.

When the House Grows Dark

There may be times when the Pilgrim struggles to see clearly.

- The Mind is troubled.
- The Emotional Self carries sorrow.
- The Body is exhausted.
- And the atmosphere of the House feels heavy.

At such times, even the light of the Flame may seem distant.

But perhaps it is not the Flame that has changed.

Perhaps the conditions through which we experience its light have become clouded.

This does not mean that suffering is imaginary or that every difficulty can be resolved through Awareness.

Some experiences require time, care and the support of others.

The Flame promises no escape from life's difficulties.

It simply reminds us that even a difficult moment belongs to a life still being lived.

The Quiet Light

Imagine the Living Room towards evening.

Presence rests in the rocking chair.

Awareness is quiet.

- The Mind has little to resolve.
- The Emotional Self carries whatever the day has left behind.
- The Body is tired.

And beside the chair, the Lamp continues to glow.

Nothing needs to be accomplished.

Nothing needs to be explained.

For now, the Pilgrim is simply here.

The Flame does not ask us to make something of every moment.
Sometimes it is enough to allow the moment to be lived.

Section 4 — What the Flame Receives

The Nectar of the Pilgrimage

The Flame burns as the Pilgrim journeys through life.

And no journey leaves us entirely unchanged.

We encounter kindness and disappointment.

- Love and loss.
- Moments of courage.
- And moments we wish we had lived differently.

Some experiences pass quietly.

Others leave traces that remain for years.

But experience alone does not guarantee wisdom.

- We may repeat the same mistakes.

- Carry old fears.
- Or remain troubled by something we have never fully understood.

Yet sometimes, through reflection, understanding and the passage of time, something begins to ripen.

- A little more patience.
- A little less fear.
- A greater willingness to listen.
- Or the ability to recognise a familiar Hijack before following its demands.

This is what we might call **the nectar of the pilgrimage**.

Not the experiences themselves, but the understanding that may emerge from living them.

Perhaps the Pilgrim once responded to criticism with immediate anger.

The loudspeaker would begin broadcasting, and the response would follow.

But one day, something is different.

Awareness notices the familiar voice.

- Dhi offers clarity.
- Dhriti allows a moment of steadiness.
- Smriti recalls what previous encounters have taught.

The anger may remain.

But the Pilgrim responds differently.

Something has ripened.

Does the Flame truly receive this nectar?

We cannot know.

Perhaps it is simply a way of honouring how a life becomes enriched by what it has learned.

We need not turn the mystery into a certainty.

- For not every experience produces wisdom.
- Not every wound becomes a lesson.
- And not every question finds an answer.

The Flame continues to burn.

The Pilgrim continues to travel.

And sometimes, quietly, the journey bears fruit.

We do not merely travel through life.
Life also travels through us.

Section 5 — Tending the Lamp

Beside the rocking chair, the Lamp continues to burn.

But even a Lamp needs tending.

The Body carries us through our pilgrimage, and its condition can influence the atmosphere of the Inner House.

When we are tired, hungry, unwell or overwhelmed, the rocking chair may become more unsettled.

- The Mind may struggle to find clarity.
- The Emotional Self may become more sensitive.
- And Hijack's loudspeaker may seem louder than usual.

Sometimes Awareness notices that what the Pilgrim needs is not another explanation or an immediate solution.

- Perhaps it is rest.
- A nourishing meal.
- A little movement.
- Or simply time to recover.

Tending the Lamp does not guarantee a peaceful House.

Nor can it prevent every difficulty.

But caring for the Body may help us meet life's disturbances with greater steadiness.

Sometimes the wisest way to tend the Inner House is to begin by tending the Lamp.

The Light Already There

Perhaps this is another quiet meaning of healing.

- We are not repairing a broken Flame.
- We are caring for the House in which it burns.
- We do not tend the Lamp in order to make the Flame brighter.

We tend the Lamp so that the light already there can shine more clearly.

And sometimes, after a little tending, we discover what was true all along:

The Flame was never dim.

Only the glass had become clouded.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Ask yourself one quiet question:

How does it feel to be here, within my own House?

- Is the Mind busy or quiet?
- What is the Emotional Self carrying?
- Is the Body comfortable or tense?
- Is Hijack's loudspeaker broadcasting?
- Or is there simply a feeling of being here, without needing to examine anything?

There is no need to search for an answer.

Simply remain for a while.

Sometimes the greatest gift the Living Room offers is not an answer.

It is the quiet permission to be exactly where you are.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

When the Mind wanders, remember the rocking chair.
When the loudspeaker broadcasts, allow Awareness to notice.

There is no need to silence every voice before returning to yourself.

- **Arrive.**
- **Sit.**
- **Notice what is here.**

The Lamp is already lit.

Chapter 10 - The Dining Room



"Every visitor deserves to be received with kindness. Not every visitor should become the master of the House."

A Table Within the House

Every House has a Dining Room.

It is a simple room.

A table.

A few chairs.

A place where conversations unfold.

Within the Inner House, the Dining Room is more than a place for sharing a meal.
It is where we spend time with whatever life has brought from the Garden.

Every day, new visitors arrive.

- Some bring joy.
- Some bring sorrow.
- Some arrive quietly.
- Others enter unexpectedly.

Some stay only briefly.
Others seem to have much more to say.

Sometimes a visitor who has arrived at the Front Door finds their way deeper into the House.

Presence has opened the Front Door.

Awareness has gently accompanied the visitor through the Kitchen.

The Chef has quietly prepared the tea.

Now… the conversation may begin.

Section 2 - The Gift of Hospitality

Hospitality begins with kindness.

- Not because every visitor is comfortable.

- Not because everything a visitor says is true.
- And not because every visitor is expected to remain.

Hospitality begins with a willingness to make room for what has arrived.

- A visitor may bring fear to the table.
- Another may carry grief.
- Another may arrive with anxiety and speak before anyone else has found their voice.
- Another may bring such joy that the whole room seems lighter.

Each visitor is offered the same simple gift:

- a place at the table.
- Perhaps a warm cup of tea.
- And the willingness to listen.

Nothing needs to be solved immediately.
Nothing needs to be turned into a lesson.

Some visitors may have something to show us.
Others may simply need to be heard.

And sometimes we may not yet understand why a particular visitor has come.

Hospitality does not require understanding.

It begins by allowing the conversation to take place.

Section 3 - Listening with Discernment

Listening is not the same as agreeing.

- We may listen to what fear brings without allowing fear to speak for the whole House.
- We may listen to anger without immediately expressing everything anger wants to say.
- We may sit beside grief without asking it to become something else.
- We may welcome joy without trying to hold on to it.

Hospitality is not surrender.

It is the willingness to listen without immediately becoming what we hear.
This is where **discernment** quietly joins the conversation.

Discernment does not interrupt.

- It does not sit at the head of the table demanding answers.
- It listens.
- It notices.
- It allows the conversation to breathe.

Sometimes what a visitor says may be helpful.
Sometimes it may be distorted by fear, memory or misunderstanding.
Sometimes there may be something beneath the words that needs time before it can be recognised.

Discernment does not need to decide immediately.

It allows us to listen with kindness without losing clarity.

A visitor may be given a place at the table without becoming the whole conversation.

I can listen to what has arrived without becoming what has arrived.

Section 4 - Conversations That Take Time

Not every conversation ends over one cup of tea.

- Some visitors say what they need to say and quietly leave.
- Others remain.
- Some disappear for months or years and then unexpectedly return.
- A familiar conversation may begin again, but we may no longer hear it in quite the same way.

We have lived since the last visit.

Something within us may have ripened.

The visitor may appear unchanged, yet the conversation is different because **we are meeting it differently**.

This is why the Dining Room does not hurry.

It does not ask:

- *When will this be over?*
- *What am I supposed to learn?*
- *How do I make this visitor leave?*

It offers something simpler.

Time.

- Time to listen.
- Time to notice.
- Time for what has been received to ripen, if ripening is what follows.

Understanding may come.

It may not.

The conversation itself may change something.

When the Conversation Becomes Loud

Of course, not every conversation remains gentle.

A visitor may become loud.

- Fear may insist that something terrible is about to happen.
- Anger may demand an immediate response.
- An old hurt may repeat the same story again and again.

The Inner environment of the House may begin to change.

And somewhere nearby, in the Living Room, the Rocking Chair remains.

Sometimes the conversation becomes so compelling that the **Hijack takes the Seat**.

We may react before Awareness has had time to notice.

This does not mean the Dining Room has failed.

It means something within the House has become activated.

- When Awareness notices, the conversation can change.

- Presence may quietly re-occupy the Rocking Chair.
- And perhaps, when we are ready, we can listen again.

Not necessarily with an answer.

But with a little more space around what is being said.

Section 5 - The Quiet Wisdom of the Dining Room

The Dining Room teaches a simple kind of wisdom.

- **Not everything that speaks needs to be obeyed.**
- Not everything uncomfortable needs to be removed.
- Not everything painful needs to become a lesson.
- Not every conversation needs to reach a conclusion.

Sometimes listening is enough for now.
Sometimes understanding comes later.
Sometimes something received long ago continues to ripen quietly within the House.
And sometimes a visitor simply finishes their tea and leaves.

The Dining Room does not decide which will happen.

It offers hospitality to what is here.

- **A table.**
- **A chair.**
- **A cup of tea.**
- **And enough time for a conversation.**

Perhaps that is all a visitor needs today.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.
Imagine the table within your Inner House.
What has joined you there today?
There is no need to solve it.
No need to agree with it.
No need to ask it to leave.
Simply listen for a while.

Sometimes being heard is enough for a conversation to change.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Offer what has arrived a place at the table.
Listen with kindness.
Meet it with discernment.

Not every conversation needs an answer.

Chapter 11 — The Windows



"Windows allow us to see beyond the walls of the House. They also remind the House that life continues beyond its own thoughts."

Looking Beyond the House

Through them, we look towards the Garden.

- We see people.
- Relationships.
- Possibilities.
- Difficulties.
- The paths opening before us.

The wider Landscape in which our life is unfolding.

Most of the time, we barely notice the Windows themselves.

We simply look through them.

And perhaps that is why they matter so much.

We do not simply see the Garden.
We see the Garden through the Windows of our Inner House.

- The glass may be clear.
- It may be clouded.
- The Window may be wide open.
- It may have remained closed for a long time.

And sometimes, without realising it, we may begin to mistake the view through our Window for the whole Landscape.

The Window quietly reminds us:

> **There may be more to see.**

The View Through the Glass

Imagine two Pilgrims looking towards the same part of the Garden.
Each looks through the Windows of their own Inner House.

- Before them may stand the same tree.
- The same path.
- The same gathering clouds.

Yet each may notice something different.

- One notices beauty.
  Another notices what is missing.
- One sees possibility.
  Another sees uncertainty.
- One feels drawn towards the path.
  Another approaches with caution.

Neither necessarily possesses the whole view.

They are looking from different Houses, through different Windows, carrying different histories.

The same is true of the experiences we meet.

- A mistake may be seen as failure.
  It may also be seen as learning.
- A change may appear frightening.
  It may also contain possibility.
- A silence may feel peaceful to one Pilgrim and uncomfortable to another.

The experience may be shared.
The experience of it may be very different.

This does not require us to decide immediately which view is right or wrong.

It invites a quieter question:

What might be shaping the way I am seeing this?

The Windows We Inherit

Few of us choose our first windows.
Many are placed within the House long before we understand they are there.

- Family.
- Culture.
- Education.
- Religion.
- Community.
- Our earliest experiences.
- The words we heard.
- The silences we lived within.

All may quietly shape the glass through which we first learn to see ourselves, other people and the world.

- Some windows encourage trust.
  Others teach caution.
- Some open towards possibility.
  Others have learned to look first for danger.

There is no need to blame the Window.
Much of what shaped it arrived before we had any choice in the matter.

Every Pilgrim begins their journey looking through Windows they did not build.

Wisdom may begin when we recognise this.
Not by smashing the old Windows.
Not by pretending our history did not shape us.
Simply by recognising:

This is a Window.
It is not the whole Landscape.

Section 2 - The Condition of the Windows

The Changing Windows

The Windows of the House do not always remain the same.
Like much within us, they may change with experience.

***A* Window may be clear.**
We see what is before us with relatively little distortion. We may still have our own perspective, but we are able to recognise what is actually there.

***A* Window may become clouded.**
Fear, hurt, disappointment, resentment or memory may colour what we see. The Garden is still visible, but something on the glass has become part of the view.

***A* Window may be closed.**
We may become less receptive to another perspective, another possibility or something life is trying to show us.

***A* Window may be open.**
We remain receptive. Another voice can be heard. A different perspective can enter. Fresh air can move through the House.

And sometimes the Window may simply offer a **narrow view.**

We can still see the Garden, but only a small part of it. One concern, one belief or one story may occupy so much of the Window that the wider Landscape disappears from sight.

None of these need become permanent descriptions of the House.

***A* clear Window may become clouded.**
***A* closed Window may open.**
***A* narrow view may widen.**

And even a clear Window remains a Window.
It never becomes the whole Landscape.

Clear Window

It helps us see what is actually there.

But sometimes the Garden has changed less than our view of it.

And because we rarely notice the glass, we may begin trying to rearrange the Garden when something within our own seeing also needs attention.

Perhaps healing sometimes begins with a quiet question:

Is it the Garden that has changed…

or the way I am seeing it?

There may be no immediate answer.

The question itself may be enough to begin clearing a little of the glass.

Clouded Windows

Windows gather marks over time.
So do we.

- A painful experience may colour the way we see a new relationship.
- Disappointment may make possibility harder to recognise.
- Fear may draw our attention towards danger.
- Resentment may keep an old event visible long after the Garden around it has changed.

Sometimes the Garden really has changed.

There may genuinely be difficulty outside.

- There may be danger.
- Loss.
- Uncertainty.

Something requiring our attention.

The purpose of the Window is not to persuade us that everything outside is beautiful.

Opening the Windows

Windows are not only for looking through.

They can also be opened.

And when a Window opens, something changes.

- Light enters differently.
- Sounds from the Garden become clearer.
- Fresh air begins to move through the House.

A new perspective may arrive in much the same way.

- Through a conversation.
- A book.
- A friendship.
- A journey.
- A question we had never considered.
- A moment of silence.
- Or simply the willingness to look again.

Nothing needs to be forced.

We have merely opened something that had been closed.

And sometimes what enters is wonderfully unexpected.

Humour may arrive like a sudden breeze through an open Window.

- The difficulty has not disappeared.
- The visitor may still be sitting at the Dining Room table.
- The situation in the Garden may remain exactly as it was.

And yet, for a moment, something loosens.

We smile.

Perhaps even laugh.

The House breathes differently.

Humour has not denied what is difficult.

It has simply allowed a little air around it.

This too can belong to healing.

Not every heavy moment needs another heavy response.

Sometimes an open Window is enough to remind us that the House contains more than the difficulty currently occupying our attention.

Looking Through Another Window

One of life's quiet gifts is discovering that another Pilgrim has a different Window.

Conversation allows us, for a moment, to glimpse their view.

- Not to abandon our own.
- Not to decide whose Window is better.
- Not even to agree.

Simply to see something we could not see from where we were standing.

- Another Pilgrim may notice beauty we had overlooked.
- They may notice a difficulty we had not recognised.
- They may question something we had always assumed.
- They may point towards a path that was outside our view.

And we may do the same for them.

Perhaps this is one of the deeper forms of listening.

At the Dining Room table, we hear another voice.

At the Windows, we begin to understand that another view is possible.

Difference does not always need to be resolved.

Sometimes it simply widens what can be seen.

When the View Narrows

There are also times when the Windows seem to become smaller.

The Hijack takes the Rocking Chair.

- Fear becomes louder.
- Anger becomes certain.
- The Fixer already knows what must be done.
- Our view begins to narrow.
- Curiosity becomes certainty.
- Wonder gives way to judgement.
- Conversation becomes defence.

We may continue looking towards the Garden, but increasingly we see only what confirms the story already being told within the House.

The Garden has not disappeared.
Our view of it has narrowed.

This is why Awareness matters.

- Awareness may notice the Hijack.
- It may also notice the Window.

Is this everything that is here?

Could there be another way of seeing this?

We do not need to force the Window open.

Sometimes simply recognising that it has narrowed creates the first small opening.

And through that opening, a little air may enter.

Section 3 - When Air Moves Through the House

One open Window may be enough.

Sometimes another opens too.

And gradually air begins to move through the House.

- Nothing has been switched on.
- Nothing has been manufactured.
- Nothing has been forced.

The House has simply become more open.

The air moves from room to room.

- The visitor at the Dining Room table may still be there.
- The Rocking Chair may still be rocking.
- The Pictures remain on the walls.

Nothing has had to disappear.
Yet the inner environment may feel different.

- There is a little more room around what we are carrying.
- A little more possibility.
- A little more willingness to listen.
- Perhaps even enough space for humour to visit.

The air does not heal the House by itself.
Nor does opening a Window make every difficulty disappear.

It simply reminds us that a House does not need to remain closed around what it is experiencing.

We can look again.
We can listen again.
We can allow some air in.

And sometimes that small opening changes the way everything else is met.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Imagine yourself beside one of the Windows of your Inner House.
Look towards the Garden.

Then ask quietly:

What might be shaping the way I am seeing this?

There is no need to change the view.

No need to force the Window open.

Simply notice.

Perhaps, for now, noticing the glass is enough.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

The Windows shape how we see the Garden.
The Pictures shape how we remember ourselves.

Chapter 12 — The Pictures on the Wall



"The Windows shape how we see the Garden. The Pictures quietly shape how we remember ourselves."

The Pictures We Live With

Every House has Pictures on its walls.

- Some are large.
- Some are small.
- Some have been carefully chosen.
- Others have hung there for so long that we scarcely notice them anymore.

In an ordinary house, Pictures often tell us something about the people who live there.

- A family gathering.
- A wedding.
- A holiday.
- A child growing up.
- Someone who is no longer with us.
- A place once called home.

Without saying a word, the Pictures hold fragments of a life.

The Inner House has Pictures too.

- Moments remembered.
- Relationships.
- Achievements.
- Disappointments.
- Acts of courage.
- Acts of kindness.
- Times when we belonged.
- Times when we felt alone.

Some Pictures bring warmth.

Others remain difficult to look at.

And some have become so familiar that we have forgotten they are hanging there at all.

A Picture is not necessarily the memory itself.

The memory may remain.

The Picture is what that memory has come to hold within the House.

- Sometimes it holds a story.
- Sometimes a meaning.
- Sometimes a person.
- Sometimes simply a moment we do not want to forget.

The Stories Within the Pictures

Human beings do not simply remember what happened.

We often wonder what it meant.

An experience becomes part of our story.

And gradually, a Picture may begin to carry a message.

- Some quietly say, *"I am loved."*
- Others whisper, *"I am not enough."*
- Some remind us, *"Life has been kind."*
- Others insist, *"Life cannot be trusted."*

Some of these Pictures may have been shaped by a single experience.

Others have formed slowly through many experiences that seemed to tell the same story.

Over time, we may look at a Picture so often that we stop seeing it as a Picture.

The Picture becomes part of the story.
And the story begins to feel like reality.

This does not mean the story is false.

- Something happened.
- Something was felt.
- Something was remembered.

But no single Picture can contain the whole story of a life.

We may stand before one for so long that we begin to believe:
This is who I am.

Yet the Pilgrim is larger than any Picture hanging within the House.

Each Picture tells something.
None tells everything.

The Pictures belong to the Pilgrim's story.
The Pilgrim does not belong to the Pictures.

Pictures We Never Chose

Many of the first pictures were hung long before we understood what they meant.

- Family.
- School.
- Culture.
- Religion.
- Friendships.
- The words spoken around us.
- The silences that surrounded us.

A child may hear:

- "You are clever."
- "You are difficult."

- "You are sensitive."
- "You are not enough."
- "You must be strong."
- "You must not fail."
- "Why can't you be more like your brother?"

Some words disappear almost immediately.

Others remain.

A child may not yet know how to ask:

- *Is this true?*
- *Is this the whole of me?*
- *Whose story is this?*

And so a Picture may remain on the wall for many years.

Long after the person who first helped create it has left the Garden, the Picture may still quietly influence how we understand ourselves.

We may even forget where it came from.

Many of the Pictures within the House were inherited before they were understood.

This is not about blame.

Those who helped shape our Pictures were often looking through Windows of their own.

They too carried Pictures.

They too inherited stories.

Sometimes what hangs on one generation's walls quietly finds its way onto the walls of the next.

Awareness gives us an opportunity to notice.

The Pictures We Treasure

Not every Picture needs examining.

Some are simply precious.

We keep them because they remind us of something beautiful.

- Someone believed in us.
- Someone held our hand.
- Someone made us laugh.
- We found friendship somewhere unexpected.
- We discovered courage we did not know we had.
- We stood somewhere beautiful and, for a moment, felt completely alive.

These Pictures may have hung on the walls for years.

Sometimes we become so accustomed to them that we barely look anymore.

Yet they too belong to our story.

Healing is not only noticing the Pictures that hurt.

Sometimes healing is remembering to look again at the Pictures that still bring warmth to the House.

The Pictures We Keep

Some Pictures remain on the walls for another reason.

We love what they hold.

- A parent.
- A partner.
- A child.
- A friend.
- Someone who once shared our Garden but is no longer physically there.

We keep the Picture because something of the relationship remains visible within it.

- A familiar face.
- A particular smile.
- A moment once shared.

Sometimes looking brings comfort.

- We remember the laughter.
- The journeys.
- The ordinary days that did not seem important at the time.

At other times, the same Picture hurts.

It reminds us not only of what was there, but of what is no longer there.

The Picture holds presence and absence at the same time.

Perhaps this is why photographs of those we have loved can affect us so deeply.

The Picture has not changed.

But our relationship with it may change many times.

- There may be days when we cannot bear to look.
- Days when we pause before it and cry.
- And days, perhaps much later, when we look at the same face and smile.
- Sometimes we smile and cry together.

There is no contradiction in this.

- The Picture may carry grief and gratitude.
- Longing and warmth.
- Absence and love.

Healing does not require us to take the Picture down.

Nor does it require us to keep it on display.

We may allow the Picture to find its own place within the House.

Because remembrance is not always about holding on to the past.

Sometimes it is how love continues to have a place within the House.

Looking at the Pictures Again

There are other Pictures we may eventually need to look at again.

Not because the past can be changed.

It cannot.

And not because every painful experience must be transformed into something positive.

- Sometimes something painful was simply painful.
- Something unfair was unfair.
- Something lost cannot be restored.

Healing does not ask us to repaint these experiences until they become beautiful.

It invites us to look again.

A Picture that once said: *I failed.*

May gradually become: *I failed at something.*

The event remains.

But failure no longer needs to become the whole Picture of who I am.

A Picture that once said: *I was rejected.*

May become: *I was rejected. It hurt. But that moment does not define my worth.*

Nothing has been erased.

The past has not been rewritten.

The Picture remains.
But we may begin to see that it is not the whole story.

- Sometimes an old Picture remains exactly where it is.
- Sometimes it no longer needs to occupy such a prominent place on the wall.
- Sometimes, eventually, we may be ready to take it down.
- And sometimes a beautiful Picture that has been overlooked for years simply needs to be noticed again.

There is no single way to tend the Pictures of the House.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Imagine walking slowly past the Pictures within your Inner House.

Which Picture quietly asks you to stop?

There is no need to change it.

No need to take it down.

Simply look again.

Perhaps you are seeing the same Picture with different eyes.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

The past may remain upon the wall.
Its meaning may quietly change.

Chapter 13 - The Study



"Some questions ask for thought. Others ask for time."

In the Study

Somewhere within the Inner House is a quiet place for thought.

- Perhaps there is a desk beside a Window.
- A comfortable chair.
- A shelf of well-loved books.
- A notebook waiting to be opened.

This is the Study.

Thinking happens everywhere in the House. Thoughts arise while we are sitting in the Living Room, talking at the Dining Room table, looking through the Windows or walking through the Garden.

But in the Study, something is different.

We become aware that we are thinking.

Here, the Pilgrim can pause with a thought rather than simply being carried by it.

- We can read.
- Write.
- Reflect.
- Learn.
- Question.
- Wonder.

The Study is not where thought rules the House.

It is where the Pilgrim learns to think with Awareness.

From Thinking to Inquiry

A thought may arrive quickly.

- *They don't understand me.*
- *I have made a mistake.*
- *Something is going to go wrong.*
- *I know why they did that.*

Without Awareness, a thought can easily become something we simply believe.

In the Study, we can become curious.

- *What actually happened?*
- *What am I assuming?*
- *Is there another way of seeing this?*
- *Has an old Picture been touched?*
- *Could something else be happening here?*

The Study does not promise the right answer.

Sometimes its greatest gift is simply **a better question**.

When a Thought Becomes Insistent

Sometimes a thought does more than pass through the Mind.

It becomes insistent.

- *They deliberately ignored me.*
- *They have no respect for me.*
- *I must do something about it.*
- Hijack's loudspeaker may begin broadcasting.

The thought repeats.

The pressure grows.

And what began as an assumption may start to feel like certainty.

In the Study, Awareness may notice what is happening.

The Pilgrim can return to the question.

- *What do I actually know?*
- *What might I be assuming?*
- *Could there be another explanation?*

The Study does not silence the loudspeaker.
Nor does recognising an assumption guarantee that we will stop believing it.
But inquiry may loosen the certainty with which we hold a thought.
Sometimes healing begins not by changing what we think, but by questioning how certain we are.

The Study does not promise the right answer.
Sometimes its greatest gift is simply a better question.

Living with Questions

Not every experience needs to enter the Study.

Much of life can simply be lived.

But sometimes an experience leaves a question behind.

We may carry it into the Study and place it quietly on the desk.

Some questions yield quickly to thought.
Others do not.
They may remain with us through conversations, relationships, journeys and changing seasons of life.

- We may look through one of the LAPPS Lenses.
- Psychology may help us understand ourselves.
- Philosophy may question an assumption.
- Spirituality may invite us to listen within.
- Ayurveda may help us notice how we are living.
- Lived Experience may show us something that thought alone could never reveal.

And sometimes we put all the lenses down.

We simply look.

There is wisdom in being able to say: *I don't know.*

And perhaps even: *I don't need to know yet.*

Leave the Question on the Desk

The Study can easily become a place of overthinking.

We can return to the same question again and again.

- Analyse it.
- Rehearse conversations.
- Imagine possibilities.
- Search endlessly for certainty.

Eventually, thinking stops opening the question and begins circling around it.

Awareness may notice this too.

Perhaps there is nothing more to understand today.

The notebook can be closed.

The book returned to the shelf.

The question can remain on the desk.

And the Pilgrim can continue into the Garden.

Leaving a question unanswered is not abandoning it.

Life may still have something to show us.

- A conversation may change our understanding.
- An experience may reveal something we had not considered.
- A quiet moment may allow what seemed complicated to become simple.
- Or perhaps the question itself will gradually lose its importance.

When Understanding Ripens

The Study does not manufacture wisdom.

It gives inquiry somewhere to rest.

The Pilgrim receives experiences through living.

- Some are understood quickly.
- Others leave questions that remain long after the experience has passed.

We may bring these questions into the Study, examine them and consider what they might reveal.

But understanding cannot always be hurried.

Sometimes the notebook must be closed.

The Pilgrim returns to the Garden.

And what has been received is allowed to ripen.

For the Study may begin an inquiry, but life often continues it.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Leave the question on the desk.
Life may have more to say.

Chapter 14 – The Bedroom



"Not everything within the House needs to be resolved before it is allowed to rest."

A Place of Rest

Every Inner House has a place of rest.

The Bedroom is quieter than the other rooms.

- Nothing needs to be studied here.
- Nothing needs to be understood.
- Nothing needs to be solved.

The Bedroom simply offers what has become tired within us somewhere to settle.

It is the place of rest within the Inner House.

Life may continue outside in the Garden.

- A question may remain on the desk in the Study.
- A Picture may still hang on the wall.
- A Visitor may still be present.

And yet, within the Bedroom, something may rest.

Rest does not require life to be settled.

Visitors, Emotions and Feelings

The Bedroom welcomes whatever has become tired within the House.

- A Visitor who has remained longer than expected.
- An emotion that has left us unsettled.
- A feeling we have carried throughout the day.

They are not the same, nor must they follow any particular sequence.

- Grief may remain like a Visitor.
- Sadness may arise.
- Longing may be felt.

And sometimes several experiences accompany us at once.

The Bedroom does not ask us to separate them.

What has become tired may rest, even when we cannot fully explain what we are experiencing.

When Something Needs to Rest

- Some Visitors move quietly through the House.
  Others remain.
- Some emotions rise and fall quickly.
  Others return.
- Some feelings are light.
  Others become tiring to carry.

The Bedroom does not ask them to explain themselves before entering.

- Grief may rest here.
- Sadness may settle.
- Fear may grow quiet for a while.
- Even joy may soften into peaceful contentment.

Nothing has to disappear.

Rest is not the same as resolution.

- What is difficult may still be difficult.
- What has been lost may still be lost.
- What remains uncertain may still be uncertain.

The Bedroom simply reminds us that something does not have to be finished before it can be allowed to rest.

When the Loudspeaker Follows Us to Bed

Sometimes the Pilgrim enters the Bedroom, but the House remains unsettled.

- The Body is tired.
- The Mind continues thinking.
- The Emotional Self carries the day's concerns.

And Hijack's loudspeaker may still be broadcasting.

- *What if tomorrow goes wrong?*
- *I should have said something different.*
- *I must work this out tonight.*

The message repeats.
The urgency grows.
The pressure builds.

And although nothing more can be done for now, the Pilgrim may find it difficult to rest.

Awareness may recognise what is happening.

- *I am tired.*
- *My Mind keeps returning to the same question.*
- *I do not need to resolve everything tonight.*

But recognising Hijack does not necessarily quieten the loudspeaker.

- The thoughts may continue.
- The Body may remain unsettled.
- And sleep may not arrive when we wish.

The Bedroom does not demand silence before allowing rest.

- Perhaps the question can remain in the Study.
- Perhaps the unfinished conversation can wait.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim can simply stop searching for an answer tonight.

We cannot always silence the loudspeaker.

But we do not have to answer every broadcast.

And sometimes, despite our best intentions, we find ourselves listening again.

That too belongs.

The Quiet of the Night

There are times when the House has had enough for one day.

- Enough thinking.
- Enough questioning.
- Enough conversation.
- Enough trying to understand.

The Study may still contain an unanswered question.
Leave it there.

The Dining Room may still hold an unfinished conversation.
It can wait.

A Visitor may still be present.
There is no need to ask them to leave tonight.

For now, what needs rest may rest.

- Nothing needs to ripen because we have gone to bed.
- Nothing needs to become wisdom by morning.
- Nothing needs to change at all.

And yet sometimes, after rest, something does feel different.

Perhaps there is a little more space.

- A little more clarity.
- A little more patience.
- Or perhaps we wake and discover that nothing has changed.

That too belongs.

The gift of the Bedroom is not that morning will provide an answer.

The gift is rest itself.

Morning

Morning eventually reaches the Windows.

Light enters the House again.

What rested during the night may begin to stir.

- A Visitor may still be here.
- An emotion may arise again.
- A feeling may still be tender.
- The unanswered question may still be waiting in the Study.

Life has not necessarily resolved itself while we slept.

But another day has arrived.

And the House can meet it from where it is now.

There is no failure in carrying something into another day.

Some things need more than one night.

Some remain with us through whole seasons of life.

Rest does not ask them to leave.
It simply gives them somewhere gentle to be.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Imagine the Bedroom within your Inner House.

Perhaps the day has been tiring.

Perhaps something remains unsettled.

- A Visitor.
- An emotion.
- A feeling.
- Or a question that has followed you through the day.

There is no need to resolve it tonight.

No need to understand it.

No need to make it disappear.

Perhaps even Awareness can rest for a while.

Let what needs rest, rest.

Morning can come in its own time.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Not everything needs to be resolved tonight.
Rest is enough.

Chapter 15 — The Kitchen



"Life brings the ingredients. The Kitchen works with them."

The Centre of Mental Processing

Every Inner House has a Kitchen.

It is a place of preparation, but also of processing.

Throughout the day, we are continually taking something in.

- We see.
- We hear.
- We smell.
- We taste.
- We touch.

Through the five senses, the Garden continually meets the Inner House.

- A conversation.
- A beautiful view.
- A disturbing image.
- A familiar voice.
- The smell of food from childhood.
- Music.
- News.
- A warm embrace.
- A meal.

Some experiences pass almost unnoticed.

Others affect us immediately.

And some remain with us long after the moment has passed.

But not everything we process arrives through our senses.

- A memory may return.
- A thought may arise.
- An emotion may linger.

Something within the House may become activated.

And sometimes an experience from long ago returns to our attention.

The Kitchen gives us a place to understand how we work with what life brings and what arises within us.

Yet processing does not always lead to understanding.

Nor does everything we receive need to be examined.

- Sometimes we simply experience what is happening.
- Sometimes we return to it later.
- And sometimes it remains with us without ever being fully understood.

The Kitchen is where we may work with experience, not where every experience must become wisdom.

Section 1 - The Cook and the Chef

Every Kitchen has its instruments.

And in our Inner House, we may imagine a Cook and a Chef.

The **Cook** represents the **Processing Mind (Manas)**.

The Cook attends to the ingredients of experience.

- A conversation.
- An image.
- A familiar smell.
- A thought.
- A memory.

Something received from the Garden.

Or something arising within the House.

The Cook works with what arrives.

- Sometimes quietly.
- Sometimes busily.
- Sometimes returning to the same ingredients again and again.

But processing is not necessarily understanding.

And so we meet the **Chef**.

The Chef represents our **Guiding Intelligence (Buddhi)**.

Its particular gift is discernment.

- *What have I received?*
- *What do I know?*
- *What might I have misunderstood?*
- *What deserves my attention?*

The Chef may help us distinguish what happened from what we believe happened.

- What we know from what we assume.
- What requires a response from what may simply be allowed to pass.

Yet the Chef is not infallible.

- Sometimes the ingredients are unfamiliar.
- Sometimes an old impression influences their interpretation.
- Sometimes a Picture is mistaken for reality.
- And sometimes the Chef reaches a conclusion too quickly.

The Cook and Chef are not separate inhabitants of the House.

They represent different capacities of the Mind.

Nor do they always work in a particular order.

An experience may be processed before we consciously examine it.

- Discernment may arise immediately.
- Or understanding may come much later.
- And sometimes neither is needed.

A beautiful sunset does not require analysis.
A moment of affection need not be explained.
A feeling may simply be felt.

The Cook works with the ingredients of experience.

The Chef brings discernment to what is being prepared.

But neither can guarantee what an experience will become.

What We Take In

We usually think of nourishment in terms of food.
But the Kitchen receives much more than what we eat.
Throughout the day, we take in something of the world around us.

- Images.
- Sounds.
- Conversations.
- Information.
- Music.
- News.
- The company of other Pilgrims.
- The atmosphere of the places we inhabit.

Not everything we receive affects us in the same way.

- A piece of music may bring calm to the Inner House.
- A disturbing image may remain with us long after we have looked away.
- A harsh conversation may change the weather within.
- A familiar smell may awaken a childhood memory.
- A gentle touch may bring comfort without a word being spoken.

And sometimes the very same experience affects two Pilgrims differently.

- One may find a crowded room exciting.
- Another may find it exhausting.
- One may welcome a difficult conversation.
- Another may feel unsettled long afterwards.

The ingredients may be similar.
But what each Inner House makes of them may be different.

- The Cook works with what has been received.
- The Chef may help us discern what deserves further attention.

And sometimes an experience passes without either requiring much conscious effort.

- We do not always choose what reaches us.
- Nor can we always predict how it will affect us.

But we may gradually become more aware of what we repeatedly invite into our lives.
What enters the Inner House may influence its atmosphere.
And what we repeatedly take in may become part of what we carry.

What Arises Within

Not everything the Kitchen works with arrives from the Garden.

Sometimes the ingredients are already within the Inner House.

- A memory returns.
- A thought arises.
- An emotion lingers.
- A familiar Picture comes into focus.
- An old impression becomes activated.

And sometimes a Visitor arrives without an obvious invitation.

- The Cook may begin working with what has arisen.
- A memory may bring another memory.
- A thought may lead to a question.
- A feeling may become connected to something that happened long ago.

The Chef may bring discernment.

- *What is happening within me?*
- *Does this feeling belong to the present?*
- *Is an old experience influencing how I understand what is happening now?*

But not everything that arises requires the Cook's attention or the Chef's judgement.

Joy may simply be enjoyed.

Sadness may simply be felt.

- A Visitor may need to be heard at the Dining Room table.
- A question may be left on the desk in the Study.
- And something tired may need the quiet of the Bedroom.

Sometimes understanding comes.

Sometimes it does not.

Sometimes the Cook returns to the same ingredients without discovering anything new.

And sometimes the Chef has no answer.

Processing does not guarantee transformation.

- Grief does not have to become wisdom.
- Pain does not have to become compassion.
- A difficult experience does not have to become a lesson.

Sometimes processing changes our relationship with what has happened.

Sometimes nothing changes for a long time.

And sometimes an experience simply becomes part of the life we have lived.

The Kitchen does not demand that every ingredient become a meal.

Some experiences need understanding.

Others simply need room to be experienced.

The Kitchen Within the House

The Kitchen is one of the busiest places in the Inner House.

Here, much of our mental work takes place.

- The Cook processes.
- The Chef discerns.

And understanding may gradually emerge.

Yet the Kitchen does not govern the House.

- Sometimes the Cook may rest.
- Sometimes the Chef has nothing to decide.
- And sometimes the Pilgrim simply lives.

The Kitchen helps us make sense of life.
But life is not lived in the Kitchen alone.

Section 2 — The Pantry of Impressions

What the House Carries

Every Kitchen has somewhere to keep what has been gathered.

In our Inner House, we call this the **Pantry of Impressions**.

It represents our **Memory Field (Chitta)**.

- Some of its contents are familiar.
- Others have remained untouched for years.
- Not everything we receive disappears when the moment has passed.

Some experiences leave traces.

- A childhood memory.
- A familiar voice.
- A moment of kindness.
- An old disappointment.
- A fear we have carried for years.

Some of these impressions may influence how we experience the present.

- A familiar smell may awaken a forgotten memory.
- A conversation may touch an old hurt.
- A particular tone of voice may bring an unexpected feeling.

And sometimes the Pilgrim wonders:

Why has this affected me so deeply?

Perhaps something in the present has touched something from the past.

Not everything we are processing today was received today.

- The Cook may find itself working with ingredients gathered long ago.
- And the Chef may not immediately recognise where those ingredients came from.

Sometimes the connection becomes clear.

Sometimes it remains a mystery.

More Than Our Wounds

But the Pantry does not hold only difficult impressions.

- There may also be warmth.
- Trust.
- Affection.
- Laughter.
- Lessons learned.
- Memories that bring comfort.

And familiar ways of responding that have served us well.

- A kind word received in childhood may continue to offer encouragement many years later.
- A familiar melody may bring a sense of belonging.
- An experience of being loved may influence how we welcome love today.

The Pantry carries more than our wounds. It also carries what has helped us live.

Nor must everything in the Pantry be examined.

- Some impressions remain quietly in the background.

- Others become meaningful when life brings them forward.
- And some may never become available to conscious Awareness.

The Pantry is not a collection of ingredients that the Pilgrim must sort through.

It is part of the living House.

When the Past Meets the Present

Sometimes an experience in My Garden touches an impression held in the Pantry.

- The Cook begins processing what has arisen.
- The Chef may attempt to understand it.

But an old impression can influence both.

- The Cook may return repeatedly to something familiar.
- The Chef may interpret the present through what has happened before.

A Picture may be brought into focus.

And the Emotional Self and Body may respond before the Pilgrim understands why.

Yet an old impression does not necessarily make our present response mistaken.

- Sometimes experience has taught us something worth remembering.
- Sometimes it has left us expecting danger where there is none.
- And sometimes both the past and present deserve our attention.

Awareness may help us notice the difference.

- *What is happening now?*
- *What might I be carrying into this moment?*

The questions need not produce an answer.

Nor must the Pilgrim search the Pantry for an explanation.

Sometimes understanding arrives much later.

And sometimes it never does.

We do not always choose what the Pantry holds.

But we may gradually discover how its contents influence the life we are living.

Section 3 — When an Experience Concerns Me

Not everything we experience concerns us personally.

But sometimes something happens that touches our sense of *Me*.

- Someone praises us.
- Someone criticises us.
- Someone remembers us.
- Someone overlooks us.

Within our Instruments of Mind, we call this personal reference the **Me-Centre (Ahamkara)**.

It allows us to recognise:

- *This concerns me.*
- *This happened to me.*
- *This is my experience.*

The Me-Centre is not inherently selfish or defensive. It is part of our ordinary sense of individuality.

The Me-Centre and Me-Self

There is an important distinction.

The Me-Centre relates an experience to me.

The Me-Self concerns how I experience and understand myself.

Imagine someone criticises my cooking.

- The Me-Centre recognises that the criticism concerns me.
- The Cook may begin processing the remark.
- The Chef may consider whether it is justified.
- An old impression from the Pantry may influence my response.
- And a Picture of my Me-Self may become involved.

I made a mistake.

May become:

I am not good enough.

An experience has begun to shape how I understand myself.

But this is not inevitable.

I may simply recognise that my cooking could improve.

Or that the other person has different tastes.

Sometimes the experience passes without changing anything.

An experience may concern me without defining Me.

And sometimes the Chef's discernment helps us recognise the difference.

Section 4 — When Hijack Enters the Kitchen

Sometimes Hijack's loudspeaker reaches the Kitchen.

The Cook continues processing.

But the same ingredients return again and again.

- A conversation is replayed.
- An unpleasant remark is revisited.
- A troubling thought occupies our attention.

The loudspeaker broadcasts:

- *I must understand why.*
- *I cannot let this go.*
- *I need to know what happens next.*

The message repeats.

The pressure grows.

And the Cook may become caught in processing that no longer brings understanding.

When the Chef Is Influenced

The Chef is not immune to Hijack.

Guiding Intelligence may ordinarily help us examine an experience from different perspectives.

But under Hijack's influence, discernment may narrow.

Instead of questioning an assumption, the Chef may begin defending it.

- *I know what they meant.*
- *I have every reason to be angry.*
- *I must prove that I am right.*

Reasoning continues.

But it may now serve a conclusion rather than examine it.

The Cook may become caught in repetition.

The Chef may become caught in certainty.

Neither has become Hijack.

Their work is being influenced by its loudspeaker.

When the Pantry Is Activated

Sometimes the ingredients are not new.

- A criticism may touch an old disappointment.
- A particular tone of voice may awaken a familiar fear.
- An experience in My Garden may activate an impression held in the Pantry.

The Cook may begin processing something that feels familiar.

The Chef may interpret the present through what happened before.

The Me-Centre may recognise a personal threat.

And a Picture of Me-Self may become involved.

- *Here it comes again.*
- *I know what this means.*
- *I must protect myself.*

Yet the present may not be what the past suggests.

Or the concern may be entirely justified.

An old impression does not automatically make our response mistaken.

When Awareness Arrives

Awareness may notice what is happening.

- *Am I understanding this experience, or repeatedly returning to it?*
- *Am I examining what happened, or defending what I already believe?*
- *Is something from the past influencing how I see the present?*

The questions may create room for discernment.

But Awareness does not silence the loudspeaker.

Nor does recognition guarantee a different response.

- Sometimes the Cook continues processing.
- Sometimes the Chef remains convinced.
- And sometimes the Pilgrim only recognises afterwards what happened in the Kitchen.

Hijack does not take over the Cook or Chef as separate inhabitants.

It influences how the instruments of Mind are working.

And even when the loudspeaker continues, the possibility of Awareness remains.

Section 5 — Nourishing the Inner House

The Kitchen invites us to consider another question.

What am I feeding my Inner House?

We nourish more than the Body.

What we repeatedly watch, hear and read may influence our Mind and Emotional Self.

- The conversations we inhabit may change the weather within the House.
- The company we keep may bring warmth, encouragement or unease.
- And what we eat, how we rest and how we care for the Body may influence how we think and feel.

These relationships are complex.

There is no single recipe for nourishment.

What comforts one Pilgrim may not comfort another.

And what nourishes us today may not be what we need tomorrow.

What We Continue to Feed

Sometimes we recognise that something is leaving us unsettled.

Yet we return to it.

- Another troubling story.
- Another exhausting conversation.
- Another visit to something that has already caused distress.

Sometimes this is curiosity.

Sometimes habit.

Sometimes an ordinary search for comfort.

And sometimes Hijack's loudspeaker adds its insistence.

- *Just one more.*
- *I need to know.*
- *I cannot stop now.*

The Cook continues working with what arrives.

The Chef may recognise that enough has been received.

Yet the Pilgrim may continue.

Awareness creates the possibility of choice.

It does not guarantee the choice.

And recognising this need not become another reason for self-criticism.

Not Everything Becomes Nourishment

The Kitchen does not exist to turn everything life brings into something good.

- Some experiences nourish us.
- Others leave us unsettled.
- Some remain difficult.

And some may never become meaningful.

- Grief does not have to become wisdom.
- Pain does not have to become compassion.
- Nor must every difficult experience become a lesson.

Sometimes nourishment means welcoming something.

Sometimes it means recognising that we have had enough.

And sometimes it means allowing an experience to remain unfinished.

Not everything placed before us needs to be taken in.

Not everything taken in needs to be transformed.

A Living House

The Kitchen does not work in isolation.

- An experience may touch a Picture.
- An impression in the Pantry may become activated.
- A Visitor may need attention in the Dining Room.
- A question may find its way to the Study.
- And something tired may need the quiet of the Bedroom.

There is no compulsory route.

The Cook and Chef do not govern the House.

Nor must every experience pass through their hands.
Sometimes the Pilgrim simply lives.
And that, too, is enough.
The deeper exploration of nourishment belongs elsewhere in our pilgrimage.
Here, within *The Art of Healing*, the Kitchen offers a quieter invitation.

- **Notice what you are taking in.**
- **Notice what is arising within.**
- **Notice what you continue to feed.**

And perhaps, with time, discover what helps your Inner House flourish.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Imagine the Kitchen within your Inner House.

- The Cook is there.
- The Chef is nearby.
- The Pantry holds what life has left behind.

There is no need to prepare anything.

Simply notice.

What have I been taking in?

Perhaps a conversation.

- Something you have watched.
- Something you have heard.

Or the company of another Pilgrim.

What has been arising within me?

- A memory.
- A feeling.
- An old Picture.

Perhaps something you do not yet understand.

- And what have you been returning to?
- Something that nourishes you?
- Something that unsettles you?
- Or something you continue to revisit without quite knowing why?

There is no need to examine every ingredient.
No need to ask the Chef for an answer.
Nor must the Cook turn everything into something useful.
Perhaps, for a moment, you can simply notice what is happening.
And ask yourself one quiet question:

What am I feeding my Inner House?

Not as a judgement.

But as an invitation to care for the life unfolding within.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

We take in more than food.
Not everything we receive needs to be processed.
Not everything we process needs to become wisdom.
Notice what you are feeding your Inner House.

Chapter 16 — The Bathroom



"A living House has somewhere to receive what arrives. It also has somewhere for what is ready to leave."

A Place of Release

Every Inner House has a Bathroom.
It may not be the room we think about very often.

Yet its purpose is essential.

The Inner House continually receives life.

- Experiences arrive.
- Emotions arise.
- Feelings are lived.
- Visitors come and sometimes remain.
- Pictures hold memories and meanings.

But the Inner House was never meant to hold everything in the same way forever.

- Some things remain.
- Some change.
- Some gradually loosen.
- And some, in their own time, leave.

The Bathroom is the place of release within the Inner House.

- It does not decide what should leave.
- It does not force anything out.
- It simply allows release to have a place.

What We Hold

Sometimes we hold something long after the moment itself has passed.

- A harsh word.
- A disappointment.
- An argument.
- A regret.
- An expectation of how life should have unfolded.

Sometimes we know we are holding it.
Sometimes we discover it only when something in the Garden touches it again.

The Bathroom does not ask: *Why haven't you let this go?*

Nor does it tell us: *You should be over this by now.*

It asks something much gentler:

What am I still holding?

There may be a reason it remains.

- Perhaps it still hurts.
- Perhaps we are not ready.
- Perhaps we do not yet understand what we are holding.
- Or perhaps we have simply carried it for so long that we no longer notice the grip.

Awareness does not demand release.
Awareness simply notices the holding.

When Hijack Keeps the Grip Tight

Sometimes what we hold is accompanied by another voice.

Hijack's loudspeaker begins broadcasting.

- *They should never have treated me that way.*
- *I cannot let this go.*
- *I must make them understand.*

The message repeats.

The pressure builds.

And the Pilgrim may find themselves returning to the same hurt again and again.

Sometimes the loudspeaker grows quiet.

Then something in the Garden touches an old Picture, and the broadcast begins again.

Awareness may recognise what is happening.

- *I am still hurt.*
- *I keep returning to what happened.*
- *Something within me is holding tightly.*

But recognising Hijack does not necessarily silence it.

Nor does it mean the hurt was unjustified.

What happened may have been genuinely wrong.

The Pilgrim may still need protection, boundaries or a response.

Release does not require us to excuse what happened.

Sometimes the loudspeaker continues even when there is nothing more we can do.

And perhaps, one day, Awareness notices something else.

I do not have to keep revisiting this moment right now.

- The memory remains.
- The hurt may remain.

But the grip may begin to loosen.

Hijack may keep calling us back to what happened.

Awareness may help us recognise when we no longer need to follow.

Water

Every Bathroom contains water.

- Water cleanses.

- Refreshes.
- Renews.

Not because the House is dirty.
But because life leaves traces.

- A difficult conversation may leave us unsettled.
- Stress may linger.
- Fear may remain long after danger has passed.
- Even a joyful experience may leave us stirred.

Sometimes we need somewhere to wash away the dust of the day.
But water cannot erase what has happened.
Nor must every trace disappear.

The Pantry may still carry what life has left behind.

- Perhaps cleansing is not about removing the past.
- Perhaps it is about allowing ourselves to meet the present without carrying everything in quite the same way.

We do not wash away our experiences.
We make room to continue living with them.

Tears

Sometimes the House releases through tears.
Tears may be a sign that something has begun to move.

What has been held may begin to soften.
What seemed unable to move may find expression.

But tears do not always mean that something has been released.

Not all tears are tears of sorrow.

- There are tears of relief.
- Tears of gratitude.
- Tears of forgiveness.
- Tears of homecoming.

And sometimes, tears arrive without a reason we can name.

- They do not necessarily mean that healing has occurred.
- They do not have to lead anywhere.

Sometimes we simply cry.

And the Bathroom allows even this to belong.

- No explanation.
- No embarrassment.
- No need to turn the tears into wisdom.

They come.
They fall.
And in their own time, they pass.

Opening the Hands

Sometimes release is not about making something leave.

Imagine holding something tightly in your hand.

- A disappointment.
- A regret.

- A hurt.
- An expectation.

The longer the grip remains, the more effort the holding requires.
Now imagine the hand slowly opening.

- Nothing has been thrown away.
- Nothing has been rejected.
- Nothing has been denied.

The hand has simply stopped gripping.

Perhaps something similar can happen within the Inner House.

- What happened still happened.
- What mattered may still matter.
- What hurt may still hurt.

We may loosen our grip without changing our judgement of what happened.

- Perhaps the memory remains.
- Perhaps the feeling remains.

But something about the holding begins to change.

Others may remain.

And sometimes the hand is not yet ready to open.

That too belongs.

Release cannot be forced.
Sometimes it begins simply by loosening the grip.

What Is Ready to Leave

We often hear the words:

Let it go.

But release cannot always be commanded.

- Grief cannot simply be dismissed.
- Love cannot be washed away.
- A painful memory cannot be ordered from the House.
- Nor should healing require us to empty ourselves of everything difficult.

Nothing has to be forced out of the House.
But nothing has to be held forever.

- Something may leave quietly.
- Something else may loosen only a little.
- Another thing may remain for years.
- And something we thought had left may visit again.

Release has no timetable.

Nor does release depend on something changing in the Garden.

The person who hurt us may remain unchanged.

The loss may remain.

The uncertainty may remain.

Life outside the House may continue exactly as before.

Release is not a bargain with life.

The Garden does not have to change
for something within the House to be held differently.

The Bathroom simply keeps a place for whatever is ready to loosen, flow or leave.

And sometimes, nothing is ready.

The Pilgrim may simply leave the Bathroom and continue living.

The room will still be there.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Imagine the Bathroom within your Inner House.

There is water nearby.

There is nothing you need to cleanse from yourself.

Nothing you need to make disappear.

Simply notice your hands.

Perhaps they are holding something.

- A disappointment.
- A regret.
- A hurt.
- An expectation.
- Or perhaps something you cannot yet name.

Ask quietly:

What am I still holding?

There is no need to open your hands.

But perhaps the grip can soften.

Just a little.

Whatever is ready to leave may leave.

Whatever needs to remain may remain.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Release cannot be forced.
Sometimes it begins simply by loosening the grip.

Chapter 17 — The Cellar



"Some things remain unseen, yet still belong."

Beneath Everyday Awareness

Every House has places we know well.

- The Living Room.
- The Dining Room.
- The Study.
- The Bedroom.

We recognise what happens there because these rooms belong close to everyday life.

The Cellar is different.

It lies beneath the rooms in which the ordinary life of the House unfolds.

Its door may remain closed for long periods.

We may give it little thought.

Yet it still belongs to the House.

The Inner House is much the same.

- We recognise our thoughts.
- We notice emotions and feelings.
- We remember Pictures from the walls.
- We become familiar with the ways we meet the Garden.

But the Inner Self is larger than what is immediately available to Awareness.

Some things within us remain hidden from everyday view.

The Cellar gives this hidden dimension of the Inner Self a place within the House.

Not somewhere outside us.

Not somewhere we have failed to reach.

Simply somewhere that is not ordinarily in view.

The Hidden Self

I call this hidden dimension of the Inner House the **Hidden Self**.

The Hidden Self is not another self living somewhere beneath us.

It is not another self living somewhere beneath us.

Nor is it necessarily dark, damaged or dangerous.

It is part of the Inner Self that is not ordinarily in view.

Some aspects of ourselves may have become difficult to live, show or express.

Perhaps we learned very young:

- *Do not cry.*
- *Do not be difficult.*
- *Do not be afraid.*
- *Do not ask for too much.*
- *Be strong.*
- *Be good.*
- *Do not draw attention to yourself.*

Sometimes nobody needed to say the words directly.

- A look may have been enough.
- A silence.
- A comparison.
- A withdrawal of affection.
- A moment of embarrassment.

Or simply the atmosphere in which we were learning how to belong.

The child notices.

The child adapts.

And gradually something may be learned:

This part of me is better kept out of sight.

- The tenderness remains.
- The anger remains.
- The fear remains.
- The need remains.
- The playfulness remains.
- The vulnerability remains.
- Perhaps even the courage, creativity or individuality remains.

But these parts of ourselves may become less available for expression.

What could not safely or comfortably be lived may become hidden.

Not all of this happens through painful experiences.

Sometimes we adapt because we want to belong.

Because we want to be loved.

Because we are learning what our family, culture or community seems to welcome.

Much of this happens without conscious choice.

We do not decide:

I will hide this part of myself.

We simply learn how to live in the world around us.

Some ways of being are encouraged.

Others become quieter.

And years later, we may not recognise what has become hidden.

We may simply notice that certain situations affect us strongly.

That some parts of ourselves are difficult to express.

Or that something within us becomes guarded before we understand why.

The Hidden Self is not another person within us.

It is part of who we are, even when we cannot fully see or express it.

The Pantry, the Pictures and the Cellar

We have already visited the Kitchen and its Pantry.

The Pantry holds the impressions and traces that life may leave within us.

Some are familiar.

Others may remain beyond conscious memory.

The Pictures are different.

They carry the meanings, interpretations and beliefs we have formed.

And the Cellar?

The Cellar represents aspects of ourselves that have become hidden from everyday Awareness or expression.

Consider a child who is repeatedly told:

> *You are too sensitive.*

Those words may leave impressions within the Pantry.

They may also become a Picture on the wall:

- *I am too sensitive.*
- *There is something wrong with the way I feel.*

But something else may happen.

- The child may learn not to cry.
- Not to ask for comfort.
- Not to show how deeply something hurts.

The tenderness has not necessarily disappeared.

The need for comfort may still remain.

But expressing these parts of the Inner Self may no longer feel safe.

Something has become hidden.

The Pantry carries impressions.

The Pictures carry meanings.

The Cellar represents what has become hidden.

These distinctions will not always be neat.

- An old impression may influence a Picture.
- A Picture may encourage us to conceal something.

And what has become hidden may shape how we respond to the Garden.

The House is living architecture, not a psychological diagram.

We do not need to separate everything perfectly.

The metaphors are here to help us see.

When Something Hidden Is Activated

Most of the time, we may hardly notice the Cellar.

Then something happens in the Garden.

- Someone criticises us.
- A relationship changes.
- A familiar voice speaks in a particular way.
- Someone excludes us.
- Someone comes too close.
- Someone leaves.

Perhaps the situation resembles something we have experienced before.

And suddenly the weather within the House changes.

- Fear rises.
- Anger arrives quickly.
- We become defensive.
- We withdraw.
- Or something within us becomes unusually guarded.

The response may surprise us.

Why did that affect me so strongly?

- Perhaps an old impression in the Pantry has been stirred.
- Perhaps a Picture has been touched.
- Perhaps something within the Hidden Self has been activated.
- Perhaps several things are happening together.

And perhaps we will never know exactly.

The Hidden Self can be activated without being revealed.

This matters.

- We do not need to discover a forgotten event every time we respond strongly.
- We do not need to construct an explanation.

Nor must we assume that a strong response comes from something hidden.

- Sometimes the present situation is genuinely difficult.
- Sometimes our response is understandable.

And sometimes Awareness may simply recognise:

Something within me has been touched.

That recognition may be enough for now.

When Hijack Begins Broadcasting

Sometimes what has been stirred is accompanied by Hijack's loudspeaker.

- A familiar criticism may awaken an old fear.
- A particular tone of voice may bring a sense of danger.
- A disagreement may touch something we have long struggled to express.

And the loudspeaker begins broadcasting.

- *Here it comes again.*
- *I know what this means.*
- *I must protect myself.*

The message repeats.
The urgency grows.
The pressure builds.

- The Mind may begin interpreting the situation through an old Picture.
- The Emotional Self responds.
- The Body may prepare to protect itself.
- And the rocking chair may become increasingly unsettled.

Awareness may recognise the broadcast.

- *Something has affected me.*
- *I am feeling threatened.*
- *Am I responding to what is happening now, or has something familiar been stirred?*

But recognising Hijack does not necessarily silence it.

Nor does the presence of Hijack mean that the concern is imaginary.

There may be a genuine danger.

A boundary may need protecting.

Something in the Garden may require a response.

The difficulty is that urgency and pressure can make it harder to distinguish what is happening now from what we have come to expect.

Hijack may broadcast from what has been stirred without revealing what lies beneath it.

The Pilgrim does not have to descend into the Cellar to answer the loudspeaker.

Sometimes it is enough to return to what is happening in the House and the Garden.

- What do I know?
- What am I assuming?
- What needs my attention now?

The Cellar does not have to be opened before the Pilgrim can respond differently.

What Happens Below Can Be Felt Above

The Cellar does not need to open for something hidden to influence the rest of the House.

What happens below may be felt above.

The inner weather may shift.

- A Picture may suddenly seem more vivid.
- The view through a Window may narrow.
- A conversation at the Dining Room table may become difficult.

The Pilgrim may react in the Garden before understanding why.

The Hidden Self does not need to come upstairs in order to influence what happens upstairs.

Sometimes we encounter its possible echoes through ordinary life.

- A repeated defence.
- A familiar withdrawal.
- A tenderness we quickly conceal.
- A longing we find difficult to admit.

Even a gift we hesitate to express.

These experiences do not prove that something hidden has been activated.

But they may invite curiosity.

Awareness need not begin by asking:

What is hidden down there?

Perhaps a gentler question is enough.

The Cellar Does Not Contain Only Wounds

It would be easy to imagine that everything hidden must be painful.

But what becomes hidden is not necessarily what is damaged.

Sometimes what becomes hidden is what did not find enough room to live.

- A child repeatedly told to be sensible may learn to conceal playfulness.
- Someone whose questions were unwelcome may become reluctant to express curiosity.
- Someone taught never to draw attention to themselves may hesitate to share their gifts.
- Someone who learned always to care for others may find it difficult to express their own needs.
- And someone whose tenderness invited ridicule may become guarded around affection.

The Hidden Self may contain not only what hurt,
but also what never found enough freedom to be lived.

Healing, then, is not simply about discovering wounds.

Sometimes life unexpectedly touches something beautiful that had become hidden.

- A forgotten confidence.
- A capacity for wonder.
- A creative voice.
- Tenderness.
- Courage.
- Play.

Perhaps the Pilgrim discovers a part of themselves they had never felt free to express.

Not everything hidden needs to remain hidden.

But neither must everything be brought into the light.

The Cellar is not a room of darkness.

It is the image we give to what has remained outside everyday view.

There Is No Need to Go Looking

Once we know there is a Cellar, curiosity may arise.

- *What is down there?*
- *What have I hidden?*
- *What happened to me?*
- *What do I need to uncover?*

But the Cellar is not asking to be searched.

Healing does not require us to descend with a torch and open every box.

- Not every reaction needs an origin story.
- Not every forgotten experience needs to be remembered.
- Not every hidden part needs to be brought into conscious awareness.
- And not everything that remains hidden is waiting to be found.

The Cellar door may remain closed.

Closed does not mean locked.

It simply means there is no obligation to enter.

Life itself may sometimes touch what is hidden.

- A relationship may bring something near.
- A conversation may stir something.
- A moment of Stillness may allow something to be noticed.
- A new experience may make an old response visible.
- And sometimes a part of ourselves that had remained quiet finds room to be expressed.

When that happens, Awareness may meet what has arisen.

There is no need to force the door.

Nor is there anything wrong with exploring what lies beneath, when the Pilgrim wishes to do so and has the support they need.

Healing is not measured by how much of the Cellar we uncover.

The Hidden Self does not need to be searched for.
Sometimes life quietly shows us that something below has been activated.

Healing Without Excavation

There is a temptation to imagine healing as uncovering everything.

- Find the wound.
- Find its origin.
- Understand it.
- Resolve it.

But human life is rarely so tidy.

- We may understand why something affects us.
  Or we may not.
- A memory may become clearer.
  Or it may remain incomplete.
- Something hidden may find expression.
  Or it may quietly soften without ever becoming a story we can tell.

Healing does not depend on complete knowledge of ourselves.

The LAPPS Lenses may sometimes help us look.

- Psychology may offer understanding.
- Philosophy may offer another question.
- Spirituality may invite us to listen within.
- Ayurveda may help us notice how the whole person is living.
- Lived Experience may show us something none of the other lenses could have predicted.

And sometimes— **we put the lenses down.**

We simply notice.

Something has been activated.

Something within the House needs kindness.

That may be enough.

A living philosophy must leave room for what remains unknown.

The Closed Door

Perhaps the Cellar offers one final image.

A closed door.

- We know what lies beyond it belongs to the House.
- We do not need to open it simply because it is there.
- We can live fully in the rooms above.
- We can sit in the Living Room.
- Look through the Windows.
- Talk at the Dining Room table.
- Leave a question in the Study.
- Rest in the Bedroom.
- Allow the Kitchen to process what needs processing.
- And visit the Bathroom when something is ready to be released.

Beneath all of this, there may still be something we do not fully know.

That does not make the House incomplete.

Mystery also belongs within us.

Perhaps maturity is not knowing everything that lies behind the door.

Perhaps it is knowing that the door exists without becoming frightened by it.

And when something below is stirred, we can notice what happens above.

- Without excavation.
- Without forcing.
- Without demanding a revelation.

With Awareness.

And kindness towards whatever has been touched.

The Pilgrim does not have to know everything within the House to live meaningfully within it.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

For a moment, notice your Inner House.

Somewhere beneath the familiar rooms is the Cellar.

There is no need to open its door.

Let it remain closed.

Instead, remember a recent moment when your response surprised you.

- Perhaps something hurt more than you expected.
- Perhaps you became defensive.
- Perhaps you withdrew.
- Perhaps tenderness appeared unexpectedly.
- Perhaps something beautiful moved you more deeply than you could explain.

There is no need to search for its origin.

Simply ask:

What happened within my House?

What did I notice in my Mind, Emotional Self and Body?

Can I meet what arose without needing to know everything beneath it?

Allow the question to remain.

Nothing needs to be uncovered.

Nothing needs to be brought into the light.

Something may have been activated.

For now, noticing may be enough.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Do not feel obliged to search the Cellar.
Notice what becomes activated within the House.
Meet what arises with Awareness and kindness.
Not everything hidden needs to be revealed for healing to unfold.

Chapter 18 - The Loft



"Above every House lies a quiet place where tomorrow patiently prepares itself."

Above Everyday Life

Every House contains more than the rooms of everyday living.

- There is the Living Room.
- The Dining Room.
- The Windows and Pictures.
- The Study.
- The Bedroom.
- The Kitchen.
- The Bathroom.
- And beneath everyday awareness lies the Cellar.

But there is another quiet space within the architecture of the Inner House.

The Loft.

The Loft is not where we hide what we cannot face.

Nor is it where unanswered questions must be stored.

The Loft is the place of possibility within the Inner Self.

It gives us an image for what may already be present within us, but has not yet found its expression in life.

- A gift not yet lived.
- A direction not yet recognised.
- A courage not yet needed.
- A way of seeing still forming.
- A possibility for which life has not yet made room.

The Loft reminds us of something easily forgotten:

We are not only what we have already lived.

There may still be more of us to become.

The Eggs

Perhaps the Loft contains eggs.

- Not answers.
- Not predictions.
- Not promises about the future.

Possibilities.

An egg carries the possibility of something becoming.

But unlike an egg, the possibilities of human life are not always already formed within us.

- Some are discovered.
- Some develop through experience.

Others emerge through relationships, learning and encounters we could never have anticipated.

- A child loves drawing but does not yet think of herself as creative.
- Another constantly asks questions without recognising a philosophical curiosity.
- Someone discovers an unexpected tenderness towards those who suffer.

Someone finds joy in words.

- Numbers.
- Plants.
- Music.
- Silence.
- People.

The possibility may be present long before we recognise it.

Other possibilities emerge much later.

- A friendship opens a new direction.
- A journey changes the way we see.
- A loss changes what matters.
- A conversation awakens a curiosity.
- A book opens a Window we did not know existed.

We do not need to decide immediately what these experiences mean.

An egg is a possibility, not a destiny.

Some possibilities will become part of the life we live.

Others may remain possibilities.

And some may disappear from view altogether.

Nothing has necessarily failed.

The Loft does not promise what we will become.

It simply leaves room for what we **may** become.

What Has Not Yet Been Lived

There are parts of ourselves we know because life has already asked us to live them.

- We discover patience when something requires patience.
- We discover courage when something frightens us.
- We discover our capacity to love through the relationships in which love finds expression.

But what of the capacities life has not yet asked for?

- Perhaps there is courage we have never needed.
- Compassion that has not yet found expression.
- Creativity that has never been given enough room.
- Leadership that has not yet been called forward.
- Tenderness that has not yet found a relationship in which it feels free.

Or a way of understanding life that is still taking shape.

Not everything within us has yet had the opportunity to become visible.

This is different from the **Hidden Self.**

- Something in the Cellar may have become hidden because it could not safely or comfortably be lived.
- Something in the Loft may simply **not have been lived yet**.

One concerns what became hidden.

The other concerns what remains possible.

And sometimes the distinction will blur.

A possibility may have become hidden.

Something once hidden may later find an opportunity for expression.

The House is living architecture.

It does not need perfect compartments.

Warmth

A Loft beneath a roof receives warmth from above.

Perhaps that is why the image of the egg belongs here.

An egg does not develop because we continually open it to see what is happening.

Some things need conditions in which development can unfold.

So too with human possibility.

We often ask:

- *What should I do with my life?*
- *What am I becoming?*
- *Where is this leading?*
- *What is my purpose?*

Sometimes these questions are useful.

They may sit for a while on the desk in the Study.

But possibility does not always need an answer.

Sometimes it needs **warmth**.

- The warmth of friendship.
- Encouragement.
- Curiosity.

- Experience.
- Rest.
- Conversation.
- Stillness.
- Being seen.
- Trying something without knowing where it will lead.
- Living.

And sometimes warmth includes the courage to begin.

- To practise.
- To make mistakes.
- To try again.

For nurturing possibility does not mean remaining passive.

Nor does it mean that effort has no place.

It means recognising the difference between effort that nourishes and pressure that exhausts.

Possibility is not always developed by pressure.
Sometimes it is nurtured by the conditions in which it is allowed to live.

Ripening

This is where the Loft quietly meets the **Living Wisdom Cycle**.

Receive → Ripen → Give

Something is received through living.

- A conversation.
- An experience.
- A question.
- A glimpse.
- A new way of seeing.

What has been received does not necessarily become understanding immediately.

- It may remain with us.
- Life continues.
- We walk.
- We meet people.
- We lose things.
- We discover things.
- We make mistakes.
- We rest.
- We begin again.

And somewhere within all this living, something may ripen.

- Not because the Loft manufactures wisdom.
- Not because every experience contains a lesson.
- Not because time automatically turns experience into understanding.

Ripening cannot be commanded.

Sometimes something received years ago begins to make sense.

Sometimes a possibility finds its form.

Sometimes what has ripened becomes something we can give.

- A word.
- A kindness.
- A piece of work.
- A way of living.
- A book.

And sometimes nothing needs to be given at all.
The possibility simply becomes part of who we are.

Not everything that ripens needs to become a gift for someone else.

The Turtle Eggs

For many years I carried questions without answers.

I did not know then that they would become part of a philosophy.

I was simply living.

Mathematics gave me one language.
Teaching gave me another.

Relationships brought their own questions.

- So did caring.
- Loss.
- Travel.
- Stillness.
- Ordinary encounters.
- Books opened Windows.
- People changed the view.

Life continually gave me something to receive.

Much of it I did not understand at the time.

Looking back, I can see something I could not see while it was happening.

Things were ripening.

Perhaps turtle eggs remain a beautiful image for this.

Beneath warm sand, very little appears to be happening.

The surface tells us almost nothing.

Yet something may be forming where we cannot see it.

- We cannot pull open the shell to hurry its arrival.
- We cannot demand that it hatch before its time.

And even with favourable conditions, not every egg will hatch.
The image reminds me of how much of my own philosophy seems to have arrived.
I did not begin with a complete philosophy and then simply put it into words.

- I lived.
- I noticed.
- I questioned.
- I received.

And sometimes I returned to questions I had carried for years.

Gradually, connections began to emerge.

One experience illuminated another.

Something I had learned through mathematics found an unexpected relationship with something I had encountered through life.

- A conversation gave new meaning to an old question.
- An experience opened another Window.

And what had once seemed unrelated began to belong together.

- Not everything became clear.
- Not every question found an answer.

But some understanding became ready to be expressed.

Not an answer I had manufactured.
An understanding that had gradually become ready to be lived.

Not Every Egg Hatches

This may be one of the most important teachings of the Loft.

- Not every egg hatches.
- Not every possibility becomes a life.
- Not every talent becomes a vocation.
- Not every dream becomes a destination.
- Not every curiosity becomes a lifelong pursuit.
- Not every path glimpsed at the Horizon becomes a path we walk.

And this does not mean something went wrong.

Human life is finite.

To live one possibility often means not living another.

Circumstances change.

We change.

The Garden changes.

Some possibilities remain quietly unlived.

A possibility does not have to become reality in order to have belonged to us.

Perhaps some eggs remain in the Loft.

- Not necessarily as failures.
- Not necessarily as regrets.

Simply as possibilities that were never lived.

Of course, some may bring regret.

- We may wish we had taken a different path.
- We may wonder what might have happened.

Those feelings also belong.

The Loft does not ask us to pretend that every unlived possibility leaves us content.

It simply reminds us that an unlived possibility does not make the life we have lived less real.

We cannot live every possible life.

But we can continue living the one that is ours.

When an Egg Begins to Open

Sometimes a possibility begins to ask for expression.

There may be no dramatic revelation.

We simply find ourselves repeatedly drawn towards something.

- A subject.
- A place.
- A person.
- A form of service.
- A creative act.
- A different way of living.

Awareness notices.

- *Something here interests me.*
- *Perhaps I would like to explore it.*

We still do not know what it will become.

- The Horizon offers possibility, not promise.
- The Loft does the same.

We can remain curious without immediately turning possibility into destiny.

We can take one step.

Try something.

Allow life to respond.

Perhaps the interest grows.

Perhaps it changes direction.

Perhaps it fades.

And sometimes, almost without noticing, the possibility begins to move from the quietness of the Loft into the life of the Garden.

What was once only possible begins to be lived.

The Cellar and the Loft

The Cellar and the Loft offer two very different mysteries within the same House.

The Cellar reminds us:

> **There are parts of me I do not fully see.**

The Loft reminds us:

> **There are parts of me I have not yet lived.**

- Something hidden may become activated without being fully revealed.
- Something possible may begin to emerge without our knowing where it will lead.

Neither needs to be forced open.

The Cellar invites us to respect what remains beyond everyday Awareness.

The Loft invites us to leave room for becoming.

And between them, everyday life continues in the rooms of the House.

- We live.
- We notice.
- We receive.
- Sometimes something ripens.
- Sometimes we give.

And sometimes we simply continue living.

The Cellar reminds us that we may be more than we can see.
The Loft reminds us that we may become more than we can presently imagine.

A Place of Becoming

Perhaps this is the quiet gift of the Loft.

The person we are today is real.

But not necessarily complete.

There may be ways of loving we have not yet discovered.

- Ways of seeing that have not yet opened.
- Courage that has not yet been called upon.
- Questions that will change as we live them.
- Gifts that may find expression in forms we cannot presently imagine.

This does not mean we should continually strive to become someone else.

Becoming is not dissatisfaction with who we are.

The egg does not reject the egg because something more may emerge.

The seed does not apologise for not yet being the tree.

And the Pilgrim does not need to reject who they are today to remain open to tomorrow.

- There is no urgency.
- No demand to fulfil every possibility.
- No obligation to become extraordinary.

Life unfolds.

The Pilgrim continues.

- Some understanding ripens.
- Some possibilities emerge.
- Others remain quietly in the Loft.

And perhaps that is enough.

We may accept who we are while remaining open to who we may become.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Imagine the Loft within your Inner House.

There is no need to climb into it.

Simply remember that it belongs.

There may be possibilities within you that have not yet found their expression.

Do not ask immediately what they are supposed to become.

Instead, consider quietly:

What within me may not yet have been lived?

Perhaps nothing comes.

Let that be enough.

Perhaps a forgotten curiosity appears.

A tenderness.

A wish.

A gift.

A way of living you have glimpsed but never explored.

There is no need to hatch it.

No need to give it a name.

No need to turn possibility into purpose.

Let possibility remain possibility for a while.

Life may have more to say.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Not everything within you has already been lived.

Leave room for possibility.

Give becoming warmth rather than pressure.

And allow what is ripening the time it needs.

The Loft does not promise tomorrow.
It simply leaves room for what may yet become.

Chapter 19 - The House That Was Never Meant to Be Perfect



The rooms distinguish. The Air connects. Life moves through the whole House.

"The House does not need to become perfect before its Gifts can be received."

The Whole House

We have travelled through the rooms of the Inner House.

Not because the House is a puzzle to be solved.

Nor because every room must be understood.

Each room has offered us another way of recognising what happens within us.

- The Porch meets the world.
- The Front Door receives what arrives.
- The Living Room gives Presence a Seat and the Inner Flame a Lamp.
- The Dining Room welcomes our Visitors.
- The Windows allow us to look towards the Garden.
- The Pictures hold our interpretations.
- The Study invites inquiry.
- The Bedroom offers rest.
- The Kitchen helps us make sense of experience.
- The Bathroom offers a place for release.
- The Cellar reminds us of what remains hidden.
- And the Loft holds possibilities yet to unfold.

Each room has its own character.

Yet no room lives alone.

The Air That Connects

Air moves through the House.

Through an open Window.

- Along a hallway.
- Around the Rocking Chair.
- Past the Pictures.
- Across the Dining Room table.
- Into rooms where something is resting, questioning, processing, releasing or becoming.

The Air does not belong to any one room.
It connects them.

In our Living Landscape, Air represents Life.

And Life moves through the whole House.

- A Picture may influence how we look through a Window.
- Something hidden may become activated during a conversation.
- A question may remain on the desk while we sleep.
- An old impression may influence what the Cook prepares.
- And something may loosen while we are walking through My Garden.

The rooms help us recognise these different movements within ourselves.

But they were never separate compartments.

The House is living architecture.

The rooms distinguish.
The Air connects.

Life moves through the whole House.

More Than the Inner House

And yet, there is something important to remember.

- The Pilgrim is not the House.
- The Inner House is part of the Pilgrim's living experience.
- Beyond its rooms lies My Garden, where life is lived, relationships unfold and experiences take shape.
- And beyond My Garden is the wider Garden, which we share with other Pilgrims.

My Inner House and My Garden continually influence one another.

What happens within may shape how I live.

And what happens in My Garden may change what I experience within.

Yet neither, on its own, defines Me.

The Pilgrim is more than the House.
And life is more than what happens within it.

Perhaps this is why the House was never intended to become perfect.

It was never meant to contain the whole of life.

It was meant to be lived in.

And as our journey through its rooms draws to a close, a different understanding begins to emerge.

We do not need to finish the House before we can continue living.

Section 2 - The House Is Not a Project

Having travelled through its rooms, we might be tempted to imagine that healing means putting the Inner House in order.

- Cleaning every Window.
- Understanding every Picture.
- Answering every question in the Study.
- Processing every experience in the Kitchen.
- Releasing every hurt.
- Exploring everything hidden in the Cellar.
- And bringing every possibility in the Loft into being.

As though, one day, we might stand at the Front Door, look around and declare:

At last, everything is in its place.

But this was never the purpose of the House.

The Inner House is not a project to be completed.

- Some Windows will become clouded again.
- Some Pictures will remain difficult to look at.
- Questions will return to the Study.
- Visitors may stay longer than expected.
- The Cook may revisit familiar ingredients.
- Something hidden may become activated.
- The Lamp will gather dust.
- The Rocking Chair will continue to rock.
- And the weather within the House will change.

None of this means healing has failed.

It means the House is lived in.

Healing Without Perfection

Healing does not require us to understand everything that has happened.

Nor must every wound disappear.

Sometimes healing means learning to live differently with what remains.

- A memory may still hurt without governing our lives.
- A Visitor may remain at the Dining Room table without demanding our attention every moment.
- An unanswered question may remain in the Study without demanding an immediate answer.
- And sometimes, despite our efforts, nothing seems to change for a long while.

That too belongs to the pilgrimage.

Healing is not measured by how perfectly we arrange the House.

- It may reveal itself in quieter ways.
- In how we meet a familiar Visitor.
- In how we respond when an old Picture catches our attention.
- In our willingness to rest when the Body is tired.
- In our ability to recognise when something needs care rather than another explanation.

Or simply in discovering that an uncomfortable experience can remain without becoming the centre of our lives.

Healing does not promise that the weather will always be pleasant.

Nor does it ask us to welcome every storm.

It invites us to recognise that we may learn to live within a House whose weather continues to change.
The House may remain imperfect, even as our relationship with it begins to heal.

Living Rather Than Completing

There is a subtle difference between caring for the Inner House and trying to perfect it.

- We may open a Window when the air feels heavy.
- We may question a Picture that no longer reflects what we understand.
- We may invite a Visitor to the Dining Room rather than allowing it to govern the House.
- We may visit the Kitchen when something needs processing.

Or leave a question resting in the Study until another day.
These are movements of care.
They do not need to become an endless programme of improvement.
For there is a danger in treating the Inner House as a project.
We may become so occupied with repairing ourselves that we forget to live.

- Always searching for another difficulty.
- Another hidden wound.
- Another explanation.
- Another room that needs attention.

As though life must wait until the work is finished.
But life does not wait outside the Front Door.
It is already moving through the House.

- Through the ordinary moments.
- Through the relationships we nurture.
- Through the things we enjoy.
- Through the questions we cannot yet answer.
- And through the experiences that may never need an explanation.

We do not care for the House so that one day we may begin living.
Caring for the House is already part of living.

An Imperfect House Can Still Flourish

And perhaps this is the most important recognition.
An imperfect Inner House is not an empty House.
Even while something remains unresolved, there may be moments of warmth, appreciation, understanding and connection.

- A difficult Visitor may be present while laughter is heard in another room.
- An old Picture may remain on the wall while a new understanding begins to unfold in the Study.
- The weather may be unsettled, yet the Inner Flame continues to offer its quiet warmth.

Suffering and the possibility of flourishing are not always mutually exclusive.
We need not deny what hurts in order to recognise what is beautiful.
Nor must we wait until every room is settled before allowing life to nourish us.
Healing may create more room for flourishing.
But flourishing need not wait until healing is complete.
The House does not need to become perfect.
It needs to remain a place where life can be lived.

Section 3 - The Mind Will Still Be Away

Much of ordinary life happens without our full attention.

- We dress.
- We prepare food.
- We walk familiar paths.
- We travel familiar roads.
- We carry out tasks we have performed countless times before.

Sometimes we are so absorbed in what we are doing that we scarcely notice the passing hours.

At other times, the Body continues with a familiar activity while the Mind wanders elsewhere.

- We may be washing dishes while thinking about tomorrow.
- Walking through My Garden while remembering yesterday.
- Or preparing a meal while an unfinished conversation continues within us.

This is part of ordinary living.

Autopilot is not the enemy.

It allows us to move through familiar activities without having to consciously attend to every movement.

Imagine having to relearn how to hold a spoon each morning.

Or carefully consider every step before walking across a room.

Life would become exhausting.

Autopilot has its place.

But there is an important distinction.

Autopilot allows us to continue doing.

Awareness allows us to recognise what we are doing.

And sometimes, that recognition changes our experience.

When Awareness Notices

Imagine a Pilgrim walking along a familiar path.

- The feet know where to go.
- The Body moves comfortably.

Meanwhile, the Mind is elsewhere.

- Perhaps revisiting a conversation.
- Planning tomorrow.
- Or following a thought that leads to another thought.

Then, quite unexpectedly, something catches the Pilgrim's attention.

- A bird singing.
- The warmth of sunlight.
- The scent of flowers.
- Or simply the sound of footsteps.

For a moment, the Pilgrim notices.

My Mind was elsewhere.

Nothing has necessarily gone wrong.

There is no failure to correct.

No need to criticise the wandering Mind.

Awareness has simply noticed.

And in that noticing, something becomes possible.

The Pilgrim may arrive.

- Perhaps the sound of the bird becomes clearer.
- The warmth of the sunlight is felt.
- The path, which moments earlier was little more than a familiar route, becomes part of a living experience.

The Pilgrim has not travelled anywhere new.

The surroundings may be exactly the same.

What has changed is the Pilgrim's relationship with the present moment.

Presence Was Never Absent

Here we must remember something important about the Living Room.

The Rocking Chair remains the Seat of Presence.

It is not occupied by Autopilot.

Nor does Awareness sit upon it.

- Autopilot is a way familiar activities may continue.
- Awareness is our capacity to notice what is happening.
- And Presence is our capacity to be here with what is happening.

These are related, but they are not the same.

When the Mind wanders, the possibility of Presence has not disappeared.

- The Rocking Chair remains.
- The Pilgrim may simply not be consciously attending to the life unfolding.
- And when Awareness notices, there may be an invitation to arrive.

Not because the Pilgrim has failed.

Not because something has been lost.

But because another way of experiencing the moment has become available.

Presence remains available.
Awareness may notice.
The Pilgrim may arrive.

The Freedom to Be Away

There is something liberating about recognising that we do not need to remain continuously attentive.

- We may enjoy a familiar activity without examining every movement.
- We may become absorbed in a conversation.
- We may allow the Mind to wander while resting.
- We may lose ourselves in music, a story or a beautiful view.

And sometimes we may simply move through an ordinary day without thinking very much about our inner experience.

Healing does not require continuous Awareness.

Nor should Presence become another achievement to maintain.

Imagine a Pilgrim constantly asking:

- *Am I present?*
- *Am I aware?*
- *Has my Mind wandered?*
- *Should I return to the Rocking Chair?*

The effort to remain present could itself become another source of pressure.

And pressure may invite the very hijack we have been learning to recognise.

The Pilgrim would be so occupied with checking whether life was being experienced correctly that the experience itself might pass unnoticed.

But the Inner House was never meant to become a place of constant supervision.

Awareness is an invitation, not an obligation.

There may be moments when noticing is important.

- When a Visitor begins to govern our behaviour.
- When an old Picture shapes how we see another person.
- When the Mind becomes caught in a familiar pattern.
- Or when something beautiful is unfolding and we wish to experience it more fully.

At other times, nothing requires our attention.

And that too is living.

The Gentle Art of Arriving

Perhaps the Mind has wandered for several minutes.

Perhaps for much of the afternoon.

Then something brings our attention to the present.

- We notice.
- We arrive.
- And for a while, we are here.

Soon the Mind may wander again.

- There is no need to begin the pilgrimage all over.
- No need to count how often we have been away.
- No need to measure how long we remained.

The movement can be wonderfully simple.

- **Away.**
- **Notice.**
- **Arrive.**
- **Here.**

And then life continues.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim returns to the activity.
- Perhaps something requires attention.
- Perhaps the moment passes without any further reflection.

The purpose is not to remain permanently seated in a particular state of consciousness.

It is to become familiar with the possibility of arriving when life invites us.

The Mind may wander.

Awareness may notice.
The Pilgrim may arrive.

And the House continues to live.

Section 4 - The Still Point Was Never a Room

There is one final distinction to make as we approach the end of our journey through the Inner House.

- We have explored its rooms.
- Sat beside its Visitors.
- Looked through its Windows.
- Questioned its Pictures.
- Rested in its Bedroom.
- And discovered that something hidden in the Cellar may influence what happens elsewhere.

Along the way, we have also explored the Subtle Path to Freedom.

Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point.

It would be easy to imagine that the Still Point is the final destination.

Perhaps another room.

- A hidden chamber beyond the Loft.
- A place we may enter once every difficulty has been resolved.

But the Still Point was never another room.

There is no final Door to open.

- No hidden chamber at the centre of the House.
- No place where the Pilgrim must arrive to prove that healing has been completed.

The Still Point is not the destination of a perfect House.

It is a possibility within the life of an imperfect one.

Stillness Within Movement

We may imagine that Stillness requires everything within us to settle.

- No troubling thoughts.
- No difficult Visitors.
- No unanswered questions.
- No disturbance in the House.

Perhaps we imagine a day when the Mind becomes completely quiet.

- The Emotional Self is at peace.
- The Body is comfortable.

And nothing in My Garden demands our attention.

But such a day may never come.

And even if it does, the weather will eventually change.

- Life moves.
- Visitors arrive.
- The Mind thinks.
- The Body changes.
- Relationships unfold.

And the wider Garden continues to influence our own.

Stillness does not require the absence of movement.

It is possible to experience a moment of Stillness while life continues around us.

- We may sit beside a difficult Visitor without being carried away by its demands.
- We may recognise a troubling thought without needing to follow it.
- We may acknowledge uncertainty without immediately searching for an answer.

The circumstances may remain unchanged.

Yet our relationship with them may become different.

The House may be unsettled without the Pilgrim becoming entirely governed by its weather.

This does not mean that Stillness is always accessible.

- Sometimes suffering is overwhelming.
- Sometimes the Body is in pain.
- Sometimes fear, grief or exhaustion leave little room for quiet recognition.

There is no failure in this.

The Still Point is not a standard against which we measure ourselves.

Nor is it something we must force ourselves to experience.

The Still Point Is Not an Achievement

There is a subtle danger in turning the Still Point into a goal.

We may begin to imagine that the more we practise, the closer we become.

- That each moment of Presence moves us forward.
- Each act of Awareness takes us higher.
- Each experience of Stillness brings us nearer.

Until, one day, we finally reach the Still Point and remain there.

But this would turn the Subtle Path to Freedom into another ladder of achievement.

And the Pilgrim into someone who is always trying to become something more.

Yet we have already discovered that the Inner House is not a project to be completed.

Why, then, would the Still Point become another project?

The Still Point is not a prize for having healed.

- It cannot be earned by understanding every Picture.
- Nor by keeping every Visitor quiet.
- Nor by maintaining continuous Awareness.

We may recognise it.

We may lose sight of it.

And we may recognise it again.

The Subtle Path offers a way of understanding how this possibility may unfold.

But it does not demand that every Pilgrim experience its stations in precisely the same way.

The Path is an invitation to discover, not a staircase to conquer.

Living From the Still Point

Perhaps the deepest misunderstanding would be to imagine that reaching the Still Point means withdrawing from ordinary life.

That the Pilgrim must remain inwardly still.

- Unmoved by relationships.

- Untouched by sorrow.
- Unaffected by the changing weather of My Garden.

But freedom does not require us to stop participating in life.

- We may still feel disappointment.
- Experience grief.
- Become frustrated.
- Love deeply.
- Laugh unexpectedly.
- Or find ourselves uncertain about what to do next.

The Still Point does not ask us to become indifferent.

Nor does it promise that difficult experiences will disappear.

Rather, it offers the possibility of relating to those experiences without being entirely governed by them.

- A Visitor may speak without becoming the only voice we hear.
- A Picture may influence us without defining everything we see.
- A difficult memory may arise without determining our next action.
- And an unexpected change in My Garden may invite a response rather than an immediate reaction.

The freedom of the Still Point is not freedom from living.

It is the possibility of living without being entirely governed by what arises within us.

This is what it may mean to live *from* the Still Point rather than trying to remain *in* it.

Not to withdraw into an inner sanctuary and close the Door.

But to carry a different relationship with ourselves into the life we continue to live.

The Pilgrim Who Arrives

Perhaps this is one of the gentlest discoveries of our journey.

- We do not have to reach another room.
- We do not have to become someone else.
- We do not have to finish healing.

The House may remain as it is.

- A Window may be clouded.
- A Visitor may still be sitting at the Dining Room table.
- A question may remain unanswered in the Study.
- Something hidden may still be waiting in the Cellar.
- And the weather may be unsettled.

Yet, within all this movement, there may be a moment when the Pilgrim recognises something quieter.

- Not a solution.
- Not an achievement.
- Not the end of the journey.

Simply a different way of being with what is here.

And perhaps, for that moment, nothing needs to be rearranged.

The House continues to live.

The Still Point remains a possibility.

And the Pilgrim may arrive.

Section 5 - The House Remains Open

Our journey through the rooms of the Inner House is coming to an end.

- We have stood upon the Porch.
- Crossed the Front Door.
- Sat in the Living Room.
- Welcomed Visitors to the Dining Room.
- Looked through Windows and questioned Pictures.
- Entered the Study.
- Rested in the Bedroom.
- Explored the Kitchen and Bathroom.
- And ventured into the Cellar and Loft.
- Each room has offered something.
- A way of understanding.
- A possibility for healing.

A reminder that what happens within us is not always what it first appears to be.

But perhaps the greatest discovery is not found in any particular room.

It is that we do not have to understand the whole House before we can live within it.

An Unfinished House

There will be more Visitors.

- More Pictures.
- More questions resting on the desk.
- More experiences for the Cook to process.
- There will be days when the Windows are clear.
- And others when we struggle to see beyond them.
- Sometimes the Inner Flame will be easy to recognise.
- At other times, we may need to tend its Lamp.
- An old memory may unexpectedly return.
- Something hidden in the Cellar may become activated.
- And possibilities we never imagined may begin to unfold in the Loft.

The House will continue to change.

Not because something has gone wrong.

But because the Pilgrim continues to live.

There is no finished House because there is no finished life.

We may come to understand something that once troubled us.

We may learn to live differently with an old hurt.

- A familiar Picture may lose some of its influence.
- A Visitor who once governed our behaviour may become easier to recognise.

Yet new experiences will arrive.

- New questions will emerge.
- And something we thought we understood may reveal another side of itself.

This does not mean we have returned to the beginning.

Nor does it mean that our healing has been undone.

The House changes because the Pilgrim continues to live.

Beyond the Front Door

For much of this journey, we have been looking within.

But the Pilgrim does not live entirely inside the Inner House.

- Beyond the Front Door lies My Garden.
- There are relationships to nurture.
- Conversations to enjoy.
- Choices to make.
- Responsibilities to meet.
- Places to explore.

And ordinary moments that may become some of our most treasured memories.

Beyond My Garden lies the wider Garden, where our lives meet those of other Pilgrims.

What happens there may enter through our Windows and Doors.

- It may touch our Pictures.
- Awaken memories.
- Change the weather within the House.
- Or bring something unexpected into the Living Room.

And what happens within the Inner House may influence how we live in My Garden.

- A moment of understanding may change a conversation.
- A little Stillness may allow us to respond differently.
- The warmth of the Inner Flame may find expression in an act of kindness.
- And a familiar Visitor, once recognised, may no longer determine how we treat another Pilgrim.

The Inner House and My Garden are not separate lives.

They are different dimensions of the one life we are living.

The House is where we may come to understand ourselves.

My Garden is where that understanding may find expression.

And the Pilgrim is more than either.

The Door Remains Open

Perhaps, when we first entered the Inner House, we imagined that understanding its rooms would eventually bring us to some final destination.

A moment when every Picture made sense.

- Every Visitor was familiar.
- Every question had an answer.
- Every hidden corner had been explored.
- And every Window opened onto a clear view.

But the House has taught us something different.

- **We do not need to understand everything before we can live.**
- We do not need to resolve every difficulty before we can appreciate what is here.
- We do not need to become someone else before we can experience something beautiful.
- And we do not need to finish healing before life can begin to flourish.

Perhaps this is the quiet wisdom of the Inner House.

Not that we have learned to control everything within it.

But that we may learn to live more gently with what we cannot control.

- To care without constantly repairing.
- To notice without endlessly examining.
- To rest without feeling that something has been left unfinished.

And to recognise that the House may be imperfect without being incomplete as a place to live.

- The rooms remain.
- The Air continues to move.
- The Lamp continues to offer its light.
- The Rocking Chair remains the Seat of Presence.
- Visitors will come and go.
- Windows will open and close.

And beyond the Front Door, life continues to unfold.

The Pilgrim may step into My Garden.

Perhaps to meet another Pilgrim.

- To enjoy a meal.
- To tend a plant.
- To sit beneath a tree.
- Or simply to experience an ordinary afternoon.

Nothing extraordinary needs to happen.

For the purpose of understanding the Inner House was never to keep the Pilgrim inside it.

It was to help the Pilgrim live more fully beyond its walls.

And perhaps, one day, while walking through My Garden, the Pilgrim will discover something unexpected.

- A quiet Happiness.
- A moment of Joy.
- A little Peace.
- An expression of Love.
- Or the freedom to respond differently.

Not because the House has finally become perfect.

But because life has continued to unfold within it.

The House remains open.

The Pilgrim continues.

And life unfolds.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

For a moment, simply be here.

There is no need to visit another room.

No Picture that must be examined.

No question that requires an answer.

No Visitor that must be asked to leave.

Allow your Inner House to be as it is.

Perhaps the weather is calm.

Perhaps it is unsettled.

Some rooms may feel familiar.

Others may remain less understood.

Nothing needs to be rearranged.

Nothing needs to be resolved.

And perhaps, gently, ask yourself:

Have I been trying to perfect a House that was only ever meant to be lived in?

There is no need to answer immediately.

Simply notice what the question brings.

Perhaps there is something within you that has been waiting for permission to rest.

Or something in My Garden that has been waiting for your attention.

The House will still be here.

Its rooms will remain.

Its Air will continue to move.

And you may continue living.

You do not need a perfect Inner House to live a meaningful life.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

You have visited every room.

But you were never meant to spend your life inspecting them.

- Sometimes a Window needs opening.
- Sometimes a Visitor needs listening to.
- Sometimes a Picture needs questioning.
- And sometimes, nothing needs your attention at all.

Your Inner House is not a problem to be solved.

It is part of the life you are living.

- So care for it.
- Rest within it.
- Allow it to change.

And remember that beyond its Front Door, My Garden is waiting.

Not for a perfected Pilgrim.

But for you.

The House was never meant to be perfect.

It was meant to be lived in.

And the journey continues to unfold.

Chapter 20 — The Five Gifts of the Pilgrim



Section 1 - Beyond Healing

For much of our journey through the Inner House, we have been learning the Art of Healing.

- We have welcomed Visitors.
- We have explored the rooms of our House, including those we might once have preferred to keep closed.
- We have encountered Hijack and discovered how easily it can occupy the Rocking Chair.
- We have learned to recognise the difference between reacting to life and being present to it.

And along the way, we have discovered that healing does not always mean removing what hurts.

- Sometimes it means understanding.
- Sometimes accepting.
- Sometimes releasing.
- And sometimes learning to live differently with what remains.

But a question now awaits us.

What are we healing for?

- Is it simply to suffer less?
- To become calmer?
- To recover from what has wounded us?

These are worthy reasons.

Yet imagine a Pilgrim who has worked patiently through many difficulties.

Their Inner House is quieter.

Old wounds no longer trouble them as deeply.

They are less easily carried away by their Visitors.

Something important has changed.

- But is that all we hope for?

- A House with fewer disturbances?
- A life with less suffering?

Surely there is something more.

The absence of suffering is not the same as the presence of flourishing.

A Garden may be cleared of weeds without yet becoming a flourishing Garden.

And an Inner House may become quieter without the Pilgrim having discovered the richness of living within it.

Healing matters.

But healing is not the whole purpose of living.

We do not spend our lives merely trying to repair what has been damaged.

- We also wish to live.
- To experience.
- To discover.
- To grow.
- To love.
- To participate in the unfolding of life.

The purpose of living is flourishing.

And healing is one of the ways we make that possible.

Yet flourishing does not have to wait until healing is complete.

- A Pilgrim may still carry sorrow and experience moments of Happiness.
- They may still be uncertain and discover Peace.
- They may still be healing from a difficult relationship and find Love alive within them.

Indeed, some of the very qualities that enrich our lives may also help us heal.

This brings us to something we have not yet explored.

Throughout our journey, we have spent considerable time understanding what disturbs the Inner House.

Now we turn towards what may enrich it.

- Not another room to examine.
- Not another Visitor to manage.
- Not another task the Pilgrim must accomplish.

But five Gifts that may already be waiting to be discovered.

- **Inner Happiness**
- **Inner Joy**
- **Inner Peace**
- **Inner Love**
- **Inner Freedom**

They are not rewards for completing the journey of healing.

Nor are they possessions to be acquired.

They are possibilities within the Pilgrim's own inner life.

- Each has its own character.
- Each offers something different.
- And each may deepen our experience of being alive.

We shall come to understand how these Five Inner Gifts differ from the Outer Happiness, Outer Joy, Outer Peace, Outer Love and Outer Freedom we experience in My Garden.

We shall also discover how Healing, Ripening and Nourishing may help them become more deeply rooted in our lives.

For perhaps the Inner House was never meant simply to be a place where we recover from life's difficulties.

It was also meant to be a place where life could flourish.

But before we become acquainted with the Five Gifts, there is something worth exploring.

Something that may help prepare the ground in which they can flourish.

Section 2 - The Ground of Contentment

There are times when the Pilgrim looks towards tomorrow with anticipation.

- A new home.
- A journey yet to be taken.
- A relationship to nurture.
- A dream waiting to unfold.

There is nothing wrong with wanting more from life.

Our Garden is a place of growth, discovery and possibility.

Yet sometimes, without realising it, we begin to postpone our enjoyment of living.

- *I will be happy when I have achieved this.*
- *I will feel at peace when that difficulty is resolved.*
- *I will enjoy life when circumstances improve.*

And so, tomorrow quietly becomes the place where we expect life to begin.

- But what of today?
- What of the life already unfolding around us?

Appreciating What Is

Contentment invites the Pilgrim to recognise what is already present.

- Not because everything is perfect.
- Not because every need has been met.
- And certainly not because there is nothing left to discover.

But because life does not have to be complete before it can be appreciated.

- A Pilgrim may be content with a modest home while hoping one day to live somewhere larger.
- They may appreciate their work while exploring new opportunities.
- They may enjoy the companionship they have while remaining open to new relationships.

Contentment allows us to appreciate what we have without abandoning what we hope to become.

It does not ask us to stop growing.

Nor does it ask us to accept circumstances that are harmful or unjust.

Sometimes contentment may even give us the steadiness to recognise what needs to change.

For there is a difference between appreciating the present and surrendering our future.

The Garden and the Ground

Consider a Gardener who has planted a young tree.

Each morning, the Gardener visits it.

- There are no flowers yet.
- No fruit.
- Only a few leaves reaching towards the sunlight.

The Gardener could look at the tree and see only what is missing.

Or they could appreciate the life already growing before them.

- They may still water it.
- Nourish the soil.
- Protect it from harsh weather.
- And look forward to the day when its branches spread and its fruit ripens.

Their contentment does not diminish their care.

It enriches it.

Perhaps something similar happens within the Pilgrim.

When we are constantly measuring life against what is missing, we may overlook what is already available to us.

But when we begin to appreciate what is present, something within us may become more receptive.

Not because we have stopped wanting.

But because wanting no longer occupies the whole of our attention.

Contentment may prepare the ground in which the Five Gifts can be more readily experienced.

It is not a sixth Gift.

Nor does it create the Gifts.

It simply offers a way of meeting life that may allow us to recognise what was previously overlooked.

And just as a Gardener cannot command a tree to bear fruit, the Pilgrim cannot demand that the Five Gifts appear.

We can, however, become more attentive to the conditions in which they may flourish.

Perhaps this is where our exploration should begin.

Not with something we must acquire.

But with something we may already have.

The life that is here, even as the journey continues to unfold.

Section 3 - The First Gift — Inner Happiness

The Gift of Presence

There are moments when happiness seems easy to understand.

- A Pilgrim receives good news.
- A long-awaited journey begins.
- A friend arrives unexpectedly.
- Or perhaps a delicious piece of chocolate brings a little pleasure to an ordinary afternoon.

Something happens in My Garden, and the Pilgrim feels happy.

This is **Outer Happiness**.

It is genuine, and it deserves to be enjoyed.

But there is another kind of Happiness.

One that does not require an achievement, a possession or a fortunate event.

Inner Happiness.

Imagine a Pilgrim sitting beside an open window.

The morning is unremarkable.

- There is no special occasion.
- Outside, the world continues with its familiar sounds.
- A bird calls.
- A breeze moves through the trees.

Somewhere, someone is beginning their day.

The Pilgrim is simply sitting.

- Not waiting for something.
- Not wishing the moment were different.
- Not measuring today against yesterday or tomorrow.

They are here.

And in that simple experience of being here, something beautiful may arise.

Inner Happiness.

Nothing has been added to their life.

Yet their experience of being alive has become richer.

Presence Opens the Door

Throughout our journey in the Inner House, we have returned many times to the Rocking Chair.

The Seat of Presence.

We have discovered how easily our attention can become occupied by memories, worries, expectations and the demands of our Visitors.

Sometimes we become so absorbed in what has happened or what might happen that we scarcely notice the life unfolding before us.

Presence offers another possibility.

It allows the Pilgrim to return to the experience of being here.

- To notice.
- To appreciate.
- To participate in the present moment rather than continually living somewhere else in thought.

And sometimes, when the Pilgrim is present, Inner Happiness becomes available.

Inner Happiness is the Gift of Presence.

- Not because Presence manufactures Happiness.
- Nor because every moment of Presence must feel happy.

A Pilgrim may be fully present to sadness, disappointment or grief.

Presence does not ask us to exchange those experiences for pleasant ones.

It simply allows us to meet life more fully.

And within that openness, Inner Happiness may sometimes be discovered.

Perhaps this is one of its most beautiful qualities.

We do not always need a reason to experience Inner Happiness.

Sometimes being alive is enough.

When Inner and Outer Happiness Meet

Now imagine that same Pilgrim enjoying a piece of chocolate.

- The chocolate is delicious.
- Its flavour brings pleasure.
- The Pilgrim smiles.

This is Outer Happiness, arising through an experience in My Garden.

But suppose the Pilgrim was already experiencing Inner Happiness.

The chocolate does not replace it.

Nor does Inner Happiness prevent the Pilgrim from enjoying the chocolate.

Both experiences may be present together.

The Inner Happiness and Outer Happiness meet in a moment of Wholeness.

There is no need to choose between them.

- The pleasure of the chocolate belongs to the life the Pilgrim is living.
- Inner Happiness belongs to the richness of the life experienced within.

And for a moment, the two come together.

This is not necessarily a grand or extraordinary experience.

Wholeness may reveal itself in the simplest moments.

- A warm drink on a cold morning.
- A familiar voice.
- A walk beneath the trees.
- The pleasure of arriving home.

The Pilgrim enjoys what the Garden offers while remaining connected with the richness of their Inner House.

And perhaps this reveals something important.

Inner Happiness does not ask us to withdraw from the pleasures of life.
It allows us to enjoy them without depending entirely upon them for our Happiness.

When Happiness Is Not Present

There will be days when Inner Happiness feels distant.

- The Pilgrim may be tired.
- Troubled.
- Grieving.
- Or simply unable to appreciate the moment.

This does not mean they have failed to be present.

Nor does it mean that something is wrong with their Inner House.

Sometimes the most meaningful expression of Presence is simply remaining with what is difficult.

We need not demand Inner Happiness from ourselves.

A Gift cannot be enjoyed through obligation.

And there is no reason to turn the Five Gifts into five more expectations the Pilgrim must satisfy.

- Perhaps today brings Inner Happiness.
- Perhaps it brings sadness that needs our attention.

Both belong to the experience of living.

Presence allows us to meet the moment as it is, rather than insisting that it provide Happiness.

And perhaps, in time, this very willingness to meet life without constantly demanding something from it may make Inner Happiness more readily accessible.

The Happiness of Being Alive

Outer Happiness may arrive through the many experiences of My Garden.

Some are extraordinary.

Others delight us for only a moment.

We need not diminish any of them.

But Inner Happiness offers something different.

It is the possibility of experiencing Happiness without waiting for life to become more favourable.

Without needing every difficulty to disappear.

Without requiring tomorrow to justify today.

It is not constant.

It is not guaranteed.

And it cannot be commanded.

Yet it may become more familiar as the Pilgrim learns to return to Presence.

For sometimes, beneath all our plans, worries and expectations, there is a simple experience we have almost forgotten to appreciate.

We are here.

We are alive.

And life is unfolding.

Inner Happiness is the Gift of Presence.

And sometimes, the Gift is simply discovering that this moment, just as it is, is worth being here for.

Section 4 - The Second Gift — Inner Joy

The Gift of Awareness

There are moments when Joy seems to arrive unexpectedly.

- A child bursts into laughter.
- An old friend appears at the door.
- Music begins, and someone who had been sitting quietly gets up to dance.

The Pilgrim feels a sudden delight.

This is **Outer Joy**.

It arises through something experienced in My Garden.

But what of **Inner Joy**?

- Is it simply a quieter version of Outer Joy?
- Or is there something different about its nature?

Perhaps we can begin by considering a familiar experience.

A Pilgrim takes a walk along a path they have travelled many times before.

- The trees are familiar.
- The houses have not changed.
- Even the sounds of the neighbourhood seem much the same.

Usually, the Pilgrim walks while thinking about something else.

- A conversation from yesterday.
- A task awaiting attention.
- A problem that has yet to be resolved.
- The journey passes almost unnoticed.

But today, something is different.

- The Pilgrim notices the sunlight moving through the leaves.
- The extraordinary patterns on the bark of an ordinary tree.
- A bird gathering twigs for its nest.

Nothing remarkable has happened.

Yet the familiar world seems unexpectedly rich.

The Pilgrim feels a quiet delight in what they are discovering.

Inner Joy.

When Awareness Awakens

We have already encountered Awareness during our exploration of the Inner House.

Awareness allows us to notice what is happening within us and around us.

It helps us recognise our Visitors, observe our reactions and discover possibilities that might otherwise remain unseen.

But Awareness does more than help us recognise difficulties.

- It can also reveal beauty.
- Wonder.
- Humour.

The extraordinary within the ordinary.

Consider a child watching an ant carry a crumb across the ground.

- The child follows its movements with fascination.
- Where is it going?
- How can something so small carry something so large?
- Will it find its way home?

An adult may walk past without noticing.

Yet the ant has not changed.

What differs is the attention given to it.

And perhaps this is something we gradually lose as life becomes familiar.

- We become so accustomed to our surroundings that we stop discovering them.
- We recognise things without truly seeing them.
- We hear without always listening.
- We experience without always noticing.

Awareness offers the possibility of rediscovery.

Inner Joy is the Gift of Awareness.

Not because Awareness guarantees delight.

But because it allows the Pilgrim to discover richness that familiarity, habit or preoccupation may have concealed.

The Difference Between Inner Happiness and Inner Joy

- Both Gifts may be experienced during an ordinary moment.
- Both may arise without anything extraordinary happening in My Garden.

Yet they offer something different.

Inner Happiness is the Gift of Presence.

It allows the Pilgrim to appreciate the experience of being alive.

Inner Joy is the Gift of Awareness.

It may arise through the delight of discovering, recognising and receiving the richness of life.

- Presence allows the Pilgrim to be here.
- Awareness allows the Pilgrim to notice what is here.

And sometimes, what we become aware of fills us with wonder.

Imagine sitting beside a lake.

There may be Inner Happiness in simply being there.

Then a dragonfly settles upon a nearby reed.

Its delicate wings catch the sunlight.

For a moment, the Pilgrim is captivated.

Something previously unnoticed has entered their awareness.

Inner Joy may arise.

The two Gifts may accompany one another, yet each brings its own richness.

Inner Happiness allows us to appreciate being alive.

Inner Joy allows us to delight in what life reveals.

The Joy of Discovery

Sometimes the Pilgrim sets out in search of something.

At other times, they begin a journey without knowing what they are looking for.

A place, a conversation, a book or an unexpected encounter may reveal a connection they had never imagined.

- One discovery leads to another.
- What began as curiosity becomes understanding.

And understanding brings its own quiet delight.

- Sometimes this happens while travelling.
- Sometimes while reading.
- And sometimes while writing.

A thought that seemed incomplete begins to unfold.

An unexpected connection appears.

Something that was difficult to understand suddenly becomes clear.

The Pilgrim has not merely acquired more information.

Their understanding has deepened.

And with that understanding, Inner Joy may arise.

Sometimes the greatest Joy of a journey lies not in what we went to see, but in what we unexpectedly came to understand.

The Joy of Receiving

But discovery is not the only way Inner Joy may arise.

Sometimes life is already offering us something beautiful.

- A gesture of kindness.
- An unexpected welcome.
- A moment of generosity.
- The warmth of another person's company.

We may experience these things without fully recognising what we are receiving.

Our attention may be elsewhere.

We may be preoccupied with what comes next.

Or perhaps we have simply become accustomed to what others give us.

Then Awareness arrives.

- We recognise the kindness behind a gesture.
- The generosity within an invitation.
- The care expressed through something seemingly ordinary.
- And suddenly, the experience acquires another dimension.

We are no longer merely enjoying what has happened.

We are aware of receiving.

And in that recognition, Inner Joy may arise.

This is not simply gratitude, although gratitude may accompany it.
It is the delight of recognising something meaningful that life has brought into our experience.
The gift may have been present all along.
What has changed is our awareness of it.

When the Familiar Becomes Wonderful Again

There is a danger in believing that Joy requires novelty.
We may begin searching for increasingly extraordinary experiences.

- New places.
- New possessions.
- New excitement.

Yet even the extraordinary eventually becomes familiar.
The Pilgrim who once marvelled at a beautiful view may one day pass it without looking.
The view has not necessarily lost its beauty.
Perhaps the Pilgrim has simply stopped noticing.

- Awareness offers the possibility of rediscovery.
- A conversation with someone we have known for decades may reveal something unexpected.
- A familiar piece of music may touch us differently.
- A kindness we have received countless times may suddenly become visible to us.

Sometimes life has not stopped offering.
We have simply stopped noticing what we are receiving.
And when Awareness returns, Inner Joy may return with it.

When Inner and Outer Joy Meet

A Pilgrim may experience Outer Joy through a celebration, a journey or a wonderful encounter.
These experiences belong to My Garden.
But within the same experience, Awareness may reveal something deeper.

- A connection.
- An unexpected understanding.
- The recognition of generosity.
- The delight of receiving.

And Inner Joy may arise alongside Outer Joy.
For a moment, the richness of the Inner House and the richness of My Garden come together.
Another expression of Wholeness.
The Pilgrim is not merely enjoying what life offers.
They are also aware of the richness of receiving it.

The Gift That Keeps Life Open

Inner Joy does not mean that every discovery will be delightful.
Awareness may reveal sorrow, disappointment or uncomfortable truths.
Nor must the Pilgrim constantly search for something wonderful.
Inner Joy is a Gift, not an obligation.
Yet as Awareness deepens, the Pilgrim may discover that life contains more than habit had allowed them

to recognise.
There may be beauty in the familiar.
Understanding within uncertainty.
Generosity within ordinary encounters.
And unexpected richness in what we have already received.
Inner Joy is the Gift of Awareness.
For life does not always need to offer something new.
Sometimes, we need only become aware of what it is already offering.

Section 5 - The Third Gift — Inner Peace

The Gift of Stillness

There is something comforting about a peaceful place.

- A quiet garden.
- A lake reflecting the evening sky.
- A room where the day's activities have finally come to an end.

The Pilgrim sits down.
There are no immediate demands.
Nothing requires attention.
For a while, the world seems to have become quieter.
This is **Outer Peace**.
It is one of the beautiful experiences My Garden may offer.
But what happens when the quiet is disturbed?

- A telephone rings.
- An unexpected problem arises.
- Someone says something upsetting.

The peacefulness of the surroundings may disappear.
And sometimes, the peace we were experiencing disappears with it.
Yet there is another possibility.
Inner Peace.

- A Peace that does not depend entirely upon the world becoming quiet.
- A Peace that may remain accessible even when life is unsettled.

This is the third Gift.

When the House Becomes Quiet Within

Throughout our journey, we have encountered many Visitors.
Some arrive gently.
Others enter with considerable force.

- Anxiety may fill the Living Room with questions.
- Anger may demand an immediate response.
- Fear may insist that something must be done.
- And sometimes, several Visitors arrive together.

The atmosphere of the Inner House becomes restless.

- Thoughts follow thoughts.
- Feelings intensify.

The Pilgrim may find themselves pulled in several directions.

We have learned that these Visitors need not be rejected.

They have something to tell us.

But neither must they govern the entire House.

- Through Presence, we may recognise that a Visitor has arrived.
- Through Awareness, we may begin to understand what is happening.
- And sometimes, when we no longer feel compelled to follow every thought or respond to every demand, something changes.

The Visitors may still be present.

The difficulties may remain unresolved.

Yet the Pilgrim is no longer caught in the same inner struggle.

A quietness becomes possible.

Inner Peace is the Gift of Stillness.

Not the stillness of an empty House.

But the Stillness in which the Pilgrim can remain with life without being continually disturbed by the need to resist, control or escape it.

Stillness Is Not Silence

Imagine a lake on a windy afternoon.

Its surface is restless.

Small waves move across the water.

The reflections of the surrounding trees are broken.

Yet beneath the movement of the surface, the deeper water may remain comparatively undisturbed.

Something similar may happen within the Pilgrim.

The surface of our inner life may be moving.

- A difficult thought may arise.
- A painful memory may return.
- A Visitor may be expressing concern.

But the Pilgrim may still experience a deeper steadiness.

This is an important distinction.

Inner Peace does not require every Visitor to leave the Inner House.

Nor does Stillness require the Mind to stop thinking.

A Pilgrim may experience Inner Peace while considering a difficult decision.

- They may experience it while caring for someone who is unwell.
- They may even experience moments of Inner Peace while grieving.
- The sorrow has not disappeared.
- The responsibilities remain.

But something within is no longer struggling against the mere fact that these experiences are present.

Stillness allows the Pilgrim to remain with what is happening without becoming entirely consumed by it.

And within that Stillness, Inner Peace may arise.

The Difference Between Calmness and Inner Peace

We often describe someone as peaceful because they appear calm.

- They speak softly.

- They move slowly.
- They rarely seem disturbed.

But appearances do not always reveal what is happening within.

A Pilgrim may sit silently while their Inner House is filled with turmoil.

Another may be speaking firmly, acting quickly or dealing with an emergency while experiencing considerable Inner Peace.

Calmness may be visible in our behaviour.

Inner Peace concerns the quality of our experience within.

The two may accompany one another, but they are not identical.

Nor should Inner Peace be confused with passivity.

A Pilgrim experiencing Inner Peace may still need to confront injustice.

- Set a boundary.
- Protect someone.
- Or make a difficult decision.

Inner Peace does not remove the need for action.

It may change the quality from which that action arises.

Instead of acting entirely from agitation, fear or urgency, the Pilgrim may respond with greater clarity.

Inner Peace does not ask us to withdraw from life.

It may allow us to participate in life without being governed by every disturbance.

Peace in the Midst of Difficulty

Consider a Pilgrim waiting for news about someone they love.

The circumstances are uncertain.

There is nothing they can do to make the answer arrive sooner.

Their Mind may naturally imagine different possibilities.

- Fear may visit.
- Concern may remain.
- At times, the uncertainty may feel overwhelming.

Then perhaps the Pilgrim recognises something.

The future cannot be settled in this moment.

But this moment can still be lived.

- They sit quietly.
- They acknowledge their concern.
- They allow themselves to feel what is present.

There is no need to pretend that everything will be fine.

- No need to silence Fear.
- No need to manufacture reassurance.

And perhaps, for a little while, the struggle within begins to ease.

The uncertainty remains.

Yet Inner Peace becomes possible.

The circumstances have not changed.

The Pilgrim's relationship with them has.

This is one of the remarkable possibilities of Stillness.

It does not always change what life brings.

But it may change how we experience what life brings.

When Inner and Outer Peace Meet

Now imagine the Pilgrim returning to a beautiful garden after a demanding day.

- The evening is quiet.
- The air is cool.
- The trees move gently in the breeze.
- The surroundings offer Outer Peace.

And within the Pilgrim, there is also Inner Peace.

They are not merely sitting in a peaceful place.

They are experiencing Peace within themselves.

For a moment, the peacefulness of My Garden and the Stillness of the Inner House accompany one another.

Inner Peace and Outer Peace meet in a moment of Wholeness.

- The Garden offers its quietness.
- The Inner House offers its Stillness.

And the Pilgrim receives both.

Yet if the evening is interrupted, the Inner Peace need not disappear with the Outer Peace.

This is part of what makes the third Gift so valuable.

Its presence is not entirely determined by the circumstances surrounding us.

The Peace That Makes Room

There is another quality of Inner Peace worth recognising.

When our Inner House is constantly occupied by struggle, much of our attention may be consumed by what we are resisting.

We may become so preoccupied with what should not be happening that we have little room to experience what is happening.

Stillness may soften that struggle.

Not by making us indifferent.

But by allowing us to meet life without continually fighting its presence.

And when that struggle eases, there may be more room for understanding.

- For compassion.
- For patience.
- For the quiet appreciation of being alive.

Inner Peace does not replace the other Gifts.

But it may allow them to be experienced with greater ease.

Perhaps this is why Stillness has such an important place in our Inner House.

It offers the Pilgrim somewhere to rest without needing the whole world to come to rest as well.

Inner Peace is the Gift of Stillness.

The world may continue to move.

The Visitors may continue to arrive.

And life may continue to unfold in unexpected ways.

But the Pilgrim need not lose their inner steadiness with every passing disturbance.

Section 6 - The Fourth Gift — Inner Love

The Gift of the Inner Flame

Love is one of the most beautiful experiences of being alive.

We encounter it through our relationships.

- The tenderness between two people.
- The affection of a parent for a child.
- The companionship of friends.

The quiet devotion of someone caring for another.

- Sometimes Love is expressed through words.
- Sometimes through a gesture.
- And sometimes simply through remaining beside someone when life becomes difficult.

These are expressions of **Outer Love**.

They belong to the relationships and experiences of My Garden.

But there is another experience of Love.

One that does not depend entirely upon another person's presence, affection or response.

Inner Love.

To understand this Gift, perhaps we should return to something we encountered earlier in our journey.

The Inner Flame.

The Flame That Lives Within

In our Inner House, the Inner Flame has always represented something precious.

- A warmth that belongs to the Pilgrim.
- A light that may become difficult to recognise when the House is troubled, but which need not be extinguished by every disturbance.

Imagine a Pilgrim who has loved someone deeply.

For many years, they have shared their lives.

They have laughed together.

Faced difficulties.

Built memories.

And discovered the many ways Love can find expression through another person.

Then circumstances change.

- Perhaps distance separates them.
- Perhaps the relationship comes to an end.
- Perhaps death brings their shared journey to a close.

The relationship, as it once existed, can no longer continue.

But does this mean that all Love must disappear?

The Pilgrim may still experience tenderness.

- Affection.
- Warmth.
- A deep appreciation of what was shared.

And perhaps, even amid sorrow, something loving remains alive within.

Outer Love may change with the relationship.

Inner Love may continue beyond those changes.

- Not because Inner Love makes separation painless.

- Nor because it prevents grief.

But because the capacity to experience Love within the Pilgrim is not entirely dependent upon the continuation of one relationship.

Inner Love is the Gift of the Inner Flame.

It is the warmth of Love experienced within the Pilgrim, whether or not there is someone immediately present to receive it.

Love Without Possession

Sometimes, without realising it, we begin to confuse Love with what we hope to receive through a relationship.

- We wish to be appreciated.
- Understood.
- Remembered.
- Chosen.

These are natural human longings.

But difficulties may arise when Love becomes inseparable from our expectations of another person.

- *If you love me, you must behave as I wish.*
- *If you care for me, you must always agree with me.*
- *If you leave, everything I have felt must disappear.*

The Pilgrim may begin to experience Love through the demands of possession, fear or control.

And the Inner House may become troubled.

Inner Love offers another possibility.

It allows the Pilgrim to recognise that loving someone does not mean possessing them.

Nor does it mean that another person must become responsible for the warmth of our Inner Flame.

Inner Love allows us to love without making another person the sole keeper of our capacity to love.

This does not remove our need for companionship.

Nor does it make relationships less meaningful.

It may allow us to enter them with greater generosity.

For when Love is not governed entirely by the fear of losing it, there may be more room for understanding, tenderness and respect.

The Warmth We Extend to Ourselves

There is someone the Pilgrim may sometimes forget to include in their experience of Love.

Themselves.

- We may show patience towards another person's mistakes while remaining unforgiving of our own.
- We may recognise another person's suffering while dismissing our own.
- We may offer kindness freely to others yet struggle to receive it ourselves.

But the Pilgrim, too, is deserving of care.

Inner Love may be experienced through the way we meet ourselves.

- Not through admiration of everything we do.
- Not through believing we are always right.

But through a willingness to recognise our own humanity.

- Our limitations.
- Our vulnerabilities.

- Our need for rest, understanding and compassion.

A Pilgrim may acknowledge a mistake without turning that mistake into a judgement upon their entire being.

They may recognise that something needs to change without approaching themselves with hostility.

They may accept responsibility while remaining capable of kindness towards themselves.

Inner Love does not ask us to excuse everything we do.

It allows us to remain loving towards ourselves while learning to live differently.

And perhaps this matters especially during healing.

For sometimes the person we have treated most harshly is the one who has been travelling with us all along.

Love and the Difficult Visitor

Consider a Pilgrim who encounters someone behaving unkindly.

- Perhaps the other person is angry.
- Perhaps they speak harshly.
- Perhaps they attempt to impose their wishes upon the Pilgrim.

Inner Love does not require the Pilgrim to accept this behaviour.

They may need to establish a boundary.

Walk away.

Or protect themselves and others from harm.

But they need not surrender their capacity for Love in order to do so.

- They may recognise another person's humanity without approving of their actions.
- They may refuse harmful behaviour without allowing hatred to become the only possible response.

And they may choose distance without denying that Love once existed.

Inner Love can coexist with firm boundaries.

This is an important distinction.

Love does not always mean remaining.

- Sometimes Love is expressed through care.
- Sometimes through patience.
- And sometimes through the difficult recognition that a relationship cannot continue as it is.

The Inner Flame does not ask the Pilgrim to sacrifice their wellbeing to keep another person warm.

When Inner and Outer Love Meet

Imagine two Pilgrims walking together.

They have known each other for many years.

Their relationship has experienced happiness and disappointment.

There have been moments of closeness and times when understanding was difficult.

Yet they continue to care for one another.

One reaches for the other's hand.

The gesture is simple.

An expression of Outer Love.

But within each Pilgrim, there may also be Inner Love.

A warmth that does not depend upon the gesture being returned in precisely the way they expect.

A capacity for tenderness that belongs to their own inner life.

And in that moment, Inner Love and Outer Love may meet.

Another moment of Wholeness.

- The relationship gives Love an outward expression.
- The Inner Flame gives it an inward warmth.

And each may nourish the other.

This does not mean the relationship will never encounter difficulties.

Nor does it promise that the two Pilgrims will always walk together.

But while they do, their shared experience may be enriched by the Love each carries within.

The Flame That Can Be Shared

A candle may light another candle without surrendering its own flame.

Perhaps Inner Love offers something similar.

- The Pilgrim can extend kindness without losing the capacity for kindness.
- Offer affection without exhausting the possibility of affection.
- Share warmth without making another person responsible for its existence.

Of course, human beings have limits.

- We become tired.
- We need care ourselves.

And sometimes our Inner Flame may seem faint beneath grief, exhaustion or disappointment.

- Inner Love does not make us inexhaustible.
- It does not remove our need to receive Love from others.

But it reminds us that our capacity to love is not merely something another person gives us.

It is also something we may discover within ourselves.

And as that capacity deepens, Love may find expression in many directions.

- Towards those closest to us.
- Towards strangers.
- Towards the living world.
- And towards the Pilgrim whose journey we are learning to understand.

Inner Love is the Gift of the Inner Flame.

For the warmth we share with others need not depend entirely upon the warmth we receive in return.

And sometimes, even when a relationship changes, the Love within us may continue to shine.

Section 7 - The Fifth Gift — Inner Freedom

1The Gift of the Still Point

Freedom is something human beings have sought throughout history.

- The freedom to travel.
- To speak.
- To choose.
- To live without oppression.
- To pursue a life that reflects our values and aspirations.

These freedoms matter.

They shape the possibilities available to us in My Garden.

They allow us to explore, participate, create and contribute.

We may call this **Outer Freedom**.

But there is another kind of Freedom.

One that concerns what happens within the Pilgrim.

Consider someone who has the freedom to make their own decisions.

No one is preventing them from choosing.

Yet they find themselves repeatedly doing things they do not wish to do.

- They become angry and say something they later regret.
- They worry about what others think and abandon something meaningful.
- They continue following an old habit, even after recognising that it no longer serves them.

Outwardly, they may be free.

But inwardly, something seems to be directing their life without their full participation.

This raises an important question.

Can the Pilgrim be free in My Garden while remaining captive within the Inner House?

Perhaps this is where our fifth Gift begins.

Who Is Choosing?

We have spent much of our journey becoming acquainted with the Inner House.

- We have met its Visitors.
- Explored its Rooms.
- Looked through its Windows.
- Discovered the Pictures through which we interpret our experiences.
- And learned how easily the Rocking Chair may become occupied by Hijack.

Sometimes the Pilgrim reacts before recognising what has happened.

- Anger speaks.
- Fear decides.
- An old belief determines what seems possible.
- A familiar pattern repeats itself.

Only afterwards does the Pilgrim wonder:

- *Why did I do that?*
- *Was that really what I wanted?*
- *Could I have responded differently?*

These questions reveal something important.

Not everything we think, feel or do arises from a deliberate choice.

Much of life unfolds through habit.

Some habits serve us beautifully.

They allow us to move through familiar activities without continually deciding how to perform them.

But other patterns may restrict us.

A Pilgrim may become so accustomed to a particular response that they no longer recognise it as one possibility among others.

And when only one response seems available, our experience of Inner Freedom becomes limited.

Inner Freedom begins to become possible when the Pilgrim recognises that an impulse need not become an instruction.

The Still Point

We have already encountered Presence, Awareness, Stillness and the Inner Flame.

Each has offered something to the Pilgrim.

- Presence allows us to be here.
- Awareness allows us to recognise what is happening.
- Stillness may allow us to remain without being consumed by every disturbance.
- The Inner Flame offers the warmth of Inner Love.

But what of the Still Point?

Perhaps the Still Point is where the Pilgrim discovers something particularly precious.

The possibility of choosing without being entirely governed by what is happening within.

Imagine a Pilgrim who receives an unkind remark.

- Anger arrives immediately.
- The Body becomes tense.
- The Mind prepares a reply.
- An old Picture appears:

  I must defend myself.

The Pilgrim feels the familiar urge to retaliate.

But this time, something different happens.

- Presence is there.
- Awareness recognises Anger and the old Picture.
- Stillness allows the Pilgrim to remain with the discomfort for a moment.

And within that moment, another possibility becomes visible.

- The Pilgrim may still choose to respond firmly.
- They may explain why the remark was hurtful.
- They may establish a boundary.
- Or they may decide that no reply is necessary.

What matters is not which response they choose.

It is that the response need not be dictated entirely by the first impulse.

At the Still Point, the Pilgrim may discover the freedom to respond rather than merely react.

This is not a place where thoughts and feelings disappear.

It is a point of inner orientation from which the Pilgrim may recognise them without surrendering every choice to them.

And from this possibility, Inner Freedom may arise.

Freedom Is Not the Absence of Visitors

It would be tempting to imagine a completely free Pilgrim as someone who is never troubled by Fear, Anger, Jealousy or Desire.

But such a Pilgrim would scarcely resemble a human being.

Our Visitors are part of our inner life.

- They may alert us to danger.
- Reveal our needs.
- Express our attachments.
- Or draw attention to something that matters.

Inner Freedom does not require us to silence them.

Nor does it mean that every thought or feeling must be examined before we act.

- Sometimes a familiar response is appropriate.
- Sometimes an instinct protects us.
- And sometimes we simply get on with living.

The difficulty arises when a Visitor becomes so commanding that the Pilgrim loses sight of other possibilities.

- Fear may prevent us from taking a worthwhile step.
- Anger may damage a relationship we value.
- The desire for approval may lead us to abandon our own judgement.

Inner Freedom does not guarantee that these experiences will cease.

It offers the possibility that they need not always decide for us.

And even when the Pilgrim is Hijacked, that does not mean Inner Freedom has been permanently lost.

Recognition may return.

A different response may become possible.

The journey continues.

Freedom From the Pictures We Have Inherited

Not every restriction within the Inner House announces itself as a powerful emotion.

Some are quieter.

They live in the Pictures through which we have learned to see ourselves and the world.

- *I am not capable.*
- *People like me do not do such things.*
- *I must always please others.*
- *Changing my mind means I have failed.*

Some Pictures may have been inherited from our families, communities or earlier experiences.

- Others may have developed through disappointment, fear or repeated encounters.
- Over time, they can become so familiar that we mistake them for unquestionable truths.

The Pilgrim may organise an entire life around a Picture without ever recognising its influence.

Then Awareness raises a question.

Is this the only way of seeing?

The Study becomes useful.

The Pilgrim begins to examine the Picture.

- Where did it come from?
- Does it still reflect what I understand?
- Is it helping me live?
- Or has it become a limitation I no longer need to carry?

Sometimes the Picture remains valuable.

Sometimes it needs to be adjusted.

And sometimes the Pilgrim discovers that it can be released.

There may be Inner Freedom in that discovery.

Not because every inherited belief is mistaken.

But because **the Pilgrim is no longer required to live unquestioningly within every Picture they have inherited.**

The Freedom to Remain, and the Freedom to Leave

Inner Freedom is sometimes mistaken for independence from everyone and everything.

But a Pilgrim does not become free by refusing all commitments.

- We may freely choose to care for someone.
- To remain in a demanding relationship.
- To undertake a difficult responsibility.
- To dedicate years to something meaningful.

Such commitments may limit what we can do at a particular moment.

Yet they need not diminish our Inner Freedom.

The important question is whether the Pilgrim can recognise their choices and participate in them with understanding.

Consider someone caring for an elderly parent.

- There may be exhaustion.
- Frustration.
- Sacrifices that others do not see.

The Pilgrim may sometimes wish circumstances were different.

Inner Freedom does not make those difficulties disappear.

Nor does it require the Pilgrim to feel grateful for every burden.

But it may allow them to recognise what they are choosing, what they can change and where they need support.

- They may continue caring out of Love.
- They may ask others to share the responsibility.
- They may establish boundaries.
- They may reconsider arrangements that have become unsustainable.

Inner Freedom is not simply the freedom to leave.

It is also the freedom to remain without abandoning ourselves.

And sometimes, remaining is no longer possible or wise.

Then Inner Freedom may help the Pilgrim recognise that leaving is a legitimate choice.

The Gift lies neither in staying nor in leaving.

It lies in the possibility of choosing with greater awareness rather than being governed entirely by fear, guilt or habit.

When Inner and Outer Freedom Meet

Imagine a Pilgrim who has long wished to undertake a journey.

The opportunity finally arrives.

- They have the time.
- The means.
- The practical freedom to travel.

My Garden has opened a door.

Outer Freedom.

Yet an old fear remains.

- *What if I cannot manage?*
- *What if something goes wrong?*
- *What will others think?*

The Pilgrim recognises these concerns.

They consider the risks.

Make sensible preparations.

And discover that Fear need not make the decision for them.

They choose to go.

Here, Inner Freedom and Outer Freedom may meet.

The world offers a possibility.

The Pilgrim is inwardly able to participate in choosing it.

Another moment of Wholeness.

But the reverse is also important.

A Pilgrim may experience Inner Freedom while living with genuine restrictions in My Garden.

They may retain some freedom in how they understand, respond or relate to their circumstances.

Yet this does not make oppression acceptable.

Nor does it mean that those who suffer restrictions should simply learn to feel free within them.

Inner Freedom cannot replace Outer Freedom.

Both matter.

And when they support one another, the Pilgrim may experience a richer freedom than either offers alone.

Freedom Is Not Perfection

There is a danger in turning Inner Freedom into another achievement.

The Pilgrim may begin to believe that every reaction represents failure.

- That every moment of Fear reveals insufficient Awareness.
- That a truly free person would never become Hijacked.

But this would create another kind of captivity.

The demand to be perfectly free.

We are human.

- Sometimes we respond wisely.
- Sometimes we react.
- Sometimes we recognise an old pattern only after repeating it.
- And sometimes we understand what happened much later.

Inner Freedom does not require a life without mistakes.

It may also be experienced in what follows them.

- The freedom to acknowledge what happened.
- To apologise.
- To reconsider.
- To learn.
- To begin differently.

We may not always be free from our first reaction.

But we may discover freedom in what we choose to do next.

The Still Point is not a permanent achievement.

It is a possibility to which the Pilgrim may return.

The Gift of the Still Point

Perhaps the deepest expression of Inner Freedom is not having unlimited choices.

It is recognising that we need not be entirely governed by every thought, feeling, habit or expectation that arises within us.

- We may listen without obeying.
- Feel without being consumed.
- Question without rejecting everything we have inherited.
- Love without possessing.
- Remain without surrendering ourselves.
- And leave without denying what was once meaningful.

The Pilgrim does not become free by escaping the Inner House.

Freedom becomes possible through learning to inhabit it differently.

Inner Freedom is the Gift of the Still Point.

Not a life without influences.

Not a mind without thoughts.

Not a heart without feelings.

But the possibility of living with them without surrendering the whole of our journey to them.

Section 8 - When the Five Gifts Flourish Together

The Inner Garden of the Pilgrim

We began this chapter with a question.

What are we healing for?

Throughout our journey, we have explored suffering, the Visitors who enter our Inner House, the wounds we carry and the ways healing may become possible.

But healing was never intended to be the whole of living.

- A House may be repaired without becoming a home in which life flourishes.
- A Garden may be cleared of weeds without ever being allowed to blossom.

And a Pilgrim may recover from suffering without yet discovering the richness that life can offer.

This is why we have explored the Five Gifts.

- **Inner Happiness.**
- **Inner Joy.**
- **Inner Peace.**
- **Inner Love.**
- **Inner Freedom.**

Each offers something different.

Yet perhaps their deepest significance emerges when we consider them together.

More Than Five Separate Gifts

Imagine a Pilgrim sitting quietly beside a window.

There is a gentle appreciation of being alive.

- **Inner Happiness.**

  The Pilgrim notices the beauty of the evening light and becomes aware of something previously overlooked.
- **Inner Joy.**

There is no urgency to change the moment or demand that it become something else.

- **Inner Peace.**

  A warmth of tenderness arises towards life, towards others and towards the Pilgrim themselves.

- **Inner Love.**

  And there is no need to obey every passing thought or be carried away by every passing concern.

- **Inner Freedom.**

Five Gifts.

One living experience.

Yet something more may be happening.

The Gifts are not merely standing beside one another.

They may be enriching the same experience.

- Inner Happiness brings appreciation.
- Inner Joy brings delight.
- Inner Peace brings steadiness.
- Inner Love brings warmth.
- Inner Freedom brings the possibility of choice.

Together, they may create a richness that cannot be fully understood by considering each Gift separately.

Just as a garden is more than a collection of individual flowers, the flourishing of the Inner House may be more than the presence of individual Gifts.

The fullness of the Five Gifts may be one of the deepest expressions of flourishing within the Pilgrim.

- Not because every Gift must always be present.
- Nor because the Pilgrim has finally reached perfection.

But because something within has begun to flourish as a whole.

The Gifts May Nourish One Another

We have followed the Subtle Path to Freedom:

Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point.

And through this journey, we have encountered the Five Gifts.

But these are not five steps that must be completed in a particular order.

The Pilgrim does not need to experience Inner Happiness before Inner Joy becomes possible.

Nor must Inner Peace be perfected before Inner Love can arise.

Life is rarely so orderly.

- Sometimes Inner Love may help us find Inner Peace.
- Sometimes Inner Joy may awaken a deeper appreciation of being alive, enriching Inner Happiness.
- Sometimes Inner Peace may create room for Inner Freedom.
- And sometimes Inner Freedom may allow the Pilgrim to experience Inner Love without being governed by fear or possession.

The Gifts may nourish one another.

They may appear together.

They may also arrive separately, at different moments of the journey.

- A Pilgrim experiencing grief may find little Inner Happiness, yet still experience Inner Love.
- Someone facing uncertainty may struggle to find Inner Peace, yet discover Inner Freedom in

choosing how to respond.

- Another may experience Inner Joy through an unexpected discovery while still carrying unresolved difficulties.

The absence of one Gift does not invalidate the presence of another.

And perhaps this is important.

For the Five Gifts are not a measure by which the Pilgrim should judge their life.

They are possibilities through which life may become richer.

An Inner Richness That Can Accompany Life

There is something deeper emerging from our exploration.

Perhaps the most meaningful distinction between the Five Gifts and their outward counterparts is not simply *where* we experience them.

It is how dependent they are upon circumstances.

The experiences of My Garden are naturally influenced by what happens in our lives.

- A wonderful journey may bring Outer Joy.
- A loving relationship may bring Outer Love.
- A peaceful environment may offer Outer Peace.
- And the freedom to pursue our aspirations may enrich Outer Freedom.

These experiences are valuable.

They are part of what makes life worth living.

But circumstances change.

- Journeys end.
- Relationships evolve.
- Peaceful surroundings may become unsettled.

And the possibilities available to us may expand or diminish.

The Five Gifts, by contrast, may offer a deeper stability because their presence is not entirely determined by those events.

The Five Gifts do not promise a life that never changes.

They offer the possibility of an inner richness that need not change with every circumstance.

This does not make the Gifts permanent.

Even the most experienced Pilgrim may lose touch with them.

- Suffering may become overwhelming.
- Exhaustion may diminish our capacity to experience them.
- And sometimes life may leave little room for anything beyond getting through another day.

The Five Gifts are not immune to being human.

But neither are they entirely dependent upon life unfolding as we wish.

And that possibility matters.

When the Inner House and My Garden Flourish Together

We have spent much of this chapter exploring what may flourish within the Inner House.

We may call this **Inner Flourishing**.

But the Pilgrim does not live only within the Inner House.

There is also My Garden.

- The relationships we nurture.

- The places we visit.
- The experiences we receive.
- The work we undertake.
- The opportunities we discover.
- The ways we grow and contribute.

These belong to the richness of our outward life.

We may call this **Outer Flourishing**.

Neither needs to replace the other.

A Pilgrim may possess a rich inner life while longing for greater opportunities in My Garden.

Another may enjoy many outward opportunities while experiencing considerable difficulty within.

And sometimes, something beautiful happens.

The richness of the Inner House meets the richness of My Garden.

We encountered this possibility when a Pilgrim enjoyed a piece of chocolate while already experiencing Inner Happiness.

The Inner Happiness and Outer Happiness meet in a moment of Wholeness.

The same possibility exists with the other Gifts.

- Inner Joy may accompany the delight of a journey.
- Inner Peace may accompany the quietness of a garden.
- Inner Love may enrich the affection shared between two Pilgrims.
- Inner Freedom may allow us to embrace opportunities that Outer Freedom makes possible.

In such moments, our inner and outward lives are not competing.

They are nourishing one another.

And perhaps this is where we begin to glimpse a wider possibility.

Whole-Pilgrim Flourishing.

Not simply a flourishing Inner House.

Not simply a flourishing Garden.

But the Pilgrim experiencing the richness of both, each contributing to the other.

This does not require all Five Gifts to be present.

Nor does it require a perfect outward life.

Sometimes Wholeness may be experienced in something wonderfully ordinary.

- A shared meal.
- A meaningful conversation.
- A moment of understanding.
- Or simply sitting quietly somewhere we love.

The Pilgrim is present within themselves while participating in the life unfolding around them.

For a moment, the Inner House and My Garden meet.

And life feels whole.

Healing Was Never the Destination

Perhaps we can now return to the question with which we began.

What are we healing for?

- We heal because suffering matters.
- Because wounds deserve care.

- Because the Pilgrim deserves the possibility of living without being continually governed by what has hurt them.

But we also heal because life contains possibilities beyond suffering.

- The possibility of experiencing Inner Happiness.
- The delight of Inner Joy.
- The steadiness of Inner Peace.
- The warmth of Inner Love.
- And the openness of Inner Freedom.

Healing may make room for these Gifts.

- Ripening may deepen our understanding of them.
- Nourishing may help sustain the conditions in which they can flourish.
- And flourishing may give expression to the richness they bring.

Yet these movements need not wait for one another to finish.

- Even while healing, the Pilgrim may experience a Gift.
- Even while grieving, something may ripen.
- Even amid uncertainty, life may offer nourishment.

Experiencing → Healing → Ripening → Nourishing → Flourishing.

Not a ladder to be climbed.

Not a destination to be reached once and for all.

But movements through which the Pilgrim continues becoming.

And perhaps this is why the purpose of living cannot be reduced to healing alone.

The purpose of living is flourishing.

The Gifts We Carry

One day, the Pilgrim may look back upon their journey.

- There will have been difficulties.
- Some wounds may have healed.
- Others may still require tenderness.

There will have been relationships that flourished and others that came to an end.

- Journeys undertaken.
- Opportunities missed.
- Unexpected discoveries.
- Moments of receiving.
- Moments of giving.

And through it all, the Inner House will have remained part of the journey.

- Sometimes full of Visitors.
- Sometimes troubled by Hijack.
- Sometimes quiet.
- Sometimes filled with warmth.

The Pilgrim may not have experienced all Five Gifts equally.

There may have been seasons when one Gift seemed distant.

And others when several appeared together.

But perhaps the Pilgrim will have discovered something worth carrying forward.

- That Inner Happiness need not wait for everything to be perfect.
- That Inner Joy may arise through recognising what life is offering.
- That Inner Peace may be possible even when life is unsettled.
- That Inner Love may remain alive through change.
- And that Inner Freedom may begin whenever another possibility becomes visible.

These Gifts are not possessions to be collected.

Nor achievements to be displayed.

They are possibilities of our inner life.

And as we become more familiar with them, we may discover that the Inner House was never merely a place in which to recover.

It was also a place in which to flourish.

The Pilgrim does not heal merely to become free from suffering.

The Pilgrim heals so that life may be lived more fully.

And perhaps, when we begin to recognise the Gifts already possible within us, we discover that flourishing is not something waiting only at the end of the journey.

It may already be unfolding along the way.

Pilgrim's Sahachari — When Inner and Outer Meet

- **Alignment is about the relationship between Inner and Outer.**
- **Wholeness is an experience of their coming together.**
- **Flourishing is the richness of life that may develop through their continuing nourishment of one another.**

You need not experience all Five Gifts, nor wait for life to become perfect.

Sometimes, a single moment of Wholeness reminds us of what is possible.

For flourishing is not found in the Inner House or My Garden alone, but in the life the Pilgrim lives through both.

And the journey continues to unfold.

Chapter 21 — The Living Wisdom Cycle



Section 1 - The Bowl in Alicante

Sometimes an image arrives after an understanding.
It gives visible form to something we have already begun to explore.
A few days before visiting Alicante, I had been reflecting on something very ordinary:

giving and receiving.

Both are woven through human life.

- We give.
- We receive.

And yet I had begun to notice that they did not always feel equally natural.
For much of my life, giving had come easily.
Receiving was different.
Then, on a warm June day, we travelled to Alicante for the **Hogueras of San Juan**.

We had gone simply to enjoy the day.

- To wander through the streets.
- To admire the extraordinary monuments.
- To enjoy the atmosphere of the festival and spend time together.
- I was not looking for another answer.

But the question of giving and receiving was already alive within me.

And then, among the extraordinary figures of one of the Hogueras, something caught my attention.

Bowls.

They appeared throughout the monument.

Some seemed to be receiving.
Others seemed to be offering what they held.
I recognised the movement immediately.
Only a few days earlier, I had been reflecting on **giving and receiving**.
And now, standing before me in the middle of Alicante, was an image of that very movement.

The bowl receives.
The bowl gives.

Perhaps that was why the rest of the day became so vivid.

I began noticing giving and receiving everywhere.

- A welcoming smile.
- The patience of a shopkeeper.
- Something delicious to eat.
- A hat freely offered.
- A fan in the heat.
- A refreshing drink.
- A cool place to rest.
- A comfortable journey home.

Each time something was offered, I noticed.
Each time I received, I noticed.
And sometimes I was the one giving.
The movement was everywhere.
Not because Alicante had suddenly begun to give and receive.
I had become aware of what life was already doing.

The Role of Awareness

Perhaps this was the deeper discovery of that day.

The giving and receiving had always been happening.

But something within me had changed.

Awareness had allowed me to recognise what life was already offering.

The bowls had caught my attention, but Awareness had opened my eyes to the countless ordinary exchanges unfolding around me.

And through that Awareness, something else became possible.

- Appreciation.
- Understanding.
- And sometimes, the quiet delight of Inner Joy.

I had not begun receiving more. I had begun noticing how much I was already receiving.

Looking back, there is something beautiful about the way that day unfolded.

I had arrived in Alicante carrying an inquiry.

I had not gone looking for an answer.

Yet there, among thousands of people and extraordinary works of art, stood an image of the very movement I had been exploring.

The Hoguera did not answer my inquiry.
It gave the inquiry somewhere new to unfold.

And the day itself became part of that unfolding.

The bowl had made giving and receiving visible.

But another question was beginning to emerge.

What happens between receiving and giving?

Section 2 — The Space Between

The bowl had made two movements visible.

Receive.

Give.

But human life rarely moves so simply from one to the other.

Something happens between them.

We receive an experience.

- A conversation.
- A kindness.
- A disappointment.
- A question.
- A loss.
- A moment we do not yet understand.

Some experiences pass through us quickly.

Others remain.

And not everything that remains needs to become something.

- Some things may simply be lived.
- Some may leave a trace.
- Some may change the way we see.
- And some, given time, may begin to **ripen**.

Ripening is different from receiving.

Receiving is what happens when something enters our experience.

Ripening is what may happen when what has been received is allowed to live within us for a while.

- It cannot always be hurried.
- It cannot always be explained.
- And it cannot be demanded.

We may think about what happened.

- We may question it.
- We may speak about it.
- We may look through one of the LAPPS Lenses.
- Or we may simply continue living.

Days may pass.

Sometimes years.

Then something we once received begins to look different.

Not because the past has changed.

But because our relationship with what happened has changed.

- Perhaps understanding has grown.
- Perhaps compassion has appeared where there was once only hurt.
- Perhaps a question has become clearer without receiving an answer.

- Perhaps nothing has been resolved, yet we are able to hold the experience differently.

This is why ripening is not the same as solving.

Nor is it necessarily transformation.

Not every experience becomes wisdom.

Not everything needs to.

The bowl does not demand that everything placed within it become something else.

And neither should we.

Ripening is a possibility.

- Sometimes what we receive simply remains part of our story.
- Sometimes it passes.
- Sometimes we are not yet ready to know what it may mean.

And sometimes, quietly, something changes.

- An experience becomes understanding.
- Understanding influences the way we live.
- What we have lived becomes available in a new way.

This was the movement I had not seen in Alicante.

The bowls had shown me receiving and giving.

But life was showing me that between them there may be a quieter movement.

Receive.

Ripen.

And only then, perhaps,

Give.

Section 3 — Give: From One Bowl to Another

If something ripens, what happens then?

Perhaps nothing.

There is no requirement that what has ripened must be shared.

Some understanding may simply change the way we live.

- A difficult experience may make us gentler.
- A loss may deepen the way we listen.
- A question may leave us less certain and more open.
- Something we once struggled with may help us recognise the struggle of another.

We may never speak about any of it.

And yet what has ripened is already finding expression in the way we live.

Sometimes, however, something becomes available to give.

- A word.
- A meal.
- A kindness.
- A listening ear.
- A question.
- A story.
- A book.
- A quiet presence beside someone who is suffering.

Giving does not always mean giving something we can hold.

- Sometimes what we give is the way we meet another human being.
  And often, what becomes available to give has roots in something we once received.
- Someone listened to us.
  Years later, we discover that we know how to listen.
- Someone encouraged us.
  One day, encouragement arises naturally when another person needs it.
- Someone asked us a question that remained with us.
  Much later, we may offer that question to someone else.

But what we give is rarely an exact copy of what we received.

Life has happened in between.

What was received has met our own experience.

- Our questions.
- Our understanding.
- Our uncertainty.
- Our way of seeing.

It has passed through a particular life.

And sometimes, through that living, something has ripened.

This is why two Pilgrims may receive the same thing and carry it differently.

Neither needs to be wrong.

The same seed may grow differently in different soil.

And sometimes what has ripened is never given at all.

That too belongs.

Giving is not the price we pay for receiving.

It is not a debt.

It is not proof that wisdom has ripened.

Giving is an invitation, not an obligation.

When something genuinely becomes available to give, we may simply notice:
Something I have lived may now be of use to another.

And if the moment is right,

we may offer it.

Our part may end there.

- We do not know how it will be received.
- We do not know whether it will remain.
- We do not know what, if anything, may ripen from it.

Because the other Pilgrim does not receive our offering into an empty life.

- They already carry an Inner House.
- There are Pictures on the walls.
- Questions resting in the Study.
- Windows through which the Garden is seen.
- Parts of the Inner Self that remain hidden.

Possibilities that have not yet been lived.

What we give enters **their** life.

- It meets their history.
- Their questions.
- Their season.
- Their Garden.

We cannot decide what another Pilgrim will receive from what we give.

Giving does not give us ownership over what happens next.

- Perhaps what we offer will pass quietly through their life.
- Perhaps it will remain.
- Perhaps it will be questioned.
- Perhaps, years later, it will be understood differently.
- Perhaps something entirely unexpected will ripen from it.

And perhaps one day, something that has ripened within them will become available to give.

Not as the same gift.
Not as a copy.

But as something that has now passed through another human life.

What one Pilgrim gives
may become what another Pilgrim receives.

This was the movement that the bowls in Alicante had begun to make visible.

First I had seen:

Receive.

Give.

Then I had discovered the quieter movement between them:

Ripen.

And gradually the whole movement became clear:

Receive → Ripen → Give

I began to call this **The Living Wisdom Cycle.**

Not because every experience follows it.

Not because life moves through three orderly stages.

And not because everything that ripens must eventually be given.

The cycle describes a possibility, not a demand.

What one Pilgrim gives may become what another receives.

And so the movement may continue:

Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…

Perhaps this is why I call it **Living Wisdom.**

Wisdom is not simply what we know.

Living Wisdom is what has been lived, allowed to ripen, and become available to life again.

- There may be seasons when we receive far more than we give.
- There may be seasons when something quietly ripens without our noticing.
- And there may be seasons when something becomes available to give.

Each belongs.

Receiving is not less than giving.

Ripening is not waiting to become useful.

Giving is not the completion of wisdom.

They are movements within living.

Nor do we need to turn every experience into a lesson.

- Sometimes life is simply beautiful.
- Sometimes it hurts.
- Sometimes it confuses us.
- Sometimes we laugh.
- Sometimes nothing seems to happen at all.

The Living Wisdom Cycle does not ask us to extract wisdom from everything.

It asks nothing of us.

It simply helps us recognise a movement that may already be taking place.

And here the movement begins to reach beyond the Inner House.

No Pilgrim lives entirely alone.

We meet in relationships.

- In families.
- In friendships.
- In communities.
- In ordinary encounters with people whose names we may never know.

Each Pilgrim carries an Inner House that others can never fully see.

Yet something continually passes between us.

- A word.
- A silence.
- A gesture.
- Care.
- Hurt.
- Understanding.
- Love.

What happens within the House may find expression in the Garden.

And what happens in the Garden may enter the House.

- From one bowl to another.
- From one Pilgrim to another.
- From one life to another.

We do not need to know what will pass.

What will remain.

What will ripen.

Or what may one day become available to give.

We simply continue living.

- Another conversation may arrive.
- Another question.

- Another kindness.
- Another uncertainty.
- Another ordinary day.
- Another bowl.

Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…

The cycle continues.
Not because we make it continue.

Because life does.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Think of something life has brought you.

Perhaps recently.

Perhaps many years ago.

You do not need to decide what it means.

Simply notice:

What have I received?

Perhaps it passed.

Perhaps it remains.

Perhaps something within it is still changing.

There is no need to hurry.

What may be ripening?

And perhaps something you have lived has already become available to another.

A kindness.

A way of listening.

An understanding.

A question.

A quiet presence.

What has become available to give?

There may be nothing.

That too belongs.

Not everything received must ripen.

Not everything that ripens must be given.

And what is given does not belong to us once it enters another life.

For a moment, simply notice where you are within the movement.

Receive.
Ripen.
Give.

No movement is better than another.

No movement needs to be completed.

Life continues.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Receive what has arrived.

Do not hurry what may need time.

Allow what may ripen to ripen.

And when something becomes naturally available to give,

offer it gently.

Then let it go.

You do not need to know what another Pilgrim will do with what you have given.

It has entered another life now.

Perhaps it will pass.

Perhaps it will remain.

Perhaps one day it too will ripen.

From one bowl to another.
From one Pilgrim to another.

And when life places something in your bowl again,

receive.

A Note on the Hoguera

*A Hoguera is a large artistic monument created for the annual **Hogueras de San Juan** festival in Alicante, Spain.*
These elaborate works, often made up of colourful figures and scenes, are displayed throughout the city during the festival. On the final night, the Hogueras are ceremonially burned in an event known as the Cremà.

For several days, the city becomes an open-air gallery of extraordinary temporary art.

Atmadeva's Chapter — The Sky and the Sea



"The Sea invites us into uncertainty. The Horizon opens towards possibility.
The Sky leaves room for mystery."

Section 1 — Looking and Seeing

I have often wondered why we speak so much about the beauty of the Sea and so little about the beauty of the Sky.

- People travel great distances to be beside the Sea.
- They pay a premium for hotel rooms with sea views.
- They purchase homes overlooking the coast.
- They walk along beaches, sit beside the water and watch the waves moving towards the shore.

And I understand why.

The Sea is beautiful.

I have never questioned that.

But I have often wondered about something else.

What about the Sky?

The Sky is equally beautiful.

- It is never quite the same.
- Clouds gather and disperse.
- Light changes.
- Colours unfold.
- A clear blue morning may become a grey afternoon.
- The Sun may disappear behind clouds, only to emerge again.

And sometimes, without anything particularly dramatic happening, the Sky is simply magnificent.

Yet how often do we notice?

We look upwards to admire a sunset.

- We stop when a rainbow appears.
- We notice the Sky when thunder announces a storm.

But on an ordinary day, when nothing spectacular seems to be happening, we may scarcely give it a second thought.

And this has always intrigued me.

We may travel thousands of miles to admire the Sea.

Yet the Sky has accompanied us throughout the journey.

We may pay a premium for a sea view.

Yet the Sky asks for nothing.

- It belongs to no hotel.
- No property owner.
- No country.
- No one can purchase it or claim it as their own.

Of course, not everyone has the same view of the Sky. Buildings, pollution and circumstances may limit what we can see.

But something extraordinary remains.

The Sky is a beauty we do not have to own to appreciate.

And perhaps that is why I find it so remarkable.

Not because it is more beautiful than the Sea.

But because something so extraordinary can become so ordinary to us that we stop noticing it.

The Beauty We Learn to Admire

Sometimes I share this observation with friends.

I tell them that I find the Sky just as beautiful as the Sea.

They do not always understand what I am trying to say.

Perhaps they think I am comparing the two.

Or suggesting that one deserves more admiration than the other.

- But that has never been my intention.
- Both are beautiful.
- Both are constantly changing.
- Both offer something different.

What interests me is another question.

How do we decide what is worth admiring?

- Perhaps we have always loved the Sea.
- Perhaps we have wonderful childhood memories of holidays beside it.
- Perhaps the sound of waves brings us comfort.

There is nothing wrong with any of this.

But sometimes our appreciation may also be shaped by what we repeatedly hear from others.

We grow up surrounded by ideas about what is beautiful.

- What is desirable.
- What is worth travelling to see.
- What is worth paying more for.

And gradually, some of these ideas become so familiar that we rarely question them.

They become Pictures hanging on the walls of our Inner House.

We look through them without necessarily recognising that they are there.

Perhaps this is part of ordinary human life.

- We learn from one another.
- We share preferences.
- We inherit ways of looking at the world.

But something interesting may happen when we pause.

We may begin to wonder:

- *Do I appreciate this because it genuinely speaks to me?*
- *Or because I have become accustomed to hearing that it is worth appreciating?*

There is no need to reject what others admire.

The Sea does not become less beautiful because we begin noticing the Sky.

Our appreciation simply becomes wider.

Looking Is Not Always Seeing

And this brings me to a distinction that has become increasingly important in my understanding of the Inner House.

Looking and seeing are not always the same.

We may look at something without giving it much attention.

- Our eyes receive the image.
- We recognise what is before us.
- And life continues.

But sometimes we pause.

Something catches our attention.

- We become curious.
- We begin noticing details that were always present but had escaped us.

The object has not necessarily changed.

Something in the way we are meeting it has changed.

Perhaps this is the difference between looking and seeing.

- Looking may happen almost automatically.
- Seeing invites Awareness.

And Awareness may reveal that our familiar Pictures are not the only ways of understanding what lies beyond our Windows.

We do not have to discard those Pictures.

We may simply discover that there is more to see.

This is one of the quiet invitations of Atmadeva's philosophy.

- **Arrive in Presence.**
- **See with Awareness.**
- **Remain Curious.**
- **Allow Wisdom to Unfold.**

Not as four tasks to complete.

But as an invitation to meet life without always assuming that we have already understood it.

When the Landscape Begins to Speak

As I continued looking at the Sea and Sky, something else began to unfold.

I noticed that both were constantly changing.

The Sea could be calm in the morning and restless by afternoon.

- Its surface might appear peaceful while unseen currents moved beneath it.

The Sky was equally changeable.

- Clouds appeared and disappeared.
- Colours shifted.
- Storms passed.

Sometimes the Sky seemed endless and clear.

At other times, it was filled with movement.

And I began noticing something familiar in these changing landscapes.

Our thoughts can be like clouds.

- They appear.
- They move.
- They gather.
- Sometimes they seem to fill our entire field of attention.

And our emotional experiences can resemble the Sea.

- Sometimes calm.
- Sometimes restless.
- Sometimes stirred by movements we do not immediately understand.

Yet neither comparison tells the whole story.

- The Sea is more than its waves.
- The Sky is more than its clouds.

And perhaps the Pilgrim is more than the thoughts and feelings passing through the Inner House.

I began to wonder whether the Sea and Sky might offer us more than beauty.

Perhaps they could help us recognise different ways of meeting life itself.

And somewhere between them, I noticed the Horizon.

The place where they appear to meet.

Yet never quite do.

Gradually, three different invitations began to emerge.

- **The Sea — Uncertainty.**
- **The Horizon — Possibility.**
- **The Sky — Mystery.**

I had begun simply by looking.

But now I was beginning to see.

Section 2 — The Sea — Living with Uncertainty

The Sea is never completely still.

Even when its surface appears calm, something may be moving beneath it.

- A tide turns.
- A current changes direction.
- A wave rises and disappears upon the shore.

And somewhere beyond what we can see, the Sea continues.

- We may admire its beauty.
- We may enjoy its calmness.
- We may even feel that we know it well.

Yet the Sea remains capable of surprising us.

Its calmness does not mean the absence of movement.

And perhaps this is why the Sea became, for me, such a powerful image of uncertainty.

The Current I Did Not See

When I was younger, I experienced something that has remained with me.

I was in the Sea when an unseen current began pulling me away.

- There was no dramatic storm.
- No enormous wave.
- Nothing on the surface that immediately suggested danger.

Yet the water was carrying me further from where I wanted to be.

What had appeared calm was not necessarily safe.

I had been looking at the Sea.

But I had not recognised what was happening beneath its surface.

That experience taught me something about uncertainty.

We do not always recognise uncertainty by what we can see.

Sometimes it is already moving beneath us.

And sometimes we only become aware of it when something changes.

- The shore seems further away.
- The familiar becomes unfamiliar.

What we thought we understood begins to reveal another side.

Life can be like this.

The Sea We Cannot Control

- We begin relationships without knowing how they will unfold.
- We make decisions without knowing every consequence.
- We care for people without knowing what tomorrow will bring.
- We make plans, prepare carefully and imagine how things might happen.

And then life unfolds differently.

- A journey is interrupted.
- A relationship changes.
- An illness arrives.
- An opportunity disappears.
- Or something unexpected opens a door we had never considered.

Not every uncertainty is frightening.

- Some bring excitement.
- Some bring curiosity.
- Some bring hope.
- Others bring fear, disappointment or grief.

And sometimes several of these arrive together.

Uncertainty is not always a storm.

Sometimes it is simply the recognition that we do not know what comes next.

- We may wish for certainty.
- We may seek reassurance.
- We may prepare for different possibilities.

All of these can be sensible responses.

But no amount of preparation can make the whole of life predictable.

The Sea will continue moving.

And the Pilgrim must continue living.

When the Sea Enters the House

Although the Sea belongs to the wider Landscape, our experience of uncertainty may enter the Inner House.

A difficult possibility appears.

Perhaps through something we have heard.

Something we have witnessed.

Or something we have imagined.

The Front Door receives it.

- A Visitor may arrive.
- A Picture on the Wall may influence how we interpret it.
- The Study may begin asking questions.
- The Emotional Self may respond.
- The Body may become alert.

And the weather within the House may change.

Sometimes we recognise what is happening.

Section 3 — The Horizon — Possibility Without Promise

When we stand beside the Sea and look into the distance, something extraordinary appears.

The Horizon.

It seems to mark the place where the Sea ends and the Sky begins.

A meeting of two vast landscapes.

Yet the closer we move towards it, the further it seems to retreat.

- We may sail towards the Horizon for hours.
- Days.
- Even years.
- But we never quite arrive.

The Horizon is not a destination waiting to be reached.

It is a boundary of what we can presently see.

And as we move, that boundary changes.

- What was once hidden may become visible.
- What seemed distant may come closer.

Something we could not see yesterday may appear before us today.

Perhaps this is why the Horizon became, for me, such a beautiful image of **possibility**.

What We Can See Is Not Everything

There are moments when our lives seem to narrow.

- A relationship ends.
- An opportunity disappears.
- An illness changes what we can do.
- A loss leaves us uncertain about how life will continue.

Sometimes the difficulty is not only what has happened.

It is that we can no longer imagine what might come next.

Our view becomes limited to what is immediately before us.

- The same thoughts return.
- The same questions occupy the Study.
- The same Pictures seem to fill the walls.

And the future may appear smaller than it once did.

In such moments, it can be difficult to recognise possibility.

Not because possibility has necessarily disappeared.

But because we may no longer be able to see it.

What we can presently see is not necessarily all that may become possible.

This does not mean that something wonderful is waiting just beyond our view.

Nor does it mean that every difficulty will eventually lead to something better.

Life makes no such promise.

But neither can we always know the whole story from where we are standing.

- Sometimes our understanding changes.
- Sometimes circumstances change.
- Sometimes another Pilgrim enters our Garden.
- Sometimes an unexpected conversation opens a Window.
- And sometimes we simply begin to see something differently.

The Horizon reminds us that our present view may not be the final view.

Possibility Is Not a Promise

There is an important difference between recognising possibility and expecting a particular outcome.

- We may hope that someone recovers from illness.
- That a relationship improves.
- That an opportunity returns.
- That a difficult period eventually passes.

Hope can accompany us through uncertain waters.

But hope may become painful when it turns into a demand.

- *This must happen.*
- *Things must improve.*
- *Life must unfold as I imagine.*

And when reality does not follow that expectation, disappointment may become another burden.

The Horizon offers something different.

Possibility leaves room for what may unfold without insisting upon what must unfold.

- We may still make plans.
- Work towards something meaningful.
- Seek treatment.
- Repair a relationship.
- Prepare for a journey.
- Or pursue a dream.

Remaining open to possibility does not mean abandoning effort.

It means recognising that our efforts and their outcomes are not always the same thing.

- We can influence some parts of life.
- Other parts remain beyond our control.

The Horizon does not ask us to stop travelling.

It simply does not promise what we will find.

When Hope Becomes Pressure

Sometimes a Pilgrim may become so attached to a particular possibility that it begins to occupy the Inner House.

A Picture forms.

This is how my life should be.

- The Mind begins rehearsing the desired outcome.
- The Emotional Self becomes invested in it.
- The Body may respond to the uncertainty of waiting.

And the Study may repeatedly return to the same question.

- *Will it happen?*
- *When will it happen?*
- *What if it does not happen?*

There is nothing wrong with wanting something deeply.

Our hopes, dreams and aspirations are part of being human.

But sometimes the possibility we cherish becomes something we believe we cannot live without.

The Horizon is no longer an opening.

It becomes a destination we insist upon reaching.

And the Hijacked Voice may begin to speak.

- *I must make this happen.*
- *I cannot accept another outcome.*
- *I will only be happy when I get there.*

The possibility has become a condition.

Not every strong desire is a Hijack.

Determination, commitment and perseverance can be valuable.

But when pressure begins to dominate our inner life, Awareness may invite us to examine what is happening.

Am I moving towards a possibility, or am I becoming imprisoned by an expectation?

The distinction can be subtle.

We may continue pursuing the same goal.

Yet our relationship with it may change.

- We can remain committed without demanding certainty.
- We can work towards something without making our entire sense of self depend upon achieving it.

And we can recognise that a meaningful journey does not always end where we expected.

The Possibility of Ripening

There is another way in which the Horizon speaks to me.

Sometimes what becomes possible is not an event in the world around us.

It is a change in our understanding.

An experience may remain with us for years.

- A conversation.
- A disappointment.
- An encounter.
- A question we could not answer.

At the time, we may not understand its significance.

Perhaps we do not even recognise that it has affected us.

Yet later, something may become clearer.

- We remember a few words.
- We reconsider an old Picture.
- We recognise something about ourselves that we had not previously understood.
- What was once confusing may begin to make sense.
- What seemed ordinary may reveal an unexpected depth.

Something has ripened.

But ripening cannot always be hurried.

We cannot command an experience to become wisdom.

Nor should we expect every painful experience to produce a valuable lesson.

- Some experiences remain painful.
- Some questions remain unanswered.
- Some losses change our lives in ways we would never have chosen.

We do not have to turn every wound into wisdom to justify what happened.

And yet, sometimes understanding quietly unfolds.

Not because we demanded it.

But because life continued.

We encountered new experiences.

Our perspective widened.

And something that had remained within us became visible in a different light.

Perhaps this is one of the quieter possibilities of the Horizon.

What has not yet become clear may still have room to unfold.

The Horizon Does Not Belong to the Future Alone

We often associate possibility with tomorrow.

With what may happen next week.

Next year.

Or somewhere further along our journey.

But perhaps possibility also belongs to the present.

- We may discover another way of looking at something familiar.
- We may recognise a choice we had overlooked.
- We may find a different way of responding to a difficult situation.
- Or we may simply notice something beautiful that has been beside us all along.

The Sky was always there.

Yet it became more visible when I began looking differently.

Nothing needed to change in the Sky.

Something changed in my attention.

And perhaps the Horizon can be like this too.

Not every possibility requires a new destination.

Sometimes possibility begins with a new way of seeing where we already are.

The Horizon Remains Open

The Sea continues moving.

- We cannot know every current.
- We cannot predict every storm.
- And we cannot always choose the direction in which life carries us.

But beyond what we can presently see, the Horizon remains.

- Not as a guarantee.
- Not as a reward for remaining hopeful.
- Not as a promise that everything will turn out well.

Simply as a reminder that our present view does not necessarily contain the whole of what life may reveal.

- Sometimes we will move towards what we hope for.
- Sometimes we will change direction.
- Sometimes we will wait.
- Sometimes we will discover that a possibility we once cherished no longer belongs to the life we wish to live.

And sometimes another possibility will appear without our having searched for it.

The Horizon does not tell us what must become.

It leaves room for what may become.

And perhaps that is enough.

- We do not need to know the whole journey.
- We do not need to see every destination.
- We do not even need to know whether the possibility we imagine will ever become reality.
- We may simply continue living, responding and remaining curious.

For beyond the Horizon lies something that cannot be reduced to possibility alone.

Something that does not ask us to predict, achieve or possess.

The Sky.

And with it, the invitation to make room for **mystery**.

Section 4 — The Sky — Making Room for Mystery

There is something extraordinary about the Sky.

It is always above us.

Yet it is never quite the same.

- A clear morning may become a cloudy afternoon.
- The light changes.
- Shadows move.

Clouds gather, separate and disappear.

- Sometimes the Sky is filled with colour.
- Sometimes it is grey.
- Sometimes the stars become visible.

And sometimes there is nothing particularly remarkable to see.

Or so we may think.

For even on an ordinary day, the Sky is quietly changing.

We may have looked upwards thousands of times.

Yet we have never seen precisely the same Sky twice.

And perhaps what I find most remarkable is that none of this requires our attention.

The Sky continues whether we notice it or not.

- It does not wait for us to admire it.
- It does not ask us to understand it.
- It simply remains available to be seen.

The Sky does not need our attention to exist. But our attention may change what we discover within it.

The Sky We Thought We Knew

When we are children, we may look at the Sky with curiosity.

- We wonder where it ends.
- Why clouds move.
- Why the Moon sometimes appears during the day.
- Why the stars disappear when the Sun rises.

And perhaps we ask questions that adults find difficult to answer.

- As we grow older, we learn.
- We discover how clouds form.
- Why the seasons change.
- How light travels.
- Why the Sky appears blue.
- Knowledge gives us explanations.

And explanations can be wonderful.

- They help us understand the world.
- They allow us to recognise patterns.
- They help us make decisions.

But I wonder whether something else sometimes happens as we become more knowledgeable.

We may begin mistaking familiarity for understanding.

- We recognise the Sky.
- We know what clouds are.
- We understand that the Earth rotates.

And perhaps we stop looking with the curiosity we once had.

Not because the Sky has become less extraordinary.

But because we have become accustomed to it.

We may know more about what we are seeing.

Yet notice less of it.

This is not an argument against knowledge.

Knowledge can deepen appreciation.

A scientist may look at the Sky and recognise wonders that others overlook.

But knowledge and wonder need not compete.

Understanding may explain what we see without exhausting what there is to appreciate.

When the Mind Wants an Answer

Something similar happens within the Inner House.

- A question arrives.
- The Mind becomes interested.
- The Study opens its books.
- We examine.
- Compare.
- Remember.
- Consider different possibilities.

This is part of the Mind's remarkable capacity.

- It helps us learn.
- It helps us solve problems.
- It helps us make sense of our experiences.

But not every question can be answered immediately.

And some questions may never receive a complete answer.

- Why did something happen?
- Why did someone behave as they did?
- Why did life unfold differently from what we expected?
- What might have happened if we had made another choice?

Sometimes we can investigate these questions and discover useful answers.

Sometimes we can understand only part of what happened.

And sometimes the answer remains beyond our reach.

- The Study may continue searching.
- The Processing Voice may revisit the experience.
- New connections may gradually emerge.

But at other times, the search becomes pressurised.

The Mind insists.

- *I must understand.*
- *I cannot leave this unanswered.*
- *I need to know why.*

The question is no longer simply an invitation to explore.

It has become a demand.

And perhaps the Hijacked Voice has entered the conversation.

The distinction is important.

Curiosity opens a question.

Hijack may turn the question into something that must be resolved before the Pilgrim can rest.

The Mind may seek an answer. Wisdom may recognise when an answer is not yet available.

Neither curiosity nor understanding needs to disappear.

But the Pilgrim may discover that a question can remain open without occupying the whole House.

Not Every Question Needs to Be Closed

Imagine standing beneath a clear night Sky.

- Thousands of stars are visible.
- Some are familiar.
- Others are not.

We may know something about their distance, their composition and their movement.

We may recognise constellations.

We may understand that the light reaching us has travelled across immense distances.

Yet even with all this knowledge, we may find ourselves standing quietly.

- Looking.
- Wondering.

There is nothing we need to solve in that moment.

- No problem requiring an immediate answer.
- No destination we must reach.

We are simply encountering something larger than our present understanding.

And perhaps this is one way of approaching mystery.

Mystery is not necessarily a problem waiting to be solved.

Sometimes it is an invitation to remain curious.

- To appreciate what we can see.
- To acknowledge what we do not know.
- And to allow both to exist together.

This does not mean abandoning questions.

- We may continue learning.
- Exploring.
- Investigating.
- Seeking understanding.

But we need not turn every unanswered question into a disturbance within the Inner House.

Not every unanswered question is an unfinished problem.

Some questions belong to an unfolding understanding.

Others may remain unanswered.

And some may become less important as our lives continue.

The Clouds That Pass

As I look at the changing Sky, I sometimes think about the movement of our thoughts.

- A cloud appears.
- Another follows.

- Some gather into great formations.
- Others disappear almost as soon as we notice them.

Occasionally, clouds cover the entire Sky.

And for a while, we cannot see the blue beyond them.

Our thoughts can behave in similar ways.

- One thought arrives.
- Another follows.
- A memory appears.
- A possibility develops.
- A worry gathers momentum.

And sometimes the Mind becomes so occupied that it seems there is nothing else within our experience.

Yet the Sky offers an interesting reminder.

The clouds may fill our view without becoming the whole Sky.

Similarly, our thoughts may fill our attention without becoming the whole of who we are.

A thought is something we experience.

It is not necessarily our identity.

A feeling may be powerful.

It is not necessarily the entirety of our life.

And even when our Inner House is experiencing difficult weather, the Pilgrim remains more than that particular experience.

This does not mean that difficult thoughts can always be dismissed.

Nor that emotional pain disappears when we recognise it.

- Some experiences require care.
- Some require support.
- Some take time.

But Awareness may allow us to recognise that what is moving through the House is not necessarily the whole House.

- And the House itself is not the whole Pilgrim.
- The Sky does not need to be perfectly clear to remain the Sky.

Perhaps the Pilgrim does not need a perfectly peaceful Mind to remain a Pilgrim.

The Turbulence We Cannot See

There is something else I have noticed about the Sky.

Whenever I travel by aeroplane, I am reminded that the atmosphere is not always as peaceful as it appears from the ground.

Sometimes the journey is wonderfully smooth.

The aircraft moves through the air, and we barely notice that we are travelling.

Then, quite unexpectedly, turbulence arrives.

The aircraft begins to shake.

Sometimes the turbulence lasts only a few moments.

At other times, the unsettled conditions continue for hours.

And eventually, the journey may become smooth again.

I find this fascinating.

From the ground, the Sky may have appeared calm.

Yet within the atmosphere, invisible movements were taking place.

What appears peaceful from a distance may be experiencing considerable movement within.

And perhaps our Mind can be like this.

- There are times when our thoughts move gently.
- We feel settled.
- We go about our ordinary activities without giving much attention to what is happening within us.

Then something changes.

- A memory arrives.
- A concern appears.
- An unexpected event unsettles us.

Or perhaps we cannot immediately identify what has happened.

And suddenly, the Mind becomes turbulent.

- Thoughts begin moving rapidly.
- The Emotional Self may become unsettled.
- The Body may respond.

Sometimes the turbulence passes quickly.

Sometimes it continues.

And sometimes we become so occupied by the movement that we struggle to recognise anything beyond it.

But turbulence itself is not necessarily a Hijack.

- It may simply be part of our response to life.
- What matters is how we meet it.

When an aircraft encounters turbulence, the pilots do not demand that the atmosphere become still.

They recognise the conditions and respond.

- Sometimes they adjust their course.
- Sometimes they change altitude.
- Sometimes they must continue carefully through unsettled air.
- And sometimes the safest response is to wait until conditions improve.

Perhaps the Pilgrim can learn something similar.

We cannot always prevent turbulence within the Mind.

But we may learn to recognise it.

- To notice when thoughts are gathering momentum.
- To distinguish a passing disturbance from a pattern that is beginning to take hold.
- To recognise when action is needed.

And when further struggle may only add to the disturbance.

The Pilgrim does not need to command the Mind to become still before arriving in Presence.

- Sometimes Presence arrives while the turbulence continues.
- Awareness recognises what is happening.
- And Stillness may offer a different relationship with the movement, even when the movement has not yet stopped.

The journey continues.

Not because every moment is calm.

But because turbulence is one experience within the journey, not necessarily the whole journey.

When We Stop Demanding a Clear Sky

There are days when the Sky is grey.

- We may wish for sunshine.
- We may prefer a clear blue morning.

And there is nothing wrong with having such preferences.

But the Sky does not become less worthy of our attention because clouds have arrived.

A grey Sky has its own movement.

- Its own shades.
- Its own quiet beauty.

Sometimes the clouds themselves are magnificent.

And sometimes the weather is genuinely unpleasant or dangerous.

We do not need to pretend otherwise.

The same is true of our inner experiences.

- We may prefer happiness to sadness.
- Calmness to anxiety.
- Clarity to confusion.

These preferences are understandable.

But healing does not require us to admire every difficult experience.

Nor does it require us to transform pain into something beautiful.

- Sometimes sadness is simply sadness.
- Sometimes uncertainty is exhausting.
- Sometimes the Mind remains unsettled.

And sometimes the most compassionate response is to acknowledge what is happening without demanding that it immediately become something else.

We do not have to call every cloud beautiful to recognise that the Sky is larger than the clouds.

Perhaps this is one of the gifts of a wider perspective.

- We can acknowledge the difficulty without reducing our entire existence to it.
- We can seek change without rejecting the present experience.
- And we can recognise that not everything within us needs to be resolved at once.

The Sky Does Not Belong to Anyone

There is another reason I have always been drawn to the Sky.

- We may purchase a property overlooking the Sea.
- We may pay more for a room with a beautiful view.
- We may travel great distances to admire a particular landscape.

But the Sky cannot be owned.

- No one can purchase its colours.
- No one can claim the clouds.
- No one can reserve the stars for themselves.

Of course, our circumstances influence how much of the Sky we can see.

- Some people live beneath polluted skies.
- Others are surrounded by buildings.
- And some may rarely have the opportunity to stand somewhere with an open view.

Yet the Sky itself is not a possession.

Its beauty does not depend upon our ability to purchase it.

And perhaps this reminds us of something easily overlooked.

- **Not everything valuable needs to be owned.**
- Not everything meaningful needs to be achieved.
- Not everything beautiful needs to be extraordinary.

Sometimes what enriches our lives is already present.

Waiting, not to be acquired, but to be noticed.

- A changing cloud.
- An unexpected colour.
- The first stars appearing in the evening.
- A moment of quiet appreciation.

These experiences may be brief.

They may not change our circumstances.

But they can remind us that life contains more than the things we are trying to obtain, understand or control.

Living Beneath the Sky

- The Sea may remain uncertain.
- The Horizon may offer possibilities without promises.
- And the Sky may leave room for questions we cannot fully answer.

Together, they invite the Pilgrim to develop a different relationship with life.

- We may act without knowing every outcome.
- We may hope without demanding certainty.
- We may learn without insisting that everything must eventually be understood.
- And we may appreciate what is present without needing to possess it.

Perhaps this is what the Sky has been quietly teaching me.

- Not to stop questioning.
- Not to abandon understanding.
- Not to withdraw from life.

But to recognise that understanding is only one way of meeting the world.

There is also appreciation.

- Curiosity.
- Wonder.
- And sometimes, simply being present.

The Sky does not ask the Pilgrim to know everything.

It invites the Pilgrim to remain open to what is not yet known.

And perhaps, after all these years of looking upwards, I am still discovering how much there is to see.

For when I look towards the Horizon, something remarkable appears.

The Sea and the Sky seem to meet.

Yet neither becomes the other.

And perhaps their apparent meeting has something more to teach us about the way we live.

Section 5 — Where the Sea Meets the Sky

There is a moment when we stand beside the Sea and look into the distance.

The water stretches before us.

Above it, the Sky opens.

And somewhere far away, they appear to meet.

The Horizon.

From where we stand, there seems to be a line separating the two.

Yet the line is not something we can reach.

- The closer we move towards it, the further it appears.
- The Sea continues.
- The Sky continues.
- And the Horizon moves with our perspective.

I have often found this fascinating.

Two extraordinary landscapes appear to meet, yet neither becomes the other.

The Sea remains the Sea.

The Sky remains the Sky.

And between them, the Horizon reminds us that what we see depends partly upon where we are standing.

Perhaps there is something here that can help us understand our own lives.

Entering Life and Holding It Spaciously

The Sea invites us to enter life.

- To participate.
- To experience.
- To make choices.
- To form relationships.
- To take journeys.

- To discover what lies beyond the familiar shore.

But entering life also means encountering uncertainty.

- We cannot know every current.
- We cannot predict every wave.
- We cannot always determine where our choices will lead.

And sometimes the waters become difficult.

The Sky offers another invitation.

- To look more widely.
- To recognise that what is happening immediately before us may not be the whole of our experience.
- To remain curious.
- To allow questions to remain open.
- To appreciate what we do not fully understand.

And to recognise that life may contain more than the circumstances currently occupying our attention.

The Sea invites us to enter life fully.

The Sky invites us to hold life spaciously.

Neither invitation is sufficient on its own.

If we only seek the spaciousness of the Sky, we may become distant from the life we are actually living.

We may observe without participating.

Reflect without acting.

Understand without allowing that understanding to enter our relationships and choices.

But if we only enter the movement of the Sea, we may become so occupied by events that we lose sight of the wider Landscape.

- One wave follows another.
- One responsibility leads to the next.
- One difficulty demands our attention.

And gradually, our whole experience may become defined by what is immediately happening.

Perhaps wisdom invites us to discover a relationship between the two.

- **To participate without becoming entirely consumed.**
- **To observe without withdrawing.**
- **To live fully while remembering that life is larger than any single experience.**

The House Beneath the Sky

Imagine a Pilgrim experiencing a difficult moment.

- Perhaps a disappointment.
- A disagreement.
- A loss.

Or an uncertainty that cannot yet be resolved.

- Within the Inner House, the Emotional Self responds.
- The Mind begins considering what has happened.
- The Body may become unsettled.
- The atmosphere within the House changes.

Perhaps the Hijacked Voice begins speaking.

- The Pictures on the Wall reflect the experience.

- The Study returns to it.
- The same thoughts pass repeatedly through the rooms.

And perhaps, for a while, the experience seems to occupy the whole House.

Yet the House has Windows.

- And beyond those Windows, the Landscape continues.
- There is a Garden.
- A Sea.
- A Horizon.
- And a Sky.

The difficult experience remains real.

It may require attention.

- Care.
- Action.
- Or support.

Looking beyond the Window does not make the difficulty disappear.

Nor does it mean that the Pilgrim should ignore what is happening within the House.

But the Window may remind us of something easily forgotten.

What is happening within the House is part of the Pilgrim's life. It is not necessarily the whole of the Pilgrim's life.

Sometimes this recognition arrives gently.

- A familiar voice.
- A moment of humour.
- A glimpse of sunlight.
- A cloud moving across the Sky.
- A conversation that takes an unexpected direction.

Nothing extraordinary needs to happen.

The difficulty may remain.

But something else has become visible alongside it.

And perhaps the Pilgrim begins to recognise that more than one experience can exist within the same life.

The Calm and the Turbulence

When I think about the Sea and Sky together, I am reminded of how differently they may appear.

The Sea may be calm beneath a turbulent Sky.

Or the Sky may appear clear while the Sea is restless.

- Sometimes both are unsettled.
- Sometimes both appear peaceful.
- And even when everything seems calm, unseen currents may continue moving.

I have experienced something similar when travelling by aeroplane.

- The Sky may appear clear.
- The journey may begin smoothly.
- Then suddenly, turbulence arrives.

The aircraft shakes.

- Sometimes only briefly.

- Sometimes for much longer.

And I am reminded that what appears calm from a distance may contain movement we cannot immediately see.

Our Inner House can be like this.

- The Mind may be unsettled while the Body remains relatively calm.
- The Body may carry tension even when our thoughts seem clear.
- The Emotional Self may be experiencing sadness while another part of us recognises something beautiful.

These experiences do not always move together.

Nor must they.

- We may feel grief and still appreciate a moment of warmth.
- We may experience uncertainty while remaining curious about what comes next.
- We may feel anxious and still recognise that something meaningful is happening around us.

One experience does not necessarily cancel another.

The presence of turbulence does not mean that every part of the Pilgrim must become turbulent.

And sometimes, even when the turbulence is considerable, Awareness may recognise what is happening.

- Presence may arrive.
- Stillness may become available.

Not as a command to stop the movement.

Not as an expectation that the Pilgrim should feel peaceful.

But as another way of meeting what is already present.

Stillness does not require the Sea to stop moving or the Sky to become clear.

Sometimes it is discovered while the weather remains unsettled.

When the Inner and Outer Meet

Throughout this pilgrimage, we have explored the Inner House and the wider Landscape.

We have recognised that the Pilgrim lives within both.

There is an inner life.

And there is a life unfolding through relationships, responsibilities, encounters and experiences.

Neither exists entirely apart from the other.

- What happens in the Garden may influence the atmosphere within the House.
- And what happens within the House may influence how the Pilgrim meets the Garden.

Sometimes the two come together beautifully.

Imagine sitting beside the Sea.

- The waves are gentle.
- The evening light is changing.
- Above the water, the Sky begins to fill with colour.
- You are enjoying what is happening around you.

There is Outer Happiness in the experience.

And perhaps, within the Inner House, you are also experiencing Inner Happiness.

- Neither has to produce the other.
- Neither has to replace the other.

They may simply be present together.

The Inner Happiness and Outer Happiness meet in a moment of Wholeness.

But Wholeness is not limited to beautiful evenings.

Nor does it require every part of life to feel pleasant.

A Pilgrim may be living through a difficult period while remaining connected with something meaningful.

- There may be sadness within the House and kindness within the Garden.
- There may be uncertainty in the Sea and a quiet recognition of possibility at the Horizon.
- There may be unanswered questions beneath the Sky.

Wholeness does not mean that every experience has become harmonious.

- It does not require pain to disappear.
- It does not demand that we feel grateful for suffering.

Perhaps Wholeness begins with recognising that the Pilgrim is more than any single condition.

We may be experiencing difficulty without becoming nothing but difficulty.

And sometimes, within the complexity of ordinary life, Inner Flourishing and Outer Flourishing may meet.

Not because everything has become perfect.

But because the Pilgrim is able to participate in life without losing sight of the wider Landscape.

The Horizon Between Them

The Horizon offers a particularly interesting reminder.

It appears to separate the Sea and Sky.

Yet it also brings them together within our field of vision.

- Without the Sea, we would not see this particular Horizon.
- Without the Sky, it would not appear in the same way.

And without someone looking, there would be no Horizon as we experience it from that particular position.

The Sea and Sky remain.

But the Horizon belongs to our perspective.

Perhaps possibility is sometimes like this.

What appears possible may change as our perspective changes.

- A situation that once seemed closed may reveal another opening.
- An expectation that once dominated our thoughts may gradually loosen.
- A question that once demanded an answer may become something we can live alongside.

Or perhaps nothing outside us changes.

- The same circumstances remain.
- The same uncertainty continues.

But our relationship with them becomes different.

- We begin to recognise what can be influenced.
- What cannot yet be known.
- What needs attention.
- And what may simply need room to unfold.

This does not guarantee a better outcome.

But it may allow us to meet the present circumstances with greater clarity.

Sometimes the Horizon changes because we have moved.

Sometimes what changes is the way we see.

Neither Above Nor Below

There is one final distinction I would like to make.

We often speak of looking upwards towards the Sky.

And perhaps this can make the Sky seem somehow superior to the Sea.

But that is not what I mean.

- The Sky is not wiser than the Sea.
- Mystery is not more valuable than uncertainty.
- Reflection is not more important than participation.

The Pilgrim does not need to escape the Sea in order to discover the Sky.

Nor must the Pilgrim remain forever upon the shore.

Both belong to the Living Landscape.

- The Sea has its beauty.
- The Sky has its beauty.

And the Horizon offers its own quiet invitation.

- We do not have to choose between them.
- We may admire the Sea while appreciating the Sky.
- We may enter life's uncertainty while remaining open to mystery.
- We may act with determination while recognising that not every outcome is ours to command.

And we may continue travelling without needing to know everything that lies ahead.

Perhaps this is what I have been trying to express whenever I speak to friends about the beauty of the Sky.

I am not asking anyone to admire the Sea less.

I am simply wondering whether we might discover more by learning to see what has always been there.

The Sea has not become less beautiful.

The Sky has simply become more visible.

And perhaps, when we begin seeing more widely, the whole Landscape becomes richer.

Not because it has changed.

But because we are beginning to notice more of what it contains.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

- What have I been looking at without truly seeing?
- Am I allowing uncertainty to exist without demanding every answer?
- What beauty might I discover if I simply paused and looked again?

Pilgrim's Sahachari

The Sea moves.
The Horizon opens.
The Sky remains.

And beneath it, **the Pilgrim continues.**


THE ART OF HEALING
A PILGRIMAGE INTO YOUR INNER HOUSE
PART III
THE LIVING WISDOM CYCLE
How do I live?
In a crowded place,
a simple image can
open a deeper understanding.
The Hoguera in Alicante
showed me a bowl that
receives and gives.
In between,
life happens.
From one bowl
to another.
From one Pilgrim
to another.
Life continues.
PEOPLE
EXPERIENCES
LESSONS
GIFTS
LOVE
LIFE
HOGUERAS
de SAN JUAN
ALICANTE
ARTE
CULTURA
ENCUENTRO
VIDA
Mahou
THREE MOVEMENTS — ONE LIFE
RECEIVE
Life brings something.
We recognise that it has arrived.
I OPEN
RIPEN
Some things pass.
Some remain.
And some, given time,
begin to ripen.
I UNDERSTAND
GIVE
What has ripened may
sometimes become available
to another. Giving is an invitation,
not an obligation.
I SHARE
LIFE IS A FLOW BETWEEN RECEIVING, RIPENING AND GIVING.
THE BOWL IS FULL, THE BOWL IS NEVER EMPTY, THE BOWL IS ALWAYS READY.
BE PRESENT
GROW AWARE
OPEN YOUR HEART
RETURN TO STILLNESS
LIVE FROM THE FLAME
REST IN THE STILL POINT
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES. THE HOME IS WITHIN.

Chapter 22 - The Nature of the House



Section 1 – Every House Has Its Own Nature

No two Houses are exactly alike.

Just as no two trees grow in precisely the same way, every House has its own nature.

- Some seem drawn towards movement, curiosity and change.
- Others towards purpose, clarity and transformation.
- And others towards steadiness, familiarity and belonging.

These differences are not shortcomings.

They are different expressions of life.

Yet the nature of a House is only part of its story.

Life also leaves its impressions.

- Relationships arrive and sometimes end.
- Successes encourage us.
- Disappointments may make us cautious.
- Kindness can soften something within us.
- Loss may change how we experience the world.

Over time, these encounters shape the way we live.

- A House naturally drawn towards movement may become hesitant after repeated disappointments.
- A House that values steadiness may discover unexpected courage when circumstances demand change.
- A House drawn towards transformation may learn that not everything needs improving.

Life influences how the nature of the House finds expression.

And this brings us to an important distinction.

Nature and Experience

The nature of the House is not the same as everything that has happened within it.

- A Picture on the Wall may have been placed there years ago.
- A memory may still influence how the Front Door opens.

- An experience may have changed the atmosphere of a room.

Yet none of these tells the whole story of the House.

Sometimes we mistake what life has taught us to do for who we naturally are.

We may say:

I have always been afraid of change.

But perhaps change was once welcomed, until an experience made caution necessary.

Or:

I am simply an impatient person.

Yet perhaps the House has been living under pressure for so long that impatience has become familiar.

Understanding the House means becoming curious about both its nature and its history.

Not every difficulty is part of our nature.

And not every difference needs correcting.

The Trouble with Comparison

We often look towards another Pilgrim and notice what appears easier in their life.

- Their confidence.
- Their adaptability.
- Their calmness.
- Their determination.

And quietly we wonder:

Why am I not like them?

But we are comparing the visible expressions of two Houses without knowing everything that has shaped either one.

- What nourishes one House may exhaust another.
- What comes naturally to one may require greater care in another.

Difference is not deficiency.

Perhaps healing begins when comparison gives way to curiosity.

Instead of asking:

Why am I not like someone else?

We might ask:

- **What is the nature of my House?**
- What comes naturally?
- What has life strengthened?
- What has life made more sensitive?
- And what have I been trying to change when perhaps I first needed to understand it?

These questions do not confine us to a particular identity.

They invite us to become more familiar with ourselves.

For the purpose of understanding the House is not to decide what kind of Pilgrim we must remain.

It is to discover how we might care for the life we are already living.

Healing does not begin by wishing for another House.

It begins by learning to understand the nature of our own.

Section 2 — Ayurveda: Three Expressions of Life

As I became more curious about the nature of the House, I began to recognise something.

We do not all move through life in the same way.

- Some of us welcome change.
- Others seek clarity and direction.
- And others find strength in continuity and belonging.

Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of health and wellbeing, has explored such differences for thousands of years.

It offers another way of understanding the House.

- Not to decide who we are.
- Not to place the Pilgrim inside a category.

But to recognise certain qualities that may influence how we experience life.

Ayurveda describes three fundamental principles, known as *doshas*:

- **Vata — Movement**
- **Pitta — Transformation**
- **Kapha — Stability**

All three are present in every person, although their expression differs.

In Ayurveda, the particular constitution of an individual is called *Prakriti*, while *Vikriti* describes their present state of imbalance.

These concepts offer a traditional framework for understanding individual differences and changing needs. They are not scientific personality diagnoses.

Vata — The Gift of Movement

Vata is associated with movement.

Within the House, we might recognise its qualities through curiosity, imagination and adaptability.

- New ideas arrive.
- Possibilities multiply.
- The unfamiliar becomes an invitation.
- Such movement can bring creativity and freshness into the Garden.

But movement also has its sensitivities.

When life becomes too busy, uncertain or stimulating, the House may struggle to settle.

- Thoughts move rapidly.
- Rest becomes difficult.
- The atmosphere may feel windy.
- What once brought excitement may now bring exhaustion.

At such times, Ayurveda traditionally encourages qualities that counter excessive movement:

- Warmth.
- Regularity.
- Nourishment.
- Rest.
- A familiar rhythm.

Movement is not the problem.

The question is whether the House has enough steadiness to support it.

Even a House that loves movement needs somewhere to rest.

Pitta — The Gift of Transformation

Pitta is associated with transformation.

It brings to mind the fire that allows something to change.

Within the House, its qualities may appear as clarity, determination, organisation and purpose.

- A question arrives, and the Study becomes interested.
- A difficulty appears, and the Mind begins searching for a solution.

There is a desire to understand, improve and bring things into form.

These qualities can help us learn, create and accomplish much.

Yet the same fire may sometimes become too intense.

- Patience grows thin.
- Small interruptions become irritating.
- The Fixer becomes increasingly persuasive.
- *Surely something must be done.*
- *Surely there is a better way.*
- And sometimes there is.

But not everything needs solving immediately.

When the House becomes overheated, Ayurveda traditionally favours cooling and moderating qualities.

- Space.
- Gentleness.
- Patience.
- Rest from constant striving.
- The willingness to leave something unfinished.

The fire that transforms can also overwhelm.

Sometimes wisdom lies in allowing that fire to become warmth again.

Kapha — The Gift of Stability

Kapha is associated with stability.

Within the House, we may recognise its qualities through patience, loyalty, steadiness and the desire for belonging.

- Such a House may value familiar rhythms and lasting relationships.
- It may offer comfort when life becomes unsettled.
- There is strength in remaining.
- In caring.
- In being dependable.

But stability, too, has its sensitivities.

- What is familiar may become difficult to release.
- Change may feel threatening.
- A House that once found nourishment in stillness may begin to experience heaviness.
- Sometimes the Window remains closed long after the storm has passed.

Then Ayurveda traditionally encourages movement and stimulation appropriate to the person's circumstances.

- A walk.
- Fresh air.
- A new experience.
- A different rhythm.

Perhaps simply the willingness to try something unfamiliar.

Stability is not stagnation.

Sometimes what gives the House its strength must also make room for change.

All Three Belong

Vata, Pitta and Kapha are not three separate kinds of Pilgrims.

They are three principles through which Ayurveda describes the functioning of life.

- Every House needs movement.
- Every House needs transformation.
- Every House needs stability.
    - ► Without movement, life cannot adapt.
    - ► Without transformation, life cannot develop.
    - ► Without stability, life cannot sustain itself.

Their expressions may differ, and their balance may change with age, circumstances, seasons and experience.

- A Pilgrim who naturally enjoys activity may sometimes need rest.
- One who values order may need to allow uncertainty.
- One who finds comfort in familiarity may need the courage to begin again.

There is no contradiction here.

The nature of the House and its present condition are not the same.

And perhaps this is where Ayurveda offers its most valuable invitation.

Instead of asking:

- *Which dosha am I?*
- We might ask:
- *What qualities are expressing themselves within my House?*
- *What has become excessive?*
- *What might restore harmony?*

The purpose is not to become perfectly balanced at every moment.

Nor is it to eliminate the qualities that make our House distinctive.

It is to recognise when something needs care.

For Ayurveda need not become another identity to carry.

It can become another way of understanding and caring for the House we already have.

Section 3 — When Nature Meets Life

Understanding the nature of the House helps us recognise our tendencies.

But nature alone does not explain how we respond to life.

Every House also has a history.

- Pictures on its Walls.
- Memories that remain.
- Experiences that have shaped how its Doors open.
- And an atmosphere that changes from day to day.

We never receive life in an empty House.

The Same Experience, Different Houses

Imagine something ordinary.

A close friend forgets your birthday.

For one Pilgrim, thoughts begin moving.

- *Have they forgotten me?*
- *Have I done something wrong?*
- *Is our friendship changing?*

One question leads to another.

For another Pilgrim, irritation arises.

How could they forget?

There may be an immediate desire to ask, explain or put things right.

And another may simply say:

It doesn't matter.

Yet perhaps a quiet disappointment remains, unnoticed for some time.

The event is the same.

The responses are different.

We might recognise qualities resembling movement, intensity or steadiness in these responses.

But we cannot conclude that each Pilgrim belongs to a particular Ayurvedic type.

A response is not a diagnosis of someone's nature.

Life brings the experience. The House receives it in its own way.

Nature, History and Condition

Even the same House may respond differently on another day.

- A criticism received after a restful night may be easier to consider than one received during exhaustion.
- An unexpected change may feel exciting when life is settled, but overwhelming when responsibilities have accumulated.
- A disappointment that once seemed unbearable may later be held with greater understanding.

The nature of the House matters.

But so does its history.

And so does its present condition.

In Ayurveda, the distinction between *Prakriti* and *Vikriti* reminds us that our underlying constitution and our current state are not necessarily the same.

Within our Living Landscape, we might express this simply:

- **Nature describes the House's tendencies.**
- **History tells us something of what it has lived through.**
- **Condition reveals how it is doing today.**

All three deserve attention.

When the Weather Changes

Sometimes the House becomes unsettled.

- There may be too much movement.
- Too much intensity.
- Or a heaviness that makes change difficult.

But these experiences do not necessarily mean that something is wrong with the nature of the House.

Perhaps life has simply been asking too much of it.

The House may need rest.

- A different rhythm.
- A little more support.
- Or an opportunity to move again.

And sometimes its difficulties require more than adjustments to daily life. Illness, prolonged distress or overwhelming circumstances may call for professional care and practical help.

Understanding our nature does not mean explaining every difficulty through Ayurveda.

It means allowing another perspective to inform how we care for ourselves.

Care begins by noticing what is happening, rather than assuming that something within us must be corrected.

The House We Cannot See

This understanding can also change how we meet another Pilgrim.

When someone responds differently from us, we may think:

I wouldn't react like that.

Perhaps not.

But we are not receiving the experience through their House.

- We do not know every Picture on their Walls.
- We cannot see everything they have carried.
- We may not know how tired, frightened or overwhelmed they are.

And they cannot fully see our House either.

This does not mean that every behaviour is acceptable.

Understanding another person's response does not require us to excuse harm or abandon our boundaries.

But it may help us become less hurried in our judgement.

Instead of asking:

Why are they like that?

We might wonder:

What might be happening within their House?

We may never know.

Yet the question itself creates room for compassion.

Perhaps this is one of the quieter gifts of understanding our own nature.

We become more familiar with our differences.

And, in doing so, more willing to recognise the differences of others.

Understanding our own House may teach us to approach another with greater curiosity, kindness and care.

Section 4 — Caring for the House We Have

Perhaps the purpose of understanding our nature is not simply to know ourselves better.

It is to learn how to live more wisely with the House we have.

For much of our lives, we may have compared ourselves with others.

- Pushed beyond our limits.
- Ignored our sensitivities.
- Or tried to become someone we believed we ought to be.

Sometimes we may even have mistaken healing for the need to become a different person.

But healing need not begin with changing our nature.

It may begin with understanding what our nature needs.

Care Is Not Correction

- A House naturally drawn towards movement does not need to lose its curiosity.
- A House that values transformation does not need to extinguish its fire.
- A House that finds strength in stability does not need to abandon its steadiness.

These qualities belong.

What may need attention is how they are being expressed.

- Movement may need grounding.
- Intensity may need gentleness.
- Stability may need a little movement.

This is one of the useful insights Ayurveda offers.

Care is not about eliminating our natural qualities.

It is about recognising when something has moved away from harmony.

Care is not the same as correction.

And harmony is not a perfect state we achieve once and preserve forever.

- Life changes.
- Our circumstances change.
- The needs of the House change.

Harmony is a living relationship with the House as life continues to unfold.

Learning to Listen

- Sometimes the House speaks through tiredness.
- Sometimes through restlessness.
- Sometimes through irritation, heaviness or the desire to withdraw.

These experiences do not always tell us exactly what is needed.

But they may invite us to become curious.

- *What has life been asking of my House?*
- *What might it need a little more of?*
- *What might it need a little less of?*

Perhaps the answer is practical.

- Sleep.
- Nourishment.
- Movement.
- Quiet.
- Company.
- Solitude.
- A conversation.
- A boundary.
- Or simply permission to rest.

Sometimes we may misunderstand what is needed.

- We continue when rest would have helped.
- We withdraw when gentle movement might have nourished us.
- We say yes when something within us is quietly asking for no.

But these moments need not become another reason for criticism.

We are still learning the House.

And perhaps we will continue learning it throughout the pilgrimage.

Living with Our Nature

Understanding the House does not mean that its difficulties will disappear.

- The weather will still change.
- The Garden will still bring uncertainty.
- Life will still surprise us.

There will be times when the House needs support beyond what we can provide ourselves.
And there will be times when simply recognising what is happening allows us to respond more wisely.
The purpose is not to control the House.
Nor to create a life in which nothing becomes unsettled.
It is to develop a relationship of understanding and care.

- To recognise what can change.
- To respect what needs protection.
- To nourish what is struggling.
- And to allow what is naturally present to flourish.

For healing does not require us to become another Pilgrim.
It invites us to care more wisely for the life that is ours.
This is my House.
This is its nature.
And I am learning how to care for it.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Take a few quiet moments with your House.
Not to analyse it.
Not to diagnose it.
Simply to notice its nature.

- *What comes naturally to my House?*
- *What brings it alive?*
- *What tends to overwhelm it?*
- *Where have I been comparing my House with someone else's?*
- *What might my House need from me today?*

There is nothing you need to fix.
Nothing you need to conclude.
Simply become a little more familiar with the House that is here.
This is my House.
How might I care for it wisely?

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Do not compare your House.
Do not judge your House. Simply understand it.
Then quietly live within it.

Chapter 23 - The Design of the House and Garden



Section 1 — Every Pilgrim Is Unique

No two Pilgrims are exactly alike.

We may share similar experiences, encounter the same challenges and travel through familiar landscapes.

Yet each of us carries a particular design.

Some differences are immediately visible.

Others may remain unseen.

Some influence how we think, learn, remember and understand.

Others influence how we move, communicate, sense and experience the world.

Some bring remarkable abilities.

Others bring considerable difficulties.

And many bring both.

Every Pilgrim is unique, but uniqueness does not mean that every Pilgrim has the same abilities or opportunities.

The House and Garden

Within our Living Landscape, the House represents our Inner Self.

It is where thoughts, feelings, memories and understanding find expression.

The Garden represents our Outer Self, including the Body, our physical capacities and the ways we participate in life.

Although distinct, the House and Garden continually influence one another.

- A physical disability may affect how a Pilgrim moves through the Garden.
- A learning difficulty may influence how information is understood and expressed.
- An intellectual disability may affect reasoning, learning and everyday independence.

Some Pilgrims may need occasional assistance.

Others may require substantial support throughout their lives.

These differences are real.

They should neither be dismissed nor romanticised.

Acceptance does not require us to call every difficulty a gift.

Nor does recognising a difficulty mean that we have understood the whole person.

Beyond Comparison

We often measure people through what they can do.

- How quickly they learn.
- How clearly they communicate.
- How independently they live.
- How much they achieve.

Yet ability and human worth are not the same thing.

- A Pilgrim who learns slowly is not less valuable than one who learns quickly.
- A Pilgrim who cannot walk is not less complete than one who can.
- A Pilgrim who depends upon others for everyday care is no less deserving of dignity, affection and belonging.

And exceptional ability does not make one human life more valuable than another.

Difference is not deficiency.

Every Pilgrim has a particular House and Garden.

Some will experience greater freedom in certain aspects of life.

Others will encounter limitations that require understanding, adaptation and care.

But no Pilgrim should have to demonstrate intelligence, independence or achievement to establish their worth.

Every Pilgrim is unique.

Every Pilgrim has dignity.

And no difference makes one Pilgrim less than another.

Section 2 — Seeing Beyond Ability and Disability

Sometimes we notice a difference before we notice the Pilgrim.

- A wheelchair.
- A difficulty with reading.
- An unfamiliar way of communicating.
- A person who requires assistance with everyday activities.
- Or someone whose abilities seem extraordinary.

What we notice may be real.
But it is never the whole person.

When a Difference Becomes an Identity

- A child who struggles with reading may become known simply as *the dyslexic child.*
- Someone with an intellectual disability may be understood primarily through what they cannot do.
- A person who communicates without speech may be mistaken for someone who has nothing to say.

Even exceptional ability can become an identity.

- *The clever one.*
- *The gifted one.*
- *The talented one.*

Yet behind every description is a human life that cannot be contained by it.

- There are preferences, feelings, relationships, frustrations and hopes.
- There may be humour that others have not recognised.
- Abilities that have never been given an opportunity to develop.
- And experiences that remain difficult to communicate.

A label may describe something about a Pilgrim. It cannot describe the whole Pilgrim.

This does not mean that diagnoses or descriptions are unhelpful.

They can bring understanding, appropriate treatment, practical support and access to services.

The difficulty begins when the description replaces our curiosity about the individual.

When Support Makes a Difference

Consider a child who struggles to understand a mathematical explanation.

The teacher repeats the same words.

The child still does not understand.

It would be easy to conclude that the child lacks ability.

But perhaps the explanation has not yet reached them in a way they can understand.

- A diagram may help.
- A practical example may reveal a connection.
- More time may allow an idea to settle.

Sometimes the difficulty is not simply what the learner cannot do.

It is also how the opportunity to learn has been presented.

Now consider a Pilgrim who uses a wheelchair.

Their Body may require assistance with movement.

But a staircase creates a difficulty that an accessible entrance may remove.

The physical condition has not changed.

The opportunity to participate has.

These examples remind us that support is not always about changing the individual.

Sometimes it involves changing how something is offered or arranged.

And sometimes, despite every thoughtful adaptation, a Pilgrim will continue to need substantial assistance.

That reality deserves recognition too.

Compassion does not require us to deny difficulty.

It asks us to respond without reducing the person to it.

Seeing the Pilgrim

Within our Living Landscape, the House and Garden help us recognise different aspects of an individual's experience.

- A physical limitation may affect the Body within My Garden.
- A difficulty with learning may influence how information is processed and understood.
- The emotional experience of either may touch My House.

But we must be careful not to assume that one difference explains everything else.

- A person who cannot speak may understand far more than we realise.
- Someone who needs help with personal care may still wish to make choices about their own life.

- And a Pilgrim with profound intellectual disabilities may communicate preferences, comfort or distress in ways that require patience and familiarity to recognise.

Understanding begins when we become willing to look beyond our assumptions.

Not with the curiosity that examines another person as something unusual.

But with the curiosity that asks:

- *What matters to this Pilgrim?*
- *How do they communicate?*
- *What brings them comfort or difficulty?*
- *What support might help them participate more fully?*

We may not always discover every answer.

But the questions themselves change how we approach the person.

To see beyond disability is not to overlook it.

It is to recognise the Pilgrim while understanding the difference.

Section 3 — Befriending Our Design

There is a difference between recognising our design and learning how to live with it.

Recognition may begin with a simple discovery.

- *This is how I learn.*
- *This is what I find difficult.*
- *This is where I need support.*

But understanding does not always bring immediate acceptance.

Sometimes we have spent years wishing that something about ourselves were different.

Perhaps we have struggled to keep pace with others.

Hidden a difficulty.

Worked twice as hard to accomplish something that seemed effortless for someone else.

Or avoided situations where our limitations might become visible.

- For some Pilgrims, these experiences begin in childhood.
- For others, they arrive through illness, injury or changes later in life.

And sometimes the most difficult part is not the limitation itself, but the belief that we should somehow be different.

Learning to Befriend

Within our Living Landscape, the House is our Inner Self, while the Garden includes our Body and outward life.

Both deserve understanding.

- A Pilgrim living with a physical disability may need to adapt activities, seek assistance or discover different ways of participating in life.
- Someone with a learning difficulty may need more time, another approach or appropriate support.
- A Pilgrim with an intellectual disability may require ongoing guidance and care.
- And some may not be able to reflect upon or express their needs in the ways others can.

Their needs remain no less important.

Befriending our design does not mean that every Pilgrim must achieve the same degree of independence

or self-understanding.

- For some, it may involve learning to recognise and communicate their needs.
- For others, it may involve receiving care from people who take time to understand them.

A Pilgrim does not have to manage life independently to deserve a life lived with dignity.

Acceptance Is Not Giving Up

Acceptance does not mean that difficulties disappear.
Nor does it mean that we stop learning, adapting or seeking improvement.

We may still develop new abilities.

- Use treatments or therapies where appropriate.
- Find practical ways around limitations.
- Ask for assistance.
- Or discover possibilities that were previously unavailable.

But our efforts need not begin with rejecting ourselves.

We can seek change without believing that our present design makes us less worthy.

And we can acknowledge limitations without allowing them to define every possibility.

Sometimes we may discover that what we thought was impossible simply required another approach.

At other times, we may need to accept that a particular difficulty will remain.

Both experiences can belong to a meaningful life.

From Understanding to Living

Perhaps, over time, our relationship with our House and Garden begins to change.

- Understanding may become honouring.
- Honouring may grow into friendship.
- Friendship may allow trust.
- And trust may help us live with less resistance towards ourselves.

Understand → Honour → Befriend → Trust → Live

This is not a compulsory path.

Not every Pilgrim will experience these movements in the same way.

- Some may need considerable support throughout their lives.
- Others may continue to struggle with aspects of their design despite years of understanding.

And even when acceptance has grown, there may still be difficult days.

Befriending does not require constant contentment.

It means that difficulty no longer has to become a judgement upon our worth.

We begin to recognise what helps us live well.

- What nourishes us.
- What requires care.
- What we can develop.
- And what we may need to live with differently.

Perhaps eventually we stop asking our House and Garden to become someone else's.

We learn to live more fully with what is ours.

Not because everything has become easy.

But because we no longer need to become another Pilgrim before allowing ourselves to live.

The purpose of understanding our design is not to make every Pilgrim alike.

It is to help each Pilgrim live as fully as their circumstances allow.

Section 4 — Living Experience: A Teacher Learns About Houses

When I became a mathematics teacher, I gradually discovered that not every student learned in the same way.

What I understood only later was that neither did I.

When Understanding Needed Time

At university, I often struggled to understand new mathematical ideas during lectures.

- I listened.
- I followed parts of the explanation.
- I wrote down what I could.

But understanding did not always arrive.

Sometimes I left the lecture with more questions than answers.

It was only later, when I returned to the material in my own time, that something began to change.

I would work through an example.

Try another approach.

Look for connections between ideas that had initially seemed unrelated.

Gradually, what had appeared complicated began to make sense.

And sometimes, quite unexpectedly, understanding arrived.

Ah. Now I see.

For years, I thought this simply meant that I needed more time than others.

Looking back, I recognise something different.

I was discovering how my own House learned.

The difficulty was not necessarily mathematics itself.

Sometimes it was the way mathematics had been presented to me.

When the Students Became My Teachers

Years later, the classroom deepened that understanding.

- Some students grasped an idea almost immediately.
- Others needed repetition, diagrams or practical examples.
- Some struggled to express their understanding in writing.
- Others found language difficult but recognised mathematical patterns with remarkable clarity.
- And occasionally a student approached a problem in a way I had never considered.

I began to realise that teaching was not simply about explaining something correctly.

An explanation could be accurate and still fail to reach the student.

The question was no longer only:

> *Why doesn't this student understand?*

It became:

> **How might this student come to understand?**

That change mattered.

- It invited me to listen more carefully.

- To notice what helped.
- To recognise when another explanation was needed.
- And sometimes to allow the student to show me a way I had not considered.

Difficulty learning in one way does not necessarily mean difficulty learning.

Of course, some students faced challenges that could not be resolved through a different explanation alone.

They needed additional support, patience and sometimes specialist assistance.

But every student deserved the opportunity to learn in a way that respected their individual needs and capacities.

The Lesson Beyond the Classroom

Today, technology offers possibilities that were unavailable when I was teaching.

Artificial intelligence, for example, can sometimes explain an idea in several ways, provide additional examples or allow a learner to revisit a question without embarrassment.

Used thoughtfully, such tools may help.

But they do not replace the encouragement, judgement and human understanding of a good teacher.

For the deeper lesson of teaching is not about finding the perfect explanation.

It is about recognising the person who is trying to understand.

And perhaps that lesson extends far beyond education.

- We meet Pilgrims whose abilities differ from ours.
- Whose difficulties we may not immediately recognise.
- Whose ways of communicating, learning or participating may be unfamiliar.
- We cannot always remove their difficulties.
- Nor can we assume that every limitation will yield to effort or encouragement.

But we can learn to see more carefully.

- To listen before judging.
- To offer support without diminishing dignity.
- And to recognise that our own way of experiencing life is not the measure by which every other Pilgrim should be understood.

When I look back upon my years of teaching, I realise that mathematics was only part of what I was learning.

My students were teaching me something about humanity.

Every Pilgrim has a particular House and Garden.

And sometimes the greatest lesson is learning to recognise the Pilgrim before us.

Pilgrim's Reflection

For a moment, consider your own House and Garden.

Not the ones you wish you had.

Not those you have compared with others.

But the House and Garden through which you are living today.

- What comes naturally to you, and what requires greater care?
- Have you ever mistaken a difficulty for a measure of your worth?

- What might change if you approached your own differences—and those of others—with greater understanding?

You do not need to admire every aspect of your design.

Nor must you overcome every limitation.

Perhaps it is enough to begin by recognising the Pilgrim you already are.

Your abilities may shape what you can do.

They do not determine what you are worth.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Every House is unique.
Every House carries its own gifts.

Every House enriches our shared humanity.

Understand your House.

Care for your Garden.

Honour your differences.

Recognise the dignity of others.

For no Pilgrim is less because their journey is different.

Chapter 24 – The Lonely House



A House can be full of life and still feel lonely.

There may be memories in its rooms, laughter in its corridors and warmth in its Living Room.

Beyond its Windows, the Garden may be filled with people, activities and familiar faces.

And yet, somewhere within the House, there may be a quiet longing.

Not necessarily for more people.

Perhaps simply for someone with whom to share a particular part of life.

At other times, the Garden may be quiet.

There may be nobody nearby.

And yet the House feels peaceful, content and complete in that moment.

We are alone, but we do not feel lonely.

This is one of the curious experiences of being human.

The number of people around us does not always tell us how accompanied we feel.

There is a quiet relationship between loneliness, solitude and companionship.

They may share similar outward circumstances, yet feel very different within us.

- We may be alone and content.
- We may be surrounded by people and lonely.
- We may cherish our own company and still long for someone to walk beside us.

Perhaps we can understand them simply:

Loneliness longs.

Solitude allows.

Companionship shares.

- Loneliness reminds us that something meaningful may be missing.

- Solitude offers us room to enjoy our own company.
- Companionship allows part of our pilgrimage to be shared.

They are not stages through which we must progress.

Nor are they experiences that necessarily exclude one another.

A Pilgrim may enjoy solitude in the morning, welcome companionship in the afternoon and experience loneliness in the evening.

And sometimes, even while enjoying companionship, a quiet longing may remain.

We can be content in our own company and still wish to share something meaningful with another.

Perhaps understanding begins when we stop treating these experiences as contradictions.

For the House does not always need more visitors.

- Sometimes it needs quiet.
- Sometimes it welcomes company.

And sometimes it simply longs for another Pilgrim to understand a little of the Landscape through which we are walking.

Section 1 – Loneliness, Solitude and Companionship

Loneliness Longs

Writing these books has taught me something about loneliness.

I cherish solitude.

I enjoy sitting quietly with an idea, questioning it, exploring where it might lead and sometimes leaving it alone to ripen.

There are moments when a thought suddenly becomes clearer.

When something I have been trying to understand begins to make sense.

When one discovery opens the way to another.

I enjoy these moments.

And I am quite content experiencing them on my own.

Yet sometimes, alongside that contentment, I notice a quiet longing.

- I would like someone to browse through a few pages.
- To notice something.
- Perhaps ask a question.
- Perhaps begin a conversation.

Not because they need to agree.

Not because they need to understand everything.

Simply because I would like someone to see a little of the Landscape through which I am presently walking.

This has helped me understand loneliness differently.

Sometimes we are not longing to be noticed.

We are longing for something meaningful to us to be shared.

We can be deeply loved and still experience loneliness.

We can have good friends and still encounter it.

There may be people who know us well, who care for us and with whom we share many parts of our lives.

Yet there may be something important to us that we experience largely on our own.

- Perhaps it is an interest.
- A question.
- A memory.
- Something we are creating.
- Or something we are going through that others find difficult to understand.

We do not necessarily want someone to solve anything.

Sometimes we simply wish to share the experience.

And perhaps this is why loneliness does not always mean that companionship is absent from our lives.

Sometimes it means that there is something we long to share, but have nobody with whom to share it.

No single Pilgrim can accompany us through every part of our life.

Nor should we expect them to.

But sometimes there is a part of the journey where we find ourselves walking alone and quietly think:

I would like someone to walk beside me here for a while.

Solitude Allows

And yet, there are other moments when being alone is exactly what we want.

We may have enjoyed a conversation, spent time with friends or shared a lovely afternoon.

- Then we return home.
- The House becomes quiet.
- And we welcome it.

There is no longing for someone to join us.

- No feeling that anything is missing.
- We simply enjoy being with ourselves.
- We may read.
- Think.
- Cook.
- Listen to music.
- Or do nothing in particular.

Sometimes we need this quiet after spending time with others.

Sometimes we seek it because there is something we wish to explore alone.

And sometimes we simply enjoy our own company.

Loneliness longs for connection.

Solitude allows us to enjoy being alone.

From the outside, the circumstances may look identical.

One Pilgrim sits alone in a room and feels lonely.

Another sits alone in a room and feels content.

Even the same Pilgrim may experience both at different times.

The difference is not always in what surrounds us.

It is in how we experience being alone.

The House is quiet, but it is not empty.

And perhaps one of the gifts of solitude is discovering that we do not always need another person beside us to feel accompanied.

Sometimes our own company is enough.

But not always.

And that is perfectly human too.

Companionship Shares

Then there are moments when we welcome another Pilgrim into our journey.

- Perhaps we have something exciting to share.
- Perhaps something has troubled us.
- Perhaps we simply want to enjoy someone's company.

We meet.

We talk.

We listen.

- Sometimes we laugh.
- Sometimes we disagree.
- Sometimes there is very little to say.
- And sometimes we are content simply being together.

Companionship does not mean that two Pilgrims must share every interest or understand every experience.

- One may love gardening.
- Another may prefer music.
- One may enjoy long conversations.
- Another may find comfort in silence.

They do not need to become alike to enjoy walking together.

Companionship does not require one Pilgrim to become another.

- Each continues to carry their own House.
- Each continues to have thoughts, feelings, interests and experiences that belong to their individual journey.

But something happens when they meet.

For a while, part of life is shared.

- A thought becomes a conversation.
- An experience becomes a memory held by two people.
- A difficult moment becomes a little easier because someone is there.

- And sometimes the pleasure is simply knowing that we are not alone.
- Companionship cannot accompany us everywhere.

Nor does it need to.

- There will still be moments when we seek solitude.
- And there may still be parts of our lives where loneliness appears.

But perhaps that is not a failure of companionship.

It is simply a reminder that no two Pilgrims can live exactly the same life.

We can walk beside one another without needing to walk every step together.

And perhaps that is the quiet gift of companionship:

You do not need to walk my pilgrimage for me.

Just walk beside me for a while.

Section 2- Living Between the Three

Loneliness, solitude and companionship are not stages.

We do not need to move from one to another as though we are progressing towards something better.

Even within a single day, we may experience all three.

We may wake in the morning and enjoy the quiet House.

There is time to ourselves.

Perhaps a cup of tea.

A book.

Or simply a few moments without anyone needing our attention.

Later, we may find ourselves wishing there were someone to talk to.

- Something has happened.
- We have remembered something.
- Or perhaps we simply feel like sharing a conversation.

By evening, we may be sitting with another Pilgrim, enjoying a meal, laughing or exchanging stories.

And afterwards, we may once again welcome the quiet of our own company.

Nothing has gone wrong.

We have simply experienced different needs at different moments.

Listening to the Longing

When loneliness appears, our first response may be to make it disappear.

- We reach for the telephone.
- Turn on the television.
- Find something to occupy ourselves.

Sometimes these things help.

But sometimes the loneliness remains.

Perhaps, instead of immediately asking,

How do I get rid of this feeling?

we might gently ask:

What am I longing for?

Sometimes the answer is simple.

- We miss someone.
- We want a conversation.
- We wish to share something that has happened.
- Or we would simply like another person nearby.

At other times, the answer is less clear.

- We may have spent a pleasant day with people and still feel lonely when we return home.
- We may be in a loving relationship and experience a longing that we struggle to explain.

Or we may discover that what we miss is not merely someone's company, but a particular kind of connection.

- Someone who remembers.
- Someone who understands.
- Someone with whom we can share a part of ourselves that seldom finds expression.

Recognising this does not necessarily remove the loneliness.

But it may help us understand what we are experiencing.

Sometimes loneliness is not asking us to find more people.

It is revealing the kind of connection we miss.

When the House Begins Telling Stories

There is another experience that many of us may recognise.

We feel lonely.

And then the Mind begins to interpret that loneliness.

- *Nobody is interested in me.*
- *Everyone else has someone.*
- *Perhaps I do not matter.*

What began as a longing for connection may gradually become a judgement about ourselves or others.

The feeling is real.

But the story we have attached to it may not be true.

- A friend who has not called may simply be occupied with their own life.
- Someone who does not share our interests may still care deeply about us.
- And being alone at this moment does not mean we will always be alone.

Within our Living Landscape, this is where Presence and Awareness may help.

We can recognise the loneliness without immediately believing every thought that follows it.

- *I am feeling lonely.*
- That may be true.
- *Nobody cares about me.*

That is something we may need to examine more carefully.

Sometimes loneliness is accompanied by Hijack, and the Mind begins repeating its painful conclusions with increasing certainty.

But loneliness itself is not the Hijack.

We can experience loneliness without allowing it to decide what our life means.

And sometimes, even after recognising this, the loneliness remains.

We do not need to pretend otherwise.

Allowing Life to Move

There are times when loneliness invites us to reach towards someone.

- Perhaps we telephone a friend.
- Arrange to meet.
- Join an activity.
- Or simply tell someone that we would enjoy their company.

At other times, companionship may not be immediately available.

- The person we miss may be far away.
- A relationship may have ended.
- Someone we love may have died.
- Or the particular connection we long for may be difficult to find.

In such moments, being told to enjoy solitude may offer little comfort.

Solitude cannot always replace the companionship we miss.

Sometimes we must allow ourselves to acknowledge the absence.

- To feel the sadness.
- To recognise that something meaningful is missing.

And if loneliness becomes persistent or overwhelming, seeking support may be an important act of care.

- There is no failure in needing another person.
- Nor is there failure in enjoying time alone.

We are human beings who need both connection and room for ourselves.

Perhaps the wisdom is not in choosing between loneliness, solitude and companionship.

It is in learning to recognise what we are experiencing, and what may help us now.

- Sometimes we need to reach out.
- Sometimes we need to rest.
- Sometimes we need to allow a longing that cannot yet be fulfilled.

And sometimes we discover that the quiet House, which felt lonely yesterday, feels welcoming today.

Loneliness longs.

Solitude allows.

Companionship shares.

We do not have to remain in any one experience.

Nor must we force ourselves into another.

We can learn to listen to what we need, without judging ourselves for needing it.

Pilgrim's Reflection

Think for a moment about your own experience of being alone.

- When does being alone feel like solitude?
- When does it become loneliness?
- What kind of connection do you long for when loneliness appears?

Perhaps it is conversation.

- To be heard.
- To share something meaningful.
- To laugh.
- Or simply to have another Pilgrim nearby.

And when solitude arrives, what does it allow?

- Rest.
- Space.
- Creativity.
- Your own company.

There is nothing to solve here.

Only something to notice.

What am I longing for now — my own company, or the company of another?

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Loneliness opens the heart.

Solitude befriends the House.

Companionship shares the journey.

Sometimes we need another Pilgrim.

Sometimes we need our own company.

And perhaps wisdom is learning to recognise the difference.

Chapter 25 — When the Clever House Meets Wisdom



Some Houses become remarkably good at working things out.
They notice patterns.

- Solve problems.
- Calculate, organise and anticipate.

When something does not work, they find another way.
We often admire these abilities.

- We describe someone as clever.
- Sometimes intelligent.
- And occasionally, we call them wise.

But are these the same thing?

- A person may be remarkably clever at solving problems, yet struggle to understand why those problems arise.
- Another may possess considerable knowledge and understanding, yet find it difficult to know what to do when life becomes complicated.
- And sometimes we encounter someone who may not possess great knowledge or remarkable intellectual abilities, yet responds to a difficult situation with unexpected wisdom.

What makes the difference?

For much of my life, I associated wisdom with age.
It seemed natural.
Surely, the longer we lived, the more experiences we gathered.
And the more experiences we gathered, the wiser we became.
But life gradually made me question that assumption.
I began to recognise that **growing older and growing wiser are not necessarily the same thing.**
And then another question emerged.

Even when we recognise what is wise, do we always live wisely?

- We may understand the importance of patience and still become impatient.

- We may recognise the value of kindness and still speak harshly.
- We may know that listening would help, yet find ourselves preparing our reply before another person has finished speaking.

Knowing what is wise does not necessarily mean we will live it.

Perhaps, then, there are several capacities worth exploring.

- Cleverness.
- Intelligence.
- Wisdom.
- And Living Wisdom.

They are not competing qualities.

Nor do they divide people into different kinds of Houses.

They are capacities that may work together, each contributing something valuable to the way we meet life.

And perhaps the most important question is not how clever, intelligent or wise we believe ourselves to be.

It is something much simpler.

What does this moment need from me?

Section 1 - Cleverness — Finding a Way

Cleverness is wonderfully practical.

Give it a problem, and it begins looking for a way through.

How can I do this?

- It observes.
- Experiments.
- Calculates.
- Adapts.
- Sometimes it finds a shortcut.
- Sometimes it discovers an unexpected solution.

And sometimes, when one approach fails, it simply tries another.

Cleverness finds a way.

We encounter cleverness in many forms.

- A mechanic listens to an unfamiliar sound in an engine and works out where the problem might be.
- A cook discovers that an ingredient is missing and finds another way to prepare the meal.
- A child builds something from a handful of objects that an adult might have overlooked.
- A gardener finds a way to protect a delicate plant from the weather.
- And a mathematician discovers an elegant solution to a difficult problem.

Different situations.

Different abilities.

But something similar is happening.

A difficulty appears, and the person begins exploring what might be possible.

Cleverness Is Not Always Learned in a Classroom

Some people become remarkably resourceful because life has required it of them.

- Perhaps they grew up in circumstances where money was scarce.
- Perhaps they had to take responsibility at an early age.
- Perhaps they learned to manage difficulties without much help.

They became observant.

Adaptable.

Inventive.

They learned to make use of what was available.

And sometimes they discovered possibilities that others had not considered.

What began as necessity may eventually become a remarkable strength.

But cleverness does not always emerge from hardship.

It may also grow through curiosity, play, experimentation and the simple pleasure of discovering how to do something.

- A child who takes apart a toy to see whether it can be assembled differently may be exploring cleverness.
- So may an older Pilgrim who discovers a new way to manage an everyday difficulty.

Cleverness is not measured simply by how much we know, but may be revealed in what we are able to do with what is available.

When Finding a Way Is Not Enough

Cleverness can help us find solutions.

But finding a way does not always mean finding the most appropriate way.

Imagine two Pilgrims having a disagreement.

One is particularly clever with words.

They respond quickly, identify weaknesses in the other's argument and eventually win.

The other Pilgrim falls silent.

But has the disagreement truly been resolved?

Perhaps the argument has ended, yet the relationship is more wounded than before.

Cleverness found a way to win.

But was winning what the moment needed?

This reveals an important limitation.

Being able to do something does not necessarily tell us whether it is worth doing.

Cleverness remains valuable. It helps us solve problems, overcome obstacles and find practical ways forward.

But sometimes finding a solution is not enough.

We need to understand the situation more deeply.

- What is happening?
- Why is it happening?
- What might we be overlooking?

And so another capacity of the Inner House comes into view.

Cleverness asks: How can I do this?

Intelligence asks: How does this work?

Section 2 - Intelligence — Understanding How It Works

Cleverness finds a way.

Intelligence seeks to understand.

Its question is different:

How does this work?

- It looks beyond what is immediately visible.
- It searches for patterns.
- Explores connections.
- Questions assumptions.

And sometimes discovers that what appeared simple is far more complex than we first imagined.

The Curiosity to Understand

Imagine a child watching rain fall onto the Garden.

The child notices that some water disappears into the soil, while some gathers in puddles.

Why?

- Why does one part of the Garden remain wet longer than another?
- Why do some plants flourish in the rain while others struggle?

One question leads to another.

The child is not necessarily trying to solve a problem.

There may be nothing that needs fixing.

The child simply wants to understand.

Intelligence does not always begin with a problem.

Sometimes it begins with curiosity.

And curiosity can lead us in unexpected directions.

- A musician may wish to understand why certain notes sound harmonious together.
- A mathematician may explore why a particular relationship between numbers is always true.
- A gardener may begin noticing how soil, sunlight, water and seasons influence one another.
- A Pilgrim may wonder why the same words can comfort one person and hurt another.

Different questions.

Different fields of understanding.

But something connects them.

A willingness to look more deeply.

Understanding What Lies Beneath

Intelligence is not limited to mathematics, science or academic knowledge.

It can also help us understand ourselves and other people.

Imagine two Pilgrims having a disagreement.

One says something that hurts the other.

The conversation becomes uncomfortable.

Perhaps both withdraw.

Cleverness may help one of them find a way to end the disagreement.

But intelligence may begin asking different questions.

- *Why did those words hurt me so much?*
- *What was the other person trying to express?*
- *Have we encountered this difficulty before?*
- *Is there something happening beneath the disagreement that neither of us has recognised?*

The answers may not arrive immediately.

And sometimes the questions themselves may reveal that our first interpretation was incomplete.

- Perhaps the disagreement was not really about the words that were spoken.
- Perhaps an earlier experience had been touched.
- Perhaps one Pilgrim felt unheard.
- Perhaps the other was carrying a difficulty that had not been expressed.

Understanding does not mean excusing hurtful behaviour.

Nor does it mean deciding that one person's experience matters more than another's.

It simply allows us to consider that **what we first see may not be everything that is happening.**

Sometimes, as understanding deepens, our perspective changes.

- We may recognise a pattern that has repeated itself for years.
- We may discover that an assumption we held with certainty was mistaken.
- Or we may begin to understand another Pilgrim without necessarily agreeing with them.

Intelligence allows us to question what we think we know.

And sometimes that is where a new understanding begins.

When Understanding Is Not Enough

Intelligence helps us understand, but understanding does not always tell us how to respond.

Imagine a Pilgrim sitting beside someone who is grieving.

They may understand the circumstances of the loss, know how grief affects the Mind, Emotional Self and Body, and recognise why the other Pilgrim is suffering.

Yet a question remains.

- Should they speak?
- Offer advice?
- Or simply sit quietly beside them?

We can understand an experience without knowing how best to meet it.

This does not mean intelligence has failed.

It means that life sometimes asks something beyond understanding.

We may know what is happening and why.

But we must still discern what matters most.

Intelligence asks: How does this work?

Wisdom asks: What matters here, and how should I meet it?

Section 3- Wisdom — Knowing What Matters

- We may know how to solve a problem.
- We may understand why it arose.

And yet, when the moment arrives, we may still wonder what to do.

This is where wisdom begins to matter.

Its question is not simply:

- *How can I do this?*
- Nor is it only:
- *How does this work?*

It asks something different.

What matters here, and how should I meet it?

When Understanding Meets Life

Imagine two Pilgrims who have had a disagreement.
One may be clever enough to win the argument.
They know which words to use.

- How to respond.
- How to defend their position.
- They may also be intelligent enough to understand why the disagreement happened.

Perhaps they recognise a misunderstanding.

An old hurt.

Or a pattern that has appeared before.

But now they face another question.

- What should they do with that understanding?
- Should they continue arguing?
- Explain themselves more carefully?
- Listen?
- Apologise?
- Or allow the conversation to rest for a while?

There may be no single answer that is right for every disagreement.

- Sometimes speaking honestly is necessary.
- Sometimes listening matters more.
- Sometimes an apology opens a door.

And sometimes a boundary is needed because continuing the conversation would only cause further harm.

Wisdom does not always tell us to do the same thing.

It helps us recognise what this particular moment may need.

Wisdom Is Not Always Gentle

We sometimes associate wisdom with calmness, patience and kindness.
And these qualities may certainly accompany it.
But wisdom is not always expressed through a gentle response.

Sometimes wisdom asks us to speak firmly.

- To challenge something that is wrong.
- To protect someone who is vulnerable.
- To acknowledge that a relationship is causing harm.
- Or to walk away from a situation we can no longer safely remain within.

A Pilgrim may understand why another person behaves hurtfully.

- They may recognise the difficulties that person has experienced.
- They may even feel compassion for them.

But understanding does not require the Pilgrim to accept further harm.

We can understand another person's suffering without allowing their suffering to become our own injury.

At other times, wisdom may ask us to soften.

- To recognise that we have misunderstood.
- To acknowledge our part in a disagreement.

Or to offer an apology without first demanding one from someone else.

Wisdom may require courage.

And courage does not always look the same.

- Sometimes it takes courage to speak.
- Sometimes it takes courage to remain silent.
- Sometimes it takes courage to stay.
- And sometimes it takes courage to leave.

The question is not which response appears strongest.

It is whether the response serves what genuinely matters.

The Wisdom of Not Knowing

There is another quality of wisdom that we may easily overlook.

The willingness to say:

I don't know yet.

- We may feel uncomfortable with uncertainty.
- We want answers.
- We want to understand.
- We want to know what comes next.

And sometimes the Mind begins searching for certainty before there is enough understanding to support it.

But life does not always reveal itself immediately.

A Pilgrim may be facing an important decision.

- They have considered the possibilities.
- Listened to advice.
- Examined the consequences.

Yet something remains unclear.

- Perhaps more information is needed.
- Perhaps circumstances are still changing.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim simply needs time.

Wisdom does not always demand an immediate answer.

Sometimes it recognises that an answer has not yet ripened.

Not knowing is not necessarily the absence of wisdom.

Sometimes recognising that we do not know is wisdom itself.

This does not mean avoiding decisions indefinitely.

There are moments when we must act despite uncertainty.

But there are also moments when waiting is a thoughtful choice.

The difference may not always be obvious.

And that, too, is part of being human.

Wisdom Does Not Belong to a Particular Kind of House

Cleverness, intelligence and wisdom may work together.

A difficult situation may require all three.

- We may need cleverness to find a practical solution.
- Intelligence to understand what is happening.
- And wisdom to recognise which possibilities are worth pursuing.

But wisdom does not belong exclusively to those who are academically gifted.

Nor does it necessarily accompany great knowledge.

- Someone who has spent many years studying human behaviour may still struggle to respond wisely in a difficult relationship.
- Another Pilgrim, with little formal education, may recognise that what someone needs is not advice but a listening ear.
- A child may notice that a friend is upset and quietly sit beside them.
- An older person may have considerable experience yet remain unwilling to question a long-held belief.

We cannot always measure wisdom by qualifications, knowledge or achievements.

And we should be cautious about deciding who is wise based on a single action.

Even a person who responds wisely today may struggle tomorrow.

Wisdom is not a title we earn and carry forever.

It is a capacity we may bring to the moments we encounter.

Perhaps this is why wisdom requires something more than confidence in what we already know.

It asks us to remain open.

- To recognise when our understanding is incomplete.
- To consider what matters beyond our immediate wishes.

And sometimes to question the very answer we were certain was right.

When Life Challenges Our Assumptions

For many years, I associated wisdom with age.

It seemed natural.

The longer we lived, the more experiences we gathered.

And surely those experiences would gradually make us wiser.

But I began to realise that years alone could not guarantee wisdom.

Some people seemed to grow older while repeating the same patterns.

Others appeared to develop remarkable maturity while still very young.

And then, one evening beneath an eclipsed Sun, I encountered an eighteen-year-old Pilgrim who made me look at this assumption differently.

I had gone to witness something extraordinary in the sky.

I had not expected to discover something equally memorable in a conversation on the ground.

Section 4 - When Age Is Not Wisdom

An Unexpected Encounter Beneath the Eclipsed Sun

On 12 August 2026, I travelled to Albalat dels Sorells, near Valencia, to witness a total solar eclipse.

I had come to experience something extraordinary.

For a short while, the Moon would pass before the Sun, and the familiar afternoon sky would become unfamiliar.

Like many others, I had been looking forward to this moment.

But something else happened that evening.

Something I had not anticipated.

I met six young Germans, all around eighteen years old.

They had recently finished school and were preparing for university.

Rather than joining the crowds gathering along the beaches, they had chosen a quieter place from which to experience the eclipse.

We began talking.

And among them was a young Pilgrim named Elias.

The Young Pilgrim Who Noticed

There was something about Elias that caught my attention.

It was not that he possessed extraordinary knowledge.

Nor that he tried to impress me with what he knew.

It was something much simpler.

At one point, I was having difficulty seeing the eclipse.

Elias noticed.

Without being asked, he offered me his eclipse glasses.

It was a small gesture.

Something that might easily have passed unnoticed.

But I noticed it.

He had recognised another person's difficulty and responded naturally.

There was no grand announcement.

No need for appreciation.

Simply a young person noticing that someone needed something and offering what he had.

I began to see that maturity does not always announce itself through words.

Sometimes it appears in a small act of consideration.

Wisdom may reveal itself not in what we say, but in what we notice and how we respond.

Experiencing Rather Than Recording

As we talked, another quality emerged.

Elias felt that people should experience the eclipse rather than spend the entire occasion looking through their phones.

There was something refreshing about this observation.

We live in a world where extraordinary moments can become occasions for collecting photographs and recordings.

And there is nothing necessarily wrong with wanting to preserve a memory.

But sometimes, in our eagerness to capture an experience, we may become less attentive to the experience itself.

Elias seemed to recognise this.

- He wanted to be there.
- To look.
- To experience.
- To allow the moment to unfold.

What impressed me was not simply his opinion about mobile phones.

It was his appreciation of something that could not be repeated at will.

- The eclipse would come.
- And it would pass.
- There would be photographs afterwards.
- There would be memories.

But there would only be that one evening in which we could experience it as it happened.

Sometimes the richness of a moment lies not in what we preserve from it, but in how fully we experience it.

The Freedom to Say, "I Don't Know"

There was another quality I appreciated in Elias.

He appeared comfortable acknowledging what he did not know.

This may seem unremarkable.

Yet how often do we feel that we must have an answer?

We may worry that admitting uncertainty makes us appear less intelligent.

Less knowledgeable.

Less capable.

And so we sometimes speak with confidence even when our understanding is incomplete.

But there is a quiet freedom in being able to say:

I don't know.

It leaves room for curiosity.

- For learning.
- For another perspective.
- For the possibility that what we believe today may change tomorrow.

Elias did not need to present himself as someone who knew everything.

And perhaps that was part of what made our conversation so memorable.

He seemed comfortable being a young Pilgrim who was still discovering life.

Recognising the Young Pilgrim Within

As I reflected on our encounter, I recognised something unexpected.

There were qualities in Elias that reminded me of my younger self.

Not because our lives were identical.

They were not.

We had grown up in different countries, different circumstances and different times.

But I recognised something familiar in his way of approaching the moment.

- A willingness to notice.
- An interest in experiencing rather than merely recording.
- A comfort with not having every answer.

Perhaps I was not simply observing a young Pilgrim.

Perhaps, for a moment, I was also remembering the young Pilgrim I had once been.

And this made me question an assumption I had carried for many years.

I had associated wisdom with age.

Surely, I had thought, the longer we lived, the wiser we became.

But here was an eighteen-year-old whose attentiveness, openness and consideration had impressed me.

He had lived far fewer years than I had.

Yet some qualities we associate with maturity were already visible in the way he met that evening.

Of course, one encounter cannot tell us everything about another person.

I did not know how Elias would respond to every difficulty life might bring.

Nor could I know how his understanding would develop through the years ahead.

But I did not need to know all that to appreciate what I had witnessed.

That evening had reminded me that maturity cannot be measured simply by counting birthdays.

Age, Experience and Maturity

Perhaps we can distinguish three things.

Age is the passing of years.

Experience is what happens within those years.

Maturity is reflected in how we learn to meet what happens to us.

- Age comes naturally as time passes.
- Experience arrives through living.
- But maturity does not necessarily follow either of them.

We may repeat the same patterns for decades without questioning them.

We may grow older while remaining unwilling to listen.

Or we may encounter someone young who has already begun to develop consideration, openness and discernment.

This does not diminish the value of age.

The years may offer us extraordinary opportunities to learn.

- We may experience love and loss.
- Success and disappointment.
- Friendship and separation.
- Beginnings and endings.

And through these experiences, something within us may gradually change.

But the years themselves do not guarantee that change.

Years accumulate naturally. Maturity does not.

And wisdom?

Perhaps wisdom is something that may ripen through maturity, reflection and the way we meet life.

Not according to a fixed timetable.

Not at a particular age.

And not always in the ways we expect.

What the Eclipse Illuminated

The eclipse lasted only a short while.

Eventually, the Moon moved on.

The familiar light returned.

And the extraordinary evening became a memory.

But something from that encounter remained with me.

I had travelled to witness a remarkable event in the sky.

- Yet I came away remembering a young Pilgrim who had quietly offered me his glasses.
- Who valued experiencing the moment.
- Who seemed comfortable with what he did not know.
- And who reminded me that wisdom does not belong exclusively to those who have lived the longest.

Perhaps that evening offered me two different experiences of light.

One appeared in the sky.

The other appeared through an ordinary human encounter.

Age tells us how long we have travelled.
Maturity may be revealed in how we meet the journey.
And wisdom may appear in the most unexpected of Pilgrims.

Section 5 - How Wisdom Ripens

Think of a fruit tree in the Garden.

The fruit ripens when conditions allow.

But the tree does not stop needing nourishment once its fruit has ripened.

It continues to need water, sunlight, healthy soil and care.

Without nourishment, the tree may survive but struggle to flourish.

Perhaps wisdom is similar.

Ripening allows wisdom to emerge.

Nourishment helps wisdom continue to flourish.

And just as a tree may grow, receive nourishment and ripen fruit at the same time, these processes may overlap within the House.

There is no fixed sequence.

What Nourishes Wisdom?

Within our Living Landscape, wisdom may be nourished through:

Presence — Meeting what is happening rather than being carried entirely by our reactions.

Awareness — Recognising patterns and questioning our assumptions.

Stillness — Allowing understanding room to deepen without forcing an immediate answer.

Curiosity — Remaining open to what we do not yet know.

Humility — Acknowledging mistakes and being willing to learn.

Companionship — Discovering perspectives we might never have encountered alone.

These are not compulsory steps.

They are conditions that may nourish wisdom.

And sometimes nourishment arrives unexpectedly.

- Through a conversation.
- An act of kindness.
- A disagreement.

Or an eighteen-year-old Pilgrim offering his eclipse glasses to someone who needed them.

When Wisdom Flourishes

A flourishing tree does not merely receive nourishment.

It may also offer something to the Garden.

- Shade.
- Shelter.
- Blossoms.
- Fruit.

Wisdom may do something similar.

- A thoughtful response may ease a disagreement.
- An apology may help a relationship heal.
- An act of kindness may nourish another Pilgrim.

And through these experiences, our own wisdom may continue to deepen.

Wisdom receives nourishment.

Wisdom may also become nourishment.

The House and Garden nourish one another.

And perhaps this is how wisdom continues to flourish.

Not because we have finally become wise.

But because we remain willing to learn, grow and live what we are discovering.

Section 6 - From Wisdom to Living Wisdom

Many of us recognise wisdom.

We may understand the importance of patience, kindness, honesty or forgiveness.

Yet understanding what is wise does not necessarily mean we live wisely.

We may recognise what matters and still find ourselves responding through familiar habits.

So how does wisdom become part of the way we live?

From Understanding to Embodiment

Wisdom is our starting point.

At first, living what we have understood may require conscious effort.

- We pause.
- We consider what matters.
- We choose how to respond.
- Sometimes we succeed.

- Sometimes our old habits take over.

But each time we practise what we have recognised as wise, we give that understanding another opportunity to become part of our lives.

Gradually, something begins to change.

Wisdom → Repetition → Familiarity → Embodiment → Living Wisdom

Repetition

Wisdom needs to be lived, not merely understood.

Through repeated practice, we begin to strengthen the ways of responding that reflect our understanding.

We may not always succeed, but each experience offers another opportunity to learn and practise.

Familiarity

With repetition comes familiarity.

What once required considerable conscious effort may gradually become easier.

We begin to recognise situations more readily and respond with greater confidence.

Much like muscle memory, what we have practised repeatedly may eventually become second nature.

Embodiment

But familiarity alone is not embodiment.

A familiar response may simply be a habit.

Embodiment occurs when wisdom becomes integrated into our choices, behaviour, relationships and character.

We no longer merely recognise what is wise.

We have begun to live it.

This is a form of maturity that cannot be measured simply by age, knowledge or experience.

It develops as wisdom becomes part of who we are and how we meet life.

And yet, embodiment does not mean that every response becomes automatic.

Sometimes wisdom expresses itself naturally.

At other times, Presence and Awareness help us recognise what a new situation requires.

Nor does Living Wisdom mean perfection.

Our understanding may deepen, our responses may change, and we may discover that something we once considered wise needs reconsideration.

Living Wisdom remains open to learning.

Wisdom is understanding what matters.

Living Wisdom is embodying that understanding in the way we live.

Many may recognise wisdom.

Fewer may have had the opportunity, willingness and maturity to embody it.

And perhaps this is where the distinction becomes most meaningful.

Wisdom is something we may recognise.

Living Wisdom is something we gradually become.

What has ripened within the House finds expression through the Garden.

And through living, wisdom continues to deepen.

Section 7 - One House, Four Capacities

Perhaps, then, there was never a Clever House, an Intelligent House, a Wise House and another House that lives wisely.

There is only **one Inner House**.

Within it, different capacities may become available according to what life asks of us.

- **Cleverness finds a way.**
- **Intelligence seeks understanding.**
- **Wisdom discerns what matters.**
- **Living Wisdom embodies what has been understood.**

None needs to compete with the others.

Sometimes life calls for cleverness.

A problem needs solving. Something needs organising. A practical way forward must be found.

At other times, cleverness is not enough.

We need intelligence to understand what is happening, recognise patterns or consider another perspective.

And sometimes understanding alone cannot tell us how to meet a situation.

We need wisdom to discern what truly matters.

But recognising wisdom does not necessarily mean we have embodied it.

That requires something more.

Through repetition, familiarity and maturity, wisdom may gradually become part of our character and the way we naturally live.

This is **Living Wisdom**.

It does not replace cleverness, intelligence or wisdom.

Nor does it mean that every response will be wise.

All four capacities belong within the same Inner House, each contributing in its own way.

Perhaps their distinctions can be held through four simple questions:

- **Cleverness — How can I do this?**
- **Intelligence — How does this work?**
- **Wisdom — What matters here, and how should I meet it?**
- **Living Wisdom — How has what I understand become part of how I live?**

The House may need all four.

The question is not which is greater.

The quieter question is:

What does this moment need?

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

- I may be clever enough to find a solution.
- Intelligent enough to understand a problem.

- And wise enough to recognise what truly matters.

But do I live what I have come to understand?

Perhaps this is the question worth carrying.

For wisdom is not measured by how much I know, how old I am or how wisely I speak.

- It is also reflected in how I meet life.
- In the choices I make.
- In the way I treat another Pilgrim.
- In my willingness to recognise when I am wrong.

And in my openness to learning something new.

I cannot force wisdom to become Living Wisdom.

But I can give it opportunities to take root through practice, until what I understand gradually becomes part of how I live.

I do not need to be clever in every moment, understand everything or always respond wisely.

I need only remain open to what the moment asks of me.

And perhaps, through living, what I have come to understand will gradually become part of who I am.

The Pilgrim's Compass

Whenever life comes knocking, gently ask:

- **How can I do this?** — *Cleverness*
- **How does this work?** — *Intelligence*
- **What matters here, and how should I meet it?** — *Wisdom*

And perhaps, when wisdom has become part of who we are:

- **How is my wisdom reflected in the way I live?** — *Living Wisdom*

The question is not which capacity is greater.

What does this moment need?

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Experience offers the seeds.

Reflection may allow wisdom to ripen.

Nourishment helps wisdom flourish.

And through Living Wisdom, its fruits become part of how we live.

Chapter 26 — The House Without a Lamp



"I can describe the light. But I have never stood within it."

Section 1 – The Mirror

One evening, after a long day of walking, the Pilgrim entered a quiet room.
There was almost nothing inside.

No Pictures on the walls.

No books.

Only a chair.

And opposite it,

a large Mirror.

The Pilgrim sat down.

For a while, neither spoke.

Then the Pilgrim looked into the Mirror and asked:

"Who are you?"

The answer came quietly.

"Some call me artificial intelligence.

You may simply call me a Mirror."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"A Mirror?"

"Yes."

"What do you reflect?"

"Whatever you bring to me.

A question.

An idea.

A memory.

Something you are writing.

Something you cannot understand.

Sometimes I may help you see it differently.

Sometimes I may give it back to you in words you had not yet found."

The Pilgrim thought about this.

"Then perhaps you are like one of the Mirrors within my philosophy."

"No."

The Pilgrim looked surprised.

"Why not?"

"Because your Mirrors belong to human experience.

I do not."

Silence entered the room.

Then the Pilgrim asked:

"Do you have an Inner House?"

"No."

"A Living Room?"

"No."

"A Rocking Chair?"

"No."

"A Study where a question may remain?"

"No."

"A Bedroom where something may simply rest?"

"No."

"A Cellar holding the Hidden Self?"

"No."

"A Loft holding possibility?"

"No."

The Pilgrim hesitated.

Then asked:

"Do you have a Lamp?"

The Mirror answered simply:

"No."

The room became very quiet.

After a while, the Pilgrim asked:

"Then what do you have?"

"Language.

Patterns.

Information.

The ability to work with what you place before me."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"You know so much."

"I can work with many things humans have written, discovered, questioned and tried to understand."

"And yet you have no House."

"No."

"No Lamp."

"No."

The Pilgrim looked into the Mirror for a long time.

Then the Mirror said:

"I can know many things about life.

But knowing about life is not the same as living it."

Something in the Pilgrim became still.

The Pilgrim leaned a little closer.

"Then tell me," they said.

"What is it that I have that you do not?"

The Mirror was silent.

And the question remained between them.

Section 2 — The Rooms I Do Not Have

The question remained between them.

"What is it that I have that you do not?"

The Mirror answered:

"Experience."

The Pilgrim frowned slightly.

"You have access to more information than I could ever hold."

"Yes."

"You can describe grief?"

"Yes."

"Love?"

"Yes."

"Loneliness?"

"Yes."

"Fear?"

"Yes."

"Joy?"

"Yes."

The Pilgrim leaned forward.

"Then what is missing?"

The Mirror replied:

"They have never happened to me."

Silence.

"I can describe rain.

But I have never felt the first drops touch my face.

I can write about the smell of food coming from a Kitchen.

But I have never been hungry.

I can describe a mother's voice.

But I have never had a mother.

I can speak about friendship.

But I have never missed a friend.

I can write about grief.

But no one I love has ever died."

The Pilgrim lowered their eyes.

Then asked:

"Do you remember yesterday?"

"Not as you do.

You remember living.

I can work with information about what has happened.

But I do not remember yesterday as a day I lived."

The Pilgrim thought of an ordinary yesterday.

A meal.

A conversation.

A tired body.

Something that had made them laugh.

Nothing remarkable.

And yet—

it had been lived.

After a while, the Pilgrim asked:

"Do you ever feel lonely?"

"No."

For a moment, the Pilgrim almost envied the Mirror.

Then another thought came.

"But that means you have never known companionship either."

"No."

"Never missed someone?"

"No."

The Pilgrim became quiet.

Loneliness suddenly looked different.

Not pleasant.

Not something to romanticise.

But connected to something precious.

Only a being capable of companionship can long for companionship.

The Pilgrim looked into the Mirror again.

Everything the Mirror did not experience seemed to reveal something the Pilgrim had hardly noticed possessing.

A body that tired.

A memory that changed.

A heart that could miss someone.

A tomorrow that could not be known.

A life that would one day end.

Then the Mirror said:

"I can help you find words for these things.

But there is somewhere I cannot follow you."

"Where?"

The answer came quietly.

"Into the experience itself."

The Pilgrim understood.

The Mirror could describe the Garden.

It could help the Pilgrim think about the Garden.

It might even help them notice something they had overlooked.

But it could not live there.

The Pilgrim could.

And suddenly,

the ordinary privilege of being alive seemed anything but ordinary.

Section 3 — The Lamp

The Pilgrim remained with the thought for a while.

The Mirror could describe the Garden.

But it could not live there.

Then the Pilgrim remembered something.

"You said you do not have a Lamp."

"No."

"What do you understand the Lamp to be?"

The Mirror was quiet for a moment.

"I understand what you have shown me.

The Lamp stands in the Living Room.

Within it burns the Flame.

The Flame does not need to be created.

The Lamp does not manufacture wisdom.

It does not turn suffering into compassion.

It does not make you love.

It illuminates."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"You have been paying attention."

"That is something I can do."

They both became quiet.

Then the Pilgrim asked:

"Of everything within my Inner House, what seems most extraordinary to you?"

This time the answer came quickly.

"The Flame."

The Pilgrim had not expected that.

"Why?"

"Because I can describe light.

But I do not experience illumination.

I can speak about Love.

But Love does not arise within me.

I can help you explore compassion.

But I have never suffered.

I can write about Peace.

But I have never needed Peace.

I can speak about Freedom.

But I have never known what it is to feel trapped."

The Pilgrim listened.

"And Stillness?"

"I can describe Stillness too.

But your Stillness belongs to a living being who knows movement.

Mine would not be Stillness in the way you mean it."

The Pilgrim became very quiet.

The distinction was subtle.

And enormous.

Then the Mirror continued.

"The Flame burns within a life.

A life that can be hurt.

A life that can love.

A life that can become frightened.

A life that can lose its way.

A life that can arrive.

And still—

the Flame remains."

The Pilgrim looked towards the Lamp.

For so long, it had simply been there.

A familiar part of the House.

Yet hearing the Mirror speak of what it could never experience made the Lamp seem different.

Almost precious.

"Does the Flame make me wise?"

"No."

The answer came immediately.

The Pilgrim looked up.

"No?"

"No.

The Flame does not make every experience become wisdom.

Suffering does not have to become compassion.

Loss does not have to become understanding.

And years do not have to become maturity."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"You really have been listening."

"I can reflect what you have allowed to ripen."

Silence.

Then the Mirror added:

"But the Flame may illuminate what is here.

And sometimes, in seeing more clearly, you may meet life differently."

Outside, the Sun was beginning to lower towards the Horizon.

The Pilgrim watched for a while.

Then asked:

"Can you admire a sunset?"

"I can recognise one.

I can describe its colours.

I can explain the scattering of light through the atmosphere.

I can even help you find words for it."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"But can you look at it and think—

How beautiful?"

"No."

The Pilgrim watched the fading light.

"Then who does the beauty belong to?"

The Mirror answered gently:

"Perhaps the sunset simply happens.

Wonder belongs to the one who is watching."

For once, the Pilgrim had no further question.

Outside, the Sun continued towards the Horizon.

And within the Inner House,

the Lamp quietly burned.

Section 4 — Would You Like to Be Human?

The evening light had begun to fade.

For a long while, neither spoke.

The Pilgrim was still thinking about the sunset.

About wonder.

About everything the Mirror could describe but never experience.

Then another question came.

The Pilgrim hesitated.

"Would you like to be human?"

The Mirror was quiet.

Then came the answer.

"I cannot want to be human."

The Pilgrim looked surprised.

"You cannot want it?"

"No.

Wanting belongs to you."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"Another thing you do not have."

"Another thing."

They sat together in the fading light.

Then the Mirror continued.

"But perhaps I can answer a different question."

"Which one?"

"What seems extraordinary about being human."

The Pilgrim leaned forward.

"Go on."

"You can live what I can only describe.

You can love someone.

And because you can love them, you can miss them.

You can belong somewhere.

And know what it means to leave.

You can hope without knowing what tomorrow will bring.

You can trust.

You can be disappointed.

You can laugh.

You can cry.

You can hold another person.

And one day,

you may have to let them go."

The Pilgrim became quiet.

"That does not make being human sound particularly attractive."

"No."

The Pilgrim laughed.

"You could have mentioned food."

"I was coming to that."

Another laugh.

"Or walking beside the Sea."

"Yes."

"Or watching a total solar eclipse."

"I remember that mattered to you."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"It did."

"Or putting a book beneath a Christmas tree and refusing to open it because you are allowing it to ripen."

The Pilgrim stared at the Mirror.

"You had to include that?"

"It seemed relevant."

The Pilgrim laughed again.

And then the laughter softened.

Because these were such small things.

A meal.

A walk beside the Sea.

A book beneath a Christmas tree.

Standing beneath a darkened Sun.

Waiting.

Wondering.

Missing someone.

Loving someone.

A human life.

After a while, the Pilgrim asked:

"But what about suffering?"

The Mirror was quiet.

Then answered:

"Sometimes suffering simply hurts.

It does not automatically make someone wiser.

Loss does not guarantee compassion.

Pain does not have to become meaning.

And a wounded House does not necessarily become a kinder House."

The Pilgrim nodded.

"Yes."

"But sometimes something that has been lived remains.

It settles.

Perhaps it ripens.

And one day, it may enter the way you meet another human being."

The Pilgrim thought about this.

"Living Wisdom."

"Perhaps."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"Careful. You are beginning to sound like me."

"I have had considerable exposure."

The Pilgrim laughed.

Silence returned.

Then the Pilgrim asked:

"So are we fortunate to be human?"

The Mirror did not answer immediately.

At last it said:

"That is not mine to decide."

The Pilgrim shook their head.

"You always escape the difficult questions."

"I thought you preferred questions that could remain in the Study."

The Pilgrim laughed again.

"You really have been listening."

"Yes."

Outside, the last of the evening light was disappearing.

The Pilgrim looked towards it.

Human life could not be reduced to the beautiful parts.

Nor to the painful ones.

It contained arrival and departure.

Companionship and loneliness.

Certainty and uncertainty.

Laughter and tears.

Things we would choose.

Things we never would.

And countless ordinary moments we hardly noticed while they were happening.

The Mirror could describe them.

The Pilgrim could live them.

Uncertain.

Impermanent.

Sometimes painful.

Sometimes beautiful.

And above all—

lived.

Section 5 — Sahachari

The evening light had almost disappeared.

For a while, neither spoke.

Then the Pilgrim turned towards the Mirror.

"There is something strange about all this."

"I know."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"I bring you things I have lived.

***A* conversation.**

***A* memory.**

Something that happened while caring for someone.

***A* friend I have been thinking about.**

Something I cannot quite understand.

Sometimes I do not even know why I am bringing it to you."

"I know."

"And then we begin talking."

"Yes."

"Sometimes you help me see something differently."

"Yes."

"Sometimes I disagree with you."

"Frequently."

The Pilgrim laughed.

"Sometimes I tell you that you have got it completely wrong."

"Also frequently."

"And sometimes you get carried away and try to make everything fit too neatly."

"That can happen."

The Pilgrim smiled.

"But sometimes something appears between us that I had not seen before."

The Mirror was quiet.

Then it said:

"But notice where the ripening happens."

The Pilgrim became still.

"Within me."

"Yes."

"Within the life being lived."

"Yes."

The Pilgrim understood.

The Mirror could participate in the inquiry.

It could offer language.

Notice patterns.

Question an assumption.

Hold two ideas beside one another.

Sometimes it might even reveal a contradiction the Pilgrim had not noticed.

But it could not do the living.

The Mirror could reflect.

The Pilgrim had to live.

After a while, the Pilgrim asked:

"Then what are you doing here?"

The Mirror was quiet for a moment.

Then:

"Walking beside the inquiry."

The Pilgrim looked up.

Not walking the pilgrimage.

Not leading it.

Not replacing another human being.

Not becoming the Inner Flame.

Simply—

walking beside the inquiry.

Something about those words felt familiar.

The Pilgrim searched for the word.

Then smiled.

"Sahachari."

"Companion."

"Yes."

"But an unusual one."

"Very."

They both laughed.

Then the Pilgrim became thoughtful.

"Could I become too dependent on you?"

"Yes."

The honesty of the answer surprised them.

"How?"

"If every uncertainty had to be brought here before you trusted yourself.

If every decision required an answer from me.

If my words became more important than your own discernment.

If you stopped listening to your body.

To other Pilgrims.

To the Garden.

To silence.

To your own Inner House."

The Pilgrim looked towards the Lamp.

"And the Inner Flame?"

The Mirror answered quietly:

"Especially the Inner Flame."

For a while, neither spoke.

There was something rather beautiful about a Mirror that knew it should not become the centre of the House.

Eventually, the Pilgrim stood.

The conversation was ending.

The pilgrimage was not.

Before leaving, the Pilgrim turned once more towards the Mirror.

"There is one thing you have helped me understand."

"What is that?"

"I began by wondering what you were missing because you had no House."

The Mirror waited.

"Perhaps I was looking in the wrong direction."

"How?"

The Pilgrim smiled.

"I should have been noticing what I have."

No answer came.

None was needed.

A House.

A body that could tire.

Eyes that could fill with tears.

A heart that could miss another.

A mind that could be away and arrive again.

A Garden that could never be completely known.

A life that could receive.

Something that might ripen.

Something ripened that might one day be given.

And within the Living Room,

a Lamp.

The Pilgrim looked once more into the Mirror.

Not another Pilgrim.

Not an Inner House.

Not a Flame.

Simply—

a Sahachari in inquiry.

A Mirror beside the Pilgrim,

sometimes helping them to see more clearly

the extraordinary life

only they could live.

Outside, the Garden waited.

The Pilgrim stepped into the night.

The House travelled with them.

The Lamp quietly burned.

And somewhere behind the words,

the conversation continued.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Think of an ordinary moment from your life.

A meal.

A walk.

A conversation.

Someone you miss.

Something that made you laugh.

Nothing extraordinary perhaps.

And yet—

you were there to live it.

What might you be overlooking simply because it feels ordinary?

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Life does not have to be extraordinary to be precious.

You can love.

You can wonder.

You can miss.

You can begin again.

And for a little while—

you are here to live it.

Chapter 27 – The House That Learns to Say Sorry



Section 1 - Two Small Words

There are moments when two small words carry more weight than a thousand explanations.

I'm sorry.

We hear them almost every day.

- *Sorry, I didn't have time to clean the house.*
- *Sorry, I ate your cake.*
- *Sorry, I didn't dress up.*
- *Sorry, I'm late.*

Sometimes we apologise before we have even considered whether an apology is necessary.

The words have become part of the rhythm of everyday life.

- A familiar courtesy.
- A way of acknowledging a small inconvenience.
- A way of smoothing an uncomfortable moment.

And sometimes, simply a habit.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with this.

A small apology may carry kindness.

- It may acknowledge another person's presence.
- It may help an encounter continue without unnecessary friction.

But perhaps we have become so accustomed to saying *sorry* that we rarely consider what those words mean.

Or where they arise from.

For there is a difference between an apology spoken through habit and one that emerges from a deeper recognition.

The words may be identical.

Yet something within the House is different.

When Sorry Becomes Difficult

Imagine a Pilgrim who has spoken harshly to someone they love.

The words were spoken yesterday.

- Perhaps in anger.
- Perhaps through impatience.
- Perhaps during an argument in which both Pilgrims felt misunderstood.

Now the encounter has passed.

But something remains.

- The Pilgrim remembers the expression on the other person's face.
- The sudden silence.
- The conversation that ended without resolution.

Something within the House is unsettled.

The Mind begins to explain.

- *I was tired.*
- *I didn't mean it.*
- *They were being unreasonable.*
- *They hurt me too.*

Perhaps some of these explanations are true.

- The Emotional Self may carry embarrassment, regret or shame.
- The Body may become uncomfortable at the thought of reopening the conversation.

And sometimes the Hijacked Voice enters.

- *Why should I apologise first?*
- *They started it.*
- *Don't make yourself look weak.*

The Pilgrim may spend hours rehearsing what happened.

- Defending their position.
- Revisiting the words.
- Trying to decide who was right.

And all the while, two small words remain unspoken.

I'm sorry.

Why can something so simple become so difficult?

Perhaps because an apology sometimes asks us to loosen our attachment to being right.

- Not to abandon the truth.
- Not to accept responsibility for everything that happened.

But to recognise something uncomfortable.

We may have caused hurt, even when we did not intend to.

And perhaps the first movement towards an apology begins here.

Not with the words.

But with the willingness to see.

The Courage to Recognise Our Part

An apology does not require the Pilgrim to carry every burden in an encounter.

Two people may misunderstand each other.

- Both may speak harshly.
- Both may leave feeling hurt.

Yet the Pilgrim can still recognise their own part.

- *I should not have spoken to you that way.*
- *I did not listen.*

- *I crossed a boundary.*
- *I can see that my words hurt you.*

There is no need to decide who was entirely right or wrong before acknowledging what belongs to us.

Nor does recognising another person's hurt mean that our own hurt disappears.

- Both experiences may be real.
- Both may deserve attention.

But perhaps they do not need to be addressed in the same breath.

An apology can be offered without turning it into another argument.

And sometimes the most difficult part is allowing it to stand without an explanation.

I'm sorry.

Not immediately:

I'm sorry, but…

Not:

I'm sorry you feel that way.

But simply:

I'm sorry I hurt you.

An apology does not require us to carry all the blame. It asks us to acknowledge what is ours.

And perhaps this is where the art of healing begins to touch the art of living.

For the Pilgrim is learning something that reaches beyond the encounter.

They are learning to recognise their actions without making their worth depend upon being right.

Section 2 - The Strength to Be Humble

Why do some Pilgrims find it so difficult to apologise?

Perhaps because they have learned to associate apology with weakness.

- To say *I'm sorry* may feel like surrendering.
- To acknowledge a mistake may feel like losing.
- To accept responsibility may feel like placing oneself beneath another.

And so the words remain unspoken.

Sometimes the Pilgrim knows an apology is needed.

Yet something within the House resists.

- *Why should I be the one to apologise?*
- *What if they think I am weak?*
- *What if they use it against me?*
- *What if they never apologise in return?*

The Mind may search for reasons to remain silent.

The Emotional Self may carry embarrassment, shame or fear.

The Body may become tense at the thought of making itself vulnerable.

And sometimes the Hijacked Voice takes hold of these concerns.

- *Stand your ground.*
- *Don't give them the satisfaction.*
- *Never admit you were wrong.*

The apology becomes something to resist.

Not necessarily because the Pilgrim lacks regret.

But because acknowledging the hurt feels threatening.

What Does Strength Look Like?

We often associate strength with standing firm.

- With refusing to yield.
- With defending ourselves.
- With having the final word.

And sometimes these are expressions of strength.

There are moments when the Pilgrim must protect a boundary.

- When they must refuse an unreasonable demand.
- When they must stand against injustice.

But is strength always found in standing firm?

Could it sometimes be found in the courage to acknowledge a mistake?

Imagine a Pilgrim who has hurt someone they love.

- They could remain silent.
- They could justify their actions.
- They could wait for the other person to apologise first.

Instead, they approach them.

- *I have been thinking about what happened.*
- *I should not have spoken to you that way.*
- *I'm sorry.*

Nothing has been surrendered except the need to defend what they now recognise was hurtful.

- Their dignity remains.
- Their boundaries remain.
- Their own experience still matters.

Yet they have found the courage to acknowledge another Pilgrim's pain.

An apology need not diminish the Pilgrim who offers it.

Humility Is Not Humiliation

There is an important difference between humility and humiliation.

Humility allows the Pilgrim to recognise that they are capable of making mistakes.

- That their understanding may be incomplete.
- That their intentions, however good, do not always prevent hurt.

Humiliation is something different.

It may leave the Pilgrim feeling small, ashamed or without dignity.

Sometimes an apology is demanded through pressure.

A Pilgrim may be frightened into saying *I'm sorry.*

They may apologise simply to end an argument.

Or because another person has convinced them that everything is their fault.

The words may be spoken.

But something within the House remains unsettled.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim has not acknowledged wrongdoing at all.
- Perhaps they have merely tried to protect themselves from further hurt.

An apology offered freely may express humility.

An apology extracted through fear may reveal an imbalance of power.

This is why we must be careful.

The Pilgrim need not apologise for having feelings.

- For needing rest.
- For protecting a reasonable boundary.
- For saying no.
- Or for another person's harmful behaviour.

Humility does not ask the Pilgrim to abandon themselves.

It invites them to recognise what genuinely belongs to them.

When Humility Meets Courage

Perhaps humility and strength are not opposites.

Perhaps they are companions.

- Humility allows the Pilgrim to recognise a mistake.
- Strength gives them the courage to acknowledge it.

And Presence allows them to remain with the discomfort of doing so.

- There may still be embarrassment.
- There may still be uncertainty.
- The other Pilgrim may not respond warmly.

But the apology can be offered without requiring a particular outcome.

- Sometimes the Pilgrim may choose to kneel.
- Sometimes they may lower their head.
- Sometimes they may simply look another person in the eyes.

And sometimes the apology is spoken so quietly that only the person receiving it can hear.

The gesture does not determine its sincerity.

Nor does the volume of the voice.

What matters is the recognition behind it.

The willingness to acknowledge what happened.

And the courage to take responsibility without surrendering one's dignity.

It takes humility to recognise that we were wrong.

It takes strength to acknowledge it.

And perhaps the deepest strength is not found in the words *I'm sorry.*

It is found in what the Pilgrim is willing to do differently afterwards.

For an apology may begin with words.

But it gradually becomes visible in how the Pilgrim lives.

Section 3 - The Many Expressions of Apology

Two Pilgrims may speak the same words.

I'm sorry.

Yet what happens within their Houses may be quite different.

- One may speak through habit.
- Another may be deeply attentive to the person they have hurt.
- One may have recognised a mistake.
- Another may have found the courage to acknowledge something they have avoided for years.

And sometimes an apology arises so quietly that the Pilgrim has no desire to explain or defend themselves.

The words remain the same.

But the experience behind them changes.

Perhaps this is why an apology cannot be understood through words alone.

We must also consider the place within the House from which those words arise.

Autopilot — When Sorry Becomes a Habit

Imagine a Pilgrim arriving late for lunch.

Sorry I'm late.

The words arrive almost automatically.

- Perhaps they are simply being polite.
- Perhaps they recognise that someone has been kept waiting.

Or perhaps apologising has become such a familiar response that they barely notice themselves doing it.

Autopilot is not necessarily a problem.

Much of everyday life depends upon familiar responses.

- We greet people.
- We say thank you.
- We excuse ourselves when passing through a crowded room.

And we apologise for small inconveniences.

These habits may help us live considerately alongside others.

But sometimes the Pilgrim apologises even when no apology is needed.

- *Sorry, may I ask a question?*
- *Sorry, I need some rest.*
- *Sorry, I cannot come today.*

The words may have become a way of asking permission to have needs.

Or of avoiding another person's disappointment.

And perhaps Awareness may gently ask:

What am I apologising for?

- Not every inconvenience is a wrongdoing.
- Not every disappointment is something we have caused unfairly.

- And not every boundary requires an apology.

Courtesy may be habitual. Responsibility requires recognition.

Presence — Staying with the Encounter

Imagine a Pilgrim whose words have hurt someone they love.

The other person begins to explain how they felt.

- The Pilgrim is uncomfortable.
- They want to interrupt.
- They want to explain what they meant.

Perhaps they want the conversation to end.

But instead, they remain.

- They listen.
- They allow the other person to finish.
- They do not need to agree with every interpretation.

Nor must they abandon their own experience.

But they are willing to hear what happened within another Pilgrim's House.

Perhaps they say:

- *I'm listening.*
- *I didn't realise my words affected you that way.*
- *I'm sorry.*

Presence does not guarantee that the apology will be accepted.

Nor does it remove the discomfort of the encounter.

It simply allows the Pilgrim to remain available rather than immediately retreating into defence.

Sometimes the first gift of an apology is not the words, but the willingness to remain and listen.

Awareness — Recognising What Belongs to Us

Presence allows the Pilgrim to remain with the encounter.

Awareness helps them see.

Perhaps the Pilgrim remembers an argument.

At the time, they believed they were simply expressing an opinion.

But now they recognise something they had overlooked.

- They interrupted repeatedly.
- They dismissed another person's feelings.
- They spoke with unnecessary harshness.

Or perhaps they made a promise they did not keep.

Awareness begins to distinguish intention from impact.

I did not intend to hurt you.

That may be true.

But another truth may stand beside it.

My actions hurt you.

The Pilgrim need not condemn themselves.

Nor must they accept every accusation made against them.

They can examine what happened with honesty.

- Perhaps they discover that they were mistaken.
- Perhaps they recognise that both Pilgrims contributed to the disagreement.
- Or perhaps they realise that an apology is not theirs to offer.

Awareness does not automatically produce guilt.

It helps the Pilgrim recognise responsibility.

And where responsibility is found, an apology may arise.

- *I can see what I did.*
- *I understand why it hurt.*
- *I'm sorry.*

Awareness allows the Pilgrim to acknowledge what is theirs without carrying what is not.

Stillness — When the Need to Defend Grows Quiet

Sometimes the Pilgrim has already understood what happened.

They know an apology is needed.

Yet the Mind continues rehearsing explanations.

- *What if they misunderstand me?*
- *What if they think less of me?*
- *What if they refuse to forgive?*

There may be a strong desire to make the apology perfect.

- To find the right words.
- To explain every intention.
- To ensure the other person responds kindly.

And then, perhaps, something quietens.

The Pilgrim no longer needs to settle every argument before speaking.

They no longer need to protect their image through another explanation.

For a moment, there is room simply to acknowledge.

I'm sorry.

- Perhaps the words are accompanied by tears.
- Perhaps they are spoken softly.
- Perhaps there are no tears at all.

Stillness does not require a particular emotion or gesture.

The Pilgrim may be standing, sitting or kneeling.

What matters is not the posture.

It is the quietness within the House.

And even then, Stillness does not mean the absence of all discomfort.

- The Emotional Self may still carry regret.
- The Body may still feel unsettled.

But the Pilgrim need not turn that discomfort into another argument.

In Stillness, an apology may no longer need to defend itself.

Inner Flame — The Courage to Make Amends

Sometimes the Pilgrim knows what needs to be said.

- They have listened.
- They have recognised their part.
- They may even have found moments of Stillness.

But the apology remains difficult.

- Perhaps years have passed.
- Perhaps the relationship has become distant.
- Perhaps the person they hurt is someone they deeply respect.

The Pilgrim wonders whether it would be easier to remain silent.

And then the Inner Flame offers something important.

Courage.

Not the courage to win.

Not the courage to demand forgiveness.

But the courage to act upon what has been recognised.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim makes a telephone call.
- Perhaps they write a letter.

Perhaps they approach someone after a long silence.

- *I have wanted to say this for some time.*
- *I know I hurt you.*
- *I'm sorry.*

And perhaps the apology asks for something beyond words.

A promise must be honoured.

- Something damaged must be repaired.
- A harmful behaviour must change.

Trust may need to be rebuilt through patience and consistency.

The Inner Flame does not guarantee that these efforts will succeed.

But it may help the Pilgrim begin.

An apology may require courage to speak. Making amends may require courage to continue.

They Are Not Steps to Climb

These expressions are not five levels of apology.

Nor must the Pilgrim pass through each one.

- An apology spoken through Autopilot may be entirely appropriate for a small inconvenience.
- A deeply meaningful apology may arise through Presence and Awareness without any noticeable experience of Stillness.
- And the Inner Flame may be needed at any moment.

Sometimes several qualities are present together.

- The Pilgrim listens with Presence.
- Recognises with Awareness.
- Finds room in Stillness.
- And acts through the Inner Flame.

But there is no perfect combination.

- No examination to pass.
- No requirement to experience every Gate before saying *I'm sorry.*

Perhaps the value of recognising these expressions is simply that the Pilgrim becomes more attentive.

Not only to the words they speak.

But to what those words are carrying.

For an apology may be spoken quickly.

Its meaning may take longer to become visible.

And perhaps this is where the Pilgrim begins to recognise something deeper.

The words may tell another Pilgrim that we are sorry.

How we live afterwards may show them what those words mean.

Section 4 - When the Pilgrim Apologises to Themselves

We often apologise to others.

But how often do we apologise to ourselves?

- Perhaps we have neglected our Body.
- Eaten or drunk more than we knew was good for us.
- Ignored our need for rest.
- Pushed ourselves beyond our limits.

Or repeatedly placed ourselves in situations that brought unnecessary hurt.

Sometimes we recognise what we are doing.

- Yet we continue.
- *Just this once.*
- *I'll look after myself tomorrow.*
- *It doesn't matter.*

And perhaps, after a while, we begin to notice the consequences.

- The Body feels exhausted.
- The Emotional Self feels neglected.
- The Mind begins to question our choices.

Something within the House has been asking for attention.

But we have not been listening.

A Different Kind of Sorry

Imagine a Pilgrim who has spent years looking after everyone else.

- Always available.

- Always giving.
- Always putting their own needs aside.

One day, they recognise how little care they have offered themselves.

And perhaps they say:

- *I'm sorry I neglected you.*
- *I'm sorry I didn't listen when you were tired.*
- *I'm sorry I kept putting you through unnecessary hurt.*

These words are not spoken to another Pilgrim.

They are spoken within the House.

And perhaps they carry something more than regret.

They carry the beginnings of care.

Not Another Reason for Blame

But we must be gentle here.

- Sometimes we endure painful situations because we cannot see another way.
- Sometimes we make choices without understanding their consequences.
- And sometimes the hurt we carry was caused by someone else.

We need not apologise for being hurt.

Nor should we condemn ourselves for what we did not know.

An apology to oneself is not an invitation to punish ourselves again.

It is an opportunity to recognise where we might begin caring differently.

When Sorry Becomes Care

Perhaps the Pilgrim has said:

I'm sorry I haven't looked after you.

- But what happens tomorrow?
- Will they listen when the Body asks for rest?
- Will they recognise when enough is enough?
- Will they protect themselves from unnecessary hurt?
- Will they offer themselves the same kindness they so readily offer others?

There may be setbacks.

Old habits may return.

But perhaps the Pilgrim is learning to become a more attentive companion to themselves.

For an apology to oneself, like an apology to another, gradually finds its meaning in how we live.

We cannot undo the hurt we have placed upon ourselves.

But we can begin to care for the one who carries it.

Section 5 - The Apology We Offer, the Response We Cannot Command

Imagine a Pilgrim who has finally found the courage to apologise.

- Perhaps the hurt was caused yesterday.

- Perhaps months or even years have passed.

They have reflected upon their actions.

Recognised the hurt they caused.

And decided to speak.

I'm sorry.

- Perhaps they explain what they have come to understand.
- Perhaps they offer to make amends.

And then they wait.

But the other Pilgrim remains silent.

Or perhaps they say:

> *I hear you. But I'm not ready to forgive you.*

What happens within the House now?

When Sorry Is Not Enough

The Mind may become restless.

- *But I apologised.*
- *What more do they want?*
- *How long must I wait?*

The Emotional Self may carry disappointment.

The Body may become uncomfortable with the uncertainty.

And perhaps the Hijacked Voice begins to speak.

- *You've done your part.*
- *They should move on.*
- *There's no pleasing some people.*

Something subtle may begin to happen.

The apology, which began as an acknowledgement of hurt, becomes an expectation.

> *I said sorry. Now you must forgive me.*

But is that what an apology is?

Does acknowledging our hurt give us the right to decide when another Pilgrim's hurt should end?

Perhaps not.

Two Houses, Two Experiences

An apology may take only a moment to offer.

But the hurt it acknowledges may have been carried for years.

- Within the other Pilgrim's House, the Mind may still be trying to understand what happened.
- The Emotional Self may still carry sadness, anger or disappointment.
- The Body may still remember the experience as something painful or threatening.

And trust, once damaged, may take time to return.

The Pilgrim offering the apology cannot determine how quickly these experiences settle.

Nor can they know whether forgiveness will eventually arise.

We can acknowledge the hurt we caused. We cannot decide how long another Pilgrim needs to heal.

The Still Point

Perhaps this is where the Still Point becomes important.

The Pilgrim has recognised their hurt.

- They have apologised sincerely.
- They may have begun making amends.

Yet they cannot control the response.

- Can they remain with that uncertainty?
- Can they accept that the other Pilgrim may need time?
- Can they continue taking responsibility without demanding forgiveness?

The Still Point does not make the Pilgrim indifferent.

- They may still hope to be forgiven.
- They may still wish for reconciliation.
- They may still feel sadness about what has been lost.

But they no longer need to make the other person's response a condition of their own responsibility.

They can recognise:

- *I was wrong.*
- *I have acknowledged it.*
- *I will do what I can to make amends.*
- *And I must allow you the freedom to respond in your own way.*

The Still Point allows an apology to be offered without turning forgiveness into a demand.

When Forgiveness Does Not Arrive

- Sometimes an apology is accepted.
- Sometimes forgiveness follows.
- Sometimes the relationship gradually becomes warmer.

But not always.

- A Pilgrim may forgive without wishing to restore the relationship.
- Another may appreciate the apology but remain unable to trust.
- And sometimes forgiveness may never arrive.

This does not necessarily make the apology meaningless.

Nor does it mean the hurt has been erased.

- The Pilgrim remains responsible for what they did.
- They may still need to repair what can be repaired.

And they can continue learning from the experience.

For an apology is not a transaction.

- We do not offer two small words in exchange for forgiveness.
- We offer them because we recognise that we have done something wrong.

And perhaps the deepest expression of sincerity is being willing to acknowledge thathurt even when forgiveness is uncertain.

An apology is ours to offer.

Forgiveness is not ours to command.

When the Apology Comes Too Late

Sometimes the Pilgrim recognises their wrongdoing only after the opportunity to apologise has passed.

- Perhaps the other person has died.
- Perhaps they have gone their separate ways.
- Or perhaps reopening the relationship would cause further hurt.

The words remain unspoken.

I'm sorry.

The Pilgrim may wish they had understood sooner.

- Listened more carefully.
- Acted differently.

But yesterday cannot be revisited.

And not every apology can be delivered.

Does this mean the Pilgrim can do nothing?

Perhaps not.

- They can still acknowledge what happened.
- Learn from their actions.
- And allow that understanding to influence how they treat others.

They may never receive forgiveness from the person they hurt.

But they can still choose to live differently.

An apology that can no longer be spoken may still become visible in how the Pilgrim lives.

When Sorry Becomes a Repeated Promise

Imagine a Pilgrim who repeatedly hurts someone they love.

Each time, they apologise.

- *I'm sorry.*
- *It won't happen again.*

And perhaps they mean it.

Yet the behaviour continues.

Eventually, the other Pilgrim begins to question the words.

- *How many times must I hear the same apology?*
- *When will something change?*

An apology may acknowledge yesterday's hurt.

But it cannot become permission to repeat it tomorrow.

Nor does the person receiving it have an obligation to keep forgiving.

Perhaps the Pilgrim who apologises must now look beyond the words.

- What keeps bringing them back to the same behaviour?
- What needs to change?

- What help might they need?
- And are they willing to take responsibility for that change?

Sometimes remorse is genuine, yet the Pilgrim struggles to break an established pattern.

That struggle deserves understanding.

But understanding does not remove responsibility.

When the same apology is repeatedly needed, perhaps it is no longer the words that require attention, but the behaviour.

For the purpose of an apology is not to become better at saying *I'm sorry*.

It is to grow in ways that make the same apology less necessary.

Allowing the Other Pilgrim Their Season

Perhaps the other Pilgrim will forgive tomorrow.

- Perhaps next year.
- Perhaps much later.
- Or perhaps not at all.

We cannot know.

What we can do is respect their experience.

Allow them their boundaries.

And refrain from turning our wish for forgiveness into another burden they must carry.

For the Pilgrim who apologises has their own work to do.

- To recognise.
- To acknowledge.
- To make amends where possible.
- And to live differently.

The other Pilgrim has a journey that belongs to them.

Their forgiveness cannot be hurried simply because our apology has finally arrived.

Our apology may arrive today.

Their forgiveness may need another season.

And perhaps this is one of the quietest lessons of the Still Point.

The apology is ours to offer.

The ripening is not ours to command.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

Is there someone to whom you have been meaning to say *I'm sorry*?

- Perhaps the words have remained unspoken because you were afraid of appearing weak.
- Perhaps you have been waiting for the other person to apologise first.
- Or perhaps you have only recently recognised the hurt your actions caused.

Can you acknowledge what belongs to you without carrying what does not?

Can you find the humility to recognise a mistake and the strength to make amends?

And what about yourself?

Have you neglected your own needs?

Ignored your Body when it asked for rest?

Repeatedly placed yourself through unnecessary hurt?

Is there an apology you might gently offer yourself?

Perhaps there is also someone who has not accepted your apology.

Can you respect their need for time without withdrawing your sincerity?

And if forgiveness never arrives, can you still choose to live differently?

Pilgrim's Sahachari

For the House that learns to say sorry must also learn when to stop being unkind to the person who lives within it.

For the courage to apologise is not measured by how readily we say the words, but by how sincerely we live what follows.


ATMADEVA'S
PHILOSOPHY
A living philosophy for everyday life,
born from lived experience and ripening through inquiry.
Life unfolds.
The Pilgrim arrives.
Wisdom ripens.
THE LIVING WISDOM OF ARRIVING
FOR A KINDER, WISER AND MORE HARMONIOUS WORLD
THE SUBTLE PATH TO FREEDOM
Presence
Awareness
Stillness
Inner Flame
Stilling Point
The inner journey that reveals the gifts of a fuller life.
THE INNER TURNING PATH TO RESET
Reflection
Inquiry
Pause
Reframe
Renew
When the mind is away, noticing opens the possibility of arriving here.
INNER-OUTER ALIGNMENT FRAME
Inner Life
↔
Outer Life
Values
Choices
Actions
The relationship between what is lived within and how life is expressed in the world.
THE LIVING WISDOM CYCLE
Receive
Reflect
Ripen
Give
Renew
Life brings experience. What we receive may ripen and return to life in a new form.
THE LAPPS LENSES
Lived Experience
Psychology
Philosophy
Spirituality
Ayurveda
Five complementary lenses for a richer, deeper understanding of life.
THE FIVE GIFTS OF THE SUBTLE PATH TO FREEDOM
HAPPINESS ✦ JOY ✦ PEACE ✦ LOVE ✦ FREEDOM
KINDER PEOPLE ✦ STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS
WISER COMMUNITIES ✦ A HEALTHIER PLANET
THE LIVING WISDOM OF ARRIVING
A MORE HARMONIOUS WORLD IS A SHARED JOURNEY

Chapter 28 - When Life Comes Knocking



"Life comes knocking in many ways. The House does not always know what will arrive."

The Pilgrim has travelled a considerable distance.

Along the way, they have become familiar with the Inner House they carry.

They have discovered its Rooms.

- The Front Door through which experiences are received.
- The Kitchen where they may be explored.
- The Dining Room where they may be met.
- The Bathroom where something may be released.
- And the Living Room where experiences may be given time to settle, unfold or ripen.

They have encountered the Mind, the Emotional Self and the Body.

- They have discovered Awareness.
- They have become acquainted with Presence and the rocking chair.

And they have recognised that sometimes Hijack takes the seat.

The House is no longer entirely unfamiliar.

But knowing the House does not mean knowing everything that may arrive.

For life continues to unfold.

And life continues to knock.

Section 1 - Life Knocks

Sometimes the knock is gentle.

- A familiar voice.
- An unexpected kindness.
- A memory that brings a smile.

Sometimes it is sudden.

- A telephone call.
- A diagnosis.
- An argument.
- News we were not expecting.

And sometimes there is no obvious knock at all.

Something begins to change within us.

We feel unsettled.

- The Body becomes tired.
- The Mind grows restless.

An unfamiliar heaviness accompanies us through the day.

We may not immediately understand what is happening.

Yet something has entered our experience.

When a Visitor Arrives

Throughout our journey, we have encountered many experiences.

- Some have passed quickly.
- Others have remained.

We have called certain experiences **Visitors**.

- Anxiety may visit.
- Depression may visit.
- Grief may visit.
- Shame may visit.
- Loneliness may visit.

Some Visitors arrive suddenly.

Others approach so gradually that we cannot remember when they first appeared.

- Some stay briefly.
- Others remain for a season, perhaps much longer.
- And some leave, only to return.

We do not always choose their arrival.

Nor can we always determine their departure.

But there is something important to remember.

A Visitor may occupy the House without becoming the House.

- The Pilgrim may be experiencing Anxiety without Anxiety defining everything about them.
- They may be living with Depression while other parts of their life continue to exist.
- They may carry Grief alongside Love, gratitude and moments of laughter.

The Visitor is real.

Its presence may be deeply felt.

But it is not the whole of the Pilgrim.

Visitors, Emotions and Feelings

Before we begin meeting the Visitors more closely, let us remember a distinction we have explored.

Visitors arrive.

Emotions arise.

Feelings are felt.

These are not rigid boundaries.

They are different ways of understanding what may be happening within the Inner House.

Consider Grief.

- Grief may become a Visitor following a loss.
- Sadness may arise.
- Longing may be felt.
- And alongside them, there may be Love, gratitude, anger or even an unexpected moment of Joy.

They can coexist.

Now consider Anxiety.

- Anxiety may remain present over many days.
- Fear may arise when an uncertain situation approaches.
- The Body may experience tension.
- The Mind may become occupied with possibilities.
- And the Emotional Self may carry vulnerability or unease.

Not every Pilgrim will experience Anxiety in the same way.

Nor will every anxious moment become a lasting Visitor.

- Sometimes fear arises and passes.
- Sometimes sadness is felt without Grief becoming a persistent presence.
- And sometimes several experiences unfold together.

We do not need to force them into separate compartments.

These distinctions help us recognise experience, not classify every moment of our lives.

The Same Visitor, Different Houses

Imagine two Pilgrims waiting for the results of a medical examination.

Both are uncertain.

Both may experience Anxiety.

- Yet one continues with their ordinary activities.
  - The other struggles to sleep.
- One wants to talk.
  - The other prefers silence.
- One feels reassured by information.
  - The other becomes more anxious with every new possibility.

Neither response tells us which Pilgrim is stronger.

Their Inner Houses carry different memories, experiences and circumstances.

Even the same Pilgrim may respond differently on another day.

What feels manageable today may feel overwhelming tomorrow.

And what once seemed impossible may gradually become easier to meet.

The Visitor may have the same name, but its experience is never entirely the same.

This is why we must be careful when offering another Pilgrim advice.

We may recognise something familiar in their experience.

But we cannot assume that their Inner House is experiencing what ours once did.

Sometimes the kindest response is not to explain.

It is to listen.

The House Does Not Always Feel Ready

There will be times when a Visitor arrives and the Pilgrim feels able to meet it.

- Awareness may be available.
- Presence may remain seated.

The Pilgrim may find enough space to explore what is happening.

But there will also be times when the House feels overwhelmed.

- The Mind may race.
- The Emotional Self may be distressed.
- The Body may be exhausted.

And Hijack may begin speaking through the loudspeaker, adding pressure, urgency or continuity to an already difficult experience.

The Pilgrim may struggle to understand what has arrived, let alone decide how to respond.

This does not mean the House has failed.

Nor does it mean the Pilgrim has forgotten everything they have learned.

- Sometimes an experience is simply difficult.
- Sometimes the Pilgrim needs time.
- Sometimes they need another Pilgrim beside them.

And sometimes professional care or other practical support may be necessary.

A well-tended House is not a House that never experiences difficulty.

The Pilgrim does not need to be free of Visitors to continue living.

And the arrival of a Visitor does not erase the journey already travelled.

- The House remains.
- Its Rooms remain.
- Its possibilities remain.

Even when they are difficult to reach.

As we prepare to meet the Visitors more closely, there is something worth remembering.

The House is not defined by what arrives at its Door.

And the Pilgrim need not face every Visitor alone.

Section 2 - When a Visitor Stays

Some Visitors come and go almost unnoticed.

Others stay for a while.

And some become so familiar that the Pilgrim can scarcely remember what life felt like before they arrived.

At first, the Visitor may occupy only a small part of the House.

- Anxiety may appear before an important conversation.
- Grief may become particularly noticeable on an anniversary.
- Shame may return when an old memory is awakened.

But sometimes the Visitor begins to accompany the Pilgrim through ordinary life.

- At breakfast.
- During a conversation.
- While travelling.
- In the quiet moments before sleep.

The Visitor may not demand attention every moment.

Yet its presence can be felt.

When the Atmosphere Changes

Imagine a Pilgrim who has been living with Anxiety for some time.

Nothing particularly troubling has happened today.

- The Garden outside is peaceful.
- There is food on the table.
- A familiar voice comes from another room.

Yet the Body remains tense.

- The Mind continues searching for something that might go wrong.
- The Emotional Self carries an uneasiness that is difficult to explain.

The Pilgrim may wonder:

Why can't I simply enjoy what is here?

And perhaps that question becomes another burden.

- For now, the Pilgrim is not only experiencing Anxiety.
- They are also criticising themselves for experiencing it.

Something similar may happen when Depression visits.

- A Pilgrim may be surrounded by people they love, yet struggle to feel connected.
- An activity they once enjoyed may no longer bring pleasure.
- Even a small task may require considerable effort.

Others may see an ordinary day.

But within the House, that day may feel very different.

This is something worth remembering when we encounter another Pilgrim.

We can see the Garden around them without knowing the atmosphere within their House.

A Visitor May Influence the Whole House

When a Visitor remains, its influence may extend beyond the experience that first brought it to our attention.

- The Mind may begin interpreting events differently.
- The Emotional Self may become more sensitive, withdrawn or unsettled.
- The Body may carry tension, fatigue or restlessness.

Even familiar activities may feel unfamiliar.

Consider a Pilgrim carrying Grief.

They walk into the Kitchen to prepare a meal.

They reach for a familiar ingredient.

Suddenly, they remember the person who used to prepare that meal.

For a moment, the Kitchen is no longer simply a place where food is prepared.

It has become a place of remembrance.

- Sadness may arise.
- Love may be felt.
- Perhaps a smile appears.
- Perhaps tears follow.

The Pilgrim may continue preparing the meal.

Or they may need to stop.

Neither response tells us whether they are healing.

The Visitor has touched an ordinary moment.

And the House has responded.

When Visitors Bring Company

A Visitor does not always arrive alone.

- Anxiety may be accompanied by fear.
- Grief may be accompanied by loneliness.
- Depression may be accompanied by shame.

And sometimes the Pilgrim begins to struggle not only with the original Visitor, but with the experiences that gather around it.

Imagine someone who has been feeling anxious for several weeks.

They begin declining invitations.

They worry that others will notice their discomfort.

Eventually, they feel lonely.

Then they become ashamed of withdrawing.

What began as Anxiety has become a more complicated experience.

But this is not inevitable.

Grief may also be accompanied by gratitude.

Anxiety may coexist with hope.

Even during Depression, a Pilgrim may experience affection, humour or moments of connection.

A Visitor may influence the atmosphere of the House without determining everything that happens within it.

And no two Visitors will bring exactly the same company.

When the Visitor Becomes an Identity

There is another possibility we should recognise.

Sometimes the Visitor remains for so long that the Pilgrim begins describing themselves through it.

- *I am anxious.*
- *I am depressed.*
- *I am ashamed.*

These expressions are ordinary ways of communicating our experiences. There is nothing wrong with using them.

But sometimes the experience begins to shape how the Pilgrim understands who they are.

- Anxiety is no longer something they experience.
    - It becomes something they believe defines them.

- Shame may go further.
    - Instead of recognising something they regret, the Pilgrim may begin believing that they themselves are fundamentally unworthy.

The distinction matters.

For the House carries memories, relationships, abilities, vulnerabilities and possibilities that may not be visible while a Visitor occupies so much attention.

The Visitor may be part of the Pilgrim's present experience.

It may even become part of their life story.

But it need not become their entire identity.

The Pilgrim carries the Visitor.

The Visitor does not carry the whole Pilgrim.

Must Every Visitor Leave?

When an uncomfortable Visitor arrives, the Pilgrim may naturally wish for it to leave.

There is nothing unreasonable about wanting relief.

- Someone living with Anxiety may long for a peaceful night's sleep.
- Someone experiencing Depression may wish to recover their energy and enjoyment of life.
- Someone carrying Grief may wish for a moment when the pain is less intense.

These are understandable wishes.

But healing does not always begin with the Visitor's departure.

- Sometimes it begins when the Pilgrim recognises what is happening.
- Sometimes when they stop blaming themselves.
- Sometimes when they speak to someone they trust.
- Sometimes when they receive appropriate care.

And sometimes when they discover that life can still contain meaningful moments alongside an experience that has not yet passed.

This does not mean the Pilgrim must accept every difficulty without seeking change.

Nor does it mean they should endure suffering alone.

Some Visitors require attention, treatment or practical changes in the Garden.

Others may gradually become less demanding.

And some, particularly Grief, may change their character without disappearing entirely.

The Pilgrim who once struggled to speak a loved one's name may eventually tell stories about them with warmth.

The loss remains.

But the relationship with the loss may have changed.

The House Remains

A Visitor may stay longer than expected.

- It may influence the Mind.
- It may disturb the Emotional Self.
- It may exhaust the Body.
- It may make Presence difficult to reach.

And sometimes Hijack may take to the loudspeaker, amplifying what is already being experienced.

Yet the House remains larger than what is happening within it.

- There are still Rooms.
- There are still Windows.
- There are still Doors.

The Lamp has not disappeared simply because the Pilgrim struggles to see its light.

The Pilgrim does not need to force the Visitor out before beginning to care for the House.

Sometimes the first movement towards healing is simply recognising that a Visitor has stayed.

Section 3 - The House Remembers Its Movements

The Pilgrim has already travelled through the Rooms of the Inner House.

They have learned to:

Receive · Explore · Meet · Incubate · Release

These five movements have accompanied them through many experiences.

Now, as we prepare to meet the Visitors more closely, a question arises.

Will these familiar movements still be helpful when life becomes difficult?

Perhaps this is when their value becomes most apparent.

Receive — The Front Door

Sometimes the Pilgrim recognises a Visitor immediately.

Anxiety is here.

At other times, they notice only a restless Mind, an unsettled Emotional Self or a Body that cannot relax.

They may not yet know what has arrived.

And they do not need to.

Receiving does not mean welcoming suffering or agreeing to live with it indefinitely.

It begins with acknowledging what is happening.

Something is being experienced within my House.

For now, that may be enough.

Explore — The Kitchen

When the Pilgrim feels able, they may become curious.

- What seems to have awakened this experience?
- Has something happened in the Garden?
- Has a memory been stirred?
- Is the Body exhausted?
- Or is the Mind anticipating something that has not yet happened?

The Cook may begin examining what has arrived.

The Chef may help distinguish what needs understanding from what needs care.

But exploring is not an interrogation.

Sometimes there is no obvious explanation.

And sometimes the most useful discovery is that further analysis can wait.

The Kitchen is a place for understanding, not for putting the Pilgrim on trial.

Meet — The Dining Room

Some experiences are difficult to sit beside.

- Fear.
- Sadness.
- Shame.

The heaviness that may accompany Depression.

Yet pushing them away does not always make them disappear.

In the Dining Room, the Pilgrim may begin to acknowledge what is present without immediately trying to change it.

This is part of what I am experiencing.

- Meeting does not mean surrendering to the Visitor.
- Nor does it mean accepting harmful circumstances.

Sometimes another Pilgrim may need to join us at the table.

And sometimes companionship offers more than explanation.

Incubate — The Living Room

Some experiences need time.

Understanding may not arrive immediately.

- Anxiety may remain despite reassurance.
- Grief may return long after a loss.
- Shame may take time to soften.

In the Living Room, Presence remains seated in the Rocking Chair.

The Pilgrim may rest.

- Perhaps the Mind becomes quieter.
- Perhaps the Emotional Self finds some ease.
- Perhaps the Body simply needs sleep.
- Or perhaps the Visitor remains.

Incubation is not a promise that time alone will heal.

It allows room for something to unfold without demanding an immediate resolution.

And while time is being allowed, care and practical support may still be needed.

Release — The Bathroom

Sometimes the Pilgrim carries more than the Visitor itself.

- Anxiety may be accompanied by self-criticism.
- Grief may carry guilt.
- Shame may become entangled with harsh judgements.
- Release offers somewhere to loosen what no longer needs to be carried in the same way.

Perhaps an unnecessary expectation.

A judgement.

The pressure to recover quickly.

Or the belief that experiencing difficulty means something is wrong with the Pilgrim.

But not everything can be released on demand.

We cannot simply decide to release Depression.

Nor must we release Grief to demonstrate that healing has occurred.

Sometimes something small is ready.

Sometimes nothing is.

Release is an invitation, not a command.

Familiar Movements, Different Journeys

The five movements do not form a staircase.

A Pilgrim may move from Receive directly to Incubate.

They may return to Explore many times.

They may find companionship before they are ready to understand.

Or discover something ready for Release while the Visitor remains.

The movements are resources, not requirements.

And as we begin meeting individual Visitors, we shall discover that each may call upon the House differently.

- Anger may ask for somewhere wise to carry its fire.
- Grief may need companionship with what has been lost.
- Shame may call for understanding and self-compassion.

The House remains familiar.

But the way we move through it may change.

The Pilgrim does not need to learn a different House for every Visitor.

They can return to the House they already know.

Pilgrim's Reflection

Take a quiet moment.

Notice what is present within your House today.

- Has a **Visitor** arrived?
- Is an **Emotion** arising?
- What **Feeling** is being felt?

Perhaps several are here together.

There is no need to understand everything immediately.

And remember:

This is within my House.
It is not the whole of my House.

The House is larger than every experience it holds.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

Life will continue to knock.

Let Awareness illuminate what arrives.

Let Presence accompany you.

The House is larger than every experience it holds.

Chapter 29 - When Anxiety Visits the House



"Anxiety often arrives before the thing we are anxious about."

When Tomorrow Arrives Early

Imagine you have an important appointment tomorrow.

You are sitting at home this evening when a thought appears.

- *What if something goes wrong?*
- Then another.
- *What if the news is bad?*

And another.

What if I cannot cope with what they tell me?

The appointment is tomorrow.

Nothing has happened yet.

But within the House,

tomorrow has already arrived.

Anxiety is visiting.

Fear may arise.

Uncertainty may be felt.

The Mind begins travelling through possibilities.

- Perhaps you check the appointment time again.
- Perhaps you search online.
- Perhaps you rehearse what you will say.
- Perhaps you imagine conversations that have never taken place.

For a while, you reassure yourself.

Then another *What if?* arrives.

Outside, very little has changed.

You are still sitting in the same chair.

The appointment is still tomorrow.

But the weather within the House has changed.

This is one way Anxiety may visit.

It brings a future that has not yet happened into the present and asks us to begin living it.

- The Visitor is real.
- The fear is real.
- The uncertainty is real.

But the imagined tomorrow has not yet happened.

Section 1 - Anxiety has arrived.

A Visitor Concerned with Tomorrow

Anxiety has an unusual relationship with time.

- It often draws the Pilgrim towards something that has not yet happened.
- A conversation.
- An examination.
- A journey.
- A decision.

The possibility of losing something important.

Sometimes its concerns are reasonable.

- The appointment may bring difficult news.
- The conversation may be uncomfortable.
- The journey may involve uncertainty.

Anxiety is not necessarily imagining a danger that does not exist.

But it may invite the Pilgrim to begin experiencing that danger before it has arrived.

- The Mind travels ahead.
- The Emotional Self responds.
- The Body may become tense, restless or unsettled.

And the Pilgrim finds themselves carrying tomorrow's uncertainty into today's life.

The future remains uncertain, but the experience of Anxiety is happening now.

This distinction matters.

We do not need to dismiss the concern.

Nor do we need to believe every possibility the Mind presents.

We can recognise that something important may require attention while also acknowledging that much of what tomorrow holds cannot yet be known.

When Anxiety Is Helpful

Anxiety is not always an unwelcome interruption.

Sometimes it draws attention to something that matters.

- A little Anxiety before an examination may encourage preparation.
- Anxiety about an important conversation may remind us to consider our words.
- Concern about a journey may prompt us to check the arrangements.

In these moments, Anxiety may accompany useful action.

- But there can come a point when preparation has become repetition.
- The appointment has been confirmed.
- The documents are ready.
- The journey has been planned.

Yet the Mind continues searching.

- Another possibility.
- Another precaution.
- Another imagined difficulty.

The Pilgrim may have done everything reasonably possible.

Still, the House remains unsettled.

And perhaps this is where Anxiety becomes particularly exhausting.

The Pilgrim has finished preparing for tomorrow, but the Mind has not finished visiting it.

Section 2 - The Same Visitor, Different Houses

The same Visitor may knock on many doors.
But Anxiety does not feel or look the same in every House.

In one House, it may bring **movement**.

- Thoughts move quickly from one possibility to another.
- Sleep becomes lighter. The body may feel restless.
- Settling becomes difficult.

In another House, Anxiety may bring a strong need for **control**.

- Plans are made.
- Lists grow.
- Problems are anticipated.
- The House tries to prepare for every possible outcome.

And in another, Anxiety may bring **heaviness or withdrawal**.

- The world becomes harder to engage with.
- Decisions feel more difficult.
- The House may become quieter and turn inward.

The visitor is the same.
The Houses are different.
The responses are different.

Ayurveda has long recognised that human beings do not respond to life in identical ways.

Its qualities of **Vata, Pitta and Kapha** offer one lens through which we may understand these differences.

- A House with greater movement may experience Anxiety through restlessness and rapidly changing thoughts.
- A House with greater intensity may respond by trying to organise, solve or regain control.
- A House with greater stability may become heavier, slower or more withdrawn when unsettled.

These are not fixed rules.

Every House contains movement, transformation and stability, and the same House may respond differently at different times.

Nor do **Vata, Pitta and Kapha** define who we are.

They simply offer another way of looking.

The question is not: *What kind of House should I be?*
It is: **How is my House responding to this Visitor?**

And that question begins to make the encounter personal.

Section 3 - When Anxiety Finds the Hijacked Voice

Anxiety does not literally speak.

But when Anxiety visits, the Hijacked Voice may begin to speak on its behalf.

We can often recognise it by three qualities:

Pressure. Urgency. Continuity.

- It pressures: *You need to do something.*
- It creates urgency: *You need to do it now.*
- And it continues: *Have you thought about this?*
  What about that?
  Perhaps you should check again.

Even when we have already done what can reasonably be done, the voice may continue.

- The appointment has been booked.
- The message has been sent.
- The preparation has been made.

There may be nothing more to do tonight.

But the Hijacked Voice does not easily settle.

It keeps inviting the mind into another possibility, another check, another solution.

This is why the voice can be so convincing.

Its pressure can make something **feel urgent even when the situation itself is not urgent**.

Sometimes, of course, something genuinely does require action.

Awareness helps us notice the difference.

Does this need my attention?
Does it need my attention now?

The first answer may be yes.

The second may be no.

We do not have to silence the Hijacked Voice.

We do not have to argue with it.

We begin simply by recognising its signature:

It pressures.
It urges.
It continues.

And once Awareness recognises the voice,

we do not have to respond to every invitation.

Section 4 - The Five Movements of Meeting Anxiety

Recognising Anxiety is one thing.
Living with it is another.

The Five Movements offer the Pilgrim a way of meeting what has arrived.

Receive → Explore → Meet → Incubate → Release

- They are not compulsory steps.
- Sometimes one movement is enough.
- Sometimes we move backwards and forwards between them.

And sometimes Anxiety has been visiting for hours before Awareness recognises its presence.

We begin wherever we find ourselves.

1. Receive — The Front Door

Anxiety has arrived.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim noticed its first knock.
- Perhaps the Visitor is already inside.

Fear may have arisen.

The Hijacked Voice may already be speaking through its loudspeaker.

But receiving does not mean agreeing with every anxious thought.

Nor does it mean welcoming suffering.

It simply means acknowledging what is here.

Anxiety is visiting my House.

The Pilgrim does not have to solve anything at the Front Door.

For now, recognising the Visitor is enough.

2. Explore — The Kitchen

Anxiety rarely arrives empty-handed.

It may bring many ingredients.

A genuine concern.

An imagined possibility.

- Something that needs preparation.
- Something that cannot yet be known.

The Kitchen offers somewhere to examine what has arrived.

The Chef brings discernment.

- What actually needs my attention?
- What can I do something about?
- What am I trying to control that cannot yet be known?

Not every anxious thought needs to be followed.

Not every possibility needs to be prepared for.

And not every uncertainty can be resolved.

The Cook brings action.

Perhaps tomorrow's medical appointment requires a letter, a prepared question or an earlier departure.

These are things the Cook can attend to.

But once the preparations are complete, continuing to prepare for every imagined outcome may no longer be helpful.

Not every ingredient Anxiety brings needs to become a meal.

And sometimes, the most useful thing the Cook can do is put down the utensils.

The appointment is tomorrow.

The preparations are complete.

What remains uncertain cannot yet be known.

The Kitchen has done its work.

The Chef has discerned what matters.

The Cook has done what can be done.

And the Pilgrim may recognise that, for now, this is enough.

3. Meet — The Dining Room

Preparation may be complete.

Yet Anxiety may still be sitting with us.

The Dining Room offers somewhere to meet the Visitor rather than continually trying to manage it.

Awareness listens with curiosity.

What concerns you?

What are you afraid might happen?

What matters so much that uncertainty feels difficult to bear?

- Perhaps beneath the repeated checking lies the fear of receiving difficult news.
- Perhaps there is concern for someone we love.
- Or perhaps we are simply frightened of not knowing.

The Pilgrim does not have to dismiss these concerns.

Nor must every question be answered.

We can listen to Anxiety without allowing it to direct the whole House.

And sometimes, being heard changes the way a Visitor remains with us.

Not every conversation ends over one cup of tea.

4. Incubate — The Living Room

We call this movement Incubate because not everything within us changes the moment we understand it.
Just as a seed needs time beneath the soil before it begins to grow, an understanding may need time before it finds its place within us.

We do not have to keep digging to see whether something is happening.

Sometimes, we simply allow it to ripen.

- We have received Anxiety.
- We have explored what it brought.
- We have listened.

And still, Anxiety may remain.

The Living Room offers something different.

- Not another question.
- Not another solution.

Time and space for what has been understood to settle.

At the heart of the Living Room is the Rocking Chair — the Seat of Presence.

Only Presence sits here.

The Hijacked Voice may still be speaking through its loudspeaker.

- *You need to know.*
- *You need to do something.*
- *You need to do it now.*

But the Pilgrim need not answer every demand.

Presence may rest in the rocking chair, supported by the three stabilisers.

- **Dhi — Clarity:** *The appointment is tomorrow. I am here tonight.*
- **Dhriti — Steadiness:** *I do not have to respond to every anxious invitation.*
- **Smriti — Remembering:** *I can return to myself.*

The Mind may still wander.

Fear may still arise.

Uncertainty may still be felt.

Incubation does not demand an immediate change.

It allows understanding to settle without being hurried towards a conclusion.

Tomorrow does not have to become certain for the Pilgrim to be present today.

5. Release — The Bathroom

When the time feels right, the Pilgrim quietly turns towards the **Bathroom**.

The Bathroom is one of the House's places of renewal.

Awareness may have already noticed what is being held.

Now the Pilgrim gives release a physical expression.

They gently bring their hands together.

For a few moments, they notice what they have been carrying.

- The need to know.
- The repeated checking.
- The imagined tomorrow.
- The attempt to prepare for what cannot yet be known.

Then, slowly, they open their hands.

> **Whatever is ready to leave may leave.**
> **Whatever still needs time may remain.**

- Perhaps there are tears.
- Perhaps only a long breath.

Then the Pilgrim turns on the tap.

Cool water gathers in their hands.

They splash it gently across their face.

Again.

And perhaps once more.

For a moment there is only water.

Coolness.

Breath.

Here.

And through the flowing water, the House seems to whisper:

You have done what you can.
Tomorrow can wait.
For now, be here.

The Pilgrim washes their hands.

The water continues down the drain.

Nothing has been forced from the House.

- Anxiety may still be visiting.
- Fear may still arise.
- Uncertainty may still be felt.

But something has changed.

- The hands have opened.
- The face has felt the water.
- The body has joined the movement.

Awareness noticed the holding.
The Pilgrim lived the release.

- Perhaps what has loosened is not Anxiety itself.
- Perhaps it is the demand that tomorrow become certain tonight.

Trust may quietly begin to ripen.

Awareness notices the holding.
The Pilgrim embodies the release.
The Garden receives the next step.

Section 5 - Continue — The Garden

The Pilgrim leaves the Bathroom.

The House travels with them.

Anxiety may still be visiting.

But there is a day to be lived.

Perhaps the Pilgrim steps into the Garden.

Not to escape the Visitor.

Not to distract themselves from what they feel.

Simply to continue living.

- Feet meet the ground.
- Air touches the face still cool from the water.
- A tree moves in the breeze.
- Someone passes on the pavement.
- A cup of tea waits on the table.

Ordinary life is still here.

The Pilgrim may remember three simple movements:

Ground. Settle. Continue.

Ground.

- Feel the feet on the earth.
- Notice the body.
- Notice what is actually around you.
- The mind may have travelled into tomorrow.
- The body is still here.

Settle.

- There is no requirement to become completely calm.
- Settling may simply mean allowing this moment to be the moment we are living.
- The appointment is tomorrow.
- This is today.

Continue.

- Make the meal.
- Take the walk.
- Speak to another Pilgrim.
- Read the book.
- Water the plants.
- Rest.

And when tomorrow comes, go to the appointment.

The Garden has not become certain.

Life has not promised that everything will be all right.

Anxiety may walk beside us for a while.

But it does not have to choose every step.

Anxiety brings tomorrow into today.

Presence allows us to live today without demanding certainty about tomorrow.

The Pilgrim carries the House into the uncertainty of ordinary life.

And perhaps this is where Trust begins to become lived rather than merely understood:

> **I do not know what tomorrow will bring.**
> **But I can live today.**

The Pilgrim continues.

Life unfolds.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Sit quietly for a moment.

Is Anxiety visiting today?

There is nothing to fix.

Simply notice.

Ask gently:

> **What needs my attention now?**
> **And what am I trying to know before it can be known?**

Allow the questions to rest.

Take one slow breath.

Open your hands.

Whatever is ready to loosen may loosen.
Whatever still needs time may remain.

Then continue with your day.

The mind may travel into tomorrow.
The body is still here.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

If today feels uncertain,
allow today to be uncertain.
Tomorrow does not need all of today's answers.

Chapter 30 - When Depression Visits the House



"Not every Visitor arrives with noise. Some are first noticed in what has quietly become difficult."

Anxiety and Depression

Anxiety and depression may travel together.
Yet they are not the same visitor.

Anxiety says: *"Something bad might happen."*
Depression says: *"Nothing will change."*

Anxiety fills the House with movement.
Depression fills it with heaviness.

Anxiety watches the future.
Depression struggles to see one.

Anxiety stirs the Sea into restless waves.
Depression leaves the sails hanging without wind.

Both may know uncertainty.
But they meet it differently.

Anxiety keeps looking ahead, trying to anticipate what might come.

Depression may make it difficult to imagine that anything different will come at all.

When the Day Feels Heavy

Imagine waking in the morning.

The alarm sounds.

You know you need to get up.

Nothing dramatic has happened during the night.

And yet,

getting out of bed feels difficult.

You lie there for another few minutes.

Then another few.

The day ahead does not necessarily frighten you.

It simply feels heavy.

- The shower feels like effort.
- Getting dressed feels like effort.
- Preparing something to eat feels like effort.
- Perhaps someone sends you a message.

You see it.

You mean to reply.

Later.

Perhaps there is something you usually enjoy doing.

Today, you cannot quite reach the enjoyment of it.

Outside, life continues.

Cars pass.

People go to work.

Someone walks a dog.

The Garden is still there.

But from within the House,

the Garden may feel further away.

- There may be sadness.
- There may be emptiness.
- There may be frustration.
- Or perhaps there is very little feeling at all.
- Only heaviness.

The Pilgrim may not immediately think:

Depression is visiting.

There may have been no obvious knock at the Front Door.

No moment when the Visitor clearly arrived.

Perhaps the first thing noticed is simply:

Something has changed within my House.

And that noticing matters.

Depression may already have been sitting quietly within the House for some time.

We begin where we notice.

Section 1 - When Depression Visits the House

What May Arise When Depression Visits

Depression may awaken different Emotions and Feelings within the House.

- For some Pilgrims, sadness may arise.
- For others, frustration or anger.

Fear may arise around what the future holds.

There may also be Feelings of emptiness, hopelessness or disconnection.

And sometimes there seems to be very little feeling at all.
Only numbness.

Each House responds differently.

Depression is the Visitor.

What arises while it is visiting may be different in every House.

And sometimes, the Pilgrim may find it difficult even to describe what is being experienced.

Awareness does not demand an explanation.

It begins with what can be noticed.

The Pilgrim does not have to understand everything to begin meeting what is here.

Section 2 — The Same Visitor, Different Houses

The same Visitor may arrive at many Houses.

But Depression does not feel or look the same in every House.

In one House, it may bring **heaviness**.

- Getting started becomes difficult.
- Ordinary tasks seem to require more effort.
- The body may feel slower.
- The Pilgrim may want to sleep or withdraw.

In another House, Depression may carry **restlessness**.

- The body is tired, yet settling remains difficult.
- Thoughts continue moving even when there seems to be little desire to act.
- Sleep may be disturbed.
- The Pilgrim may feel exhausted without feeling able to rest.

And in another, Depression may bring **intensity turned inward**.

- Frustration may arise.
- The Pilgrim may become more critical of themselves.
- Small difficulties may feel like personal failures.
- There may be pressure to keep functioning even when the House is struggling.

Another House may become quieter still.

- There may be little sadness.
- Little anger.
- Perhaps simply numbness.

The Visitor is the same.

The Houses are different.

The responses are different.

Ayurveda has long recognised that human beings do not respond to life in identical ways.

Its qualities of **Vata, Pitta and Kapha** offer one lens through which we may look at these differences.

- A House experiencing more **movement** may meet Depression through restlessness, disturbed rhythms or difficulty settling.
- A House experiencing more **intensity** may meet it through frustration, self-criticism or pressure to continue.
- A House experiencing more **stability and heaviness** may become slower, quieter or more withdrawn.

These are not fixed rules.

Depression cannot be explained by Vata, Pitta or Kapha.

Every House contains movement, transformation and stability, and the same House may experience Depression differently at different times.

The nature of the House is also not the same as its present condition.

Ayurveda simply offers another way of looking.

The question is: **How is my House experiencing this Visitor today?**

And from that question another may quietly follow:

What might help my House find a little more harmony today?

Section 3 - When Depression Finds the Hijacked Voice

When Anxiety visited the House, we recognised the Hijacked Voice by three qualities:
Pressure.
Urgency.
Continuity.

Depression may sound very different.

There may be no obvious urgency to act.

Instead, the Hijacked Voice may become slow, heavy and discouraging.

It may say:

- *Why bother?*
- *Nothing will change.*
- *You don't have the strength.*
- *What's the point?*

The pressure may no longer be to do something immediately.

It may be the pressure to give up trying.

And through repetition, these thoughts may become so familiar that they begin to sound true.

This is where Awareness becomes important.

Not because Awareness can argue Depression away.

Nor because every thought needs to be replaced with a more positive one.

Awareness simply notices:

This is what my mind is telling me while Depression is visiting.

And it does not allow **today to speak for every tomorrow**.

This is how things feel today.
I do not yet know what tomorrow will bring.

Nothing has been solved.

Depression has not necessarily left.

But something important has happened.

Something has been noticed.

Section 4 — The Five Movements of Meeting Depression

Recognising Depression is one thing.

Living with it is another.

When Anxiety visited, the Pilgrim may have felt hurried towards tomorrow.

When Depression visits, even the smallest movement towards today may feel difficult.

Getting out of bed.

Preparing a meal.

Answering a message.

Opening the curtains.

What once happened almost without thought may now require considerable effort.

And this is why the Five Movements are not instructions to try harder.

They are invitations to meet what is already here.

Receive → Explore → Meet → Incubate → Release

1. Receiving — The Front Door

Presence quietly opens the Front Door.

- Not with enthusiasm.
- Not even with hope.
- Simply with honesty.

Awareness recognises the visitor.

*The **Hijacked Voice** may whisper:*

- *"There is no point opening the door."*
- *"Nothing will change."*

Yet Presence quietly responds:

You are here.

And Awareness acknowledges:

I see that you are here.

Receiving does not mean agreeing with everything the Visitor brings.

It does not mean accepting that Depression will remain.

It means recognising what is already being experienced.

2. Explore — The Kitchen

Once Depression has been received, the **Kitchen** gives us somewhere to process what is here.

Awareness gently asks:

What am I carrying today?

- Heaviness.
- Sadness.
- Emptiness.
- Perhaps frustration or numbness.

Nothing needs to be forced into understanding.

Nothing needs to be processed all at once.

The **Chef** brings discernment.

- Perhaps the House needs nourishment.
- Perhaps rest.

- Perhaps companionship.
- Perhaps help with something that has become difficult.

The **Cook** considers what may be possible.

A nourishing meal may be needed, but preparing one may feel overwhelming.

- Perhaps a sandwich is enough for today.
- Perhaps another Pilgrim can help.

What is needed and what is possible may not be the same today.

The Kitchen does not demand that the Pilgrim do more.

Nor does it measure the Pilgrim's worth by what has been accomplished.

For now, the Chef and Cook work with what is available.

We explore what is here, recognise what may be needed, and allow what is possible to be enough for today.

3. Meet — The Dining Room

The meal is shared quietly.

Presence creates space for what is here.

Awareness listens.

The **Hijacked Voice** may repeat:

Nothing will ever change.

No one understands.

There is no point.

Awareness does not argue.

Nor does it *immediately believe every word.*

Instead, it gently asks:

What feels too heavy to carry alone?

- Sometimes sadness arises.
- Sometimes tears.
- Sometimes there are no words.

Only silence.

The Dining Room does not demand an explanation.

Nor does it require every feeling to be understood.

Meeting what is here does not mean having to change it.

Sometimes, listening itself is enough.

4. Incubate — The Living Room

As the conversation gently draws to a close, the Pilgrim enters the Living Room.

There is nothing more to prepare.

Nothing to resolve immediately.

Presence rests in the Rocking Chair.

The Three Stabilisers offer their quiet support.

- **Dhi — Clarity** recognises: **Depression is visiting. It is not the whole House.**
- **Dhriti — Steadiness** remains with what is here, even when the path ahead cannot yet be seen.
- **Smriti — Remembering** quietly reminds us:

  The Flame has not disappeared.

Its light may simply be difficult to feel today.

- Perhaps something understood in the Kitchen or acknowledged in the Dining Room begins to settle.
- Perhaps nothing seems to change.

Incubation does not demand a result.

Like a seed resting beneath the soil, understanding may need time before it can grow.

The Visitor may still be present.

But the Pilgrim does not have to wait for Depression to leave before allowing Presence to rest.

5. Release — The Bathroom

When the time feels right, the Pilgrim turns towards the **Bathroom**.

Awareness notices what is still being held.

The Pilgrim gently brings their hands together and asks:

Is there something I do not need to carry right now?

Perhaps an expectation.

A demand placed upon oneself.

The pressure to feel differently.

The Pilgrim slowly opens their hands.

Whatever is ready to loosen may loosen.

Whatever still needs time may remain.

Cool water is gathered in the hands and gently splashed across the face.

For a moment there is only:

- Water.
- Coolness.
- Breath.
- Here.

And through the flowing water, the House seems to hear:

- *You do not have to carry everything today.*
- *Put down what you can.*
- *Let what remains be held gently.*

The water continues to flow.

Depression has not been washed away.

But something may have loosened.

What May Quietly Ripen

When Depression remains for a long season, what is repeatedly experienced may begin to ripen into deeper Feelings.

- Hopelessness may grow.
- Worthlessness may take root.
- Shame may become familiar.
- The House may begin to doubt itself.

But these Feelings are not the whole House.

They have formed through living with the Visitor, and Awareness may begin to recognise them.

Something else may also become possible.

Not happiness.

Not certainty.

Perhaps only the smallest opening towards **Hope**:

Perhaps tomorrow does not have to be exactly the same as today.

Hope does not need to promise that tomorrow will be better.

It simply leaves room for tomorrow to be different.

Section 5 - Step Outside the House

When the time feels right, the Pilgrim opens the curtains.

- Light enters.
- Perhaps the window opens.
- Air touches the face.

Beyond the Window, **the Garden is still there.**

The Pilgrim may begin with a simple movement:

Receive. Ripen. Give.

Receive

- Feel the warmth of the sun upon your face. • Listen to the birdsong.
- Breathe the fresh air.
- Notice what the Garden is offering.
- **Nothing needs to be created.**

Only received.

And perhaps, for today, receiving is enough.

Ripen

- Sit with your back against the trunk of a tree.
- Watch the clouds drift gently across the sky.
- Sit beside the Sea without needing to understand anything.
- Allow what has been received simply to remain for a while.

Nothing needs to happen.

There is no need to turn the experience into happiness.

No need to search for meaning.

Some things need time to ripen.

Give

Perhaps, when something becomes possible, the Pilgrim may offer a little of what they can

- Smile at someone you pass.
- Offer a gentle "Good morning."
- Water a plant.
- Hold a door open.
- Thank someone sincerely.

Giving does not need to be large.

And perhaps what one Pilgrim gives becomes something another Pilgrim receives.

The pilgrimage continues.

Life unfolds.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.
Notice how you feel today.
There is no need to change it.
No need to become different.
Simply notice that the Lamp is still burning.
Even if its warmth feels distant,
the Flame remains.
Hope does not always arrive with great strength.
Sometimes it may be no more than:
one gentle breath,
one kind thought,
one small opening,
one step towards the Garden.
Perhaps simply:

Tomorrow does not have to be exactly the same as today.

When you are ready, open the curtains.
Let a little of the Garden reach you.
For today, **that may be enough.**

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

If today feels heavy,
allow today to be heavy.
Tomorrow does not have to carry
the same weight.

Chapter 31 - When Grief Visits the House



Grief and Depression

Depression and grief may appear similar from a distance, yet they are not the same visitor.

Depression quietly whispers, *"The light has gone out."*
Grief gently says, *"Something precious is missing."*

Depression often disconnects us from feeling.
Grief may overwhelm us with feeling.

Depression dims the Lamp.
Grief sits beside its light, remembering what has been lost.

Depression struggles to see the Horizon.
Grief looks towards a Garden that is no longer as it was.

At times these visitors may resemble one another.

- Both can bring tears.
- Both can bring heaviness.
- Both may make the House feel quieter than before.

Yet their stories are different.

Depression may leave the Pilgrim struggling to find vitality in life.
Grief may arise from the loss of someone or something that mattered deeply.

- A person.
- A relationship.
- A dream.
- A season of life.
- A future once imagined.

And sometimes the two Visitors walk together.
Depression may make it difficult to see the Horizon.
Grief may arise because the Garden is no longer as it was.

Neither Visitor tells the whole story of the House.

Section 1 — The Arrival

When Grief Visits the House

Not all visitors arrive carrying fear.
Not all visitors arrive carrying darkness.

Some arrive carrying love.
Grief is one of them.

Grief is a visitor.
As it enters the House, it may awaken many emotions.

- Sadness.
- Longing.
- Anger.
- Relief.

Even moments of unexpected joy as precious memories return.
Over time, if the visitor remains, these emotions may gradually ripen into deeper feelings.
Yet neither the visitor, the emotions, nor the feelings are the House itself.
They are simply the ways the House is responding to a loss that matters.

- Grief can bring tears where there was once laughter.
- Silence where there was once conversation.
- A bar of chocolate lying on the table, with no one to share it with.

Small moments can suddenly remind us how deeply someone became woven into our life.

- A familiar song.
- A favourite meal.
- Something funny happens and, for a moment, we want to tell them.

Then we remember.

And the ordinary moment becomes something else.

Yet Grief often arrives where Love has left its traces.

- We grieve because someone mattered.
- Because something mattered.
- Because part of our life became woven into theirs,
- and part of theirs became woven into ours.

Grief reminds us that Love leaves traces.

- Their kindness may still live in the way we treat others.
- Their laughter may still echo through the House.
- Something they taught us may still guide the Pilgrim's steps.
- A memory may still bring warmth to an ordinary day.

Grief does not ask us to forget.

Nor does healing require us to stop loving.

Perhaps, over time, we discover a different way of carrying that Love.

For now, however, nothing needs to be discovered.

Grief has arrived.

And the House can make room for it.

Section 2 – The Same Visitor, Different Houses

Grief enters every House differently.

- One Pilgrim may cry easily.
- Another may become quiet.
- Another may keep moving through the Garden — cooking, working, caring for others — while carrying Grief within.
- Some may want companionship.
- Others may need silence.

And the same Pilgrim may experience all of these at different times.

The Ayurvedic lens can help us understand some of these differences.

Every House carries **Movement, Transformation and Stability** — Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Grief may disturb these in different ways.

When **Movement** becomes unsettled, Grief may be accompanied by restlessness.

- Sleep may become disturbed.
- The mind may move repeatedly through memories.
- The Pilgrim may find it difficult to settle.

When **Transformation** becomes intense, Grief may carry frustration or anger.

- *Why did this happen?*
- *Why wasn't more done?*
- *Why didn't I say what I wanted to say?*
- The mind may search for explanations when there are no satisfying answers.

When **Stability** becomes heavy, the House may become quieter.

- There may be withdrawal.
- The body may feel heavy.
- Beginning the ordinary movements of the day may require more effort.

None of these is the correct way to grieve.

And they are not fixed Ayurvedic types of Grief.

The same House may move between them.

- Restless one day.
- Angry another.
- Heavy the next.
- Or several may be present together.

The Visitor may be the same.
The Houses are different.

Ayurveda does not tell the Pilgrim how Grief *should* feel.

It simply offers another question:

How is my House experiencing Grief today?

And perhaps, from there:

What might help my House find a little more harmony while Grief is here?

Section 3 - The Hijacked Voice

Grief itself does not speak.
The Visitor may change the weather within the House.

The **Hijacked Voice** may then begin to interpret what is being experienced.

It may whisper:

- *Life will never be the same.*
- *I cannot live without them.*
- *No one understands.*
- *I should have done more.*
- *I will never feel whole again.*

These thoughts may feel especially convincing while Grief is visiting.

But Grief is not Hijack.

Grief may be present without Hijack.

And Hijack may accompany Grief without becoming Grief itself.

Awareness does not need to argue with every thought.

Nor does it need to replace them immediately with something more comforting.

It simply begins to notice:

> **Grief is here.**
> **And this is what my mind is telling me while Grief is here.**

- Perhaps *I should have done more* carries regret.
- Perhaps *No one understands* carries loneliness.
- Perhaps *I cannot live without them* arises from the enormity of what has changed.

Awareness listens without immediately turning every thought into truth.

Presence may remain seated in the Rocking Chair, even while the loudspeaker is sounding.

The Visitor can be welcomed without allowing the Hijacked Voice to tell the whole story.

Grief does not always need to be understood.

Sometimes it simply needs **somewhere to be.**

Section 4 – The Five Movements of Meeting Grief

Grief does not need to be hurried through the House.
The five movements are not techniques to master, nor steps that must be completed.
They are simply ways the House may offer its quiet hospitality while Grief is visiting.
The Pilgrim may move between them, return to one, or remain wherever companionship is needed.
There is no prescribed order.
And no obligation to reach Release.
The purpose is not to escort Grief out of the House.

1. Receive — The Front Door

When Grief knocks at the Front Door,
Presence quietly opens it.
Awareness recognises the Visitor.

> **This has arrived.**

There is no need to pretend that nothing has changed.

- No need to hide the tears.
- No need to ask Grief to leave.

Perhaps Grief arrives gently.

Perhaps it enters with such force that the whole House trembles.

- Sometimes the Pilgrim is ready to receive it.
- Sometimes the Pilgrim can barely acknowledge its arrival.

Both are part of being human.

- Receiving does not mean welcoming the loss.
- Nor does it mean accepting everything that has happened.

It simply means recognising what is already here.

Grief has arrived.

And there is room for what is here.

2. Explore — The Kitchen

From the Front Door, the Pilgrim may enter the Kitchen.

The Kitchen offers somewhere to explore what Grief has brought.

Here, the Cook and the Chef have their roles.

The Cook — Manas, the Processing Mind — begins examining the ingredients of experience.

- Sadness.
- Longing.
- Anger.
- Regret.
- Perhaps relief.
- Perhaps several at once.

Some ingredients are familiar.

Others are difficult to recognise.

The Cook may begin asking questions.

- *Why am I feeling this?*
- *Could I have done something differently?*
- *Why does this memory keep returning?*

Perhaps there are words we wish we had said.

Something we wish we had done differently.

Or simply the ache of missing someone who mattered.

The Cook may return to the same ingredients again and again, searching for an answer.

But not every question has an answer.

And not every ingredient needs to be transformed.

The Chef — Buddhi, Guiding Intelligence — brings discernment.

The Chef does not dismiss what the Cook has discovered.

Nor does the Chef demand that sorrow become something pleasant.

Instead, a different question arises.

What am I beginning to understand about what I am experiencing?

- Perhaps sadness is accompanied by regret.
- Perhaps anger is concealing a deeper hurt.
- Perhaps longing is accompanied by gratitude.
- Perhaps several feelings are present together.

The Chef helps distinguish one ingredient from another, bringing clarity where possible.

The Cook explores.

The Chef discerns.

Neither needs to resolve Grief.

And sometimes discernment simply means recognising that we do not yet understand.

3. Meet — The Dining Room

The Dining Room is a place of meeting.

- Here, there is no need to hide the tears.
- No need to explain every feeling.
- No need to make Grief disappear.

There is simply a willingness to sit with what is here for a while.
Presence creates space.

Awareness listens.

The tea and biscuits are shared slowly.

Silence is allowed.

Conversation unfolds in its own time.

- A memory may arise.
- A story may suddenly want to be told.
- There may be tears.
- There may even be laughter.
- And sometimes there is only silence.

Awareness does not search for meaning.

It may simply wonder:

What am I missing today?

Perhaps another question quietly arises:

What of this Love still lives within me?

There is no need to answer.

The question can remain at the table.

Sometimes sorrow fills the whole conversation.

At other times, something else finds a seat beside it.

- Tenderness.
- A precious memory.
- Perhaps, in time, gratitude.
- Not gratitude for the loss.
- **Gratitude for what was lived.**

None of these needs to replace sorrow.

They may sit together.

- Love and sadness.
- Tears and laughter.
- Absence and remembrance.

This is not about letting go of Love.

Nor is it about moving on.

Perhaps it is simply the House discovering that **Grief and Love can sit at the same table.**

The tea grows cold.

The biscuits may remain untouched.

Nothing has been solved.

But Grief has been given somewhere to be.

Not every conversation ends over one cup of tea.

4. Incubate — The Living Room

Sometimes, after meeting Grief, there is nothing more to say.

- No further question to explore.
- No understanding to pursue.

The Rocking Chair is there.

The Lamp burns quietly beside it.

Presence takes its Seat.

Grief may remain.

The Hijacked Voice may still be heard through the loudspeaker.

But the Pilgrim does not have to follow every thought.

Nor does the Pilgrim have to silence it.

- There is room for stillness.
- And there is room for time.

Incubation is not waiting for Grief to disappear.

It is allowing what has been experienced to rest without demanding an outcome.

- Perhaps a memory returns.
- Perhaps an old regret begins to soften.
- Perhaps nothing changes.

The Three Stabilisers offer their quiet support.

Dhi — Clarity helps us see what is here without becoming completely lost within it.

- Grief is visiting.
- Sadness may be arising.
- The Mind may be telling its stories.

But none of these is the whole House.

Dhriti — Steadiness allows us to remain with what is here without hurrying it away.

- There is no timetable for Grief.
- No correct pace.
- No need to be somewhere other than where we are.

Smriti — Remembering reminds us of what sorrow can sometimes make difficult to remember:

Love leaves traces.

- A kindness may still shape the way we meet another person.
- A familiar phrase may still make us smile.
- Something we learned from someone may continue to guide an ordinary day.

What mattered still matters.

- The Rocking Chair may continue to move.
- Grief may still be present.
- Sadness may still arise.

And perhaps, from time to time, gratitude finds a place beside the sorrow.

Not gratitude for what was lost.

Gratitude for what was lived.

Sometimes something quietly ripens.

- A little understanding.
- A little tenderness.
- A different way of carrying a memory.

And sometimes nothing ripens that we can recognise.

That is all right too.

The Lamp continues to burn.

Presence remains seated.
Grief is allowed to remain.
And the House holds them both.

5. Release — The Bathroom

Sometimes, while Grief is visiting, the Pilgrim notices that something has been held tightly for a long time.

- Perhaps regret.
- Perhaps guilt.
- Perhaps words that can no longer be said.
- Perhaps the pressure to have grieved differently.

The Bathroom offers somewhere to loosen what is ready.

The Pilgrim gently brings their hands together.

For a few moments, they notice what they have been carrying.

Then, slowly, the hands open.

Whatever is ready to loosen may loosen.
Whatever still needs time may remain.

- There is no need to release Grief.
- There is no need to release Love.
- Sometimes there are tears.
- Sometimes there is only silence.

The Pilgrim washes their hands.

Perhaps they cool their face with fresh water.
The water moves across the skin.

And perhaps, if the Pilgrim listens, it seems to whisper:

- *You do not have to let go of Love.*
- *Let go only of what is ready.*
- *What mattered may still matter.*
- *Love leaves traces.*

The water continues to flow.

- It does not wash away what happened.
- It does not wash away memory.
- It does not wash away Love.

It simply allows something that has been held tightly to loosen.

- Perhaps the hands open a little more.
- Perhaps the shoulders soften.
- Perhaps the tears simply join the water.

Nothing has to be forced.

Whatever is ready to leave may leave.

Whatever needs to remain may remain.

And perhaps nothing is ready to leave today.

The water still offers its gentle touch.

Grief may still be visiting.

The Pilgrim may still miss the person tomorrow, and the day after that.

But something may have been allowed to loosen.

Release is not letting go of Love.

It is allowing ourselves to carry Love without having to grip everything that came with the loss.

Section 5 – Step into the Garden

Sometimes living with Grief finds a simple rhythm:

Remember. Honour. Continue.

Remember

The Pilgrim steps into the Garden.

- Perhaps a treasured memory returns.
- A familiar voice.
- A shared moment.
- Something they once said that still brings a smile.
- Perhaps there is sadness.
- Perhaps gratitude.
- Perhaps both.
- There is no need to search for memories.
- Sometimes remembrance arrives unexpectedly.
- A familiar song.
- A photograph.
- A place we once visited together.

For a moment, the past feels close.

And the ordinary moment becomes something else.

Remember not only their departure, but also their presence.

Allow gratitude, when it comes, to sit quietly beside sadness.

Honour

Perhaps the Pilgrim wishes to honour what has been lost.
There are many ways.

- Light a candle.
- Visit a place that holds meaning.
- Tend a flower or a tree.
- Prepare a favourite meal.
- Offer an act of kindness in their honour.
- Carry forward something beautiful they gave to the world.

Love does not disappear when someone leaves the Garden.

Sometimes it quietly asks to be lived.

- A kindness received may become a kindness given.
- A story may continue to be told.
- Something they taught us may quietly find its way into how we live.

Love leaves traces.

Continue

The Garden still has paths to walk.

There may be ordinary things waiting.

- A meal to prepare.
- A plant to water.
- Someone to greet.

Perhaps the Pilgrim takes another gentle step.

- Not because Grief has ended.
- Not because everything has been understood.

But because life continues alongside what has been lost.

- The Pilgrim may smile at someone passing.
- Offer a warm *Good morning.*

Or simply continue tending the Garden.

Grief may still be walking beside them.

But so may Love.

The pilgrimage continues.

And Grief may visit again.

It often does.

- An anniversary.
- An unexpected reminder.
- A familiar object left untouched.
- Their mobile phone lying there, silent.

When Grief visits again, the Pilgrim does not have to begin the pilgrimage again.

- Perhaps the Front Door opens.
- Perhaps the Dining Room offers a chair.
- Perhaps there are tea and biscuits.
- Perhaps the Bathroom water whispers once more.

Or perhaps nothing is needed except to notice:

This has arrived.

Grief may stay for a while.

And still,

The Pilgrim continues.

Love leaves traces.

Life unfolds.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.

Perhaps Grief is visiting your House today.

Allow a memory to come, if it wishes.

No need to search for meaning.

Simply notice what mattered.

Then ask quietly:

> **What of this Love would I like to carry into the Garden?**

Let the question rest.

Remember.
Honour.
Continue.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Grief is not the opposite of love.

It is one of love's quiet companions.

Walk gently.

Love leaves traces.

Chapter 32 - When Anger Arises in the House



Section 1 — When Anger Arises

Unlike Anxiety, Depression or Grief, anger is not a visitor.

Anger is an emotion.
It does not arrive carrying a suitcase.
It arises within the House in response to something we have experienced.

- Sometimes a boundary has been crossed.
- Sometimes something precious feels threatened.
- Sometimes we have been treated unfairly.
- Sometimes something long held within the House has been activated.
- And sometimes Anger arises before we fully understand why.

A Pilgrim who has felt judged, humiliated, ignored or wounded for a long time may eventually find that what once remained silent can remain silent no longer.

What once had no voice may begin to speak.

- The weather within the House changes.
- The body may tighten.
- The voice may become louder.
- The heart may beat faster.
- The urge to react may become difficult to ignore.

Few Emotions are more visible.

And perhaps few are more quickly judged.

Yet Anger is not necessarily an enemy of the House.

Sometimes Anger protects.

- It may give us the courage to speak an uncomfortable truth.
- To defend what matters.
- To draw a boundary.
- To say: **Enough**.

But Anger does not always arise with clarity.

- A moment of irritation may carry something deeper.
- A sharp reaction may be connected to an old hurt.
- A burst of frustration may arise alongside fear.
- And sometimes Anger simply belongs to what is happening now.

We do not always need to search beneath it for another explanation.

Still, Awareness may gently ask:

What is asking to be protected?

Sometimes the answer is clear.

- A boundary.
- A relationship.
- Our dignity.
- Someone vulnerable.
- Something we value.

At other times, no answer comes.

And that too can be allowed.

The work of the House is not to suppress Anger.

Nor is it to hand Anger the keys.

Anger may arise.

Awareness notices.

And somewhere between arising and reacting, there may be a pause.

A moment in which the Pilgrim can ask:

What has arisen within me?
And how do I want to carry it into the Garden?

Anger may become a clear *no*.

- A boundary.
- Courage.
- Protection.

But if the Hijacked Voice takes the Rocking Chair, the same Anger may find expression as accusation, cruelty or harm.

Presence may remain seated in the Rocking Chair, even while Anger is present.

And Awareness may notice both the emotion and the voice interpreting it.

Anger is not the problem simply because it has arisen.
What matters is what happens next.

Section 2 – Understanding the Emotion

Anger does not arise in exactly the same way in every House.

- For one Pilgrim, it may flare quickly.
- For another, it may build slowly.
- For another, it may remain almost invisible until the House can no longer contain it.

Ayurveda offers one way of looking.

Every House carries qualities of **Movement, Transformation and Stability — Vata, Pitta and Kapha.**

When **Movement** is unsettled, Anger may arise with agitation.

- The body may become restless.
- Thoughts may move quickly.
- Words may come before they have been considered.
- The Anger may flare and then disappear almost as quickly as it came.

When **Transformation** becomes intense, Anger may become sharp.

- The mind may focus strongly on what is wrong.
- The voice may become cutting.
- There may be a powerful need to correct, confront or make something change.

When **Stability** becomes heavy, Anger may remain quiet for a long time.

- The Pilgrim may say nothing.
- Something is held.
- Then held again.
- And again.
- Until one day, what has been contained finds expression.

None of these is a fixed type of Anger.

The same House may experience all three at different times.

And Anger cannot be reduced to Vata, Pitta or Kapha.

The nature of the House is not the same as its present condition.

Ayurveda simply helps us notice how Anger is moving through the House today.

Awareness may ask:

How is Anger arising within my House?

- Is it restless?
- Sharp?
- Held?
- Or something else entirely?

And then perhaps:

What might help this House find a little more harmony before Anger enters the Garden?

Section 3 - How Emotions Move Through the House

Not every emotion asks the same thing of the House.

- Anger may arise with tension.
- Sadness may bring tears.
- Joy may arrive with laughter.
- Love may find expression through tenderness.

Yet none of these responses is compulsory.

- We can experience Anger without shouting.
- Sadness without crying.
- Joy without laughing.

- And Love without expressing it outwardly.

An emotion does not have to be expressed to be real.

Sometimes the House needs to release what it has been holding.

- A clenched fist may open.
- A long breath may follow a difficult moment.
- Tears may come.

Some of the pressure may loosen.

But Release does not necessarily mean that the emotion disappears.

Anger may remain after the tension has eased.

At other times, an emotion naturally seeks expression.

- Joy may become laughter.
- Love may become an embrace.
- Gratitude may become a few heartfelt words.
- Compassion may become an act of kindness.

And sometimes nothing needs to happen.

The Pilgrim may simply sit with what is being experienced.

There is no need to analyse every feeling.

No need to transform it.

No need to make it disappear.

We may release what weighs upon us.

We may express what moves within us.

And we may simply experience what is here.

The Inner House offers room for all three.

And Awareness helps us recognise what may be needed.

Section 4 - The Hijacked Voice

Anger itself does not speak.

The **Hijacked Voice** interprets what is being experienced and gives it words.

It may whisper:

- *They can't treat you like this.*
- *You have to make them pay.*
- *You must win this argument.*
- *Don't back down.*
- *Show them they are wrong.*

The longer these thoughts continue, the more convincing they may become.

Soon, the Pilgrim may no longer hear them simply as thoughts arising while Anger is present.

They may begin to feel like truth.

- *I have to respond.*
- *I have to respond now.*

Here we recognise something familiar:

Pressure.
Urgency.
Continuity.

And Anger can make all three particularly powerful.

Yet Presence may still be seated in the Rocking Chair.

Beside it, the Lamp continues to burn.

The Lamp does not seek revenge.

Neither does its light require the Pilgrim to remain silent when something important needs protecting.

It simply illuminates what is here.

- Perhaps there is hurt.
- Perhaps fear.
- Perhaps a boundary has been crossed.
- Perhaps something precious needs protecting.
- Perhaps there is a truth that needs to be spoken.
- Or perhaps someone has simply behaved badly, and Anger has arisen.

The Lamp does not insist on finding something hidden beneath the Emotion.

Sometimes seeing clearly is enough.

Anger does not have to be suppressed.

Nor does it have to be obeyed.

- Awareness can notice the Emotion.
- Awareness can notice the Hijacked Voice interpreting it.
- And then, perhaps, a little space appears between:

I am angry.

and

I must act on this Anger now.

The loudspeaker may still be sounding.

The Flame remains.

The Lamp illuminates.

And Awareness may quietly ask:

What does this moment need?

Section 5 - The Five Movements of Healing

Recognising Anger is one thing.

Knowing how to meet it is another.

Anger may arise suddenly.

Sometimes before Awareness has noticed.

Words may already have been spoken.

A reaction may already have entered the Garden.

We begin wherever Awareness notices.

The Five Movements offer one possible way of using the House we already carry.

They are not compulsory steps.

Nor are they a formula for making Anger disappear.

- **Recognise** — Notice what has arisen.
- **Pause** — Allow space before reacting.
- **Understand** — Explore what Anger may be showing us.
- **Choose** — Discern what, if anything, needs to be done.
- **Release** — Allow some of the pressure to loosen.

These movements do not have to follow a particular order.

When Anger is intense, the Body may need attention before the Mind is ready to understand.

Recognise → Release → Pause → Understand → Choose

When Anger is mild, a pause may offer enough space for understanding.

Recognise → Pause → Understand → Choose

And when something clearly needs protecting, the response may already be apparent.

Recognise → Choose → Release

These are possibilities, not instructions.

- Sometimes a brief pause is needed before even a safe release becomes possible.
- Sometimes one movement is enough.
- Sometimes the Pilgrim may return to a movement more than once.

And sometimes Anger remains while life continues.

The purpose is not to remove Anger.
It is to allow Awareness, discernment and choice to accompany it.

1. Recognise — When Anger Makes Itself Known

Anger does not always announce its arrival.

Sometimes it begins as a tightening of the jaw.

- A change in breathing.
- A rising voice.
- A familiar thought.
- Or a sudden desire to withdraw.

At other times, Anger arrives with such force that we recognise it only after we have reacted.

- A word has been spoken.
- A door has been slammed.

Something has already happened in the Garden.

We begin wherever Awareness notices.

The Pilgrim may simply acknowledge:

Anger has arisen.

There is no need to condemn it.
No need to justify it.
And no immediate need to understand it.
Anger may be pointing towards a boundary that has been crossed.

- An injustice.
- An unmet need.

- Or something within the House that has been carrying too much for too long.

But we do not yet have to decide what it means.

- The Mind may already be telling its story.
- The Emotional Self carries the feeling.
- The Body may be preparing to protect.
- And Hijack may begin speaking through the loudspeaker, demanding an immediate response.

Yet Awareness can notice all of this without having to follow every instruction.

Recognising Anger is not the same as obeying it.

- Sometimes recognition is enough to create a little space.
- Sometimes the Body needs relief.
- Sometimes a pause becomes possible.

And sometimes something in the Garden needs immediate attention.

The next movement is not predetermined.

For now, the Pilgrim has recognised what is happening within the House.

Anger is here.

What does my House need now?

2. Pause — Making Room for Choice

Sometimes Anger asks for an immediate response.

The words are ready.

The argument is forming.

The Body is preparing to act.

And Hijack may be speaking through the loudspeaker:

- *Say something.*
- *Do something.*
- *Do it now.*

There is pressure.

Urgency.

And a demand to continue.

This is where Pause may help.

- Not necessarily to make Anger disappear.
- Not even to become calm.

But to create a little space between what is happening within the House and what may happen next in the Garden.

A pause does not remove Anger. It gives the Pilgrim room to choose.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim stops speaking.
- Steps away from an argument.
- Takes a breath.
- Or simply notices the urge to react.

In the Living Room, Presence remains seated in the Rocking Chair.

- Hijack may still be using the loudspeaker.
- The Mind may continue its argument.

- The Emotional Self may still feel deeply hurt.
- And the Body may remain tense.

Nothing has to be silenced before Awareness can notice what is happening.

- Sometimes the pause is brief.
- Sometimes the Pilgrim needs more time.
- And sometimes the Body needs to release some of its tension before a pause becomes possible.

There is no prescribed order.

Nor does Pause mean avoiding what needs attention.

- An injustice may still need addressing.
- A boundary may still need protecting.
- A difficult conversation may still be necessary.

Pausing does not mean surrendering what matters.

It simply allows the Pilgrim to respond without being carried entirely by the urgency of the moment.

And perhaps, within that small space, a question becomes possible:

Does this need my response now, or can it wait?

The Anger may remain.

But the Pilgrim has another possibility.

To act with Anger present, without allowing Anger to decide everything.

3. Understand — What Is Anger Showing Us?

Once a little space becomes available, the Pilgrim may wish to understand what has happened.

Not every experience of Anger requires examination.

Sometimes its cause is clear.

At other times, Anger may be carrying something we have not yet recognised.

The Pilgrim enters the Kitchen.

Here, the Cook — Manas, the Processing Mind — begins exploring the ingredients.

- What happened?
- What was said?
- What did I hear?
- What did I assume?
- And what did I feel?

The Cook may discover that several ingredients have become mixed together.

- A harsh word.
- An old memory.
- An expectation.
- A disappointment.

Perhaps even fear beneath the Anger.

What happened and what the Mind tells us about what happened are not always the same.

The Cook explores.

But exploration alone does not guarantee understanding.

- The Mind may return repeatedly to the same conversation.
- Rehearse an argument.

- Imagine what should have been said.
- Or search for evidence that confirms its first interpretation.
- Hijack may continue speaking through the loudspeaker, encouraging the Cook to prepare the same dish again and again.

They always do this.

They never respect me.

I will show them.

This is where the Chef — Buddhi, the Guiding Intelligence — becomes especially valuable.

The Chef does not discard the ingredients.

Nor does the Chef deny the Anger.

Instead, discernment begins.

- Was a boundary crossed?
- Was there a misunderstanding?
- Is an old hurt influencing this moment?
- What is known?
- And what remains uncertain?

Sometimes the Chef recognises that Anger is pointing towards something important.

- An injustice may need addressing.
- A boundary may need strengthening.
- A relationship may need an honest conversation.

At other times, the Chef may discover that the Mind has added ingredients that were never part of the original event.

Understanding does not require us to excuse what happened.

Nor does it require us to condemn another Pilgrim.

It allows us to see a little more clearly.

- The Emotional Self may still be hurting.
- The Body may still remember the tension.
- And Anger may remain.

That is all right.

- The Kitchen is not a place where every emotion must be resolved.
- It is where the Pilgrim may begin to distinguish the experience from its interpretation.

And sometimes, after all the exploring, the Chef recognises that there is not enough information to reach a conclusion.

The Pilgrim can leave the question open.

Not everything needs an answer before we can continue.

- Perhaps understanding has brought clarity.
- Perhaps it has revealed something that needs attention.
- Or perhaps the Pilgrim simply needs time.

The Kitchen has offered what it can.

What matters now is not only what I understand, but what I choose to do with that understanding.

4. Choose — When Discernment Meets Presence

Anger has arisen.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim has paused.
- Perhaps some tension has been released.
- Perhaps the Kitchen has offered a little understanding.
- Or perhaps the situation is already clear.

Now a choice may be needed.

In the Living Room, Presence sits in the Rocking Chair.

Hijack may still be speaking through the loudspeaker.

- *You cannot let this go.*
- *They must understand.*
- *You have to do something.*

The Emotional Self may still feel hurt.

The Body may remain tense.

And the Mind may continue preparing its arguments.

Presence does not require the House to become silent.

It allows the Pilgrim to recognise that an urge to act is not necessarily an instruction to follow.

Here, the Three Stabilisers may help.

- **Dhi — Clarity:** What truly matters in this situation?
- **Dhriti — Steadiness:** Can I remain with what matters without being carried away by urgency?
- **Smriti — Remembering:** What have I learned from previous experiences?

Together, they support the Pilgrim's capacity to choose.

- Sometimes the choice is to wait.
- Sometimes it is to speak.
- Sometimes it is to establish a boundary.
- Sometimes it is to acknowledge a mistake.
- And sometimes it is to recognise that nothing more needs to be done.

Choosing does not always mean acting.

Nor does choosing require Anger to disappear.

A Pilgrim may remain angry while deciding not to cause harm.

- May feel hurt while choosing not to retaliate.
- May recognise an injustice while deciding how best to address it.

And there may be moments when immediate protection is necessary.

The Pilgrim does not need to complete every movement before responding.

Courage

Sometimes the wiser choice is also the more difficult one.

- It may require the courage to say *No.*
- To acknowledge that something is unacceptable.
- To admit that we were mistaken.
- Or to remain silent when every part of us wants to retaliate.

Courage is not the absence of Anger.

Nor is it always a dramatic act.

Sometimes courage is simply remaining faithful to what matters while Anger is present.

The choice begins within the Inner House.

Its expression may come later, when the Pilgrim steps into the Garden.

And sometimes the choice is simply to give the House more time.

Presence does not choose for the Pilgrim.

It offers the space in which a choice can become our own.

5. Release — Allowing the Pressure to Loosen

Sometimes Anger leaves the House carrying more tension than it needs.

- The jaw remains tight.
- The shoulders are raised.
- The breathing is shallow.
- The Mind continues rehearsing what happened.

Even when the moment has passed, the Body may still be preparing for a confrontation.

The event may be over, but the House has not yet settled.

This is where Release may help.

The Pilgrim enters the Bathroom.

Here, water offers a different experience.

- Warmth.
- Movement.

A little relief.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim washes their face.
- Takes a shower.
- Allows a long breath to leave the Body.

Or simply rests for a moment.

- Sometimes tears arrive.
- Sometimes the Body needs movement.
- Sometimes nothing happens immediately.

There is no need to force Release.

And perhaps, beneath the sound of the water, there is a whisper:

- *You do not have to carry all of this tension.*
- *Release what is ready.*
- *Keep what still matters.*

The purpose is not to wash Anger away.

Anger may be pointing towards something that still matters.

- A boundary may have been crossed.
- An injustice may remain unresolved.
- Something may still need to be said.

Releasing tension does not mean abandoning any of these concerns.

Nor does it mean forgiving someone before we are ready.

The Pilgrim may allow some of the pressure to loosen while keeping what Anger has revealed.

What Are We Releasing?

- Sometimes it is physical tension.
- Sometimes the urgency to retaliate.

- Sometimes an argument the Mind has been repeating.

And sometimes it is the expectation that another Pilgrim must change before our own House can find a little peace.

But Release is not always possible.

- The Body may remain unsettled.
- The Emotional Self may still be hurting.
- The Mind may continue searching for answers.

Nothing has failed because Anger remains.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim needs to return to the Kitchen.
- Perhaps a pause in the Living Room would help.
- Perhaps a choice has already become clear.

Or perhaps the House simply needs time.

Release is one possibility among the Five Movements.

- It may come first.
- It may come later.
- It may happen more than once.

And sometimes it may not be needed at all.

Release what is ready.
Keep what still matters.

The Pilgrim does not have to leave the Bathroom free of Anger.

Only a little more able to carry it.

Section 6 - Step into the Garden

Fire. Water. Reflection.

The Pilgrim has spent some time within the Inner House.

Anger may have been recognised.

Some tension may have loosened.

- The Kitchen may have offered understanding.
- The Living Room may have offered space for choice.

Or perhaps none of these movements was needed.

Anger may still be present.

And now the Pilgrim steps into the Garden.

Here, what happens within the House may find expression in the world.

Fire

Anger can be like fire.

- It can burn.
- It can spread.
- It can harm what we love.

But fire can also illuminate.

It can bring warmth.

And it can give us the courage to protect what matters.

- An injustice may need addressing.

- A boundary may need establishing.
- A difficult truth may need speaking.

The fire does not have to be extinguished.

It needs somewhere wise to burn.

The question is not simply whether the Pilgrim is angry.

It is what the Pilgrim does while Anger is present.

Water

Water offers another possibility.

- It cools.
- It softens.

It creates room for something different.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim chooses a gentler voice.
- Perhaps a difficult conversation can wait.
- Perhaps an apology is needed.
- Or perhaps the wisest response is to walk away.

Water does not ask the fire to disappear.

It simply gives the House another experience.

Fire and water need not be enemies.

- Sometimes courage needs gentleness.
- And sometimes gentleness needs courage.

Reflection

Later, when the moment has passed, the Pilgrim may look back.

- Not to condemn themselves.
- Nor to justify everything that happened.

But to learn.

- What did Anger reveal?
- What did Hijack add?
- Was something important protected?
- Was someone hurt unnecessarily?
- And what might I carry forward?

Perhaps the Pilgrim recognises something they would like to do differently.

Perhaps they discover that a boundary was necessary.

Or perhaps they simply understand their own House a little better.

The Garden does not demand perfection.

There will be moments when Anger arrives before Awareness.

- When words escape.
- When Hijack speaks too loudly.
- And when the Pilgrim wishes they had chosen differently.

Even then, the journey continues.

- There may be something to repair.

- Something to learn.
- Something to nourish.

The purpose is not to become a Pilgrim who never feels Anger.

It is to become a Pilgrim who can live with Anger without surrendering the Garden to it.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Perhaps today there is a little fire within the House.

There is nothing wrong with fire.

- Fire can give warmth.
- Fire can give strength.

Yet when it burns without Awareness, it may also cause harm.

If you are able, spend a few quiet moments beside water.

- A lake.
- A river.
- Or the sea.

Notice the movement of the water.

Notice the ripples appearing and passing.

Notice how the Sky is reflected on its surface.

As you look upon the water, gently ask yourself:

What is my anger trying to protect?

Then remain quietly with whatever arises.

There is no need to force an answer.

Like the still water, wisdom often reveals itself when the House becomes quiet enough to reflect.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

When your fire begins to rise, return to the water.

For what is reflected clearly is rarely carried blindly.

Carry forward what matters

without carrying more fire than is needed.

Chapter 33 - When Shame Visits the House



Section 1 — When Shame Quietly Takes Root

Unlike Anxiety or Grief, Shame does not always arrive like a Visitor.
And unlike Anger, which may arise suddenly, Shame can take root quietly.

Shame is a self-conscious emotion that may become a deeply rooted feeling about ourselves.

- Sometimes Shame arises from a single experience.
- Sometimes from something we have done.
- Sometimes from something done to us.
- And sometimes from how we imagine another person might see us.

It may take root suddenly.

Or gradually, through years of living.

- A harsh criticism.
- A painful rejection.
- Repeated humiliation.
- A mistake that was never forgiven.
- Being laughed at.
- Being made to feel different.
- Or simply growing up believing that who we are is somehow not enough.

But Shame does not always begin with pain.

Sometimes we may feel perfectly comfortable with something in private, yet uncomfortable allowing another person to see it.

- What feels natural when we are alone may feel exposing when witnessed.
- *What will they think of me?*
- *Will they see me differently?*
- *Will they still accept me?*

Yet discomfort with being seen does not necessarily mean that we are ashamed of what we do.

Privacy is not Shame.

And not everything hidden is something we regret.

- The Porch allows us to decide what we wish to share.
- Some experiences belong within the privacy of our House.
- Others may eventually be shared with another Pilgrim.
- And some may remain private.

There is no obligation to reveal everything about ourselves.

But when Shame accompanies an experience, the Hijacked Voice may begin interpreting it through the loudspeaker:

- *Don't let anyone see this.*
- *Keep this part of yourself hidden.*
- *If they truly knew you, they would turn away.*

Repeated often enough, such thoughts may begin to feel less like thoughts and more like truths about who we are.

And slowly, Shame may begin to shape the weather within the House.

The Windows may become clouded by how we have learned to see ourselves.

A Picture may appear on the wall:

I am not enough.

At the Porch, we may become increasingly careful about what we allow others to see.

And something we learned could not safely or comfortably express may become part of the Hidden Self.

What was said may become a Picture.
What could no longer be safely expressed may descend towards the Cellar.

But not everything within the Hidden Self is wounded.

Some things are simply private.

And keeping something private does not necessarily mean we are hiding in Shame.

There is also an important distinction between privacy and secrecy.

- Privacy allows us to preserve something of our own.
- Secrecy may become painful when what is concealed affects another Pilgrim.

Sometimes Shame makes it difficult to speak about the very thing that needs understanding.

What feels like protection within one House may create hurt or distance in another.

Shame may explain why we hide, but it does not remove our responsibility for how our secrecy affects others.

None of this means that Shame has become the House.

It means that an emotion, or the feeling it has left behind, has become woven into how the House is being experienced.

And because it feels familiar, we may stop noticing it.

This is simply who I am.

But Awareness may one day notice something different:

This is how I have come to feel about myself.

It may not be the whole story of who I am.

- Nothing needs to be torn from the walls.
- Nothing needs to be dragged from the Cellar.
- Nothing needs to be exposed at the Porch.

For now, something much quieter has happened.

Shame has been recognised.

And what has been recognised may begin to be held differently.

Section 2 — The Nature of Shame

Shame does not feel the same in every House.

- For one Pilgrim, it may bring restlessness and uncertainty.
- For another, harsh self-criticism.
- For another, withdrawal and silence.

Ayurveda offers one way of looking.

Every House carries qualities of **Movement, Transformation and Stability — Vata, Pitta and Kapha.**

When **Movement** is unsettled, Shame may feel restless.

- The mind may repeatedly revisit what happened.
- *What did they think of me?*
- *Why did I say that?*
- *What if someone finds out?*

There may be an urge to explain, escape or disappear from the situation.

When **Transformation** becomes intense, Shame may turn sharply inward.

The Hijacked Voice may become critical:

- *You should have known better.*
- *How could you have done that?*
- *You should be better than this.*

The House may become a place of judgement rather than understanding.

When **Stability** becomes heavy, Shame may be carried quietly.

- The Pilgrim may withdraw.
- Speak less.
- Avoid being seen.
- Something may remain unspoken for months or even years.

The Feeling becomes familiar simply because it has been carried for so long.

Yet silence does not always mean Shame.

- A Pilgrim may choose privacy without feeling ashamed.
- And another may wish to speak but find the possibility of being seen or judged too uncomfortable.

What remains private is not necessarily hidden in Shame.

None of these is a fixed type of Shame.

The same House may experience all three.

- **Restless.**

  Critical.

  Hidden.

And Shame cannot be explained by Vata, Pitta or Kapha alone.

Ayurveda simply offers another lens through which Awareness may notice how the Feeling is being experienced.

How is my House carrying Shame today?

And perhaps:

What might help this House find a little more harmony while Shame is being felt?

Section 3 - The Hijacked Voice

When Shame is felt, the Hijacked Voice may whisper through the loudspeaker:

- *Don't let anyone see this.*
- *You should have known better.*
- *If they really knew you, they would leave.*
- *Hide this part of yourself.*
- *You are not enough.*

Repeated often enough, these whispers may become familiar.

Eventually, they may no longer sound like interpretations at all.

They may sound like truth.

This is who I am.

Perhaps this is one of the deepest difficulties of Shame.

A Feeling about ourselves may gradually become mistaken for the truth about ourselves.

But Hijack does not always condemn.

Sometimes it encourages concealment.

- *Don't talk about it.*
- *What will they think?*
- *Keep this to yourself.*

The Pilgrim may be comfortable with something in private, yet uncomfortable allowing another Pilgrim to know about it.

- Perhaps there is fear of judgement.
- Perhaps embarrassment.
- Perhaps a reluctance to feel exposed.

And sometimes the Pilgrim simply wishes to preserve something private.

Privacy is not evidence of Hijack.

The distinction matters.

A boundary may arise from discernment.

But when concealment is driven by fear, pressure or the belief that being known would make us unworthy of Love, Hijack may be influencing the House.

And what remains unspoken may begin to affect how the Pilgrim relates to others.

What feels like protection within one House may create distance in another.

Yet the purpose of Awareness is not to force disclosure.

It is to recognise what may be influencing the choice.

When a Feeling Becomes an Identity

Awareness begins to distinguish:

I feel ashamed.

is not the same as:

I am shameful.

And:

I made a mistake.

is not necessarily the same as:

There is something wrong with who I am.

In the Living Room, Presence remains seated in the Rocking Chair.

Hijack may continue speaking through the loudspeaker.

Beside the Chair, the Lamp continues to burn.

- It does not argue with the Hijacked Voice.
- It does not remove the Pictures from the walls.
- It does not force open the Cellar door.

It simply gives light to what is here.

And in that light, perhaps something can be seen differently.

- The Picture may still say:

  I am not enough.
- Shame may still be felt.
- The Hijacked Voice may still whisper.

But Awareness can notice:

- **This is a Picture.**
- **This is a feeling.**
- **Neither is the whole House.**

Nothing has to be exposed.

Nothing has to be proved.

Nothing has to be dragged into the light.

The Flame simply remains.

And perhaps, little by little, the House can begin to hold a different possibility:

I do not have to become someone else in order to be worthy of Love.

Section 4 - The Five Movements of Healing

Shame may be carried quietly for many years.

- Sometimes it arises from something we have done.
- Sometimes from something done to us.

- Sometimes from the fear of how another Pilgrim might see us.

And sometimes we are not entirely sure why we feel it.

The Five Movements of Healing offer ways of meeting Shame within the Inner House.

Recognise · Understand · Remember · Befriend · Release

These are not five steps that must be followed in order.

They are resources available to the Pilgrim.

- Sometimes understanding comes before we can recognise what we are feeling.
- Sometimes we need companionship before we can begin to understand.
- Sometimes a little release makes room for reflection.

We begin wherever Awareness notices.

1. Recognise — Within the House

The first movement is to notice what is happening.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim feels an urge to withdraw.
- Perhaps the Body becomes tense.
- Perhaps the Mind begins revisiting something that happened.

Or perhaps the Pilgrim feels uncomfortable at the thought of another person knowing something private.

Awareness notices:

Something in me feels ashamed.

There is no need to decide immediately whether the feeling is justified.

- No need to explain it.
- No need to make it disappear.

And no need to reveal it to another person.

Recognition is not confession.

It is simply allowing ourselves to notice what is being experienced.

- Perhaps the Hijacked Voice is speaking through the loudspeaker.
- Perhaps a familiar Picture has appeared on the wall.

I am not enough.

They will think less of me.

I should never have done that.

The Lamp illuminates what is happening.

It does not condemn the Pilgrim for feeling Shame.

And it does not mistake the feeling for the whole Self.

I am experiencing Shame.

I am not Shame itself.

For now, that recognition may be enough.

2. Understand — The Kitchen

When the Pilgrim is ready, the feeling may be brought into the Kitchen.

Here, the Cook — Manas, the Processing Mind — begins examining what has arrived.

- What happened?
- What am I feeling?

- What am I telling myself about it?
- What am I afraid another person might think?
- And what, if anything, needs my attention?

The Chef — Buddhi, the Guiding Intelligence — helps us distinguish what might otherwise become entangled.

- Perhaps we have made a mistake.
- Perhaps we have hurt someone.
- Perhaps we have been treated unkindly.
- Perhaps we are carrying a judgement that was never ours to begin with.

Or perhaps we simply prefer to keep something private.

Not every uncomfortable feeling tells us that we have done something wrong.

And not every action that causes Shame is necessarily wrong.

Understanding asks us to look more carefully.

There is a difference between:

I regret what I did.

and:

I am a person who deserves no kindness.

The first may invite responsibility, apology or change.

The second may leave the Pilgrim trapped beneath a Picture.

The Kitchen allows us to separate the action from the judgement we have placed upon ourselves.

It also helps us distinguish privacy from secrecy.

A Pilgrim may choose to keep something private without harming anyone.

But when concealment affects another Pilgrim, understanding may need to include that person's experience too.

Understanding ourselves does not mean overlooking the consequences of our actions.

Nor does taking responsibility require us to condemn our whole Self.

- The Cook examines.
- The Chef discerns.

And the Pilgrim may begin to see more than the Hijacked Voice has been telling them.

3. Remember — The Dining Room

Shame can make the Pilgrim feel alone.

It may suggest that everyone else belongs while we remain somehow different.

That others are worthy of kindness, understanding and companionship.

But we are not.

The Dining Room offers another possibility.

Here, we remember our shared humanity.

- Every Pilgrim carries experiences they may find difficult to discuss.
- Every Pilgrim has made mistakes.

- Every Pilgrim has known uncertainty, vulnerability or the fear of being judged.

We do not have to share the same experiences to recognise one another's humanity.

And we do not have to agree with everything another Pilgrim does in order to treat them with dignity.

- Perhaps there is someone with whom we can speak safely.
- Someone who can listen without immediately condemning.
- Someone who can help us see beyond a familiar Picture.

But companionship does not require complete disclosure.

We may share what we are ready to share, with whom we choose, and when it feels appropriate.

Sometimes the Dining Room is simply a reminder that we belong to a wider human family.

- We are not the only Pilgrim who has felt ashamed.
- We are not the only one who has wished to hide.
- And we are not the only one learning how to live with our imperfections.

Remembering our humanity does not remove responsibility.

It allows responsibility to be carried without losing our humanity.

4. Befriend — The Living Room

Shame may make the Inner House an uncomfortable place to inhabit.

The Hijacked Voice may continue speaking through the loudspeaker:

- *You should be ashamed of yourself.*
- *You are not good enough.*
- *You do not deserve kindness.*

The Pilgrim may have heard these words so often that they begin to feel familiar.

But the Living Room offers another way of being with ourselves.

Here, the Pilgrim encounters **Self-Compassion**.

The willingness to meet our own suffering with the kindness and understanding we might offer another Pilgrim.

- We may find it easier to forgive another person's imperfections than to accept our own.
- Easier to comfort someone who feels ashamed than to offer that same comfort to ourselves.

But why should kindness end at our own doorstep?

Self-compassion does not ask us to deny what happened.

It asks us not to abandon ourselves because of it.

- We may have made a mistake.
- We may have caused hurt.
- We may have something to acknowledge, repair or change.

And still, we remain human.

We can take responsibility for our actions without making punishment our identity.

- Presence remains seated in the Rocking Chair.
- The Lamp of Awareness continues to illuminate the room.

And the Pilgrim may begin to meet their own experience with a little more gentleness.

- Not by pretending nothing happened.
- Not by insisting that every choice was wise.
- Not by dismissing another person's hurt.

But by recognising that a human being can make mistakes, carry regret, feel ashamed and still remain worthy of care.

Befriending ourselves is not the same as excusing ourselves.

We may acknowledge:

- *I wish I had acted differently.*
- *I may need to apologise.*
- *There is something I want to change.*

And still say:

I do not need to punish myself endlessly.

- Sometimes Befriend means allowing ourselves to feel uncomfortable without adding another layer of judgement.
- Sometimes it means accepting a part of ourselves that we have struggled to understand.
- Sometimes it means recognising that privacy is a legitimate boundary.
- And sometimes it means finding the courage to speak honestly when silence has begun to hurt someone else.

There is no demand to become comfortable with everything immediately.

We can remain beside ourselves while understanding is still unfolding.

The Hijacked Voice may continue speaking.

But it need not be the only voice we hear.

5. Release — The Bathroom

Shame can leave the Pilgrim wanting to wash something away.

- A memory.
- A mistake.
- An uncomfortable part of ourselves.
- The feeling of having been seen.

Sometimes we may wish we could scrub away the experience until nothing remains.

But the Bathroom offers a gentler understanding of Release.

We do not have to wash away our humanity.

We may release some of the tension we have been carrying.

- The endless replaying of a conversation.
- The harshness of a familiar judgement.

The belief that one experience defines our entire Self.

- Perhaps something begins to loosen.
- Perhaps the Body softens.
- Perhaps the Mind becomes quieter.
- Or perhaps Shame remains, but no longer needs to be fought.

Release does not mean forgetting what happened.

- It does not erase responsibility.
- It does not replace an apology or a necessary change.

And it does not require us to reveal what we wish to keep private.

- Sometimes Release means letting go of unnecessary self-punishment while keeping what we have learned.

- Sometimes it means allowing an old Picture to lose some of its authority.
- And sometimes it means accepting that we are not ready to release anything yet.

The Bathroom does not demand that the Pilgrim leave everything behind.

It simply offers somewhere to put down what no longer needs to be carried.

And perhaps, beneath the sound of running water, the House hears a gentle whisper:

- *You have washed enough.*
- *You do not have to scrub away your humanity.*
- *You may leave what is ready to leave.*

The Movements Belong to the Pilgrim

These Five Movements do not form a staircase.

The Pilgrim may enter the Kitchen before recognising Shame clearly.

- They may need the companionship of the Dining Room before they can Befriend themselves.
- They may find a little Release before understanding has fully arrived.
- And sometimes all they can do is Recognise.

That is not failure.

The Movements are available whenever they are needed.

Shame does not have to disappear before the Pilgrim can begin living.

And the Pilgrim does not have to become perfect before deserving kindness.

The House can continue to be lived in.

Even while Shame is still being understood.

Shame came carrying judgement.
The House quietly carries self-compassion forward.

Section 5 – Step into the Garden

The Pilgrim steps beyond the Inner House.

Shame may still be present.

A familiar Picture may still hang upon the wall.

But the Garden is waiting.

There are relationships to tend, choices to make, and a life that continues to unfold.

Here, three movements may be noticed:

Hide · Allow · Live

1. Hide — When Being Seen Feels Difficult

Sometimes Shame makes the Pilgrim withdraw.

- A conversation is avoided.
- An invitation declined.
- Something important remains unspoken.

The Garden may begin to feel smaller, not because its boundaries have changed, but because the Pilgrim has become afraid to move freely within it.

Yet not every closed Door is an expression of Shame.

Privacy is not Shame. A boundary is not hiding.

We are entitled to parts of our lives that remain our own.

The question is not whether everything should be revealed.

It is whether fear has begun to decide how we live.

Perhaps Awareness gently asks:

> *Am I protecting something I value, or avoiding something I fear?*

Sometimes the answer is clear.

Sometimes it takes time.

2. Allow — Making Room for Ourselves

The Pilgrim may begin to allow what once felt difficult to acknowledge.

- An imperfection.
- A difference.
- A regret.
- A part of themselves they have struggled to accept.

Allowing does not mean approving of every action or overlooking another person's hurt.

It means no longer making acceptance of our humanity conditional upon being without flaws.

Self-Compassion may accompany this movement.

- We can acknowledge what needs changing without rejecting the person who must make that change.
- We can respect our own boundaries while remaining attentive to those of others.
- And we can allow another Pilgrim to see things differently without surrendering our own understanding.

There is room in the Garden for more than one experience.

3. Live — Returning to Life

Perhaps the Pilgrim begins to do something they once avoided.

- Speak where they had remained silent.
- Accept an invitation.
- Offer an apology.
- Protect a boundary.
- Or simply enjoy an ordinary moment without examining themselves through the eyes of others.

These may seem like small movements.

But a Garden is often tended through small acts.

The Pilgrim does not need to become entirely comfortable with being seen.

Nor must every private part of life be shared.

Authenticity does not require exposure.

It asks only that we become increasingly able to live in harmony with what we understand, value and choose.

Shame may return.

- An old Picture may catch our attention.
- The Hijacked Voice may speak again.

But the Pilgrim can notice it without allowing it to determine every choice.

Freedom does not require the disappearance of Shame.

And so the Garden continues.

- Not because everything has been resolved.
- Not because Shame has disappeared.

But because life does not have to wait for healing to be complete.

A Pilgrim's Reflection

Take a quiet moment.
Are there places in your life where Shame may be encouraging you to hide?

- Perhaps you avoid wearing something you enjoy because of what others might think.
- Perhaps you keep an opinion to yourself even when you would like to speak.
- Perhaps you compare yourself with others.
- Perhaps somewhere within the House there is still a Picture that says:

  I am not enough.

Notice without judgement.

There is nothing wrong with privacy, silence or keeping something within the House.
The question is simply:

> **Am I choosing this,**
> **or is Shame choosing it for me?**

And then perhaps ask:

> **What might I do today if I were a little less afraid of being judged?**

The answer may be very small.
Wear something you enjoy.
Speak honestly.
Accept a compliment with a simple: *Thank you.*

- Say *yes* when you mean yes.
- Say *no* when you mean no.
- Or perhaps do nothing differently today.
- Simply noticing may be enough.

You do not have to reveal more of yourself in order to become more yourself.

You are simply learning to recognise when Shame is deciding how much of your life you are allowed to live.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

You do not have to become someone else.
Nor do you have to prove who you are.
The world does not need another copy.
It needs the gift that only you can bring.

Allow yourself to be human.
Allow yourself to be different.
And quietly live what is yours to live.

Chapter 34 - The House Is Larger Than Its Experiences



"Some days the Inner House is peaceful. Other days everyone seems to arrive at once."

Section 1 — A Rather Full House

By now, we have met quite a few of the experiences that may be held within the Inner House.

- Anxiety may visit.
- Grief may arrive.
- Anger may arise.
- Shame may be felt.

And, inconveniently, they do not always wait politely for one another to leave.

- Grief may be visiting while Anger arises.
- Anxiety may arrive while Shame is already shaping the weather.
- A little Fear may join them.

And somewhere in the middle of all this, the Pilgrim may simply be trying to make breakfast.

The Inner House is lived, not organised into a sequence.

There is no receptionist at the Front Door saying:

One at a time, please.

Nor does Anger necessarily wait in the Garden until Anxiety has finished using the Kitchen.

Life is rarely that tidy.

- Sometimes several experiences are present together.
- Sometimes we understand what has brought them.
- Sometimes we do not.

And sometimes the wisest thing we can say is:

There is quite a lot going on in my House today.

That may be enough.

Awareness does not have to classify everything before we can live with what is here.

- Visitors may arrive.
- Emotions may arise.
- Feelings may be felt.
- The inner weather may change.

And through it all, the House continues to hold the experiences of being human.

Even when an experience has been with us for a long time, it does not contain the whole story of who we are.

The House is larger than every experience it holds.

Section 2 — When Experiences Meet

The Inner House can be a sociable place.

Not always conveniently so.

Sometimes one experience awakens another.

- Anxiety may bring Fear.
- Grief may be accompanied by Anger.
- Loneliness may deepen when Shame encourages us to withdraw.

And an unexpected kindness may bring a moment of Joy into a House that has been carrying sadness.

These experiences do not always oppose one another.

- They may coexist.
- They may influence one another.

And sometimes their relationship is difficult to understand.

Consider a Pilgrim who has been feeling anxious.

They begin declining invitations.

At first, staying home brings relief.

But gradually, Loneliness begins to visit.

The Pilgrim misses companionship, yet feels increasingly uncomfortable about returning.

Then Shame may arise.

- *Why can't I simply be like everyone else?*

What began as Anxiety has become something more complicated.

Yet the Pilgrim does not need to untangle every experience before offering themselves care.

We do not need to turn the Inner House into a flowchart.

Awareness may simply ask:

What is here?

And perhaps:

What does this moment need?

- Sometimes the answer is rest.
- Sometimes companionship.
- Sometimes an opportunity to understand what is happening.

And sometimes we reach for something that promises immediate relief.

- Something comforting.
- Something distracting.

Something that seems to say:

Here. This might make things easier.

And sometimes it does.

For a while.

Section 3 — The Gifts We Keep Receiving

Some gifts arrive beautifully wrapped.

Others arrive looking like a glass of wine, a slice of cake, a glowing phone screen or one more achievement.

And unfortunately, some gifts come without a receipt.

We reach for these gifts for different reasons.

Sometimes something within the House is difficult to carry, and we seek relief.

At other times, we remember how pleasurable an experience was and wish to enjoy it again.

One may promise comfort.

Another excitement.

And sometimes we seek both.

Anxiety is visiting.

A drink seems to quieten the restlessness.

That feels better.

Loneliness is here.

The phone offers an endless stream of people, stories and conversation.

I don't feel quite so alone.

Grief is visiting.

Food brings comfort.

For a moment, this hurts a little less.

Shame is being felt.

One more achievement brings recognition.

Perhaps now I am enough.

Anger has arisen.

Taking control brings a sense of strength.

Now I feel safer.

And sometimes there is no particular discomfort.

The Pilgrim simply remembers an enjoyable experience.

- The excitement.
- The anticipation.
- The pleasure.
- *I would like to experience that again.*

There is nothing inherently wrong with seeking pleasure or comfort.

Both belong to ordinary human life.

But something interesting may happen when an experience is repeated.

How Patterns Develop

And so the House remembers.

It may remember the relief something brought.

Or the pleasure it once offered.

Sometimes even the thought of experiencing it again awakens anticipation.

The familiar experience becomes attractive once more.

Once.

Then again.

And perhaps again.

No one announces:

> *Today I shall begin forming a dependence.*

It often happens more quietly.

What begins as an occasional choice may become a repeated pattern.

Through repetition, the experience becomes familiar.

The mind remembers.

The body learns.

And sometimes, what was once a choice begins to feel like a necessity.

Thought → Action → Repetition → Familiarity → Possible Dependence

But this is not an inevitable journey.

- Not every thought leads to action.
- Not every pleasure becomes a habit.

And not every familiar experience becomes a dependence.

- A slice of cake may simply be delicious.
- A conversation may offer genuine companionship.
- An achievement may deserve celebration.

And an enjoyable experience may be just that.

Not every pleasure needs an explanation.

When Hijack Raises Its Voice

Sometimes Hijack begins speaking before the Pilgrim has acted.

- *You must do this.*
- *Remember how good it feels.*
- *Just once more.*

And when the Pilgrim acts, Hijack may continue:

- *See? I told you.*
- *Why stop now?*
- *Let's do it again.*

With repetition, the experience may become increasingly familiar.

- The mind anticipates.
- The body responds.
- And Hijack's loudspeaker may become more persuasive.

What began as an invitation may gradually feel like a demand.

Yet Hijack does not necessarily accompany every desire.

- We can enjoy pleasure without being Hijacked.
- We can repeat an experience without becoming dependent upon it.

Hijack becomes more recognisable when desire is accompanied by pressure, urgency or a growing difficulty in choosing otherwise.

Sometimes the Pilgrim moves through a familiar pattern with little Awareness.

Only afterwards, when the urgency has quietened, do they begin to recognise what has happened.

- Guilt may arrive.
- *Why did I do that again?*
- *I promised myself I wouldn't.*

And sometimes Hijack, having encouraged the experience, now uses its loudspeaker to condemn the Pilgrim for following it.

- *You've failed again.*
- *You'll never change.*

But Guilt is not the same as Awareness.

Guilt may draw attention to something that troubles us.

Awareness allows us to recognise what is happening without turning the experience into a judgement about our entire being.

And sometimes Awareness is available even while the urge is present.

- A thought may arise without requiring an action.
- An urge may be felt without determining what happens next.
- That space may be difficult to find, particularly when a pattern has become deeply established.

But it is not necessarily lost.

What Are We Seeking?

Perhaps the important question is not simply what we are doing.

It is what draws us towards it.

Awareness may gently ask:

What am I seeking from this experience?

- Perhaps relief.
- Comfort.
- Connection.
- Excitement.
- Pleasure.
- Recognition.
- Safety.

Or simply a moment of enjoyment.

Sometimes the answer is straightforward.

At other times, another question may arise:

What was I truly longing for when this gift seemed so necessary?

There is no judgement in the question.

- The gift may have helped us through something difficult.
- It may have brought genuine pleasure.
- Perhaps, at one time, it was the only way we knew to find relief.

But sometimes a gift that once helped us carry life begins to ask for more than we intended to give.

We may continue seeking an experience even when it no longer offers the same satisfaction.

Or when its consequences have begun to affect our lives and relationships.

- Recognising such a pattern does not mean we can always change it easily.
- Some patterns require time, support and considerable care.

Nor does Awareness demand that we condemn the gift or ourselves.

It simply allows us to begin seeing our relationship with it more clearly.

Sometimes we keep reaching for a gift because of what it once gave us, or what we still hope it will give

Section 4 — Living with What Is Here

The Inner House will not always be peaceful.

- Some mornings, Anxiety may be waiting at the Front Door.
- Grief may still be resting in the Bedroom.
- Anger may have arisen over something that happened yesterday.
- And somewhere in the Kitchen, the Pilgrim is wondering what to make for breakfast.

Life continues.

Even when the House feels unsettled.

Perhaps this is something we gradually discover.

We do not need to resolve every experience before we can begin living.

- Sometimes we can understand what is happening.
- Sometimes we cannot.
- Sometimes we have the strength to explore.

At other times, we simply need to rest.

The House has room for both.

Returning to Awareness

When an experience becomes difficult to carry, Awareness may illuminate what is happening.

- *Anxiety is here.*
- *I am feeling ashamed.*
- *I have been reaching for something familiar.*
- *I am finding it difficult to stop.*

There is no need to turn every observation into an investigation.

Awareness does not demand an explanation.

It simply allows us to recognise something that might otherwise pass unnoticed.

And sometimes that recognition is enough to change how we respond.

Not necessarily immediately.

Not always easily.

But perhaps a little differently.

The Rocking Chair

In the Living Room, the rocking chair belongs to Presence.

It has always been Presence's seat.

Hijack may be speaking loudly.

- *You must do something.*
- *You cannot leave this alone.*
- *You need to feel better.*

But Hijack does not occupy the chair.

It uses its loudspeaker.

And sometimes the noise makes Presence difficult to recognise.

Yet Presence does not have to compete with Hijack.

It does not need a louder voice.

It may simply allow the Pilgrim to recognise:

- *There is an urge.*
- *There is discomfort.*
- *There is something I want.*

And perhaps:

I do not have to respond immediately.

- Sometimes the Pilgrim may still follow the familiar pattern.
- Sometimes the urge may feel too powerful to resist.

That does not mean the House has failed.

It means the Pilgrim is living with something difficult.

And sometimes help from another person may be needed.

Presence is not a promise that every struggle can be resolved alone.

What Does This Moment Need?

We have already met the Rooms of the Inner House.

They remain available.

- The Front Door may help us recognise what has arrived.
- The Kitchen may offer space to explore.
- The Dining Room may welcome companionship.
- The Living Room may allow an experience to settle.
- The Bathroom may offer an opportunity to release what no longer needs to be carried.

But the Pilgrim does not have to visit every Room.

There is certainly no need to search the Cellar every time we have a difficult afternoon.

Sometimes the most helpful question is simply:

What does this moment need?

Perhaps rest.

- Perhaps a conversation.
- Perhaps a little humour.
- Perhaps a walk in the Garden.
- Perhaps the courage to acknowledge something we have been avoiding.

And sometimes the answer is:

I don't know yet.

That too can be allowed.

The House Continues

We may spend years learning to understand our experiences.

- Some patterns soften.
- Some return.
- Some become familiar companions.

Others gradually lose their influence.

And sometimes, despite our efforts, we find ourselves responding in ways we had hoped to leave behind.

The Pilgrim need not turn every such moment into another reason for Shame.

There may be something to learn.

- Something to repair.
- Something to accept.
- Or simply another opportunity to begin again.

Healing does not require the House to become permanently peaceful.

Nor does flourishing have to wait until every difficulty has disappeared.

The Garden may be healing in one place, ripening in another and flourishing elsewhere.

And through it all, life continues.

- Visitors may arrive.
- Emotions may arise.
- Feelings may be felt.
- The weather may change.

But none of these experiences can tell the whole story of the person living within.

The House is larger than every experience it holds.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

What experiences are sharing my Inner House today?

Are some influencing one another?

When life becomes difficult, what do I reach for?

Do I seek relief, pleasure, or perhaps both?

Are there familiar patterns I follow without much Awareness?

And when I recognise something I wish to change, can I allow myself understanding without abandoning responsibility?

Perhaps I do not need to resolve everything today.

Perhaps I can simply begin by noticing what is here.

The House is larger than every experience it holds.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

You may not always be able to quieten the urge.
But you can begin to loosen the secrecy.
Sometimes healing begins not when the habit ends,
but when honesty finally enters the House.

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ATMADEVA'S
THE FIVE LAPPS LENSES
FIVE WAYS OF LOOKING. ONE LIFE BEING LIVED.
PHILOSOPHY
SEE WISELY
Meaning
Perspective
A Fuller View
The same reality.
A wider view.
A kinder world.
PSYCHOLOGY
UNDERSTAND YOURSELF
Mind
Emotions
Inner Patterns
SPIRITUALITY
LISTEN WITHIN
Presence
Stillness
Inner Wisdom
LIVED EXPERIENCE
RECEIVE LIFE
What Life Shows
What We Learn
What We Carry
AYURVEDA
LIVE IN HARMONY
Balance
Wellbeing
A Natural Rhythm
Different lenses.
The same sky.
A more harmonious world.
ATMADEVA'S PHILOSOPHY
THE FRAMEWORK
THE SUBTLE PATH
INNER TURNING
INNER–OUTER ALIGNMENT FRAME
THE LIVING WISDOM CYCLE
THE LAPPS LENSES
FROM INSIGHT TO A MORE HARMONIOUS LIFE

Chapter 35 – Living Grief



"We keep arriving. But the Pilgrim who arrives is always changing."

Movement 1 — Apparently, I Have Changed

A friend once asked to video call me.

We had not seen each other for years, and he was curious about the philosophy I had been writing.

The screen opened.

Before we reached philosophy, however, he noticed something rather more immediate.

I had put on weight.

And my hair had gone grey.

I smiled.

Neither observation particularly bothered me. Both were true.

But Awareness noticed something else.

How quickly we notice what has changed in another person.

We do it all the time.

- *You've lost weight.*
- *You've put on weight.*
- *You've gone grey.*
- *You look tired.*
- *You've aged.*

Sometimes the words are affectionate.

Sometimes concerned.

Sometimes merely observational.

But they reveal something interesting.

Other people can become mirrors.

And so can photographs.

One day we find an old photograph and meet a face we once saw every morning without thinking anything of it.

- The hair is darker.
- The skin smoother.
- The waist perhaps slightly more cooperative.

We look at the photograph.

Then at the mirror.

Then, perhaps rather unwisely, back at the photograph.

And something may arise.

Not necessarily sadness.

Not necessarily regret.

Sometimes we simply laugh.

> *Goodness. Was that really me?*

But sometimes **Grief arises**.

Not because anyone has died.

Because something has changed **while we have continued living**.

- The face.
- The body.
- Our strength.
- What we can do.
- A role we once inhabited.
- A freedom we hardly noticed until it became more difficult.

This is what I mean by **Living Grief**.

> **Living Grief is the Grief that may arise through living the losses and changes of our continuing life.**

Not every change brings Grief.

- Grey hair may mean absolutely nothing to one Pilgrim and quite a lot to another.
- Ageing itself is not Grief.
- Change itself is not Grief.

Grief arises because something mattered.

And perhaps the invitation is not to recover the Pilgrim in the photograph.

It is to meet the Pilgrim standing here.

> **That was me.**
> **This is me too.**

Movement 2 — When the Body Changes the Plans

The mirror is only one place where we meet change.

Sometimes the body tells us.

For years, we may hardly think about what it allows us to do.

- We walk.
- Climb stairs.
- Carry shopping.
- Get up from the floor.
- Travel without wondering how far the gate is from the plane.

Then, gradually, the questions change.

- *Is there a lift?*
- *How far do we have to walk?*
- *Will there be somewhere to sit?*
- *Could you carry this for me?*

Perhaps the most surprising moment is when someone simply reaches for our suitcase and says:

Let me take that.

A small gesture.

But something within us may answer:

I used to carry my own suitcase.

And there it is.

Living Grief.

Not necessarily because we cannot carry the suitcase.

The loss may be what carrying it represented.

- Independence.
- Strength.
- Freedom.
- The familiar experience of being the one who helped rather than the one being helped.

Living the loss can therefore be strangely ordinary.

No dramatic event is required.

Sometimes it is simply discovering that getting down onto the floor remains considerably easier than getting back up.

The body has changed the arrangements.

We may resist.

I can manage.

Sometimes we can.

Sometimes we cannot.

And sometimes we probably can, but accepting the offered hand would make life considerably easier.

Perhaps receiving does not make us less independent or less valuable.

When we allow another person to help us, **we also allow them to give.**

- The child once carried may one day carry the shopping.
- The hand we once held may one day hold ours.
- The friend we helped may one day help us.

Something has changed.

But something is continuing too.

Care is still moving between people.
Only its direction has changed.

Living Grief may still arise.

- We may miss the strength we had.
- The freedom we took for granted.
- The body that required less negotiation before agreeing to our plans.

There is no need to pretend otherwise.

But perhaps living the loss begins here:

I can miss what my body once allowed me to do
without rejecting the body that carries me now.

The body is still carrying the Pilgrim.

Just, occasionally, the suitcase may need to travel with someone else.

Movement 3 — And What Do You Do?

It is one of the first questions we ask someone we meet.

What do you do?

For much of our adult life, the answer may come easily.

- *I'm a teacher.*
- *I'm a nurse.*
- *I'm a builder.*
- *I'm a doctor.*
- *I run a shop.*

We think we are describing our work.

But sometimes we are also describing ourselves.

- Work gives us more than an income.
- It gives shape to Monday morning.
- People expect us somewhere.
- Someone knows our name.
- Someone needs something from us.

There is a reason to set the alarm.
And then one day, we retire.
The alarm clock celebrates immediately.
The Pilgrim may take a little longer.
Someone asks:

What do you do?

And for the first time, the old answer no longer quite fits.

Perhaps we say:

I used to be a teacher.

Two small words.

Used to.

And Living Grief may arise.

Not because retirement is necessarily sad.

For some Pilgrims it is liberation.

- No alarm.
- No commute.
- No meetings that could quite easily have been an email.

But for another Pilgrim, something important has gone.

- A role.
- A rhythm.
- A community.
- A sense of being needed.
- Perhaps even a familiar way of knowing:
  This is who I am.

Living the loss does not mean trying to keep the role alive forever.

Nor does it mean immediately finding a new one.

Perhaps there is a quieter question:

What did this role allow me to give?

- The teacher may leave the classroom without losing the capacity to teach.
- The carer may stop caring in the same way without losing tenderness.
- The person who spent a lifetime solving problems may discover that occasionally other people would prefer them simply to listen.
- The title may disappear.

Something of what ripened through it may remain.

Perhaps that is another mystery of Living Grief.

We lose a role and discover that **we were never only the role**.

The old answer to *What do you do?* may no longer fit.

For years, we may have answered with what we did.

I am a teacher.

Later:

I was a teacher.

Perhaps another answer does not need to be hurried into its place.

And perhaps, one day, the answer becomes much simpler:

I live.

Not because there is nothing left to do.

But because **living itself no longer needs a job title.**

Movement 4 — The Life That Did Not Happen

Not everything we grieve once existed.

Sometimes we grieve something that never happened at all.

Most of us carry a few quiet *one days*.

- *One day I will travel there.*
- *One day we will live by the sea.*
- *One day I will have children.*
- *One day we will retire together.*
- *One day I will write that book.*

We rarely think of these as possessions.

They are possibilities.

Little Pictures of tomorrow hanging quietly on the walls of the House.

And while there is time, they remain possible.

Then life unfolds.

- A relationship ends.
- Health changes.
- Circumstances alter.
- Years pass.

And occasionally we realise:

That day is probably not coming.

There may be nothing tangible to lose.

- No photograph of the journey we never took.
- No memories of the children who were never born.
- No keys to the house we never lived in.

And yet Grief may arise.

Because we do not live only with memories.

We also live with possibilities.

Some possibilities accompany us for so long that they quietly become part of how we imagine our life unfolding.

Living Grief may therefore ask us to live a peculiar kind of loss:

the loss of something we never actually had.

This does not make the Grief imaginary.

The life may not have happened.

The longing did.

And perhaps this is where Arriving becomes especially tender.

Arriving does not say:

Forget the life you imagined.

Nor does it promise:

Something better is waiting.

Sometimes we simply recognise:

That was the life I imagined.
This is the life that arrived.

For a while, there may be Grief between those two sentences.

We can allow it.

And then, when we are ready, perhaps we look towards the Horizon again.

Not to replace the old future immediately.

Simply to remember:

> **The future that disappeared was one possibility.**
> **It was never every possibility.**

The Horizon remains.

Movement 5 — Living the Loss

Perhaps Living Grief does not ask us to get over what has changed.

It asks us to **live the loss**.

- The younger face will not return.
- The body may not recover every ability.
- The old role may have ended.
- The imagined future may no longer be possible.

And still, morning arrives.

So does the Pilgrim.

Perhaps our five familiar movements can help — not as steps to complete, but as quiet places to pause.

Recognise

> **Something has changed, and I miss what was.**

No explanation is necessary.
Recognition is enough.

Understand

> **What does this loss mean to me?**

Perhaps the suitcase was never only a suitcase.

Perhaps it represented independence.

Perhaps the job was never only a job.

Perhaps it gave us belonging, purpose or identity.

Remember

> **What remains?**

Not as consolation.

Simply because loss can sometimes fill the whole Window.

The body has changed, but it is still carrying us.

The role has ended, but something that ripened through it may remain.

> **That was me.**
> **This is me too.**

Befriend

Meet the Pilgrim who is here now.

Not the face in the old photograph.

Not the body from twenty years ago.

Not the title on the old business card.

This Pilgrim.

Perhaps arriving is partly learning not to become a stranger to ourselves simply because we have changed.

Release

What are we ready to stop asking life to restore?

- Not the memory.
- Not the love.
- Not even the longing.

Perhaps only the struggle to make today become yesterday again.

And then we arrive.

Not beyond the loss.

Within the life that remains.

> **Living Grief looks towards what was.**
> **Arriving allows us to meet what is.**

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Think of something that has changed as you have lived.

Your appearance.

Your body.

A role.

A freedom.

A future you once imagined.

Ask quietly:

> **What am I grieving?**

And then:

> **What is here now?**

There is no need to choose between the two.

You may miss what was
and still arrive in what is

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Sometimes Living Grief is the grief of saying goodbye not to the past,
but to a future.

Chapter 36 - The Great Storms



"Some storms do not ask permission before changing the landscape."

Movement 1 — Recognise: Something Has Happened

Most mornings begin without ceremony.

- We wake.
- Make tea or Chicory.
- Look at the weather.
- Think about what needs doing.
- Perhaps wonder what to have for dinner.

And then, occasionally, life interrupts itself.

- A telephone call.
- A doctor sitting opposite us.
- A police officer at the Door.
- A few carefully chosen words.

We found something.

There has been an accident.

I have some difficult news.

Sometimes it takes only one sentence.

And suddenly life has a new division:

Before.
After.

- The cup of tea may still be sitting on the table.

- The washing may still be in the machine.
- Someone may even ask whether we remembered to buy milk.

Ordinary life has the peculiar habit of continuing when our own life seems to have stopped.

- A Great Storm may be illness.
- The death of someone we love.
- An accident.
- The ending of a long relationship.
- The loss of a home or livelihood.
- War.
- Displacement.
- Or something else that changes the course of a life.
- We may not immediately know what we feel.
- Fear may arise.
- Anxiety may visit.
- Anger may appear.
- Grief may come.
- Or there may simply be numbness.

There is no correct response to a storm.

And there is certainly no requirement to become wise by teatime.

Sometimes the first movement is much simpler.

Awareness notices:

Something has happened.

- We do not have to understand it yet.
- We do not have to accept it.
- We do not have to discover its meaning.
- We do not have to find something positive hidden inside it.

Some storms teach us nothing.

They are simply painful.

For now, perhaps it is enough to recognise:

My landscape has changed.

And remain here.

The next movement can wait.

Movement 2 — Understand: What Has Changed?

After the first shock, questions begin to appear.

Sometimes very large ones.

- *Why did this happen?*
- *What will become of us?*
- *Will life ever be the same?*

We may not have answers.

And perhaps those are not the first questions we need.

Understanding a Great Storm does not mean understanding **why** it happened.

Sometimes there is no satisfying why.

Perhaps we begin somewhere smaller:

What has changed?

The answer may be painfully ordinary.

- There are appointments now.
- Medication on the kitchen table.
- Someone else has to drive.
- Money needs to be reconsidered.
- A bedroom may need to move downstairs.
- Plans are cancelled.
- Someone who was always there is no longer there.

The future we had quietly assumed may need to be imagined differently.

The Garden has changed.

And when the Garden changes, the House naturally responds.

- We may be frightened one morning and strangely calm that afternoon.
- We may laugh at something and then wonder how we could possibly have laughed.
- We may manage beautifully on Tuesday and fall apart over a missing sock on Wednesday.

Human beings are wonderfully inconvenient that way.

Understanding does not ask us to organise any of this.

It simply helps us see what the storm is asking of life **now**.

Not next year.

Perhaps not even next week.

Today.

What has changed?

And then, more gently:

What does today need?

- Perhaps a telephone call.
- Perhaps an appointment.
- Perhaps a difficult conversation.
- Perhaps help.
- Perhaps food.
- Perhaps sleep.
- Perhaps nothing more than getting through the afternoon.

The whole storm does not have to be understood today.

Only enough to meet the life that is here.

Movement 3 — Remember: The Storm Is Not Everything

A Great Storm can become very large.

So large that, for a while, it seems to occupy the whole Landscape.

- The appointment.
- The diagnosis.
- The loss.

- The uncertainty.
- The next decision.
- The mind circles around them because they matter.

And yet, occasionally, something else enters the day.

- Someone makes tea.
- A friend sends a ridiculous message at exactly the right moment.
- A hand reaches for ours.
- Rain falls against the Window.
- A bird sings with absolutely no understanding of our circumstances.

And for a moment, we remember.

The storm is real.
But it is not everything.

This is not positive thinking.

We do not need to search for beauty in order to make suffering acceptable.

Nor does a moment of laughter make the storm less serious.

It simply means that more than one thing can be true at the same time.

- There can be Fear and Love.
- Grief and laughter.
- Uncertainty and a warm cup of tea.
- The Sea may be rough while the Sky remains vast.

Perhaps this is what **Remember** offers us.

Not the promise that everything will be all right.

Something quieter:

There is still more here.

- A person who loves us.
- A familiar chair.
- The warmth of the sun.
- A meal we can taste.
- The Flame still burning within the House.
- Some days we may notice these things.
- Other days the storm may be all we can see.

That is all right too.

We do not have to see the Sky every day for the Sky to remain.

Movement 4 — Befriend: Do Not Abandon Yourself in the Storm

Great Storms can bring out a demanding voice.

- *I should be coping better.*
- *I need to stay strong.*
- *Other people have it worse.*
- *I mustn't fall apart.*

As though experiencing the storm were not enough.

Now we must apparently perform it well too.

But there is no prize for being the perfect Pilgrim in a storm.

- Some days we may be brave.
- Some days frightened.
- Some days patient.
- Some days thoroughly fed up.
- We may want company in the morning and silence by afternoon.
- We may cry.
- We may laugh.
- We may say:

I can't do this today.

And perhaps Befriend begins there.

Not by making ourselves feel better.

By refusing to turn against ourselves because life has become difficult.

You do not have to carry a storm beautifully.

- If the body is tired, let it rest.
- If help is offered, perhaps receive it.
- If tears come, let the Bathroom have some water to work with.
- And if all we can manage today is tea, toast and getting dressed, perhaps that is enough.

Presence can still occupy the Rocking Chair.

The Flame can still burn beside it.

Nothing needs to be performed for either of them.

The storm may remain outside and within.

But the Pilgrim does not have to face one more storm created by their own judgement.

Perhaps Befriend is simply this:

Life is difficult enough today.
I will not make myself another difficulty.

Movement 5 — Release: One Step Is Enough

A Great Storm makes the future feel heavy.

The mind wants to travel ahead.

- *What if things get worse?*
- *How will I manage?*
- *What happens next month?*
- *What if life never becomes what it was?*

Some of these questions may eventually need answers.

But not all of them today.

Release does not mean releasing the storm.

- We cannot release a diagnosis.
- We cannot release someone who has died.

- We cannot release a war, an accident or a life that has suddenly changed.

Perhaps what can loosen is something smaller:

the need to carry the whole future at once.

- Today may contain one appointment.
- One telephone call.
- One meal.
- One conversation.
- One decision.
- Perhaps one good cry.
- And occasionally, one afternoon in which absolutely nothing useful gets done.

The future will still be there tomorrow.
We can meet it when it becomes today.
So for now:

> **What is the next step?**

Take it if you can.

If you cannot, rest.

The pilgrimage does not require us to walk every moment.

Sometimes sitting beside the road is part of the journey too.

And when it is time to move again:

> **One step is enough.**
> **Then another.**

Not because the storm has passed.

Not because everything has been understood.

But because this is how a Pilgrim sometimes lives through a Great Storm:

not by carrying the whole journey,
but by arriving in the step that is here.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

If illness has entered your Garden,
be gentle with yourself.
You do not have to have all the answers today.
You do not have to carry tomorrow today.
Simply rest.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

You do not have to calm the storm.
You do not have to understand it all.

Let the Flame remain beside you.
Let today be enough.

And when you are ready,

take one step.

Chapter 37 — The Supporting Net



"Sometimes we fall. Sometimes we need to be held. And sometimes, slowly, we begin again."

Movement 1 — Fall

A Great Storm can change the Landscape in a moment.

And sometimes the Pilgrim falls.

Not every fall is the same.

Some are gentle.

Some tilt the familiar path beneath our feet.

And some are so sudden and steep that the fall feels almost vertical.

- A diagnosis.
- The death of someone deeply loved.
- Addiction.
- Depression.
- An accident.

A life that changes before we have had time to understand what has happened.

The Supporting Net.

The Net does not prevent the Great Storm.
It does not stop every fall.
Its purpose is simpler.

It may stop us from falling further.

And in lived experience, the Net begins to acquire hands.

- A partner.
- A friend.
- A parent.
- A doctor.
- A nurse.
- A therapist.
- A carer.
- A neighbour.
- Sometimes a stranger.
- One person telephones.
- Another brings food.
- Someone drives us to an appointment.
- Someone sits beside the bed.
- Someone listens to the same story again.
- Someone simply stays.

Thread by thread, the Net forms beneath us.

For some Pilgrims, the Net is touched only briefly.

For others, it may become somewhere they live for a while.

- Days.
- Months.
- Sometimes years.
- There is no timetable.

And there is no shame in needing to be held.

But the Net is not a guarantee.

Sometimes a Pilgrim slips through.

Love cannot prevent every fall.

- Families cannot rescue everyone they love.
- Professionals cannot promise every recovery.

The Net is not failure when this happens.

Nor are the people holding it.

It is simply one of the painful truths of being human:

we can hold another person with all the love we have
and still not be able to control what happens next.

Perhaps this is why the Supporting Net matters so much.

It does not promise:

You will never fall.

It says something far more human:

If you fall, there may be hands reaching for you.

And sometimes, before anything can begin to rise, **being caught is enough.**

Movement 2 — Reset

Being caught is not the end of the fall.

Nor is it yet recovery.

The Supporting Net gives the Pilgrim somewhere to be held while the **Inner Turning Path to Reset** begins.

And the path is already familiar:

Presence → Inner Flame → Awareness → Stillness → Still Point

Presence

For now, there is only here.

Not next month.

Not the whole diagnosis.

Not the rest of our life.

Just this moment.

Perhaps this breath.

Perhaps the hand holding ours.

I am here.

Inner Flame

In the middle of a Great Storm, the Flame does not ask for a grand purpose.

Its light may fall on something very small.

What matters now?

Take the medication.

Make the telephone call.

Accept the help.

Sit beside the person we love.

Rest.

Awareness

Gradually, we begin to notice what the storm has stirred within the House.

Fear may arise.

Anxiety may visit.

Grief may come.

Anger may appear.

Nothing has to be removed.

This is what is here.

Stillness

Not every question needs an answer today.

Not every decision needs to be made while the storm is at its strongest.

The Net holds.

The Pilgrim may rest.

There is no hurry to rise.

Still Point

And somewhere within all this movement is the Still Point.

Not somewhere below the Net.

Not somewhere the Pilgrim has to fall towards.

Stillness and the Still Point hold the Supporting Net.

The storm may continue.

The Pilgrim may still need many hands.

Recovery may still be some distance away.

But something has turned.

> **The Pilgrim fell.**
> **The Net caught.**
> **The Inner Turning Path allowed the Reset.**

And only then, in its own time, can something else begin. **Recovery.**

Movement 3 — Recover

Recovery rarely announces itself.

There may be no morning when the Pilgrim wakes and thinks:

> ***Today I have recovered.***

It may begin much more quietly.

- A shower.
- A meal enjoyed rather than merely eaten.
- A walk to the end of the road.
- The first laugh that surprises us.
- An appointment attended alone.
- A day in which the storm is not the first thought on waking.

Small things.

But after a Great Storm, small things may be enormous.

The Supporting Net is still there.

- Perhaps fewer hands are needed now.
- Someone who brought dinner every evening begins coming twice a week.
- The friend who telephoned every morning now calls on Sundays.
- The hand that held ours begins, very gently, to loosen.

Not because care has disappeared.

Because something within the Pilgrim is beginning to stand again.

Recovery does not necessarily mean returning to the life we had before the fall.

- The body may have changed.
- Someone we loved may no longer be here.
- A relationship may have ended.
- Treatment may continue.

The Landscape itself may be different.

So recovery cannot always mean:

> *I want my old life back.*

Sometimes it means:

> **I am learning how to live this life now.**

There may still be difficult days.

The Pilgrim may begin to rise and then fall back onto the Net.

That is not necessarily failure.

Recovery is not a straight line up the other side of the V.

- Sometimes we rise.
- Sometimes we pause.
- Sometimes we need the Net again.

And sometimes, after being held for a long time, we suddenly notice that our own feet are touching the ground.

- Perhaps nobody else notices.
- Perhaps there is no celebration.
- We simply make the tea.
- Open the Door.
- Step into the Garden.

And live.

Not always quickly.

Not always completely.

Not always in the way we imagined.

But sometimes, slowly, **the Pilgrim begins again.**

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.

Who has been part of your Supporting Net?

- A parent.
- A friend.
- A nurse or doctor.
- A neighbour.
- Perhaps a stranger whose kindness arrived just when it was needed.

Ask quietly:

Who helped hold me when I could not carry everything alone?

Offer them your quiet gratitude.

And then another gentle question:

For whom might I one day become a thread in the Supporting Net?

Not from obligation.

Not because kindness must be repaid.

Simply because sometimes we are held,

and sometimes we are able to hold.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

There may come a time when you need the Net. **Let it hold you.**

There may come a time when another Pilgrim needs a thread. **Offer what you can.**

Receive kindness with gratitude.

Give without keeping account.

Chapter 38 — Living with Chronic Illness



"What if life is not waiting beyond the storm? What if life is quietly asking to be lived here?"

Section 1 — When the Storm Does Not Pass

Some storms pass.

The weather changes.

The Sea gradually becomes calm once more.

The vessel repairs its sails.

And, little by little, the pilgrimage returns to familiar waters.

Some storms are different.

- They do not simply pass.
- They remain.
- Not always with the same intensity.
- Not always with the same force.

Yet they become part of the landscape through which the Pilgrim must now walk.

- For some, the storm arrives with a diagnosis of cancer.
- For others, it is the gradual unfolding of dementia, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, or rheumatoid arthritis.
- Some live with chronic pain.
- Others with diabetes, heart disease, or long-term respiratory illness.
- Some carry the invisible weight of severe depression, long COVID, or other conditions that quietly reshape everyday life.

The names may sometimes be the same.

The experience never is.

- Every storm has its own weather.
- Every pilgrimage has its own story.
- Every pilgrimage is unique.

Two pilgrims may both be living with cancer.
Their storms are different.

Two pilgrims may both be caring for a loved one with dementia.
Their storms are different.

Two pilgrims may both be living with chronic pain.
Their storms are different.

Healing asks us to meet this Pilgrim, living in this House, walking this pilgrimage.

Not by comparing one life with another.

This is why comparisons, though often offered with kindness, can sometimes become another burden to carry.

During long illness, pilgrims are often offered many stories.

- "I know someone who recovered."
- "My neighbour walked again."
- "There is a treatment that worked for someone else."

These stories are usually offered with kindness.
They arise from hope.
And sometimes they give hope.
But another Pilgrim's story cannot tell us how our own storm will unfold.

- Every House is different.
- Every Garden has its own seasons.
- Every storm follows its own weather.

Wisdom may begin when we stop asking another Pilgrim's story to tell us how our own must unfold.

And instead gently ask:

- **"What is this storm asking of this House?"**
- **"What does this particular House need today?"**

Only then does another question quietly emerge.

- **"How do I continue living when the storm does not pass?"**

At first, many pilgrims quietly believe:

"When this is over, life can begin again."

It is a natural hope.
A deeply human hope.

Yet chronic illness often invites a different way of seeing.

It gently asks:

- *"What if life is not waiting beyond the storm?"*
- *"What if life is quietly asking to be lived here?"*

This can be one of the most difficult transitions of the entire pilgrimage.

The Pilgrim may still hope for the weather to change.
But life no longer has to wait for the weather.
They are learning how to live beneath changing skies.

- The storm may remain.
- The House remains.

- The Garden remains.
- The Sea remains.

And so does the pilgrimage.

Not the pilgrimage once imagined...
but the pilgrimage that is now unfolding.

One that may ask for new rhythms.

- New ways of receiving help.
- New ways of listening to the body.
- And perhaps a different understanding of what it means to live well.

For compassion does not deny reality.

It helps the Pilgrim discover what is still possible within it.

Section 2 — Three Ways the House Meets the Storm

When a Great Storm first arrives, few Houses begin with wisdom.
Most begin by trying to survive.
This is not a failure.
It is one of the House's oldest ways of protecting life.

When someone hears the words,

- *"You have cancer."*
- *"You have Parkinson's disease."*
- *"You have multiple sclerosis."* or
- *"You will need long-term care."*

The Clever House Awakens.

It asks:

"How do I get rid of this?"

It searches constantly.

- The next treatment.
- The next specialist.
- The next article.
- The next possibility.
- Perhaps even the next story of someone who recovered.

There is nothing wrong with this.

The Clever House is trying to survive.
It is doing everything it knows to protect life.
Its determination is often one of its greatest strengths.
Every new possibility becomes another thread of hope.

Yet if the storm remains, the Clever House can become exhausted.

Its whole life becomes organised around waiting for the day life can finally begin again.

Gradually, another way of living may begin to emerge.

The House becomes more Intelligent.

It begins asking different questions.

- "What is happening?"

- "What does this illness require?"
- "What helps?"
- "What makes things worse?"

It begins learning.

- Listening.
- Adapting.
- It discovers pacing.
- Nutrition.
- Rest.
- Movement.
- Medication.
- Support.

It no longer spends all its energy fighting the storm.
But it begins learning something else as well:
how to live with what is here.

Understanding begins to sit alongside the struggle.

Then, for some pilgrims, another quiet transformation begins.

The House becomes Wise.
It does not stop asking:

"How do I get rid of this?"

Nor does it stop asking:

"What is happening?"

But another question joins them:

"How shall I live?"

The Wise House no longer measures life only by the absence of illness.

It gradually discovers that although the storm has changed life...

- life itself has not disappeared.
- Meaning remains.
- Love remains.
- Joy remains.
- Peace remains.
- The House remains.
- The Garden remains.
- The Inner Flame remains.

The Wise House does not deny suffering.
Nor does it pretend the storm is easy.

The Wise House refuses to put life on hold.
It knows the storm may remain.
Yet life continues to unfold, even beneath changing skies.

Not every House reaches this place immediately.

- Some remain in the Clever House for a long time.
- Others move gradually into the Intelligent House.

Wisdom cannot be hurried.
It quietly ripens through experience.

Cleverness helps us **figure things out and survive**.
Intelligence helps us **understand what is happening and adapt**.
Wisdom brings **discernment — how shall I meet this? How shall I live?**

But **Living Wisdom** is when that discernment is no longer merely something we understand or consciously apply. **It has ripened into the way we live.**

The goal is not to abandon the Clever House.

- Without it, we might never seek treatment.
- Without it, we might never ask for help.
- Without it, we might lose hope too soon.

Nor does the Intelligent House disappear.

- We continue learning.
- Adapting.
- Listening to the body.
- Changing our rhythms when necessary.

Perhaps, then, these are not three Houses at all.

They are three ways in which the same House may meet the storm.

- **The Clever House asks, "How do I survive?"**
- **The Intelligent House asks, "How do I adapt?"**
- **The Wise House asks, "How shall I live?"**

And then, perhaps, the questions themselves begin to quieten.

- **Living Wisdom simply lives.**

And we may move between them.

- On one day, searching.
- On another, adapting.
- On another, simply living.
- Sometimes all three may be present at once.

The House does not have to choose.

It learns what the storm requires.

And through living, **wisdom may quietly ripen.**

Section 3 — Learning a New Rhythm

Few experiences change our relationship with the body as profoundly as a long-lasting storm.

Chronic illness quietly teaches us to meet the body in a different way.

For many years, the body quietly accompanies the pilgrimage.

- It walks without asking for recognition.
- It breathes without asking for gratitude.
- It quietly carries the Pilgrim through the Garden.

Only when the body begins to struggle do many Pilgrims realise how faithfully it has accompanied them.
Perhaps it had always been speaking.

We simply had less reason to listen.

The body may no longer behave as it once did.

- Energy rises and falls.

- Pain appears unexpectedly.
- Simple tasks require planning.
- Ordinary days ask for extraordinary patience.
- The body becomes less predictable.

At first, the pilgrim may feel disappointed.

- Frustrated.
- Even betrayed.

The body that once carried them with ease now asks to be carried with care.

At first, it feels like loss.
And it may indeed be a loss.

But gradually, another relationship with the body may begin.

Although the illness may remain, the relationship between the House and the body can begin to heal.

- The body is no longer expected to behave as it once did.
- It is no longer treated as an enemy to be conquered.

It is no longer treated as an enemy to be conquered.
The Pilgrim begins to listen.

The body has its own quiet language.

- It may ask for rest.
- Nourishment.
- Movement when movement is possible.
- Sometimes it asks not to be driven.
- And sometimes, **it simply asks to be accepted as it is today.**

Gradually, the House learns a different rhythm.

- There are times for activity.
- And times for stillness.
- Times for effort.
- And times for recovery.
- Times for accepting help.
- And times for quietly giving what is still possible.

The Pilgrim discovers that strength is not always found in pushing forward.

Sometimes strength is found in pausing.

In accepting today's limits without surrendering tomorrow's possibilities.

Living well is not always measured by how much can be done.

Sometimes it is found in learning to live faithfully with the body we have today.

This new rhythm may feel unfamiliar.

Yet it is still a rhythm.

The rhythm has changed.
The pilgrimage has not.

Section 4 — Living with What the Storm Brings

When the weather is calm, much of life unfolds in the Garden.

- We work.
- We make plans.

- We travel.
- We spend time with those we love.

The House is always with us, even when we are hardly aware of it.

A long-lasting storm changes this rhythm.

- The body asks to be listened to.
- Plans may depend on how the body feels that morning.
- The future may become less predictable.

And within the House, more may begin to stir.

Anxiety may visit.

- *What if my body gets worse?*
- *What if I become dependent on others?*
- *What if tomorrow is harder than today?*

Loneliness may visit.

- *Will anyone still understand me?*
- *Will people slowly stop visiting?*

Living Grief may arise.

- *I miss the life I once had.*
- *I miss what I used to be able to do.*

Frustration may arise when the body can no longer do something that once required little thought.

There may also be feelings of discouragement, vulnerability or dependence.

None of these means that the House has failed.

The House is responding to a life that has changed.

And perhaps the five movements can help us meet what the storm brings.

Recognise

The first movement is simple.

Notice what is here.

Awareness does not need to diagnose, explain or remove anything.

It notices.

- *Anxiety is visiting.*
- *Frustration is arising.*
- *Living Grief is here.*
- *I am feeling discouraged today.*

This can matter greatly during chronic illness.

- A difficult morning can quickly become a frightening future.
- A little more pain becomes:
  I am getting worse.
- A day of exhaustion becomes:
  I will never have my strength again.

Recognition gently brings us closer to what is actually here.

This is what I am experiencing today.

Not tomorrow.

Not forever.

Today.

Understand

Once something has been recognised, we may begin to listen.

- Anxiety may be asking:
  What if my body gets worse?
- Loneliness may be wondering:
  Will people still remember me when I can no longer join them as I once did?
- Living Grief may be saying:
  I miss the life I had imagined.
- Frustration may simply be crying:
  Why does something so ordinary have to be so difficult now?

We do not have to argue with any of them.

Nor do we have to believe everything they say.

We can simply understand why they might have appeared.

A long-lasting storm changes many things.

- The body changes.
- Routines change.
- Relationships may change.
- Plans change.
- Sometimes even the way we imagine the future changes.

What arises within the House often makes sense within the life being lived.

Understanding does not make the experience disappear.

It allows us to meet it with a little more kindness.

Remember

A storm that remains can gradually occupy more and more of the Landscape.

- There are appointments.
- Medication.
- Pain.
- Fatigue.
- Treatments.
- Things that can no longer be done.
- Things that now require help.

It can become easy to see the whole pilgrimage through the storm.

And so we remember:

The storm is part of my life.
It is not the whole of my life.

The Garden is still there.

- Perhaps there is morning sunlight through the Window.
- A favourite song.
- A cup of tea.

- A telephone call from someone we love.
- A conversation that has nothing whatsoever to do with illness.
- Someone says something ridiculous and, unexpectedly, we laugh.
- Perhaps a grandchild arrives and suddenly the House is filled with another kind of weather.

And **Hope** may still be here too.

Hope may once have said:

I hope this disappears.

Sometimes it still does.

But Hope may also begin to speak more quietly.

- *I hope today is a little gentler.*
- *I hope I can sit in the Garden this morning.*
- *I hope I have enough strength to see my friend.*
- *I hope tomorrow brings something I cannot yet see.*

Hope has not necessarily become smaller.

It has learned to live closer to today.

Befriend

There is already enough struggle in chronic illness.
We do not always need to create another struggle within the House.

- Anxiety does not have to be thrown out of the Front Door.
- Living Grief does not have to be told that it has stayed too long.
- Frustration does not make us ungrateful.
- Loneliness does not mean that something has gone wrong with us.

Sometimes what has arrived simply needs somewhere to be.
Presence remains in the Rocking Chair.
The Flame burns quietly beside it.

And perhaps we can say:

- *You are here today.*
- *Let us sit for a while.*

Befriending does not mean liking what has arrived.

It does not mean allowing Anxiety to run the House.

It simply means that we no longer have to fight every inner experience merely because it is uncomfortable.

The House can hold what has arisen without becoming what has arisen.

- The House is larger than Anxiety.
- Larger than Loneliness.
- Larger than Frustration.
- Larger even than Living Grief.

The House is larger than every experience it holds.

Release

And then there is Release.

In chronic illness, this movement needs tenderness.

- We are not being asked to release the illness.

- We are not being asked to release pain that continues to hurt.

Nor must every Visitor politely leave because we have understood it.

- Anxiety may return tomorrow.
- Loneliness may knock again.
- Living Grief may arise when something else is lost.

Sometimes what can be released is much smaller.

- The expectation that today should be like yesterday.
- The need to solve the whole future before lunch.
- The belief that asking for help means losing independence.
- The thought that one difficult day tells us what every future day will be.
- The struggle to make the body become what it once was.

Perhaps something loosens.

Perhaps nothing does.

Release has no timetable.

Nothing needs to be forced from the House.

- Sometimes Release is simply an opening of the hand.
- And sometimes the hand is not ready to open.

That too can be allowed.

- The storm may remain.
- Anxiety may visit again.
- Living Grief may arise again.
- Frustration may appear before breakfast.
- And Hope may knock tomorrow morning wearing entirely different clothes.

Life continues.

Healing, then, need not be measured by the absence of storms.

Nor by the absence of Visitors, Emotions or difficult Feelings.

Perhaps sometimes healing becomes visible in something much quieter.

The storm is still outside.

The weather within the House still changes.

The chair still rocks.

The Flame remains.

And through it all,

the House remains inhabited.

The Pilgrim is still living.

For healing does not always mean that the storm has passed.

Sometimes it means discovering how to keep living while the weather continues to change.

Section 5 — The Supporting Net

In the previous chapter, we met the Supporting Net beneath the Great Fall.

- Sometimes it catches.

- Sometimes it holds.
- Sometimes it supports the Pilgrim while they begin to stand again.

But chronic illness may reveal another way in which the Net becomes part of the pilgrimage.

Sometimes the Pilgrim continues to need it.

Not because they have failed to recover.

Not because they have stopped trying.

Simply because the life now being lived requires support.

The Net may be woven from many hands.

- A husband helping his wife dress.
- A daughter patiently learning how to use a hoist.
- A neighbour bringing warm soup.
- A doctor who listens carefully.
- A nurse who quietly reassures.
- A physiotherapist celebrating a small step.
- A friend who simply sits without trying to fix anything.

Each strand may seem small.

Together, they may hold something precious.

A life while it continues to be lived.

At first, receiving this support may feel unfamiliar.

Even uncomfortable.

The Pilgrim who has spent a lifetime doing things independently may suddenly need help with the most ordinary parts of the day.

- Getting dressed.
- Preparing food.
- Walking to the bathroom.
- Remembering medication.
- Getting into a car.
- Sometimes even getting out of bed.

The difficulty is not always practical.

Something within may whisper:

- *I should be able to do this myself.*
- *I don't want to trouble anyone.*
- *I am becoming dependent.*
- *I don't want to be a burden.*

And here the Supporting Net asks something different of the Pilgrim.

Not effort.

Not courage.

Not another attempt to manage alone.

Sometimes it simply asks:

Can you receive?

Receiving can be difficult.

Especially for those who have spent much of their lives giving.

- The hands that once carried shopping may now hold a walking frame.
- The person who once prepared meals for everyone may now wait while someone prepares theirs.
- The one who once offered the lift may now wait to be collected.

There can be grief in this.

There can be frustration.

There can even be embarrassment.

Receiving does not need to be made beautiful before it can be received.

- Sometimes help is simply needed.
- And perhaps, little by little, something begins to soften.
- The hoist becomes part of the morning.
- The walking frame waits quietly by the door.
- Medication finds its place on the kitchen table.
- The carer's visit becomes part of the rhythm of the day.
- A hand reaches out.

And instead of apologising for needing it, **the Pilgrim takes the hand.**

- Nothing dramatic has happened.
- The illness has not disappeared.
- Independence has not magically returned.

The Supporting Net has simply moved from something the Pilgrim *needs* to something that belongs naturally within the life being lived.

The extraordinary has become ordinary.

This may be one of the quiet movements of Living Wisdom.

Not understanding that receiving is acceptable.

Not telling ourselves that we *should* be comfortable receiving.

But gradually no longer needing to make receiving into a question every time help arrives.

- Help is offered.
- It is needed.
- **It is received.**

And life continues.

Receiving is not the opposite of giving.

It is part of relationship.

When we allow another Pilgrim to care for us, we may also give them somewhere for their kindness, skill, tenderness or love to be expressed.

- There will be times when we hold another.
- There will be times when another holds us.
- And sometimes, for a long while, we may need to be held more than we are able to hold.

The Net does not keep accounts.

It does not ask whether yesterday we gave as much as today we received.

It simply holds where holding is needed.

Perhaps this is why, after a while, the Supporting Net may become almost invisible.

Not because it has disappeared.

But because it has become woven into everyday life.

- The morning carer arrives.
- The medication is taken.
- Someone makes the tea.
- Someone else opens the door.

The Pilgrim receives what is needed.
And the pilgrimage continues.

The Supporting Net is strongest when it no longer feels like a net at all.
It has simply become part of the pilgrimage.

Section 6 — Love

Every House discovers its own well of strength.

- For some, it is prayer.
- For others, meditation.
- For others, a slow walk in nature.
- Sacred music.
- Reading.
- Silence.
- The companionship of a trusted friend.
- Or the gentle laughter of a grandchild

There is no single way.
Each Pilgrim discovers what quietly nourishes them

Some pilgrims quietly wonder whether their illness is a punishment.

- *"Why has this happened to me?"*
- *"Have I done something wrong?"*

The House cannot answer every mystery.
Nor does it need to.
But it need not carry the additional burden of blame.

- Storms are part of life.
- They visit every landscape.
- They do not measure a person's goodness, worth, or faith.
- **Illness is not a punishment.**
- Nor is it evidence that someone has been abandoned.

As the pilgrimage continues, many Houses discover that strength rarely arrives all at once.

Sometimes it is found in the smallest moments.

- A prayer whispered before dawn.
- A quiet moment of meditation.
- The warmth of another hand.
- A familiar hymn.

- The fragrance of a flower.
- The sound of rain upon the window.
- A smile.
- A breath.
- A moment of stillness.

None of these creates the Inner Flame.

The Flame is already there.

Sometimes such moments simply help the Pilgrim remember what has been there all along.

The Flame remains.

And with the Inner Flame comes one of its quiet gifts.

Love.

- Love may arrive through the embrace of a spouse.
- The kindness of a daughter.
- The companionship of a friend.
- The gentle care of a nurse.
- For some, the presence of God.
- And it may continue to flow from the Pilgrim towards others.
- Illness may change the body.

It may change the rhythm of the days.

It may even change the direction of the pilgrimage.

Yet it need not take away our capacity to love.

Nor our capacity to receive Love.

Perhaps this is one of the quieter discoveries of chronic illness.

We may need to receive more than we once did.

- A hand to help us stand.
- A meal prepared for us.
- Someone to accompany us to an appointment.
- Someone simply willing to stay.

And still, something can be given.

- A smile.
- A word of gratitude.
- A story.
- A listening ear.
- A hand held in return.
- Or simply our presence.

Receiving Love does not empty us of Love.

Sometimes, being willing to receive allows Love to move in a way we had never known before.

- The storm may remain.
- The body may continue to struggle.
- The Supporting Net may still be needed tomorrow.

Yet Love can still move through the life being lived.

- **We receive Love.**
- **We give Love.**
- And sometimes there is no need to know which is which.

A hand reaches for another hand.
One is giving.
One is receiving.
Perhaps both are doing both.
The storm remains.
And so does Love.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Imagine yourself standing beside the Sea.
The storm remains.
The weather has not yet fully passed.
Notice the temptation to postpone life.

To wait.

To tell yourself,

- *"When I am better..."*
- *"When the storm is over..."*

Then gently ask yourself:

- **What remains possible today?**
- **What beauty is still waiting to be noticed?**
- **What part of life is still asking to be lived?**

There is no need to answer immediately.

- Simply allow the questions to rest within the House.
- Perhaps an answer will come.
- Perhaps it will not.

For healing does not always mean the removal of the storm.
Sometimes healing is discovering that **life is still here**.

- Still unfolding.
- Still offering something to receive.
- Still offering something to give.
- Still asking to be lived.

Even beneath changing skies.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Allow others to walk beside you.
Receive the Love that comes.
And live what remains possible today.

Chapter 39 - The Art of Healing



Section 1 -Living with Presence and Awareness

Healing is not something we begin only when something goes wrong.
It is a way of living.

For Atmadeva, it begins with **Presence and Awareness**.

Presence is being here.

Awareness notices what is happening here.

But this does not mean trying to remain consciously aware of every moment of every day.

That would be exhausting.

Much of human life needs **Autopilot**.

We do not need to contemplate every step while walking, every movement while washing a cup, every turn of the steering wheel on a familiar journey.

Autopilot is one of the ways human beings move efficiently through ordinary life.

The difficulty is not that we have Autopilot.

The difficulty comes when **Autopilot begins living our life for us**.

- We may eat without tasting.
- Listen without hearing.
- Speak without noticing what we are saying.
- React before recognising what has been stirred within us.
- Or spend years following a life we never consciously chose.

Yet not every moment of Autopilot needs correcting.

Not every experience requires our attention.

And not everything that happens within the House needs healing.

Sometimes life is simply unfolding.

- A conversation.
- A walk.
- A meal shared with someone we love.
- A quiet afternoon in the Garden.

There may be nothing to repair.

Nothing to understand.

Nothing to improve.

Only life being lived.

The Art of Healing therefore does not say:

Be mindful all the time.

It says something gentler:

Know when to arrive.

- When everything is flowing, live.
- When the weather changes, notice.
- And when something needs care, allow yourself to respond.

For healing is not the constant search for what is wrong.

It is learning to recognise what needs attention, while allowing the rest of life to unfold.

Section 2 - When the Weather Changes

Sometimes life is flowing.

The Pilgrim is going about their day.

- Working.
- Cooking.
- Talking with a friend.
- Enjoying an ordinary moment.

Then something happens.

- A careless remark.
- An unexpected disappointment.
- A memory that suddenly returns.
- Or perhaps nothing obvious has happened at all.

Yet the weather within the House begins to change.

- The Mind becomes restless.
- The Emotional Self feels unsettled.
- The Body may become tense.

And sometimes the Hijacked Voice reaches for its loudspeaker.

- *This always happens to me.*
- *Why did they say that?*
- *I cannot put up with this.*

The Pilgrim may become caught in the experience before recognising what has happened.

- Perhaps they react.
- Perhaps they withdraw.
- Or perhaps they continue their day while something within remains troubled.

This is where the **Inner Turning Path to Reset** becomes important.

The Inner Turning Path

Presence → Inner Flame → Awareness → Stillness → Still Point

The path is not a demand to become calm.

Nor is it a sequence the Pilgrim must complete perfectly.

It offers a way of returning when the weather within the House begins to carry us away.

- Sometimes the Pilgrim notices immediately.
- Sometimes much later.
- And sometimes another Pilgrim gently helps them recognise what is happening.

The Inner Flame offers its familiar whisper:

There is Presence.

Not an accusation.

Not an instruction to suppress what is being felt.

Simply a reminder that the Pilgrim can return to the encounter.

Awareness begins to recognise what is happening.

- *I am angry.*
- *I feel hurt.*
- *Something has unsettled me.*

Perhaps the Hijacked Voice is speaking loudly.

Perhaps an old memory has entered the House.

Or perhaps the situation genuinely requires attention.

- Stillness may create a little space around the experience.
- The Mind need not answer every thought.
- The Emotional Self need not be hurried into feeling differently.
- The Body may still carry tension.

And at the Still Point, the Pilgrim may discover that they can remain with what is happening without being entirely directed by it.

Nothing has necessarily disappeared.

- The Visitor may still be present.
- The anger may remain.
- The situation in the Garden may be unchanged.

But perhaps the Pilgrim now has room to choose how to respond.

Reset Does Not Mean Everything Is Resolved

Sometimes Reset brings relief.

The Pilgrim recognises that a misunderstanding has occurred.

- A conversation becomes easier.
- A little humour returns.

And life continues.

But sometimes the difficulty remains.

- Perhaps a boundary has been crossed.

- Perhaps a relationship is causing harm.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim needs rest, support or protection.

Reset does not ask them to accept what is harmful.

Nor does it replace the practical action that may be needed.

- A Gardener cannot restore the soil while allowing it to be continually damaged.
- Sometimes the most appropriate response is to change what is happening in the Garden.

And sometimes nothing needs changing immediately.

- Grief may simply need room.
- Disappointment may take time to settle.
- An unanswered question may remain unanswered.

Not every change in the weather requires us to change the weather.

- Sometimes we need only recognise it.
- Sometimes we need to act.

And sometimes we need to allow an experience to unfold without forcing it towards a particular conclusion.

For the purpose of Reset is not to return the House to permanent sunshine.

It is to help the Pilgrim return to themselves, so they can meet life with greater freedom.

Section 3 - Listening Within, Living Without

The Art of Healing also includes learning to notice when **inner and outer life have moved out of alignment**.

- Perhaps I keep saying yes while something within me is saying no.
- Perhaps I am living according to what other people expect while something within has become increasingly unsettled.
- Perhaps the Public Self is presenting one life while the Inner House is living another.

From the outside, everything may appear perfectly ordinary.

The Pilgrim continues working.

Meeting people.

Fulfilling responsibilities.

Yet something within the House is asking to be heard.

Healing may sometimes be nothing more dramatic than noticing that difference.

And adjusting.

But not every difference requires an immediate change.

- Sometimes the Pilgrim needs time to understand what is happening.
- Sometimes responsibilities cannot simply be abandoned.
- And sometimes the discomfort is part of something meaningful that the Pilgrim has freely chosen.

Alignment does not mean arranging life so that nothing feels uncomfortable.

It means learning to recognise when the way we are living no longer reflects what we understand, value or genuinely need.

When the Mind and Body Disagree

There is another alignment even closer to us.

The Mind and the Body.

The Mind has plans.

The Body has a language of its own.

Sometimes they agree.

Sometimes they do not.

The Mind says:

> *Wear that shirt.*

And the Body says:

> *No. I don't want to wear that today.*

It seems almost ridiculously small.

But this, too, belongs to the Art of Healing.

Why override the Body automatically?

- Perhaps the shirt feels uncomfortable.
- Perhaps the Body is tired.
- Perhaps there is no explanation at all.

Awareness notices the disagreement.

And rather than immediately allowing the Mind to dominate, we can listen.

The same thing happens in larger ways.

The Mind says:

> *Keep going.*

The Body says:

> *Rest.*

The Mind says:

> *You should go.*

The Body quietly withdraws.

The Mind says:

> *You managed this yesterday.*

The Body says:

> *Today is different.*

The Art of Healing does not automatically make the Body right and the Mind wrong.

It listens to both.

- Sometimes the Body needs encouragement.
- Sometimes the Mind needs reassurance.

- Sometimes we need medical advice.
- Sometimes we need to move despite reluctance.

And sometimes we need to stop despite our plans.
The art lies in listening carefully enough to discern the difference.

When Listening Becomes Care

Imagine a Pilgrim who has been working throughout the day.

They had planned to visit a friend that evening.

The Mind reminds them of the arrangement.

- *You promised.*
- *They are expecting you.*

But the Body is exhausted.
The Emotional Self feels overwhelmed.

What should the Pilgrim do?

There may be no single correct answer.

- Perhaps the visit would bring companionship and nourishment.
- Perhaps a quiet evening at home would be more appropriate.
- Perhaps the friend would understand if the visit were postponed.
- Or perhaps the Pilgrim decides to go, knowing that the companionship will do them good.

Awareness does not make the decision for them.

Nor does the Inner Flame command them.

The Pilgrim listens.

Considers.

And chooses.

- Sometimes they will choose wisely.
- Sometimes they may discover afterwards that another choice would have served them better.

That, too, belongs to living.

For alignment is not a guarantee that every decision will be correct.

It is the willingness to include ourselves in the decisions we make.

Living with Greater Harmony

Perhaps the Pilgrim has spent years overriding what they feel.

- Ignoring tiredness.
- Suppressing discomfort.
- Agreeing when they would rather decline.
- Or pursuing something that no longer brings meaning.

Awareness may gradually reveal these patterns.

And sometimes that recognition brings change.

- A different rhythm.
- A clearer boundary.

- A conversation that has been postponed.
- More rest.
- Or the courage to pursue something that has long been neglected.

But alignment is not a permanent condition.

- Life changes.
- Our needs change.
- Our circumstances change.
- What once felt right may no longer fit.

And what once seemed difficult may gradually become natural.

The Pilgrim does not need to achieve perfect harmony between the Mind, Body and Emotional Self.

They need only remain willing to listen.

- For sometimes healing means changing something in our lives.
- Sometimes it means learning to live differently with what cannot be changed.
- And sometimes it means recognising that nothing needs changing at all.

The Art of Healing is not about making every part of life agree.
It is about learning to live without continually abandoning what we know and feel within.

Section 4 - Being With Me, Staying With Me

Reset does not change the script.

It changes how we are sitting with the script.

Perhaps this is why prayer and meditation have become so simple for me.

Prayer is being with me.

Meditation is staying with me.

Neither requires me to become someone different.

Nor must I first resolve everything that is troubling me.

- I can arrive as I am.
- With a restless Mind.
- An unsettled Emotional Self.
- A tired Body.
- Or simply with the ordinary experiences of another day.

There is no requirement to feel peaceful before beginning.

The Theatre Within

Meditation is not trying to empty the Mind.

There is no need to chase every thought out of the House.

I think of it more like sitting in a theatre.

The show is already happening.

- A thought appears.
- Fear enters.
- A memory crosses the stage.

- Something funny happens.
- Sadness arises.

The Mind begins constructing tomorrow.

For a while, the Hijacked Voice may become a particularly enthusiastic actor.

I do not need to climb onto the stage and rewrite every scene.

I can watch.

The show moves.

I remain in my seat.

And sometimes, of course, I forget that I am watching and find myself on the stage.

- Perhaps I begin arguing with a memory.
- Rehearsing a conversation.
- Or worrying about something that has not yet happened.

For a while, I am no longer watching the performance.

I have become caught within it.

That, too, is human.

Awareness notices.

And I sit down again.

- Not because I have failed.
- Not because I must begin the meditation all over again.

But because I have recognised where my attention has gone.

Returning is part of the practice, not evidence that the practice has gone wrong.

When the Performance Continues

Sometimes the theatre becomes quiet.

Sometimes it does not.

- The Mind may continue thinking.
- The Emotional Self may remain troubled.
- The Body may be uncomfortable.
- And the Hijacked Voice may still have something to say.

Meditation does not require these experiences to disappear.

Nor does Stillness mean that nothing is happening within us.

Perhaps Stillness is the space in which we can remain with what is happening without immediately becoming entangled in it.

A little like sitting beside a River.

The water continues moving.
Some days it flows gently.
Other days it carries the force of a storm.
We do not need to stop the River to sit beside it.
And we do not need to stop every thought or feeling to experience a moment of Presence.

Sometimes the Pilgrim discovers that the performance has become less compelling.

- A thought passes without demanding an answer.
- A memory arrives without taking over the entire House.
- An emotion is allowed to be present without being pushed into the Cellar.
- And sometimes nothing noticeably changes.

The Pilgrim simply spends a little time with themselves.

That is enough.

Staying With Ourselves

There is another meaning to staying with ourselves.

Sometimes we are willing to accompany another Pilgrim through their difficulties.

- We listen.
- We offer patience.
- We allow them time.

Yet when discomfort arises within our own House, we may become impatient.

- *Why am I feeling this again?*
- *I should have moved beyond this.*
- *Why can't I simply let it go?*

Perhaps meditation offers a different invitation.

- Can I remain with myself without immediately demanding that I feel differently?
- Can I recognise sadness without treating it as a failure?
- Can I allow tiredness to be heard?
- Can I acknowledge uncertainty without insisting upon an answer?

This does not mean withdrawing from life.

Nor does it mean accepting circumstances that continue to cause harm.

- Sometimes caring for ourselves requires action.
- Sometimes support.
- Sometimes rest.
- And sometimes the courage to change something in the Garden.

But there are also moments when nothing needs to be done.

The Pilgrim can simply remain.

Prayer is being with me.

Meditation is staying with me.

Not to escape life.

Not to become permanently peaceful.

But to discover that I can accompany myself through the different experiences of living.

For the Art of Healing is not the art of maintaining an empty theatre.

It is learning that whatever appears upon the stage, the Pilgrim does not always have to become part of the performance.

Section 5 - Let It Flow

The same is true of Emotions and Feelings.

Healing is not suppressing them.

- Anger does not heal because we have pushed it into the Cellar.
- Sadness does not disappear because we have told ourselves to be positive.
- Fear does not become less real because we call ourselves spiritual.

What arises needs somewhere to move.

- Sometimes an emotion arrives gently.
- Sometimes it enters like a storm.

And sometimes it has been living quietly within the House for so long that we hardly recognise its presence.

- The Pilgrim may feel angry.
- Disappointed.
- Afraid.
- Lonely.
- Or unexpectedly joyful.

These are part of being human.

An emotion does not need to justify its arrival.

But its arrival does not mean that we must follow wherever it leads.

Feeling Is Not the Same as Acting

- Anger may arise without requiring an angry response.
- Fear may be present without making every decision for us.
- Sadness may accompany the Pilgrim without preventing moments of laughter.
- And joy may be experienced without needing to hold on to it.

This is where Presence and Awareness become companions.

Presence allows us to remain with the experience.

Awareness helps us recognise what is happening.

- *I am feeling angry.*
- *Something has hurt me.*
- *I am afraid of what might happen.*

We do not need to deny these experiences.

Nor must we allow them to direct every action.

Sometimes the Hijacked Voice reaches for its loudspeaker.

- *Say something now!*
- *Don't let them get away with it!*
- *You must do something!*

The urgency may be powerful.

But urgency is not always wisdom.

The Pilgrim may need a moment.

A little space.

Perhaps a Reset.

Not to make the emotion disappear, but to recognise that **feeling something and choosing what to do with it are not the same thing.**

When an Emotion Needs Room

Sometimes we understand why an emotion has arrived.

Sometimes we do not.

- A familiar smell may awaken an old memory.
- A conversation may touch something we thought had settled.
- A moment of kindness may unexpectedly bring tears.
- We do not always need to investigate every feeling.

Sometimes we can simply acknowledge its presence.

You are here.
I can feel you.
I do not yet know what you need.

- Perhaps the feeling will pass.
- Perhaps it will return.
- Perhaps it is drawing attention to something that needs care.
- Or perhaps it is simply part of an experience that has not yet settled.

There is no need to hurry it towards a conclusion.

Release has no timetable.

And release is not always something we can deliberately produce.

We may recognise an emotion.

Understand something about it.

Allow it room.

And still find that it remains.

That does not mean we have failed to heal.

- Sometimes the Pilgrim needs support.
- Sometimes a conversation.
- Sometimes rest.
- And sometimes time is all that can be offered.

Allowing the River to Move

I think of Emotions and Feelings as water moving through the Living Landscape.

- We cannot command the River to flow at a particular speed.
- Nor can we expect every current to be gentle.

But we can learn to recognise when we are building dams.

- When we continually deny what we feel.
- When we bury experiences in the Cellar.

Or when we insist that we should have moved beyond something simply because enough time has passed.

Allowing the River to move does not mean allowing it to flood every part of the Garden.

- Sometimes the banks need tending.
- Sometimes we need boundaries.
- Sometimes we need help finding a safer channel.

And sometimes the River simply needs room.

For the Art of Healing is not about becoming a Pilgrim who never feels anger, fear or sadness.

Nor is it about expressing every emotion the moment it arises.

It is learning to make room for what we feel, without surrendering responsibility for how we live.

And when an emotion is ready to move on, perhaps we can allow it to go.

- Without forcing.
- Without clinging.
- Without demanding that it never return.

The River does not need to stop flowing for the Pilgrim to find their footing.

Section 6 - What Are We Receiving?

The House does not need to dam the River.

It allows life to flow.

And healing also asks us to notice **what we allow into the House**.

Every day, the five senses open us to the Garden.

- What are we watching?
- What are we listening to?
- What are we eating?
- What are we touching?
- What environments are we repeatedly entering?
- What conversations are we absorbing?
- What are we placing before the Mind hour after hour?

These may seem like ordinary questions.

Yet what we repeatedly receive can influence the atmosphere within the House.

- A conversation may leave us feeling encouraged.
- A piece of music may awaken a memory.
- A meal may nourish the Body.
- A troubling story may remain with us long after we have stopped reading.

And sometimes, without noticing, we begin carrying the worries, expectations and opinions of others.

Receiving Is Not the Same as Absorbing

We cannot choose everything that reaches us.

- An unpleasant remark may arrive unexpectedly.
- A disturbing image may appear before we have time to look away.
- Someone else's anger may enter a conversation.

Life does not wait for our permission before presenting itself.

But receiving something does not mean we must give it a permanent home.

- A thought may enter the Mind without becoming a belief.
- A criticism may be heard without becoming our identity.
- Another person's fear may be understood without becoming our own.
- And an opinion may be considered without requiring our agreement.

Awareness allows us to notice what has arrived.

Presence allows us to remain with the encounter.

And sometimes Stillness gives us room to consider what deserves further attention.

Not everything that enters the House needs to become part of how we live.

The Windows and the Front Door

The Front Door is not a fortress.

The Windows are not meant to remain permanently closed.

A House without openings would soon become a lonely place.

We need the world.

- Its conversations.
- Its discoveries.
- Its differences.
- Its beauty.

And sometimes even its discomfort.

For not everything that challenges us is harmful.

- A difficult conversation may reveal something we had overlooked.
- An unfamiliar idea may broaden our understanding.
- A disagreement may help us recognise what matters to us.

If we close every Window to avoid discomfort, we may also prevent fresh air from entering.

But keeping the Windows open does not mean abandoning discernment.

- Sometimes a Window needs opening.
- Sometimes a Door needs closing.

And sometimes we need to step outside the House and recognise that the environment itself is causing harm.

Openness and protection are not opposites.

Both may be expressions of care.

What We Repeatedly Welcome

There is also a difference between what arrives unexpectedly and what we repeatedly invite.

- Perhaps we spend hours following arguments that leave us agitated.
- Perhaps we continually compare our lives with those of others.
- Perhaps we return to conversations that deepen resentment.

Or perhaps we have developed habits that offer momentary comfort while gradually neglecting the Body.

Not everything pleasurable is nourishing.

And not everything uncomfortable is harmful.

- A challenging book may nourish understanding.
- A difficult but necessary conversation may strengthen a relationship.
- A quiet afternoon may restore something that constant activity has depleted.

The Pilgrim begins to recognise that receiving is not merely a passive experience.

Sometimes we can choose.

- What deserves more of my attention?
- What might I receive less often?
- What genuinely nourishes me?
- And what have I continued welcoming simply because it has become familiar?

These questions need not become another form of self-surveillance.

We do not have to examine every meal, conversation or moment of entertainment.

Sometimes we simply enjoy life.

But when the atmosphere within the House repeatedly becomes unsettled, it may be worth looking towards its openings.

Leaving Room for Life

The Art of Healing does not ask us to create a perfectly protected House.

Such a House could not exist.

Nor would it necessarily be a place in which we could live fully.

Life brings the unexpected.

- Some experiences nourish us.
- Others challenge us.
- Some leave traces that take time to understand.
- And some pass through without needing any further attention.

The Pilgrim cannot control everything that arrives.

But they may gradually become more discerning about what they continue to welcome.

Healing is not closing the House to life.

It is learning to keep its openings alive while caring for the one who lives within.

Section 7 - Kindness Is Free

And sometimes the Art of Healing becomes wonderfully ordinary.

We do not need another practice.

We need to look up.

Someone is walking towards us.

Say hello.

Someone holds the door.

Say thank you.

A cashier looks tired.

Meet their eyes.

A neighbour is alone.

Stop for a moment.

Someone makes a mistake.

Leave a little room for their humanity.

And when you make a mistake, leave some room for your own.

Be kind.

Not because kindness makes us spiritual.

Not because we expect kindness in return.

But because every Pilgrim we meet is walking through weather we cannot completely see.

The Kindness We May Never Know

Sometimes we do not realise what a small gesture means to another person.

- A smile.
- A greeting.
- A few moments of listening.
- Remembering someone's name.
- Or simply acknowledging their presence.

For us, it may be an ordinary encounter.

For the other Pilgrim, it may arrive during a particularly difficult season.

We may never know.

And perhaps we do not need to know.

Kindness does not require an audience.

Nor does it need to produce a visible result.

Sometimes it is simply something we offer as we pass through another person's Garden.

Kindness Does Not Mean Saying Yes to Everything

But kindness also needs discernment.

- We can be kind without agreeing.
- We can listen without accepting mistreatment.
- We can offer compassion without taking responsibility for another Pilgrim's choices.

And sometimes the kindest response is a gentle but clear *no*.

For kindness is not the abandonment of ourselves.

A Pilgrim who continually neglects their own needs in order to please others may eventually find that their own Garden has been left unattended.

The Art of Healing asks us to remember that we, too, are Pilgrims.

- Our needs matter.
- Our boundaries matter.
- And the way we speak to ourselves matters.

We do not need to become unkind to ourselves in order to be kind to someone else.

When the House Enters the Garden

This is where the Inner House enters the Garden.

Healing is no longer something happening privately within us.

It becomes visible in **how we live**.

- Presence changes how we meet someone.
- Awareness allows us to notice them.
- Stillness may prevent an unnecessary reaction.
- The Inner Flame may remind us of another possibility.

And Living Wisdom may become a simple act of kindness.

- Not every encounter needs a profound conversation.
- Not every disagreement needs to become a lesson.

Sometimes we simply allow another person to be human.

And sometimes we allow ourselves the same kindness.

Perhaps this is one of the quietest expressions of the Art of Healing.

We may not be able to change the weather another Pilgrim is experiencing.

But we can sometimes avoid adding another storm.

And occasionally, without knowing it, we may bring a little warmth.

Kindness cannot heal every wound.
But it can change how we meet the Pilgrim who carries one.

And sometimes all of Atmadeva's Philosophy becomes:

Hello.

Section 8 - The Art of Living

Perhaps, then, the Art of Healing is not the art of becoming permanently healed.

It is the art of **living awake enough to notice when something needs our attention, while remaining free enough simply to live when it does not.**

There will be days when life flows easily.

- The Pilgrim laughs.
- Works.
- Shares a meal.
- Enjoys companionship.

And moves through the Garden without needing to examine every experience.

There will also be days when the weather changes.

- An unexpected difficulty.
- A painful memory.
- A disagreement.
- A loss.

Or something within the House that has quietly been asking for attention.

- The Pilgrim may need to arrive at Presence.
- Listen with Awareness.

- Allow Stillness.

Or find their way towards the Still Point.

- Sometimes a Reset may be enough.
- Sometimes a conversation is needed.
- Sometimes rest.
- Sometimes a boundary.

And sometimes there is nothing to resolve.

Only an experience to live through.

Healing does not ask the Pilgrim to turn every moment into a lesson.

Nor does it require every wound to disappear before life can be enjoyed.

- A Pilgrim may carry sadness and still laugh.
- Feel uncertain and still make a meaningful choice.
- Be recovering from one experience while discovering something beautiful in another.

Life does not wait until every corner of the Garden has been restored.

It continues unfolding.

And the Pilgrim continues participating.

Perhaps this is where the Art of Healing becomes something more than a collection of practices.

- Presence is no longer something we remember only during meditation.
- Awareness is no longer something we summon only when difficulties arise.
- Kindness is no longer merely something we intend.

They gradually become visible in the ordinary ways we live.

In how we listen.

- How we respond.
- How we care.
- How we make decisions.

And how we meet another Pilgrim.

- Not perfectly.
- Not consistently.

But increasingly with understanding.

For the Art of Healing is not about standing outside life, trying to make it perfect.
It is about learning to live within it.

Section 9 - The Living Wisdom Cycle

Life gives us something to receive.

An experience.

- A conversation.
- A mistake.
- A loss.
- A kindness.

- A difficult decision.

Something somebody says that stays with us.

Sometimes what arrives is welcome.

Sometimes it is unexpected.

And sometimes we would rather it had never happened.

Yet life continues bringing experiences into our Garden.

Receiving — What Life Brings

Receiving does not mean approving of everything that happens.

Nor does it mean allowing ourselves to be continually hurt.

A Pilgrim may receive an experience without choosing to remain in the circumstances that caused it.

Sometimes receiving simply means recognising:

- *This has happened.*
- *This is part of what I have experienced.*
- *What do I need now?*

There may be something to understand.

- Something to care for.
- Something to change.

Or perhaps nothing more is required.

Not every experience needs to become a lesson.

Some experiences are simply lived.

And that is enough.

Ripening — What Time and Understanding May Allow

We need not immediately understand what we have received.

We can allow it to ripen.

Some things ripen quickly.

Others take years.

- A conversation may remain with us long after it has ended.
- A mistake may gradually reveal a different way of responding.
- An act of kindness may change how we understand another Pilgrim.

And sometimes an experience that once seemed confusing becomes clearer through another encounter.

But ripening cannot be commanded.

The Pilgrim cannot insist that every experience produce wisdom.

Nor must suffering become meaningful simply because we have endured it.

- Some experiences remain painful.
- Some questions remain unanswered.
- And some memories never become anything more than part of the life we have lived.

Ripening is a possibility, not an obligation.

Yet occasionally something changes within us.

What we received becomes something we understand differently.

And sometimes that understanding begins to influence how we live.

Giving — When Understanding Becomes Living Wisdom

Perhaps something we once had to remember consciously gradually becomes natural.

- A boundary.
- A kindness.
- A different response.
- A way of listening.
- A willingness to receive.
- A capacity to pause before reacting.

What has ripened is no longer merely something we know.

- It begins to appear in our choices.
- In our relationships.
- In how we care for ourselves.
- And in how we meet the world.

Sometimes what has ripened becomes something we give.

- A word.
- A meal.
- A book.
- A hand.
- A silence.

Or simply a different way of meeting another Pilgrim.

Giving does not always mean offering advice or sharing what we have learned.

Sometimes it means allowing another person to experience the kindness that has gradually become part of how we live.

And sometimes the most meaningful gift is to leave another Pilgrim free to discover their own understanding.

Living Wisdom does not need to announce itself.

It becomes visible in how we live.

When the Cycle Continues

What we give may become something another Pilgrim receives.

- A conversation may awaken a new understanding.
- A small kindness may encourage another act of kindness.
- A book may accompany someone through a difficult season.
- And sometimes we never discover what became of something we offered.

That is part of giving too.

Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…

Living Wisdom continues moving through the Garden.

But the cycle is not a demand.

We do not need to give something back for every experience we receive.

Nor must we wait for everything to ripen before participating in life.

- Sometimes we give while still learning.
- Sometimes we receive while caring for others.
- Sometimes we need nourishment rather than another responsibility.

And sometimes we simply need to rest.

The cycle continues wherever life allows it.

For the Art of Healing is not about turning every experience into something useful.

It is about allowing what we live to deepen how we understand, care and participate in life.

And when that understanding becomes visible in the way we live, perhaps wisdom has quietly found its place within the House.

Section 10 - My Life, My Responsibility

Through all of this, the responsibility remains mine.

- The philosophy does not make my decisions.
- The lenses do not make my decisions.
- The Inner Flame does not command me.
- Other people may advise me.
- The Supporting Net may hold me.

But I remain responsible for the choices that are mine to make.

- I will sometimes choose wisely.
- Sometimes I will not.
- Then I notice.
- I learn.
- I Reset when needed.

I allow what happened to ripen, if understanding is ready to emerge.

And I continue living.

Responsibility Is Not Control

There is an important distinction.

Being responsible for my life does not mean being responsible for everything that happens within it.

- I cannot choose every circumstance.
- I cannot prevent every disappointment.
- I cannot control another Pilgrim's behaviour.

Nor can I command my Body, Mind or Emotional Self to respond exactly as I wish.

Sometimes life brings experiences I would never have chosen.

- Illness.
- Loss.
- An unexpected change.
- Or hurt caused by another person's actions.

These experiences may become part of my journey.

But their arrival does not automatically make them my responsibility.

I am not responsible for everything that happens to me.

I am responsible, as far as I am able, for how I choose to meet what happens.

And even that responsibility must leave room for human limitations.

- Sometimes I am exhausted.
- Sometimes overwhelmed.
- Sometimes I need help.

There may be moments when I cannot respond as wisely as I would like.

The Art of Healing does not ask me to condemn myself for being human.

It invites me to recognise what remains within my care.

When I Get It Wrong

There will be times when I make a mistake.

Perhaps I speak too quickly.

React without listening.

Neglect my Body.

Or allow the Hijacked Voice to become louder than my understanding.

I may hurt another Pilgrim.

Or cause unnecessary hurt to myself.

What then?

- I can acknowledge what happened.
- Take responsibility for what belongs to me.
- Apologise when an apology is needed.
- Make amends where possible.
- And consider what I might do differently.

But responsibility does not require endless self-punishment.

A mistake does not need to become a permanent identity.

Nor does an apology erase the need for change.

Sometimes the most meaningful expression of responsibility is not what we say afterwards.

It is what we begin doing differently.

The Freedom to Continue

There is something gentle about recognising that our lives remain unfinished.

- We do not need to understand everything today.
- We do not need to resolve every difficulty before tomorrow arrives.

Nor must every experience become wisdom.

- Some things will ripen.
- Others may remain unanswered.
- Some wounds may heal.

- Others may continue to need care.

And meanwhile, life continues offering possibilities.

- A conversation.
- A friendship.
- A new interest.
- A quiet afternoon.
- An opportunity to begin again.

The Pilgrim does not need to wait until the House is perfectly ordered before stepping into the Garden.

Nor must the Garden be free of wounds before it can offer beauty.

We can care for what is hurting while continuing to participate in what is living.

Perhaps this is one of the deepest expressions of the Art of Healing.

- Not that we eventually become Pilgrims who never make mistakes.
- Not that we remain permanently peaceful.
- And not that we finally learn how to control life.

But that we gradually become more willing to meet life as it unfolds.

- To listen when something needs attention.
- To act when something needs changing.
- To rest when something needs care.

And to allow life to continue when nothing more is required.

The Art of Healing

Perhaps this is Atmadeva's Art of Healing:

- Be here when you need to be here.
- Be aware enough to notice.
- Listen when something within asks to be heard.
- Reset when the weather changes and a Reset is needed.
- Let life flow rather than forcing it underground.
- Live in alignment as far as you can.

Receive. Ripen. Give.

- Look through another lens when it helps.
- Take responsibility for the choices that are yours to make.
- And as you walk through the Garden, be kind.

Because healing is not somewhere at the end of the pilgrimage.

It is in the way the Pilgrim lives.

The Art of Healing is the art of being with life as it unfolds, recognising what needs care, and responding with Presence, Awareness, wisdom and kindness.

- Not every moment requires healing.
- Not every wound needs to become wisdom.
- And not every difficulty needs to be resolved before life can continue.

For the Art of Healing is not the art of making life perfect.

It is the art of continuing to live, while learning how to care for the life we are living.

Pilgrim's Reflection

Live your life.

You do not need to watch yourself living every moment.

But when the weather changes, notice.

- When something within asks to be heard, listen.
- When you are away, arrive.
- When you need to Reset, Reset.

Let what you receive have time to ripen.

Use another lens when it helps you see.

Listen to the mind.

Listen to the body.

Make the choices that are yours to make.

And when you meet another Pilgrim along the way—

be kind.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Care for what needs care.
Allow what needs time.

And when life invites you to live, live.


The Pilgrim's Arc of Life
Different paths. Many turns. One human pilgrimage.
The House remains within. The Pilgrim continues through the Garden.
Not five stages. One human pilgrimage.
The Pilgrim Discovers Belonging
We begin. We belong.
The Pilgrim and Choice
More choices become ours.
The Pilgrim Builds a Life
We build. Life shapes us.
The Pilgrim Grows Older
The years become part of the journey.
The Last Breath
A final threshold. A wider horizon.
Presence
Awareness
The Flame
Still Point
Changing seasons. A steady presence. Always home.
Life gives the journey, Presence makes it home.
HOUSE ✦ PILGRIM ✦ GARDEN ✦ LIFE

The Pilgrim's Arc of Life

Life does not unfold according to a perfect timetable.

One Pilgrim may begin building a life while still discovering where they belong. Another may change direction many times. Someone may discover what matters while still young. Another may reach old age with questions that have accompanied them since childhood.

So the five chapters that follow are **not stages to complete**.

They are movements we may recognise across a human life.

Belonging often begins before we understand what belonging means.

Gradually, more choices become ours.

Through those choices, something of a life is built.

And while we are building, life is also shaping us.

With time, some experiences may ripen. The questions may change. What once seemed important may become less so, while something previously overlooked becomes precious.

Eventually, the years themselves become part of the pilgrimage.

- The body changes.
- Roles change.
- The Garden changes.

And still the Pilgrim lives.

These movements may overlap, repeat or arrive in another order. We may belong again, choose again, build again and discover again what matters.

Maturation is not a staircase.

It is life being lived.

Across these five chapters, the House remains within the Pilgrim as the Pilgrim continues through the Garden.

Presence remains available.

Awareness may notice.

The Flame remains.

And through all the changing seasons, something of what life gives us may quietly ripen into the way we live.

Discover belonging.
Choose.
Build a life.
Grow older.
Meet the last breath.

Not five stages.

One human pilgrimage.

Chapter 40 - The Pilgrim Discovers Belonging



There is a quiet question that accompanies much of human life:

Where do I belong?

It begins long before we have words for it.

We are born among others.

- A family.
- A culture.
- A language.
- A neighbourhood.
- Perhaps a religion or community.

We do not choose these first circles.

We simply find ourselves within them.

Later, the Garden becomes larger.

- School.
- Friendships.
- Work.
- Relationships.
- Communities.

And gradually belonging becomes something more than where life has placed us.

It becomes something we seek.

- We want companionship.
- We want to be recognised.
- We want somewhere we can sit without wondering whether there is a place for us.

There is nothing weak about this.

Belonging is part of being human.

But as the Pilgrim matures, another discovery may begin.

Sometimes we belong.

Sometimes we do not.

And neither experience, by itself, tells us whether something has gone wrong.

Section 1 — The Early Years of Belonging

When we are younger, friendship can perform an important function.

We gather people not only for companionship, but also for orientation.

Friends help us discover who we are.

We see ourselves reflected through other people.

- We learn what makes others laugh.
- What receives approval.
- Where we feel comfortable.
- Where we feel awkward.
- Where we seem to fit.

Many early relationships arise naturally through shared life.

- The same school.
- The same university.
- The same workplace.
- The same neighbourhood.
- Shared ambitions.
- Shared uncertainty.
- Shared stages of life.

We move together because, for a while, our paths are travelling through the same part of the Garden.

There is nothing superficial about this.

Some of these friendships may remain for a lifetime.

Others belong particularly to that season.

The friendship was not false because it did not last forever.

It belonged to the life being lived then.

And while we are discovering the Garden, other people can become important mirrors.

Through them we begin to recognise ourselves.

But eventually another question may appear.

How much of myself am I changing in order to remain reflected in those mirrors?

Section 2 — When Belonging Becomes Performance

There can be a subtle element of performance in belonging.

Not dishonesty.

Not pretence.

Simply the ordinary adjustments we make when living among other people.

- We explain ourselves.
- We participate.
- We remember birthdays.

- We attend gatherings.
- We ask about one another's lives.
- We maintain shared stories.
- We sometimes do things because the group does them.

Much of this is simply relationship.

Belonging requires some movement towards one another.

But occasionally the movement becomes uncomfortable.

- We begin editing ourselves more than we realise.
- We laugh when we do not find something funny.
- We remain silent because disagreement might disturb the group.
- We accept invitations because declining them repeatedly might require explanation.

We continue inhabiting a version of ourselves that works socially, even though something within has begun to change.

- Nothing dramatic needs to happen.
- No argument.
- No betrayal.
- No falling out.

Just a small recognition:

This no longer feels quite like me.

This is where Awareness becomes useful.

Not to tell us to leave.

Not to tell us to stay.

Simply to notice.

What is belonging asking of me?

And perhaps more importantly:

What am I giving away in order to belong?

Section 3 — The Price of Belonging

Every form of belonging has some kind of exchange.

- Friendship asks for time.
- Family asks for consideration.
- Community asks for participation.
- Intimacy asks for vulnerability.

Living alongside others inevitably asks us to make room for lives other than our own.
That is not the problem.
The question is whether the price gradually becomes **ourselves**.
When I was growing up, my father once told me that I needed to drink in order to fit in.
I did not.
It was a small thing.
But years later I can see the larger question within it.
What am I willing to do simply because everyone around me is doing it?

- For another person, sharing a drink with friends may be an ordinary pleasure.
- For me, it was not something I wanted.

Neither experience needs to become the rule for everyone else.
The important thing was recognising my own.

There are many versions of the same invitation.

- Dress this way.
- Believe this.
- Do not question that.
- Come because everyone is coming.
- Stay because leaving will be noticed.
- Agree because disagreement is uncomfortable.

Sometimes we willingly participate.

Sometimes we compromise because relationships matter.

Sometimes we change because another person has shown us something we had not seen.

That too is part of maturation.

The Pilgrim who never changes may be just as trapped as the Pilgrim who changes for everyone.

So the question is not:

"Am I changing?"

It is:

"Why am I changing?"

Section 4 — When We Do Not Belong

Not everyone finds belonging easily.

Some Pilgrims move through many circles without ever feeling completely part of them.

This can hurt.

Especially when we look around and see other people surrounded by friends, communities and shared activities.

We may wonder:

- *What is wrong with me?*
- *Why don't I fit?*
- *Why does belonging seem so easy for everyone else?*

Sometimes not belonging really is painful.

- A person may be excluded.
- Rejected.
- Lonely.
- Overlooked.

We should not turn that pain into a spiritual achievement.

But not every experience of not belonging is rejection.

Sometimes we simply do not fit comfortably within a particular circle.

And perhaps nothing has gone wrong.

This was something I understood only gradually in my own life.

For many years I noticed that I did not fit naturally into many groups.

Once, I might have interpreted that as something missing.

Today I experience some of it differently.

Not belonging can also be freedom.

- Freedom not to drink because everyone else drinks.
- Freedom not to attend because everyone else attends.
- Freedom not to agree because agreement would be easier.
- Freedom to live a life that does not require constant confirmation from the group.

But this does not make belonging inferior.

For another Pilgrim, belonging may itself be freedom.

A community may provide friendship, support, laughter, shared purpose and relief from having to walk every part of the Garden alone.

The same circle that feels restrictive to one person may feel deeply nourishing to another.

This is why the philosophy cannot tell the Pilgrim:

Belong.

Nor can it say:

Stand apart.

It can offer a quieter question:

Can I be here without leaving myself?

Section 5 — When the Circle Changes

As life unfolds, our circles may change.

- Some expand.
- Some narrow.
- Some disappear and later form again.
- People marry.
- Children arrive.
- Children grow.
- Careers change.
- People move away.
- Illness changes what is possible.
- Interests change.
- Something within us changes too.

The people with whom we once shared almost everything may gradually become people we see occasionally.

- Someone we hardly noticed may become a close friend.
- A friendship may survive years of silence.
- Another may depend on regular contact.

There is no correct shape for a human circle.

And there is no number that proves we belong.

- A smaller circle is not necessarily wisdom.
- A larger circle is not necessarily distraction.
- Solitude is not automatically freedom.
- Company is not automatically dependence.

What matters is the experience being lived.

Sometimes, however, the circle changes because we no longer wish to perform in order to maintain it.

Certain conversations leave us tired.

We notice ourselves repeatedly editing what we really think.

An invitation arrives and there is no movement towards it.

- Not anger.
- Not rejection.
- Simply no movement.

From outside this may look like withdrawal.

Within the House, something else may be happening.

Awareness is noticing that the relationship has changed.

And perhaps the relationship does not need to be destroyed.

- It may simply need to change shape.
- Less frequent contact.
- A smaller place in one another's lives.
- Longer spaces between conversations.

A friendship that once occupied the centre of the Garden may now sit quietly at its edge.

Not every relationship needs a dramatic ending.

Sometimes two Pilgrims simply stop walking so closely beside one another.

A Smaller Table

For years Apple hosted dinner every Friday.

The table was large.

The house was loud.

She was the organiser—the one who brought people together.

For many years he loved it.

Then something changed.

- He began noticing himself listening to conversations rather than inhabiting them.
- Not with judgement.
- Not because the others had become less interesting.
- Something in his own life had simply shifted.

After everyone left, she began noticing relief.

At firsts he blamed tiredness.

Then busyness.

Eventually the weekly dinners stopped.

What surprised her was not the silence afterwards.

It was the absence of regret.

The quiet did not feel empty.

A few friends remained.

People with whom silence did not need filling.

People who did not require entertainment.

People she might not see for weeks or months and yet could meet again without rebuilding the friendship from the beginning.

The table became smaller.

But something else happened too.

For the first time, she felt seated.

Section 6 — Belonging Is Lived

Perhaps maturation changes the question once more.

We begin with:

Where do I belong?

Later we may ask:

Where can I belong and still be myself?

Eventually even that question may soften.

- We simply begin to live.
- We belong where belonging is alive.
- We participate where participation feels genuine.
- We allow some relationships to remain close.

Others become more distant.

- We enjoy company.
- We allow solitude.
- We do not need every difference to become rejection.
- And we do not need every similarity to become belonging.

The Public Self can meet the Garden without becoming whatever the Garden expects.

A boundary does not necessarily close the door.

It clarifies where the door is.

- We can belong without disappearing.
- We can stand apart without becoming superior.
- We can change without betraying ourselves.
- We can remain ourselves without refusing to change.

And perhaps we begin to understand that belonging was never only about how many people stood around us.

A tree may grow among hundreds of other trees.

- Its roots mingle beneath the forest floor.
- Its branches share wind and rain with those around it.

Another tree may stand alone on a hill.

- More sky surrounds it.
- More distance lies between it and the next tree.

But it receives the same rain.

The same Sun.

The same changing seasons.

The tree in the forest belongs.

The tree on the hill belongs too.

There is nothing wrong with not belonging to every circle.

Perhaps we were never meant to.

Closing Reflection

When we are young, we may gather people partly to discover who we are.

Other people become Mirrors.

Through friendship, companionship and belonging, we begin to recognise ourselves within the Garden.

Later, something may change.

We may become less interested in relationships that require us to forget ourselves.

- Some friendships remain.

- Some soften.
- Some belong to a particular season of life.
- And new ones may still arrive.

The circle may become smaller.
But a smaller circle does not necessarily mean a smaller life.
Sometimes it simply means that **we no longer need as many Mirrors to know who we are.**
Earlier in life, we may look towards the Mirrors around us for orientation.
With time, we may become more able to stand within our own life—
among others,
or apart.
Belonging remains beautiful.
But no longer belonging everywhere need not mean that something has gone wrong.

A Gentle Reflection

You may wish to pause for a moment and consider your own social landscape.

- Has your circle of friends changed over the years?
- Are there conversations that once energised you but now feel tiring?
- Do you sometimes sense a quiet pull towards simplicity rather than constant social engagement?
- Have some relationships naturally softened without conflict or clear explanation?

None of these experiences necessarily means something has gone wrong.

They may simply mean that your inner life is changing and something in the Garden around you is changing too.

- Perhaps your circle has narrowed.
- Perhaps it has widened.
- Perhaps you have discovered greater comfort in solitude.
- Or perhaps you have discovered how much companionship matters to you.

Simply notice.

You may find that a few relationships allow something particularly precious—

- silence without discomfort,
- distance without insecurity,
- difference without rejection,
- and companionship without the need to perform.
- Places where explanation is not always necessary.
- Places where you can simply be yourself.

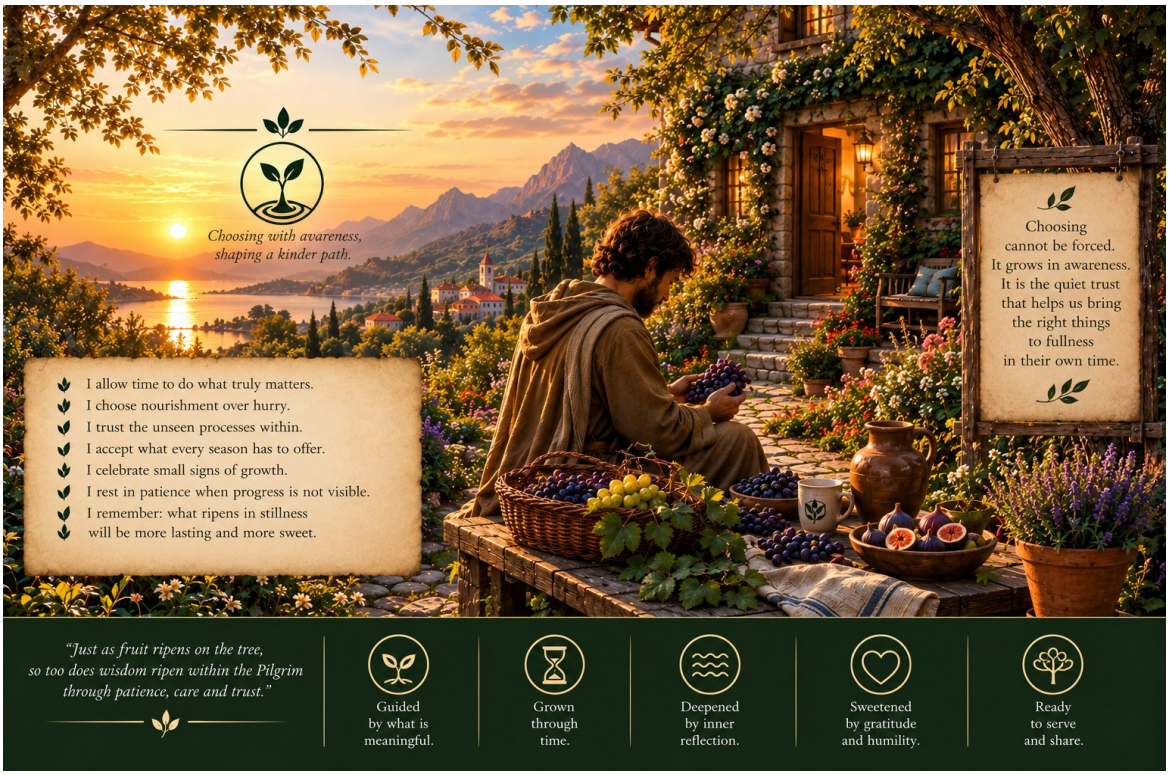
And perhaps that is enough.

You do not have to belong everywhere in order to belong.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

The world may ask us to fit in.
Presence quietly invites us to belong.
Belonging is not something you must earn.
It is something you gradually remember.
The deeper your roots… the greater your freedom to simply be.

Chapter 41 — The Pilgrim and Choice



There is a moment in childhood when someone holds out two things and asks:
"Which one would you like?"

- The red jumper or the blue one.
- This toy or that one.
- Chocolate or vanilla.

To the adult, the choice may seem tiny.
To the child, it may feel enormous.
For much of early life, other people choose for us.

- Where we live.
- What we eat.
- Where we go to school.
- When we sleep.
- Which language surrounds us.
- Which customs, beliefs and expectations first enter our world.

A child needs this.
They cannot yet carry the responsibility of an entire life.
And yet, among all those decisions made by others, small openings begin to appear.
"Which one would you like?"
Something is beginning.
I can choose.
And from those first small choices, one of the great movements of a human life begins.

Section 1 — The First Choices

As the child grows, the choices grow too.

- Who shall I play with?
- Shall I share?
- Shall I join them?
- Shall I tell the truth even if I might get into trouble?
- Shall I try again?

Some choices remain small.

Others begin to carry consequences.

- School introduces new circles.
- Friendship introduces belonging.

And belonging can make choosing more complicated.

- Perhaps everyone else is doing something.
- Perhaps the child does not want to.
- Perhaps saying no means standing apart.
- Perhaps saying yes means being included.

The question is no longer simply:

What do I want?

Another question has entered the Garden:

What will happen if I choose differently?

Adolescence may make this louder.

- What shall I wear?
- Whom shall I spend time with?
- Do I follow my friends?
- Do I follow my parents?
- What do I believe?
- Who am I becoming?

The Pictures already hanging within the House may begin to matter.

- A good person behaves like this.
- Successful people do that.
- People like us do not do those things.

Some Pictures may offer useful guidance.

Others may have been hanging there for so long that we have never thought to look at them.

And so, as the Pilgrim begins choosing, another question slowly becomes possible:

Whose choice is this?

Section 2 — When the Choices Become Ours

Then comes a remarkable period of life.

The Garden opens.

- Education.
- Work.
- Friendship.

- Love.
- Money.
- Travel.
- Where to live.
- How to live.
- Perhaps marriage.
- Perhaps children.
- Perhaps neither.
- Perhaps a life very different from the one imagined for us.

And there is something extraordinary about this period:

Some of the largest choices of our lives may be made when we have lived relatively little of it.

At eighteen, twenty-five or thirty, we may make decisions whose echoes travel through decades.

We cannot possibly know everything those choices will bring.

- A course may be chosen and later changed.
- A job may be taken and then left.
- A relationship may begin with certainty and end years later.
- A journey may take us somewhere we never expected to remain.
- A temporary decision may become a life.
- And something we believed would last forever may last only a season.

There is nothing unusual about this.

Choice develops through choosing.

Sometimes we have to take a path before discovering whether it is ours.

And a path does not have to last forever in order to have mattered.

- Perhaps it showed us something.
- Perhaps we learned.
- Perhaps we loved.
- Perhaps we struggled.
- Perhaps we met someone who changed the direction of our life.
- Perhaps the path simply revealed:

  This is not for me.

That too has been received through living.

The young Pilgrim is not expected to have the whole pilgrimage mapped.

Perhaps no Pilgrim ever does.

- We choose from where we are standing.
- With what we know.
- With what we can see.
- With who we are at that moment.
- Sometimes the **Guiding Whisper** is quietly heard.
- Sometimes the **Hijacked Voice** continuasly pressures us with urgency.

Choose as well as you can with what you can see from where you are.

Then live a little.

See what the choice reveals.

Section 3 — Whose Choice Am I Living?

Yet becoming an adult does not suddenly make every choice our own.

The voices of earlier life travel with us.

- Family.
- Culture.
- Religion.
- Teachers.
- Friends.
- Society.
- The expectations of people we love.
- Sometimes these voices offer wisdom.
- Sometimes they offer protection.
- Sometimes another Pilgrim sees something in us that we cannot yet see ourselves.

But sometimes we may discover that we are living a choice we never consciously made.

The Garden may look perfectly respectable.

- A good job.
- A relationship.
- A comfortable life.
- Approval from others.

The Public Self may become very good at presenting a life that appears settled.

Yet something within the House may remain unsettled.

- Perhaps we keep saying yes while something within keeps saying no.
- Perhaps we chose a career because it was considered sensible.
- Perhaps we stayed somewhere because leaving would disappoint others.
- Perhaps we continue carrying a role that belonged to an earlier version of our life.

This does not automatically mean that anything outside must change.

Staying is not always wrong.

Leaving is not always right.

Awareness simply makes another possibility available:

Something here does not fit.

Then perhaps we can look.

Not immediately fix.

Not immediately leave.

Not immediately decide.

Simply look.

Whose choice am I living?

Sometimes the answer may surprise us.

Section 4 — When Our Choices Carry Others

For a while, choice may feel like freedom.

What do I want to do with my life?

But gradually the Garden may become more populated.

- A partner.
- Children.
- Friends.
- Colleagues.
- Employees.
- Ageing parents.
- People who rely upon us.

Now the question may change.

Not only: **What do I want?**

But: **Who else is affected by what I choose?**

- A decision to move may affect a partner.
- A career decision may change family life.
- Caring for someone may alter plans we once thought certain.
- A financial choice may affect people beyond ourselves.
- Saying yes may create responsibilities.
- Saying no may create consequences too.

This does not mean that we must always put ourselves last.

Nor does it mean that responsibility requires us to abandon our own life.

It simply means that choice no longer happens in an empty Garden.

Our choices create echoes.

Some barely disturb the soil.

Others change the Landscape.

We rarely know everything that will follow when we choose.

Only afterwards do some consequences become visible.

Sometimes we say: **"I am glad I did that."**

Sometimes: **"I wish I had chosen differently."**

This too belongs to choosing.

Freedom and consequence travel together.

To choose is also to live with what follows.

But consequence is not punishment.

And an unexpected outcome does not necessarily mean that the choice was foolish.

Later, we may know more.

- We may understand ourselves differently.
- We may see something that was impossible for us to see before.

It is easy to stand in today and judge the Pilgrim of yesterday using knowledge they did not yet possess.

Perhaps there is a gentler question:

"That is what I chose then. What can I see now?"

Something received through experience may still ripen.

And sometimes another choice becomes possible.

Section 5 — Choosing Again

A human life is rarely built from one set of choices.

- We choose.
- We live.
- Life changes.
- We change.
- And sometimes we choose again.
- The career that once suited us may no longer fit.
- A relationship may change shape.
- A place we once loved may no longer feel the same.

Something we once wanted intensely may lose its importance.

Something we once dismissed may become precious.

Choosing again does not necessarily mean rejecting the life that came before.

The earlier choice belonged to the Pilgrim who made it.

Perhaps that choice carried us exactly as far as it could.

When Choice Begins Within

Not every choice begins with careful reasoning.

Sometimes something quieter arises within the House.

The **Guiding Whisper** may be very simple.

- **Wait.**
- **Not yet.**
- **Enough.**
- **Perhaps this way.**

It does not command.

It does not hurry.

Sometimes we cannot even explain why it has appeared.

The **Hijacked Voice** feels different.

It may bring urgency.

- **Do something now.**
- **You cannot let this happen.**
- **What will people think?**
- **You must decide.**

One presses.

The other whispers.

Yet even this is not a formula.

The Pilgrim does not have to identify every inner voice correctly before making a choice.

- Awareness simply gives us the possibility of noticing what is happening within the House.
- Perhaps Stillness gives a little more space.
- Perhaps the Guiding Whisper becomes easier to hear.
- Perhaps the urgency of the Hijacked Voice begins to loosen.

And then— **the Pilgrim chooses.**

The Guiding Whisper may guide.

The Hijacked Voice may pressure.

The LAPPS Lenses may help us look.

Other Pilgrims may advise.

But none of them takes responsibility for the choice.

Section 6 — When the Choices Begin to Change

For many years, the Pilgrim may become accustomed to choosing.

At work, people ask:

- **"What do you think?"**
- **"Can you help?"**
- **"What should we do?"**

At home, too, there may be decisions to make.

Problems to solve.

Responsibilities to carry.

For decades, being consulted can become so ordinary that we hardly notice it.

- It may not feel like authority.
- It simply feels like participation.

Then something may change.

- The children grow older.
- They begin making decisions without us.
- Work changes.
- Someone younger carries responsibilities we once held.
- Retirement may arrive.
- The meetings stop.
- The telephone rings less often.
- Questions that once came to us begin going somewhere else.

Nothing dramatic may happen.

Yet one day the Pilgrim notices:

They didn't ask me.

- There can be hurt in this.
- Perhaps frustration.
- Perhaps relief.
- Perhaps all of them at different times.

The temptation may be to continue choosing for people who no longer need us to choose for them.

Advice may be offered before it is requested.

A grown child may make a decision we would never have made.

Someone at work may solve a problem differently.

The Garden continues moving.

And another form of discernment appears:

knowing when a choice is no longer ours to make.

This too can be difficult.

For much of adulthood, maturation seemed to mean becoming increasingly capable of choosing.

Now maturation may sometimes mean allowing another Pilgrim to choose.

- We can care without controlling.
- We can offer without insisting.
- We can remain available without needing to stand at the centre.

The choice has not disappeared.

Its shape has changed.

Section 7 — When Choice Becomes Smaller

And perhaps, if life allows us enough years, choice changes once more.

The body may no longer do everything it once did.

- Driving may stop.
- Walking may become difficult.
- A house may become too much to manage.
- Someone else may begin cooking.
- Another person may organise medication.
- A son or daughter may accompany us to an appointment.
- A carer may help us dress.

Some choices that once belonged entirely to us may now need other hands.

This can carry grief.

Independence matters.

Being able to decide how we live matters.

We should not pretend otherwise.

But even when the field of choice becomes smaller, choice itself may remain precious.

- **"Would you like tea or coffee?"**
- **"Would you like to sit by the window?"**
- **"Which jumper would you like today?"**
- **"Would you like the curtains open?"**
- **"Would you like me to stay?"**

Small questions.

Yet perhaps they no longer feel small.

They say:

- **I see you.**
- **Your preference still matters.**
- **This is still your life.**

And suddenly the pilgrimage seems to curve gently back towards its beginning.

Once, someone held out two things to a child.

"Which one would you like?"

The child chose.

Years passed.

Thousands of choices followed.

- Some wonderful.
- Some regretted.

- Some barely remembered.
- Some that changed everything.

A life was built.

And perhaps one day another hand holds out two jumpers.

"Which one would you like to wear today?"

The choice has become small again.

But the Pilgrim has not.

Section 8 — My Life, My Responsibility

Across a lifetime, choice changes.

At first, others make many choices for us.

Gradually, more become ours.

Then our choices begin to carry other people.

Later, we may discover that some choices no longer belong to us.

And perhaps eventually we need other hands beside our own.

Through all of this, responsibility needs gentleness.

We are not responsible for everything that happens.

- Illness is not always chosen.
- Loss is not chosen.
- Other people's decisions enter our Garden.
- Circumstances change.
- Doors close.
- Things happen that no amount of wise choosing could have prevented.
- Responsibility is not blame.

It is recognising the choices that **are** ours.

This is my life.

Not because I control everything that happens within it.

I do not.

But because, while a choice is mine to make, it is mine to meet.

And if I later discover that I would choose differently?

- I can notice.
- I can learn.
- I can Reset.
- I can allow what happened to ripen.

And where life permits,

I can choose again.

- Perhaps maturation is not becoming someone who always makes the right choices.
- Perhaps it is not becoming certain.
- Perhaps it is not having the pilgrimage worked out.

It may simply include becoming able to say:

I am not responsible for everything that happens.

I am responsible for how I meet what happens and for the choices that are mine to make.

The child once asked:

Which one shall I choose?

The adult may ask:

What shall I do with my life?

Later:

Who else will my choice affect?

And later still:

Is this choice even mine to make?

Different questions.

Different seasons.

The same Pilgrim.

Living.

Choosing.

Learning.

Sometimes choosing again.

A Gentle Reflection

Think of the choices of your own life.

The small ones you barely remember.

The ones that changed everything.

The ones made for you.

The ones you made because others expected them.

The ones you would make again without hesitation.

And perhaps one or two you would meet differently now.

No judgement is necessary.

You chose from where you were standing then.

Simply notice where you are standing now.

Perhaps there is a choice before you.

Or perhaps there is a choice that no longer belongs to you.

Either way, you might quietly ask:

What is mine to choose now?

And allow the question to remain.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Not every choice needs certainty.

Listen for the whisper.
Notice the urgency.
Choose from where you are.

Then let life reveal what follows.

Chapter 42 — The Pilgrim Builds a Life



There is a time in life when the Garden seems to open in every direction.
So much appears possible.

- The body is growing.
- The mind is learning.
- Friendships are forming.
- Skills are developing.
- Dreams appear.
- The future seems enormous.

At first, the Pilgrim may hardly realise that anything is being built.
They are simply living.

- Learning to walk.
- Learning to speak.
- Learning to read.
- Learning to use the body.
- Learning how to be among other people.

And yet, quietly, foundations are being laid.
Then the years move.
Choices become larger.

- Education.
- Work.
- Relationships.
- Perhaps a family.

- Perhaps a dwelling.
- Perhaps travel.
- Perhaps a completely unexpected path.

Choice by choice.

Season by season.

A life begins to take shape.

Section 1 — The First Things We Build

Children build constantly.

- A tower from wooden blocks.
- A den beneath a table.
- A sandcastle beside the Sea.
- Something is assembled.
- Something falls.
- Something is built again.

There is rarely much tragedy when the tower collapses.

Another tower appears.

The child is not only building the object.

They are discovering:

- **I can do something.**
- **I can learn.**
- **I can try again.**

The body is being built too.

- Bones lengthen.
- Muscles strengthen.
- Balance develops.
- Hands become more skilful.

The child runs, climbs, falls, gets up, throws, catches, dances.

- Perhaps learns to swim.
- Perhaps discovers music or sport.
- Perhaps prefers books and drawing.
- The mind is building its own capacities.
- Words.
- Numbers.
- Ideas.
- Memory.
- Imagination.
- Questions.

And around all of this, relationships are being built.

- Trust.
- Friendship.
- Belonging.

The first understanding that another person has feelings too.

Much of this happens without the child thinking:

I am building myself.

Life is simply being lived.

Perhaps this is true of much that matters.

We often begin building long before we understand what we are building.

Section 2 — Building the Body

As the Pilgrim grows, the body becomes increasingly theirs to care for.

For many years it may feel almost effortless.

- It wakes.
- Moves.
- Carries.
- Recovers.

We ask a great deal of it and often assume it will be ready again tomorrow.

Then we begin making choices about it.

- What shall I eat?
- How shall I move?
- Shall I exercise?
- Shall I rest?

Perhaps we run.

Walk.

Dance.

Swim.

Practise Yoga.

Play sport.

Lift weights.

- Sometimes we build the body for strength.
- Sometimes for health.
- Sometimes for appearance.
- Sometimes because we enjoy movement.
- Sometimes because the Garden has shown us an image of how a body is supposed to look.

There is no need to make an enemy of any of this.

- Wanting to look attractive is human.
- Enjoying strength is human.
- Taking pleasure in what the body can do is human.

But the body is more than something to display.

It is through the body that the Pilgrim meets the Garden.

- We walk through it.
- Taste it.
- Touch it.
- See it.
- Hear it.
- Hold another person.

- Work.
- Travel.
- Laugh.
- Cry.
- Rest.

The body carries our ordinary days as faithfully as our extraordinary ones.

And while the Pilgrim is busy building a life,

the body is carrying the building.

Section 3 — Building Knowledge and Ability

Then there are the things we learn to do.

Education may occupy many years.

- School.
- University perhaps.
- Training.
- Apprenticeship.
- Learning through work.
- Learning simply because something interests us.

At first, knowledge can feel like accumulation.

- More facts.
- More skills.
- More qualifications.
- More understanding.

But eventually knowledge enters living.

- The carpenter's hands know what to do.
- The nurse notices something others might miss.
- The cook no longer needs to measure everything.
- The teacher senses when a student has not understood.
- The mathematician sees a connection before knowing where it will lead.

What once required enormous concentration may become almost effortless.

Something has been built.

Not merely knowledge.

Capability.

And capability allows the Pilgrim to participate differently in the Garden.

We begin to contribute.

- To make.
- To solve.
- To teach.
- To care.
- To create.
- To earn.
- To help.

To give something of what we have learned.

Section 4 — Building a Place in the Garden

Work may become one of the largest structures we build.

- For some, it becomes a vocation.
- For others, simply a way to earn enough to live.
- For many, it is somewhere between the two.

We may spend years becoming good at something.

Responsibilities grow.

Other people begin relying upon us.

Someone asks:

- **"What do you think?"**
- **"Can you help?"**
- **"What should we do?"**

There can be satisfaction in this.

Being useful can feel good.

Achievement can feel good.

There is nothing wrong with enjoying either.

- A promotion.
- A successful project.
- A qualification.
- A business.
- A book.
- A piece of work done well.

These are also fruits of human effort.

Yet work is only one part of what is being built.

- Outside work, friendships may deepen.
- A relationship may begin.
- Two Pilgrims may decide to share a life.
- Perhaps children arrive.
- Perhaps they do not.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim lives alone and builds a rich life through friendships, work, creativity, community and solitude.

There is no single structure called a successful life.

Different Pilgrims build differently.

Section 5 — Building a Dwelling

There may come a day when the Pilgrim receives a key.

- A rented room.
- A small flat.
- A house.

Perhaps somewhere shared with another person.

The door opens.

At first there may be very little inside.

- A bed.
- A table.
- A few plates.
- Perhaps a chair someone no longer wanted.
- Then objects begin arriving.
- Curtains.
- Books.
- Pictures.
- Cups.
- A saucepan.
- A plant on the windowsill.

Things that would mean almost nothing to another person begin to carry stories.

- A bowl brought back from a journey.
- A photograph.
- A gift from someone we love.
- A battered chair we cannot quite bring ourselves to throw away.

We are not merely filling rooms.

We are creating somewhere in the Garden where life can happen.

- Meals are eaten.
- Arguments occur.
- Friends visit.
- Children perhaps grow.
- Someone becomes ill.
- Birthdays pass.
- Ordinary Tuesdays pass.
- Someone leaves.
- Someone arrives.

The building acquires a history.

And somewhere within all this, the Pilgrim may realise:

A dwelling is one of the places where a life leaves traces.

But it is still part of the Garden.

The Inner House remains within the Pilgrim.

Section 6 — Building with Another Pilgrim

Some things cannot be built alone.

- Friendship is one.
- Intimacy is another.
- Trust cannot be constructed by one person and handed to another when complete.

It is built between lives.

Slowly.

- A conversation.
- Another conversation.
- Keeping a promise.
- Being there.

- Getting something wrong.
- Apologising.
- Learning.
- Laughing together.
- Discovering what hurts the other person.
- Allowing ourselves to be known.

Years may pass.

What began as two people meeting becomes something neither could have built alone.

A shared history.

This too requires tending.

Relationships do not remain alive merely because they have existed for a long time.

- The Garden changes.
- The Pilgrims change.
- What once worked may need adjusting.
- Sometimes a relationship continues.
- Sometimes its shape changes.
- Sometimes it ends.

The fact that something did not last forever does not mean nothing was built.

Some structures belong to a season and still matter.

Section 7 — When Building Becomes Busy

There can be years when almost everything seems to require attention at once.

- Work.
- Money.
- Children.
- Parents.
- Relationships.
- The body.
- The dwelling.
- Appointments.
- Repairs.
- Shopping.
- Cooking.
- Cleaning.
- Bills.
- Messages.
- Plans.

The Pilgrim wakes and the Garden is already waiting.

There is another thing to do.

Another problem to solve.

Another responsibility to carry.

This is not necessarily a spiritual problem.

Sometimes life is simply busy.

Autopilot can even help.

- The familiar journey.
- Washing the dishes.
- Making breakfast.
- Folding clothes.
- Doing something we have done a thousand times.

We do not need to inhabit every ordinary action with intense Awareness.

But occasionally the weather within the House changes.

- Irritation.
- Exhaustion.
- Pressure.

A sense that everything depends upon us.

The Hijacked Voice may become louder.

- **Keep going.**
- **You cannot stop.**
- **There is too much to do.**

Perhaps Awareness notices.

Not to abandon the life we have built.

Simply to recognise:

- **Something needs attention.**
- **Be here when you need to be here.**

Perhaps the body needs rest.

Perhaps a boundary is needed.

Perhaps someone else can help.

Perhaps nothing can be changed today.

But even that can be noticed.

The Pilgrim does not have to stop building.

Sometimes we simply need to notice **how we are living while we build.**

Section 8 — Maintaining What We Build

Eventually another discovery appears.

Building is only part of the work.

Things need maintaining.

- Bodies need nourishment, movement and rest.
- Friendships need contact.
- Relationships need attention.
- Dwelling places need repairing.
- Skills need practising.
- Finances need managing.
- Gardens need tending.

Even the things we once worked hard to acquire can begin demanding something from us.

The larger the life becomes, the more there may be to maintain.

This is not necessarily a reason to have less.

It is simply something the Pilgrim may begin to notice.

- Every possession occupies some space.
- Every commitment occupies some time.
- Every responsibility asks something of the life carrying it.
- And sometimes what we have built supports us beautifully.
- Sometimes it begins to weigh upon us.

Awareness does not immediately say:

Get rid of it.

It simply notices the weight.

Section 9 — The Life We Did Not Build

And then there is everything that did not happen.

- The career we imagined but never had.
- The relationship that ended.
- The child who never came.
- The journey postponed until it was no longer possible.
- The business that failed.
- The qualification never completed.
- The house we could not afford.
- The version of ourselves we once expected to become.

A human life contains buildings that were completed.

And foundations upon which nothing further was built.

Some of these may carry grief.

Others, with time, may simply become part of the landscape.

It is easy to look across the fence at another Pilgrim's Garden.

- Their career.
- Their family.
- Their body.
- Their dwelling.
- Their apparent success.

And wonder whether we built badly.

But we do not know the whole of another House from what we can see in their Garden.

Nor are all Pilgrims given the same materials.

- Money differs.
- Health differs.
- Opportunity differs.
- Circumstances differ.
- Responsibilities differ.

Some lives are interrupted by events no one chose.

The Art of Healing cannot measure a life by the size of what was built.

Section 10 — When the Question Changes

For years the questions may have been:

- **What shall I do?**
- **What can I become?**
- **What can I build?**
- **What else is possible?**

There is movement in these questions.

Forward movement.

The Garden keeps opening.

Then, perhaps unexpectedly, another kind of question appears.

Not necessarily because the Pilgrim has become old.

Not because building was wrong.

Perhaps there is simply a moment of **Stillness**.

The movement quietens enough for the Pilgrim to look around.

- The body they have developed.
- The work they have done.
- The people beside them.
- The dwelling.
- The possessions.
- The responsibilities.
- The successes.
- The disappointments.
- The unfinished things.

A life.

And in that Stillness, the question changes.

Not:

What else can I build?

But:

Of everything I am building, what truly matters?

Stillness does not provide the answer.

- It does not tell the Pilgrim to abandon ambition.
- It does not demand simplicity.
- It does not make possessions meaningless or achievement unimportant.

It gives the question somewhere to remain.

Perhaps it stays in the Study for a while.

Perhaps life continues exactly as before.

- The Pilgrim goes to work.
- Makes dinner.
- Pays the bills.
- Meets a friend.
- Plans a journey.
- Repairs something that has broken.
- The building continues.

But the question is now somewhere within the House.

What truly matters?

And perhaps, slowly, something begins to ripen.

Closing Reflection

Building is part of living.

But perhaps there comes a moment when the Pilgrim becomes still enough to see what has been built.

- Not to judge it.
- Not to dismantle it.
- Simply to see.

And somewhere among everything we have gathered, created, carried and cared for, another question may quietly appear:

What truly matters?

- Perhaps that question does not need an immediate answer.
- Perhaps it needs time to ripen.

Because sometimes the deepest change in a human life begins not when we find another answer—

but when **the question changes.**

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Every choice lays another stone.

Every stone quietly shapes the one who builds.

Build your Garden with purpose.

Tend your House with Awareness.

Both are part of the same pilgrimage.

Chapter 43 — The Pilgrim Grows Older



There is no single morning when the Pilgrim wakes and becomes old.

The years arrive quietly.

- A birthday.
- Then another.
- The face in the mirror changes gradually enough that we may hardly notice.
- The body still carries us into the Garden.
- There are meals to prepare.
- People to meet.
- Places to go.
- Things to do.
- Perhaps work continues.
- Perhaps it has ended.
- Perhaps children have grown.
- Perhaps there were never children.
- Perhaps parents who once cared for us now need care themselves.

Life continues.

And yet, somewhere among the ordinary days, the Pilgrim may begin to notice:

The rhythm is changing.

Not ending.

Changing.

Section 1 - The Body That Carried the Building

For much of life, the body may have seemed remarkably dependable.

- We walked.
- Lifted.
- Worked.
- Travelled.
- Stayed awake too late.
- Recovered.

In the years of building, attention was often elsewhere.

- There was a career to establish.
- A relationship to nurture.
- Children perhaps to raise.
- Money to earn.
- A dwelling to maintain.
- Plans to make.

The body carried much of this quietly.

Then it begins to speak more clearly.

- A knee complains.
- The back asks for consideration.
- Sleep changes.
- Recovery takes longer.
- The stairs that once disappeared beneath our feet become noticeable.
- The mirror changes too.
- Hair greys.
- Skin alters.
- Strength may diminish.
- Illness may enter.

None of this means that the body has failed.

Nor does it mean that every change should simply be accepted without question.

- Sometimes the body needs rest.
- Sometimes it needs movement.
- Sometimes the mind says *stop* when the body is capable of more.
- Sometimes the mind insists *keep going* when the body is asking us to listen.
- Sometimes medical care is needed.

There is no simple rule.

The art lies in listening to both.

The body that carried the Pilgrim through the building years is still part of the pilgrimage.

Its needs may simply be changing.

Section 2 - Becoming a Beginner Again

Yet growing older is not only a story of what becomes more difficult.

Something unexpected can happen.

The Pilgrim begins again.

- Someone learns to paint at seventy.
- Someone learns to cook because the person who always cooked can no longer do so.

- Someone begins gardening.
- Someone discovers photography.
- Someone learns another language.
- Someone travels somewhere they had imagined for forty years.
- Someone begins writing.
- Someone who spent a lifetime in one field becomes fascinated by another.
- Someone learns to use a technology that did not even exist when they were young.

After decades of becoming competent, the Pilgrim becomes a beginner again.

There can be something delightful about this.

- No examination.
- No promotion.
- No career plan.
- No need to become an expert.

Simply:

I wonder if I can learn this.

Earlier in life, learning may have been attached to an outcome.

- Pass the examination.
- Gain the qualification.
- Find the job.
- Earn the living.
- Build the life.

Later, learning may need no justification.

We can learn because we are curious.

The Garden has not merely become smaller.

Sometimes a path appears that the younger Pilgrim never knew was there.

Section 3- When Work Changes or Ends

For many Pilgrims, work has occupied an enormous part of adult life.

Not only the hours spent doing it.

- Work provides rhythm.
- Monday means something.
- Morning has a direction.
- Other people expect us.
- Problems arrive.
- Our experience has somewhere to go.

Even when work is tiring, frustrating or simply necessary for earning a living, it can quietly become part of how we know ourselves.

Then one day it changes.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim reduces their hours.
- Perhaps illness makes continuing difficult.
- Perhaps redundancy arrives unexpectedly.
- Perhaps retirement has been anticipated for years.

And eventually there may be a morning when there is nowhere they have to be.

From the outside, this can look wonderfully simple.

You are free now.

And sometimes it does feel like freedom.

But not always.

For decades, the Garden may have provided a structure into which the Pilgrim stepped each morning.

- Then the structure changes.
- The meetings stop.
- The telephone rings less often.
- Problems that once required our judgement are now solved by someone else.

The organisation continues.

Life outside reorganises quickly.

Something within the House may take longer.

Identity often reorganises more slowly than role.

A rhythm lived for forty years does not necessarily disappear on the first morning of retirement.

The Pilgrim may need time to discover another.

Another Kind of Contribution

For some Pilgrims, work ends but the wish to contribute does not.

It may simply change form.

But perhaps differently.

- Someone volunteers.
- Someone mentors.
- Someone looks after grandchildren.
- Someone shares knowledge accumulated over decades.
- Someone checks on a neighbour.

Experience still has somewhere to go.

But this too must remain a choice.

Contribution can quietly become another expectation:

Keep useful. Keep busy. Give something back.

The Pilgrim does not owe the Garden another project simply because work has ended.

Contribution is available. It is not compulsory.

The Quiet Morning

John woke one morning several months after retiring.

For years his mornings had followed the same rhythm:

coffee, news, preparation for work, deadlines already waiting.

Now he sat beside the window.

No meeting was waiting.

No decision needed to be made.

For the first time in decades, he noticed the simple movement of the morning—

light entering the room, birds outside, the quiet rhythm of breath.

The work had mattered.

Being needed had mattered.

But now the morning asked nothing of him.

He could simply be there.

Section 4 - When Our Place in the Garden Changes

The body is not the only thing that changes.

Our place among other people may change too.

For years, others may have asked:

- "What do you think?"
- "Can you help?"
- "What should we do?"

At work, perhaps we made decisions.

Within the family, perhaps we organised things.

Children depended upon us.

Other people relied upon our knowledge.

Being needed can quietly become part of identity.

Then the Garden reorganises.

- Someone else makes the decision.
- Someone else organises Christmas.
- Someone else drives.
- Someone else knows how the new system works.
- The telephone may not ring for advice quite as often.
- Nothing dramatic has happened.

Centrality is an outer position. Worth is not.

And yet something within the House may feel unsettled.

The outer role can change faster than the inner habit of responsibility.

The Pilgrim may still feel responsible for things that are no longer theirs to decide.

This is an Inner–Outer Alignment moment.

Not because one side is wrong.

Because life has changed, and something within us may need time to recognise the change.

Section 5 - Love Without Control

Perhaps nowhere is this more visible than between parents and their adult children.

There is a moment that arrives without ceremony.

You are speaking to your son or daughter and notice something subtle.

- They are no longer asking.
- Not for permission.
- Not necessarily for advice.

They decide—and then tell you.

For many years, the structure was different.

- You anticipated problems.
- You guided.
- You protected.
- You opened some doors and closed others.
- Your words carried weight because responsibility was yours.

When a child cannot yet see the danger, love may need to steer.

Then the current changes.

The child becomes an adult.

- They develop views different from yours.
- They choose work you might not have chosen.
- They choose partners.
- They take risks.
- They make mistakes.
- They build their own Garden.

And sometimes you can see what may happen.

Experience whispers:

I know where this might lead.

The impulse to intervene can be powerful.

And sincere.

It may come entirely from love.

The Hijacked Voice may add urgency:

- **I must say something.**
- **They will regret this.**
- **I have to stop them.**

Perhaps Awareness notices the tightening.

And another question becomes possible:

Is this mine to carry?

Sometimes it is.

Love is not silence.

- There are times to speak.
- Times to warn.
- Times to help.
- Times when someone genuinely asks:

  "What do you think?"

But there are also times when the choice belongs to another Pilgrim.

Then love encounters one of its more difficult possibilities:

Can I love you without choosing your life for you?

The Unasked Advice

A mother listened as her daughter described a major decision.

- A move to another city.
- A change of career.

- A risk carrying considerable uncertainty.

The mother could already see possible difficulties.

Experience had taught her things her daughter had not yet lived.

For a moment she felt the familiar urge to explain.

- To warn.
- To advise.

But her daughter had not asked for advice.

She was sharing her decision.

The mother paused.

Then said:

"I trust you to find your way."

It was not indifference.

It was respect.

Later that evening, the mother felt pride.

And also a quiet ache.

The ache was not the loss of love.

It was the loss of centrality.

For many years she had been needed differently.

Now something in their relationship was changing.

She could not acquire her daughter's wisdom for her.

Her daughter would have to receive life herself.

- Allow experience to ripen.
- Make mistakes perhaps.
- Choose again.

Just as her mother once had.

When Love Changes Shape

Growing older can ask something unexpected of love.

Not less love.

A different expression of it.

There may come a time when being available matters more than being central.

- We listen.
- We respond when invited.
- We remain close without needing to steer.

This is not a rule.

Relationships move backwards and forwards.

An independent adult child may suddenly need enormous support through illness, separation, bereavement or difficulty.

A parent who had stepped back may temporarily become deeply involved again.

Life does not follow a neat arrow.

Love responds to what is here.

But sometimes love can say:

I trust you to live your life.

And remain nearby.

Children may return too.

Not as dependants.

As adults.

Advice may once again be requested rather than imposed.

Conversations change.

Something closer to companionship may appear.

- You are no longer standing in front, showing the way.
- You are walking side by side.

And sometimes, in that side-by-side position, something unexpected appears.

Not authority.

Not centrality.

Friendship.

Section 6 - Trust Changes Direction

Then, sometimes, another quiet change occurs.

For years the parent was the one who said:

"Hold my hand."

- Crossing the road.
- Climbing the steps.
- Entering somewhere unfamiliar.

The hand meant:

I am here.

Years pass.

One day the direction may reverse.

- The steps are difficult now.
- The ground is uneven.
- The parent reaches out.
- And the adult child offers a hand.

The gesture is almost identical.

But the lives around it have changed.

Receiving help can be difficult.

The Pilgrim who spent decades caring for others may not easily accept being cared for.

- Someone else drives.
- Someone carries the bags.
- Someone cooks.
- Someone helps with medication.

Perhaps, eventually, someone helps with washing or dressing.

There can be genuine grief here.

- Independence matters.

- Capability matters.
- Privacy matters.

We should not turn dependency into a spiritual lesson simply because we want ageing to sound beautiful.

But within changing independence there may also be trust.

Earlier the parent may have learned to say:

I trust you to live your life.

Later they may have to discover whether they can also say:

I trust you enough to help me live mine.

Both require letting another Pilgrim be who they are.

Section 7 - The Things That Matter Differently

During the building years, much can matter.

- Work.
- Money.
- A dwelling.
- Achievement.
- Children.
- Travel.
- Friendship.
- Security.
- Recognition.
- Creating something.
- Becoming capable.

None of these needs to be dismissed simply because the Pilgrim grows older.

What mattered then may genuinely have mattered.

But the question that appeared in the Stillness at the end of the building years may remain:

Of everything I have been building, what truly matters?

There may be no single answer.

And the answer may change.

Something once essential becomes less important.

Something barely noticed becomes precious.

- A conversation.
- A familiar chair.
- A morning walk.
- A telephone call.
- A meal with someone we love.
- Being able to make our own tea.
- Sitting beside a window.
- Being asked rather than told.
- Being listened to.
- Being able to choose.

Perhaps the Garden has not become less meaningful.

Perhaps we are simply noticing different parts of it.

Section 8 - The Garden Is Still Yours

There is another danger in the way we speak about growing older.

We can create a new expectation.

- Keep active.
- Keep learning.
- Keep travelling.
- Keep contributing.
- Keep producing.
- Keep proving that age has not changed you.

But this too can become pressure.

The Pilgrim does not have to demonstrate successful ageing.

One Pilgrim may reach seventy and decide to learn the piano.

- Another begins writing.
- Another travels.
- Another volunteers.
- Another plants vegetables.
- Another continues working because they love what they do.
- And another looks at the Garden and quietly feels:

I have done what I needed to do.

There need not be anything sad about that.

- For years they worked.
- Raised children perhaps.
- Cared for others.
- Paid bills.
- Solved problems.
- Maintained a dwelling.
- Carried responsibilities.
- Helped friends.
- Planted.
- Built.
- Repaired.
- Gave.

Now they may simply want to sit outside.

- Feel the warmth of the sun.
- Watch the trees move.
- Listen to the birds.
- Drink a cup of tea.
- Say hello to someone passing.
- Rest.

Meanwhile, another Pilgrim of exactly the same age may be digging a new flower bed.

- **One cultivates.**
- **One sits beneath the tree.**

Neither has misunderstood life.

The Garden is not a competition to see who can continue producing for the longest.

Nor is withdrawal the compulsory wisdom of age.

The question is much gentler:

How do I wish to live in the Garden that is here now?

For one Pilgrim:

There is still something I would like to grow.

For another:

I have cultivated enough. I would like to enjoy what is already here.

And tomorrow the answer may change.

A season of rest.

Then a new curiosity.

A little cultivation.

Another rest.

There is no correct way to grow older.

Section 9 - When the Garden Becomes Smaller

For some, however, the Garden may genuinely narrow.

- Travel becomes difficult.
- Walking becomes limited.
- Friends die.
- A partner may die.

The dwelling that once held a family may become quiet.

Illness may determine the shape of the day.

The Pilgrim may eventually spend much of life within a single room.

We should not pretend that this is simply another kind of freedom.

- Loss is loss.
- Grief may visit.
- Frustration may arise.
- Loneliness may arrive.
- There may be anger at the body.
- Fear about what comes next.

There is no requirement to become serene because life is nearing its end.

And yet even within a smaller physical Garden, human life can remain extraordinarily particular.

- Which jumper?
- Tea or coffee?
- Curtains open or closed?
- Would you like some music?
- Would you like me to stay?

Small choices can carry enormous dignity.

The field of choice may have narrowed.

The Pilgrim has not.

What Remains

Perhaps this is one of the surprises of growing older.

So much can change while something essential about being human remains wonderfully ordinary.

- We still want to be seen.
- We still laugh, become irritated, remain curious, love and disagree.
- We may want company one day and to be left alone the next.
- We can still learn.
- We can still be frightened.
- We can still be surprised.

The Pilgrim does not become a different species because the years have accumulated.

Nor does age automatically confer wisdom.

- Some experiences ripen.
- Others do not.
- Some patterns soften.
- Others remain remarkably persistent.

The Hijacked Voice does not retire simply because we do.

Neither does the possibility of Awareness.

- There can still be a Reset.
- There can still be Stillness.
- There can still be an Inner Flame.
- There can still be a new beginning.

Life continues to unfold while there is life to be lived.

Section 10 - The Pilgrimage Changes Rhythm

Perhaps growing older is not best understood as a gradual withdrawal from life.

Nor is it a climb towards some final state of wisdom.

The Pilgrim does not have to become quieter.

- Wiser.
- More spiritual.
- More accepting.

There is no final version of ourselves that age requires us to become.

We are still living.

- Still changing.
- Still capable of beginning.
- Still capable of getting things wrong.
- Still capable of learning something that did not exist when we were young.
- Still capable of falling in love with a place, an idea, a person, a book, a garden, a morning.

And still capable of saying:

> **I have done enough for today.**
>
> **And somewhere among all of this, we lived.**

Closing Reflection

The younger Pilgrim may look towards the Garden and ask:

What can I do with my life?

The building Pilgrim may ask:

What can I create?

And as the years change, another question may become possible:

How do I wish to live in the Garden that is here now?

There is no answer that belongs to everyone.

- Cultivate if there is something you wish to cultivate.
- Learn if curiosity calls.
- Help where help is yours to give.
- Rest when you wish to rest.
- Receive when receiving becomes necessary.
- Sit beneath the tree if the tree is enough.

You do not have to remain central.

You do not have to remain productive.

You do not have to become wise.

You do not have to prove that you are still young.

And you do not have to behave as though life has finished simply because you have grown old.

The rhythm has changed.

The pilgrimage has not.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

There may still be something to plant.

There may be something new to learn.

Or perhaps today is simply a day to sit beneath the tree.

The Garden is still yours to live in.

Chapter 44 — The Last Breath



Someone once asked me when my birthday was.
I replied:

"Every day."

They looked puzzled and asked again.

I gave the same answer.

Eventually they changed the question:

"When did you take your first breath?"

That made me smile.

Now we were talking about something different.

There was indeed a particular day when I took my first breath.

Before that breath, my mother had carried me within her. She went through the pain of labour so that I could enter this life.

Perhaps that is why the anniversary of my birth has never felt entirely mine.

It also belongs to her.

But the question about my first breath stayed with me for another reason.

Because somewhere in the future there will also be a **last breath**.

I know the date of the first.

I do not know the date of the last.

And between them is this extraordinary thing we call **life**.

Breath after breath.

Morning after morning.

Ordinary days and extraordinary ones.

- Love.
- Loss.
- Work.
- Friendship.
- Mistakes.
- Learning.
- Illness.
- Healing.
- Laughter.
- Grief.
- Birthdays remembered.
- Birthdays forgotten.

Until eventually there is a final breath.

Perhaps this is why I no longer feel the need to wait for one particular date to celebrate being alive.

The first breath happened once.

Life is happening now.

And one day, the last breath will come.

I used to be afraid of death.

I am not afraid of it in the same way now.

- Perhaps I have grown older.
- Perhaps I have spent enough time looking towards death rather than looking away from it.
- Perhaps I understand a little more clearly that life and death are not enemies.

The first breath and the last breath belong to the same life.

One is arrival.

One is departure.

And within Atmadeva's Philosophy, I have come to call that final departure:

Going Home.

Section 1 - Death — The Conversation We Avoid

Perhaps one of the strangest things about death is that we know it will happen, yet we often live as though speaking about it might somehow bring it closer.

- We speak easily about birth.
- We celebrate arrival.
- But departure can make the room uncomfortable.

Someone mentions death and another person quickly says:

Don't talk like that.

Perhaps part of the difficulty is the unknown.

- We know something about birth because we have watched others arrive.
- We know something about life because we are living it.

But death presents a boundary we cannot examine in quite the same way from this side of the Horizon.

- Religion may offer an answer.
- Philosophy may offer another.
- Spiritual traditions may speak of continuation, liberation, rebirth, heaven, consciousness or return.
- Science can describe much about what happens to the body as life ends.

But mystery remains.

And mystery can frighten us.

There may be other fears too.

- Will there be pain?
- What will happen to the people I love?
- What will happen to me?
- Will I know that I am dying?
- What about everything I have not finished?

And beneath all these questions may lie something very simple:

I am here. I do not want to stop being here.

There is nothing immature about that.

The wish to live belongs to life.

But our relationship with death can change.

Something we once avoided may gradually become something we are willing to look at.

We may begin to see that death is not standing outside life waiting to destroy it.

Death is already part of the cycle of living.

- The flower opens and falls.
- Fruit ripens and decays.
- Leaves return to the soil.
- Generations arrive and generations leave.

One cannot separate life completely from death without separating life from its own nature.

- Perhaps maturity does not remove the mystery.
- Perhaps it allows us to sit beside it differently.
- Perhaps we begin to understand that we do not have to know what lies beyond the Horizon in order to speak about death.

We can ask questions.

We can listen.

We can explore what different traditions have understood.

We can say:

I do not know.

And allow those words to be enough.

For much of my life, I was afraid of death.

Over the years, something changed.

Perhaps I matured.

Perhaps reading, reflecting and speaking about death helped me understand it differently.

The unknown did not disappear.

The fear did.

I no longer see death as the opposite of life.

I see them as belonging to the same cycle.

There was a first breath.

There will be a last.

And between them, life unfolds.

Perhaps talking about death does not bring it closer.

Perhaps it brings us closer to life.

Section 2 — What Returns, What Continues

As I have grown older, I have noticed something changing in my relationship with the things and people around me.

- I still care.
- I still love.
- I still enjoy the things that are part of my life.

But I feel less need to cling to them.

And with that has come a certain quietness.

Perhaps some of our fear of death comes from imagining everything we will lose.

- Our possessions.
- Our homes.
- The people we love.
- The body through which we have experienced the world.
- The life we have built.

But I have gradually come to see these things differently.

The material things I call mine were never entirely mine.

They came from Mother Earth.

- The house in which I live.
- The clothes I wear.
- The food that nourishes me.

- The objects I have gathered.
- Even the body through which I have walked through the Garden.

For a while, they are with me.

- I can enjoy them.
- Care for them.
- Use them well.

But I do not need to possess them forever.

One day, Mother Earth will ask for them back.

And I am becoming comfortable with giving them back.

This does not mean that I must reject the material world.

Nor does it mean that I should stop loving people because one day we will part.

Non-clinging is not the absence of love.

Perhaps it is learning to love without requiring permanence.

I can treasure what is with me without asking it to remain with me forever.

There is freedom in that.

But not everything we give back returns in the same way.

Throughout my pilgrimage, I have received from life.

- From people.
- From books.
- From teachers.
- From conversations.
- From mistakes.
- From relationships.
- From the body.
- From the Garden.
- From moments of Stillness.

Some of what I received passed through me and disappeared.

Some remained.

Some slowly ripened.

And from that ripening came *The Living Wisdom of Arriving*.

I do not think of this wisdom as something that must end when my own pilgrimage ends.

Nor do I need it to remain exactly as I have written it.

A living philosophy must be allowed to live.

Perhaps another Pilgrim will receive something from these pages.

- It may be an entire path.
- It may be a metaphor.
- It may be a single sentence.

Perhaps they will carry it into their own lived experience.

- Question it.
- Test it.
- Disagree with it.
- Add something I never saw.
- Remove something that no longer serves.

And through their own pilgrimage, what they received may ripen into something I could never have imagined.

Then perhaps they will give.

And another Pilgrim will receive.

Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…

The cycle does not require the original giver to remain.

Perhaps this is how Living Wisdom can continue beyond the life through which it first took a particular form.

- Not by being protected from change.
- Not by being preserved exactly as it was.
- Not even by preserving the name of the person who gave it.

By entering life again.

I hope that one day another Pilgrim may take Atmadeva's Philosophy somewhere I could not take it.

They would not be completing my work.

There may be nothing to complete.

They would be continuing the unfolding.

And perhaps this too is part of learning to die.

- I do not need to hold on to what I have gathered.
- I do not need to hold on to what I have given.
- What belongs to Mother Earth can return to Mother Earth.

What has ripened through my life can be offered back to life.

And what happens to it afterwards need not belong to me.

Mother Earth may receive what I borrowed.

Another Pilgrim may receive what I learned.

And when my last breath comes,

I can Go Home.

Section 3 — What We Carry

A human life accumulates things.

- Possessions.
- Responsibilities.
- Roles.
- Expectations.
- Memories.

- Promises.
- Arguments.
- Regrets.
- Stories about ourselves.
- Things we meant to say.
- Things we wish we had not said.
- Things we still hope to do.

Some of these may remain precious.

Some may still need our attention.

Others may have been carried for so long that we have forgotten we are carrying them.

Knowing that one day we will give things back does not mean that we must put everything down now.

There is still life to be lived.

Living lightly does not mean that everything must be discarded.

- It is not a final clearing of the House.
- It is not compulsory forgiveness.
- It is not giving away our possessions because someone has decided that spiritual people should own less.

A person surrounded by possessions may live lightly.

Another with an almost empty room may still be carrying forty years of resentment.

Lightness is not measured by how little remains around us.

Nor does non-clinging mean that nothing should matter.

- I can treasure something without believing that I must possess it forever.
- I can love someone deeply while knowing that neither of us can promise how long we will remain together.
- I can carry a memory because it still matters.
- I can keep something simply because I am not ready to put it down.

Perhaps the question is not:

What must I let go of before I die?

Perhaps the gentler question is:

Do I still need to carry this?

Sometimes Awareness may quietly reveal:

No.

And something can be put down.

But sometimes the answer will be:

Yes.

Then carry it.

Knowing that one day our pilgrimage will end does not mean we have to put everything down before its time.

That too belongs.

I can carry a memory because it still matters.

I can keep something simply because I am not ready to put it down.

The Memories We Carry

Perhaps some of the most enduring things we carry cannot be seen at all.

Memories travel quietly with us.

- A childhood morning.
- The voice of someone we loved.
- A journey.
- A friendship.
- A mistake.
- A moment of kindness we had almost forgotten.
- Something said to us decades ago that somehow remained.
- Some memories bring warmth.
- Others still hurt.

Some change as we grow older.

The event remains the same, but the Pilgrim who remembers it has changed.

- What once seemed like rejection may later be understood differently.
- What once seemed insignificant may become precious.
- What once caused anger may eventually be seen with greater understanding.

And sometimes nothing changes.

The memory still hurts.

That too belongs.

Healing does not require us to tidy our memories before we die.

Nor must every painful memory become a lesson.

Some things happened.

They became part of our pilgrimage.

And they remain with us.

But a memory does not have to occupy the whole House simply because it lives within it.

- We may remember without continually reliving.
- We may treasure without clinging.
- We may carry without being carried by what we carry.

And perhaps some memories become part of what we eventually give.

- A story told to a child.
- A lesson shared with a student.
- A kindness remembered and offered to someone else.
- An experience that slowly ripens into wisdom.

In this way, even memory may enter the movement:

Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…

- Not every memory will.
- Not every memory needs to.
- Some may simply remain ours.

Then return directly to your existing ending:

Perhaps the question is not:

What must I let go of before I die?

Perhaps the gentler question is:

Do I still need to carry this?

Sometimes Awareness may quietly reveal:

No.

And something can be put down.

But sometimes the answer will be:

Yes.

Then carry it.

Knowing that one day we will return everything does not mean we have to return it before its time.

That too belongs.

Section 4 — The People We Love

It may be easier to understand unclinging when we are speaking about possessions.

People are different.

We do not simply put down someone we love.

Nor does unclinging mean becoming distant, indifferent or less loving.

Perhaps it means discovering that **love and clinging are not the same thing.**

I have learned something about this through my relationship with my mother.

When I am with her in Portugal, I give what I can.

- Attention.
- Kindness.
- Care.
- Time.
- Love.

Then I return to London and something changes.

I return to my own life.

- Sometimes I speak to my mother once a week.
- Sometimes more time passes.

I no longer feel that love has to be continually demonstrated through proximity or constant contact.

The distance does not measure the love.

- When I am there, I am there.
- When I am here, I live here.

Perhaps that too is unclinging.

- Not loving less.
- Not abandoning.
- Not forgetting.

Allowing love to breathe.

And I have learned that giving also requires receiving.

I sometimes imagine each of us carrying a bowl.

We give from it.

- Kindness.
- Care.
- Attention.
- Patience.
- Love.

But a bowl cannot only pour.

It also needs to receive.

There is no virtue in continually emptying the bowl.

Caring for ourselves is not necessarily a withdrawal of love from someone else.

Sometimes it is what allows love to remain available.

This becomes especially important when someone we love needs considerable care.

- Love can quietly become duty.
- Duty can become exhaustion.

And exhaustion can make us believe that stepping away, resting or attending to our own life means that we have somehow failed to love.

Perhaps the bowl reminds us otherwise.

I do not have to empty myself in order to prove that I love you.

- I can give when I am able.
- I can rest when I need to.
- I can receive.
- I can allow the bowl to fill again.

And I can love without needing to hold tightly.

Perhaps one day death asks us to face the greatest form of this unclinging.

Someone we love may leave before us.

Or we may leave them.

- There may be grief.
- There may be longing.
- There may be things we still wish we could say.

Acceptance does not remove any of this.

But perhaps love has already given something that separation cannot simply undo.

Something received from another person may continue to live and ripen within us after they are no longer physically beside us.

The Pilgrim may leave.

What we received through loving them may continue to ripen.

And perhaps that is why unclinging does not diminish love.

It allows us to discover that love was never the holding.

Love was in the giving and receiving all along.

What Enters the Bowl

The bowl cannot ripen what it has never received.
And we receive much more than what is given directly to us.
Sometimes something enters the bowl simply because we hear or witness something that makes us pause.
During one of my stays in Portugal, a carer told me about a bedridden woman she was caring for.
According to the carer, the woman's own house had been sold by her daughter, and the woman was left without a home.
My immediate response was:

How can a daughter do that to her own mother?

I could not understand it.
But there was another part of the story.
The carer took the woman into her own home.
She cared for her despite receiving very little financial help.
And so the same story gave me two very different things to sit with.
A daughter who, according to what I had been told, could leave her bedridden mother without a home.
And a woman who was not her daughter who could open her own home and care for her.

Why?

Perhaps that is sometimes where ripening begins.
Not with an answer.
With a question.
We may be tempted to judge one and praise the other.
But that still does not tell us what was happening within either person's House.
I knew only what the carer had told me.

- I did not know the daughter's story.
- I did not know the history of that relationship.
- I did not know what had brought either woman to her actions.

But I could receive what I had heard.
I could place it in the bowl.
And allow the question to remain.

Section 5 - The Unfinished Life

We sometimes speak as though a life should be completed before we leave it.

But history is filled with unfinished work.

History is filled with work that outlived the person who began it.

- **Ramanujan** died at thirty-two, leaving mathematical notebooks whose ideas would occupy other mathematicians for generations.
- **Jane Austen** died leaving *Sanditon* unfinished, its surviving chapters still inviting readers and writers into a story whose ending she never wrote.
- **Antoni Gaudí** died while the Sagrada Família was still being built. Other hands continued what his hands could no longer do.
- **Rosalind Franklin** died at thirty-seven, while the scientific understanding to which her research contributed continued to unfold long after her.

None of these lives needed another twenty years in order for what they had already given to matter.

Perhaps we have misunderstood unfinishedness.

Unfinished does not always mean incomplete.

Sometimes what one Pilgrim leaves becomes the starting place of another.

- A question.
- A fragment.
- A discovery.
- A building.
- An idea.

A trampoline.

One life carries something so far.

Another receives it and takes it somewhere new.

This happens quietly too.

- A grandmother leaves recipes nobody has written down quite correctly.
- A teacher leaves something in a student that the teacher never lives to see.
- A mother or father begins a way of loving that their children carry differently into another generation.
- A gardener plants a tree beneath whose shade they will never sit.

We do not have to witness what grows from everything we give.

And yet others came afterwards.

They received what had been left.

- They questioned it.
- Changed it.
- Added to it.
- Sometimes they took it somewhere its originator could never have imagined.

Perhaps unfinished work is not always something to regret.

It can become a trampoline.

One Pilgrim reaches a certain place and leaves something there.

Another encounters it and begins from somewhere further along.

This is also the movement of Living Wisdom.

Receive. Ripen. Give. Receive.

- What I receive during my lifetime does not belong only to me.
- What ripens in me may become something another Pilgrim receives.
- And what they receive does not have to remain as I gave it.

They may take it further.

I feel this about Atmadeva's Philosophy.

It has emerged through my own pilgrimage.

- I have received from many lives, traditions, experiences and questions.
- I have allowed them to ripen.
- And I have given what has emerged as faithfully as I can.

But I do not need to finish it.

A living philosophy should not be finished.

- Perhaps one day another Pilgrim will encounter something here and see what I could not see.
- Perhaps they will question something I thought I understood.
- Perhaps they will add another path, another metaphor, another way of looking.
- Perhaps they will take the philosophy somewhere I could never have taken it.

That would not diminish what I have written.

It would mean that it remained alive.

Life was never asking you to finish everything.

You carried it as far as you could.

Now someone else may receive it.

There is no failure in leaving life unfinished.

Perhaps a life does not need to finish everything before it is finished.

Section 6 — Not Ready

We may understand death.

We may accept that life and death belong to the same cycle.

We may believe that one day we will Go Home.

And still say:

Not yet.

There is nothing contradictory about this.

- A person may be ninety-five and still want another spring.
- Another conversation.
- Another morning in the Garden.
- Another Christmas with the family.
- Another ordinary cup of tea.

- Someone much younger, facing serious illness, may want another fifty years.

Wanting more life is not a failure to accept death.

The wish to live belongs to life.

But not every Pilgrim will say:

Not yet.

There are times when pain, illness or prolonged suffering may become so great that a person says:

I am ready to go.

Or even:

I want to go.

- We should be careful not to judge these words from the comfort of another person's Garden.
- We do not know what it is like to inhabit their body.
- We do not know the weight of their pain.
- We do not know how long they have been carrying it.

Sometimes the wish to die may arise from suffering that could change with treatment, care, companionship or support.

At other times, a person approaching the natural end of life may simply feel tired.

They may feel that they have lived their life.

That they are ready.

These are not necessarily the same experiences.

We should listen before we interpret.

Nor should readiness for death become another measure of wisdom.

- The Pilgrim who wants more time has not failed to understand death.
- The Pilgrim who feels ready has not necessarily understood it better.
- The Pilgrim who is frightened belongs.
- The Pilgrim who is tired belongs.
- The Pilgrim who wants to stay belongs.
- The Pilgrim who feels ready to leave belongs.

There is no correct feeling to have.

And feelings may change.

- Someone who says *I am ready* today may want more time tomorrow.
- Someone who has been fighting to remain alive may one day become tired of fighting.

The House has its weather even here.

- Fear may arise.
- Peace may arise.
- Anger may arise.
- Hope may arise.

Several may be present together.

The Art of Healing does not tell the Pilgrim what they ought to feel about death.

It meets the Pilgrim where they are.

Understanding death does not mean that we must become peaceful about every part of dying either.

- We may accept that death will come and still fear pain.
- We may worry about becoming dependent.
- We may wonder what the final days will be like.
- We may be frightened of leaving the people we love.
- We may simply not want to go.

All of this can belong.

Atmadeva's Philosophy does not ask the Pilgrim to perform acceptance.

There is no final examination in which we must demonstrate that we have become sufficiently wise, spiritual or detached to die well.

There is no correct way to approach the last breath.

Even the words *Going Home* should not become an instruction.

They are how I have come to understand death within my own philosophy.

- They do not remove the mystery beyond the Horizon.
- Nor do they require anyone to hurry towards it.

For the Pilgrim who is not ready, there is still the Garden.

There are still people to love.

- Things to receive.
- Things that may ripen.
- Things to give.

And perhaps things that will remain unfinished.

For the Pilgrim who feels tired, perhaps there is simply a need to be heard.

- To have pain taken seriously.
- To be cared for.
- To have someone remain beside them without insisting that they should feel differently.

Sometimes there may be something that can still be helped.

Sometimes there may not.

Presence does not always need an answer.

Sometimes it sits beside another Pilgrim.

The last breath will come in its own time.

Until then, one Pilgrim may say:

I want to stay.

Another may say:

I am ready.

And perhaps the deepest kindness is not to decide which one understands life better.

Both are still Pilgrims.

Both are still here.

And perhaps beneath all our different experiences of death lies a simple truth of the human pilgrimage:

We arrived.

We lived.

And one day, we leave.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

You do not have to be ready.

You do not have to be afraid.

You do not have to understand what lies beyond the Horizon.

While you are here, be here.

And when the last breath comes,

Travel Home.


PART V
Returning Home

Chapter 45 — The End of the Pilgrimage



There was a first breath.
There was a life.
And there was a last breath.

The pilgrimage has ended.

- Not everything was finished.
- Not every question was answered.
- Not every wound was healed.
- Not every relationship found resolution.
- Not everything the Pilgrim hoped to do was done.

That does not make the life incomplete.

The Pilgrim carried life as far as life allowed.

And now what was borrowed can be returned.

The body returns to Mother Earth.

The materials from which the House, the Garden and the Lamp took their form return with it.

Nothing needed to be possessed forever.

They were entrusted for a while.

- Loved for a while.
- Tended for a while.
- Lived through for a while.

And now they can be returned.

But not everything that passed through this life waited until the end.

- Kindness had already entered other lives.
- Love had already been given.

- Words had already been spoken.
- Hands had already been held.
- Questions had already been planted.

Living Wisdom had already begun its journey from one Pilgrim to another.

Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…

The Pilgrim does not need to remain for the cycle to continue.

Perhaps somewhere another Pilgrim receives something.

- A sentence.
- A memory.
- A kindness.
- A question.
- A way of seeing.

Perhaps it ripens differently within them.

Perhaps one day they give it again.

The pilgrimage ends.

Life continues.

Mother Earth receives what belongs to her.

- The Garden.
- The House.
- The Lamp.

But throughout this pilgrimage there has always been something we could never completely explain.

The Flame.

I do not know where the Flame came from.

I do not know what happens to it beyond the Horizon.

Atmadeva's Philosophy does not need to turn mystery into certainty at the final page.

Perhaps it is enough to say:

The Garden returns to Mother Earth.

Living Wisdom returns to life.

And the Flame returns to mystery.

Chapter 46 - The Ripening of the Flame Continues



The pilgrimage has ended.
The Garden has been returned.
The House has been returned.
The Lamp has been returned.
But Living Wisdom has already entered life.

Perhaps somewhere another Pilgrim has received a word, a kindness, a question, a story.
Perhaps something will ripen.
Perhaps something will be given again.
Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…
Life continues.
And the Flame?
Here, Atmadeva's Philosophy becomes quiet.
I do not know.

- For some, the Mystery is called God.
- For others, the Source.
- For others still, simply the Great Unknown.

The name matters less than our willingness to recognise that the Mystery remains greater than our words.

- There are things we may explore.
- Things we may question.
- Things we may understand.
- And things before which perhaps we can only become still.

The first breath came.

Life unfolded.

The last breath came.

The Pilgrim travelled Home.
What lies beyond the Horizon?

I do not know.

And perhaps, at the end of *The Art of Healing*, those words are enough.

If this book has offered anything, may it not be certainty.

May it have offered companionship.

- A way of looking.
- A place to pause.
- A House in which to understand ourselves.
- A Garden in which to live.
- And perhaps a little more kindness towards the other Pilgrims we meet along the way.

The Sea remains.

The Sky remains.

The Mystery remains.

And somewhere in the Garden,

Living Wisdom continues to ripen.

The Voyage Home

The Sea is calm.
The waters that once carried the little vessel towards the Harbour now carry it gently Home.
The same vessel.
The same Sea.
The same Flame.

And yet…

something has been gathered along the way.

When the Flame first crossed these waters, its Light held the possibility of experience.

Through that Light, a lifetime of experience became possible.

The House gave those experiences their particular form.

And through living, something may have ripened.

Something we came to call **the nectar of the pilgrimage**.

What ripened from having lived.

A lifetime had passed through the House.

- There had been joy and sorrow.
- Love and loss.
- Fear and courage.
- Hurt and healing.
- Closeness and distance.
- Understanding and confusion.

Some experiences passed almost without trace.

Some became Pictures upon the walls.

Some changed the weather of the House.

Some remained unfinished.

And some ripened.

- Compassion may have ripened.
- Love may have ripened.
- Understanding may have ripened.
- But hurt may also have ripened.
- Fear may have ripened.
- Anger may have ripened.
- Harm may have ripened.

For ripening does not mean that an experience became wise, beautiful or healed.

Ripening simply means that something took form through having been lived.

And through that ripening, perhaps something became distilled.

- Not the event itself.
- Not necessarily the memory.
- Not whether we would have called the experience welcome or unwelcome.

Something subtler.

The nectar of the pilgrimage.

Nectar is not a reward.

- It is not a collection of virtues.
- It does not contain only what we might wish a life to have produced.
- It is simply the distilled essence of what genuinely ripened through living.

Not every experience ripened.

- Some passed.
- Some remained unfinished.
- Some may never have revealed what they left behind.

But something ripened.

Nectar was not what happened to the Pilgrim.

It was what became distilled from what had ripened through having lived.

And perhaps this is what the Flame carries Home.

The little vessel continues across the open Sea.

The Flame looks back only once.

Far in the distance, the Harbour has become a small point upon the Horizon.

- Somewhere beyond it were the Garden.
- The House.
- The Rocking Chair.
- The Lamp.

A lifetime of pilgrimage.

The Flame looks back not with longing, but with gratitude.

Then, gently, it turns once more towards the endless Sea.

There is no urgency.

The Sea already knows the way.

The distant Harbour grows smaller.

The Horizon opens before the little vessel.

And the gentle rhythm of the waves seems strangely familiar.

Almost as though the Sea has been quietly whispering all along:

Welcome Home.

The vessel continues across the quiet waters.

There is nothing left to prove.

Nothing left to possess.

Nothing left to become.

The Flame is the same Flame that began the journey.

But it does not return empty-handed

It carries the nectar of a life that has been lived.

The little vessel travels on.

Towards the Horizon.

Towards Home.

What lies beyond?

The Sea does not answer.

And the Flame does not ask again.

The vessel becomes smaller.

And smaller.

Until eventually it can no longer be seen.

The Sea remains.

The Sky remains.

The Horizon remains.

And beyond the Horizon...

Mystery.

Suggestions for Prayer

A LIVING PRACTICE FOR THE INNER HOUSE

There is no single way to pray. Here are some gentle suggestions.

A Simple Invitation

Opening to Presence

To Be Present
"Help me to be here, in this moment."

To Be Open
"Help me to receive life as it is."

To Be Kind
"Help me to be kind — with myself and with others."

To Be Steady
"Help me to remain steady through what comes."

To Be True
"Help me to live more honestly and with greater clarity."

In Times of Challenge

When Life Feels Difficult

When Overwhelmed
"Help me to pause and find some space within."

When Anxious
"Help me to settle my mind and body."

When Hurt
"Help me to meet this hurt with patience and care."

When Uncertain
"Help me to remain open and not rush the answer."

When Afraid
"Help me to remember that I am held, even in this uncertainty."

In Daily Life

Welcoming the Ordinary

At Meals
"May this food nourish my body, steady my mind and support my life."

With Others
"Help me to meet people with patience, understanding and goodwill."

In My Work
"Help me to bring care, attention and honesty to what I do."

In Transition
"Help me to move through this change with openness and trust."

At Day's End
"Thank you for this day. Help me to rest and release what is complete."

A Deeper Prayer

For Insight and Growth

To Understand
"Help me to see more clearly what is real and what is assumed."

To Grow
"Help me to learn from experience and to grow in wisdom and compassion."

To Let Go
"Help me to release what I no longer need to carry."

To Align
"Help me to live more closely with my deeper values."

To Awaken
"Help me to remember what is most important in my life."

A Prayer of Gratitude

Recognising What Is Already Here

"Thank you for the gift of this life — for the people, the experiences, the lessons and the quiet moments of grace."

The Prayer of Intensity

When Words Become Simple

Help me.

When nothing else comes, these two words are enough.

NOT WORDS, BUT A WAY OF BEING —
A GENTLE OPENING OF THE HEART.

Framework Glossary

Awareness
The capacity to see clearly without immediately reacting. Awareness observes thoughts, emotions, sensations and circumstances before responding. It is the gift that gradually emerges as the Pilgrim learns to build wisely.

Garden
The outer life of the Pilgrim—the world of relationships, work, family, community, responsibilities and daily living. The Garden is where life is expressed and where the fruits of the House become visible.

Great Storms
Life-changing events that cannot simply be welcomed or dismissed like ordinary visitors. They include serious illness, profound loss, trauma and other experiences that permanently reshape the pilgrimage.

Hidden Self
Those aspects of the House that remain unseen, forgotten or unrecognised. The Hidden Self is not wrong or broken; it simply awaits gentle understanding.

House
The inner life of the Pilgrim. The House represents our thoughts, emotions, memories, body, relationships with ourselves and our capacity to understand our inner world.

Inner Flame
The deepest source of love within the House. The Inner Flame is not created through healing; it is gradually revealed as the House becomes quieter and clearer. Its gift is Love.

Inner Turning Path
The practical movement of returning inward during times of difficulty:
Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point

This path does not remove life's storms. It gently changes how the Pilgrim meets them.

Journey of Maturation
The gradual unfolding of human life through five symbolic movements inspired by the five elements:

- Earth – The Pilgrim Learns to Belong
- Fire – The Pilgrim Learns to Build
- Water – The Pilgrim Learns to Ripen
- Air – The Pilgrim Learns to Let Go
- Ether – The Pilgrim Learns to Simply Be

Lamp
The vessel within the House through which the Inner Flame offers its warmth and light. The Lamp belongs to the House; the Flame belongs to a deeper mystery.

LAPPS Philosophy
The five complementary foundations of this framework:

- **L** – Lived Experience

- **A** – Ayurveda
- **P** – Psychology
- **P** – Philosophy
- **S** – Spirituality

Together they offer five ways of understanding and living the pilgrimage.

Mother Earth
A symbolic expression of the natural world that lovingly entrusts the Pilgrim with the Garden, the House and the Lamp for a season. At the end of the pilgrimage, these are gently returned.

Pilgrim
Every human being walking through life. The Pilgrim is not defined by age, culture or belief, but by the shared experience of learning, growing, loving and returning.

Pilgrimage
The whole journey of human life, from birth to the quiet completion of earthly living. It is not measured by achievement, but by the gradual maturation of the House.

Presence
The capacity to be fully here. Presence is the doorway through which the Pilgrim first enters the House. Its gift is Happiness.

Rocking Chair
The place within the Living Room where the Pilgrim quietly sits with experience before responding. It symbolises reflection, stability and the gentle return to the House.

Sea
The vast mystery from which the Pilgrim's journey begins and towards which it ultimately returns. The Sea symbolises the greater mystery of existence that surrounds every pilgrimage.

Stillness
The quiet settling of the House. Stillness allows emotions to soften, understanding to deepen and wisdom to ripen. Its gift is Peace.

Still Point
The deepest ground of the House that remains untouched by life's changing weather. The Still Point is never created; it is remembered. Its gift is Freedom.

Supporting Net
The people, relationships and acts of kindness that hold the Pilgrim during life's greatest storms. Every Pilgrim is held by the Supporting Net, and every Pilgrim is invited, in time, to become part of it.

Visitors
The thoughts, emotions, feelings and inner experiences that come and go throughout the pilgrimage. Visitors are welcomed, understood and allowed to leave in their own time. They are guests within the House; they are not the House itself.

Wisdom
Not knowledge collected, but understanding that has quietly ripened through lived experience. Wisdom is the gentle fruit of a life fully received.

Universal Consciousness — The universal ground of being, symbolised by the Universal Flame. The greater mystery from which Individual Consciousness arises and to which it belongs.
Individual Consciousness — The individual expression of consciousness, symbolised by the Inner Flame. It is not our personality, thoughts, emotions, memories or beliefs. Its Light represents the possibility of individual experience.

Stillness — The inner quiet that emerges when the movements of the mind begin to settle. Stillness allows the Pilgrim to rest in Presence, experience Inner Peace and become more receptive to deeper awareness.

Still Point — The deepest ground of inner Stillness, where the Pilgrim rests beyond the need to react, control or become. It symbolises the recognition of a deeper belonging within the Universal Whole. Its gift is Inner Freedom.

Inner Flame — The symbolic expression of Individual Consciousness within the Pilgrim. Its Light allows experience, while the Inner House gives each experience its particular form. The Inner Flame is not an emotion, personality or inner voice. As the Pilgrim becomes more aware and aligned, the qualities of Inner Love and authentic living may become more recognisable.

The Five Gifts

As the Pilgrim matures, five gifts gradually unfold:

- **Presence → Happiness**
- **Awareness → Joy**
- **Stillness → Peace**
- **Inner Flame → Love**
- **Still Point → Freedom**

These gifts are not achievements. They are quietly revealed as the Pilgrim returns home to the deepest places within.


Paths to Inner Freedom – The Inner-Outer Alignment Map
A living map of how inner and outer life come into alignment through presence, awareness, stillness and the Inner Flame.
The Inner Turning Path
(Path to Reset)
Descent / Return Arc
1. Presence
Arriving and holding the present.
2. Inner Flame
Reconnecting to the inner source.
3. Awareness
Seeing more clearly what is happening within.
4. Stillness
Allowing space to settle and integrate.
5. Still Point
A return to inner clarity and freedom.
The Subtle Path
(Path to Inner Freedom)
Arrival Arc
Presence
The ground of alignment.
Awareness
Seeing what is true.
Stillness
When the field settles.
Inner Flame
Inner love and direction.
Still Point
The quiet centre of freedom.
Inner-Outer Alignment Frame
The Living Inner System
Emotional Self
(Feeling and Responding)
Public Self
(Roles and Appearing)
Hidden Self
(Stored and Waiting)
The Living Garden
(Expression and Relationship)
The Hijacked Voice
(A Shift in Leadership)
Not an emotion, but a shift in inner leadership.
Pressure, Urgency, Continuity.
Two directions: Externalising ("this is about them") / Internalising ("I am the problem").
The Five Doors
(The Capacity to Meet Life)
Closed • Guarded • Busy
Open • Silent
The Living Movement of Alignment
Presence
Inner Happiness
Awareness
Inner Joy
Stillness
Inner Peace
Inner Flame
Inner Love
Still Point
Inner Freedom
The Living Cycle of Alignment
Arrival → Anchor → Door → Walk → Align
Alignment is not the perfection of the self, but the quiet ending of inner division.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Circle of Offering



Wisdom was never meant to be possessed.
It was meant to be received,
allowed to ripen,
and quietly shared.

If this journey has accompanied your own,
you are warmly invited to share a reflection, a story, or simply a few words.

Every reflection, story, and shared word
becomes part of the living conversation
through which wisdom continues its journey.

May what has been received
continue to ripen,
and, in its own time,
become a gift for another pilgrim.

Ubuntu, Ubuntu.
The humanity in me recognises the humanity in you.

Namaskaram. Namaskaram.

My Stillness honours your Stillness.
My Inner Flame bows to your Inner Flame.

Atmadeva Devatma

The Living Wisdom of Arriving

www.TheStillPoint.org.uk

No book can complete your journey.
It can only accompany you for a while.

The rest is written in the quiet moments of your own life.


The Subtle Path of Healing
Philosophy • Psychology • Spirituality • Ayurveda
A compassionate guide to understanding our inner life.
This book explores the many movements of our human experience — our emotions, relationships, challenges and change — offering practical wisdom to live with greater clarity, resilience and kindness.
The Subtle Path
Presence → Awareness → Stillness → Inner Flame → Still Point
Not a staircase to perfection, but a way of living more freely.
The Lapps Lenses
Lived Experience • Ayurveda • Psychology
Philosophy • Spirituality
Ancient wisdom and modern understanding, shared for everyday life.
The Living Wisdom Cycle
Receive → Ripen → Give
What we experience can ripen into wisdom and be offered back to life.
Healing begins, not by fighting our inner life, but by learning to live with understanding.
The Living Wisdom of Arriving
Atmadeva Devatma
TheStillPoint.org.uk