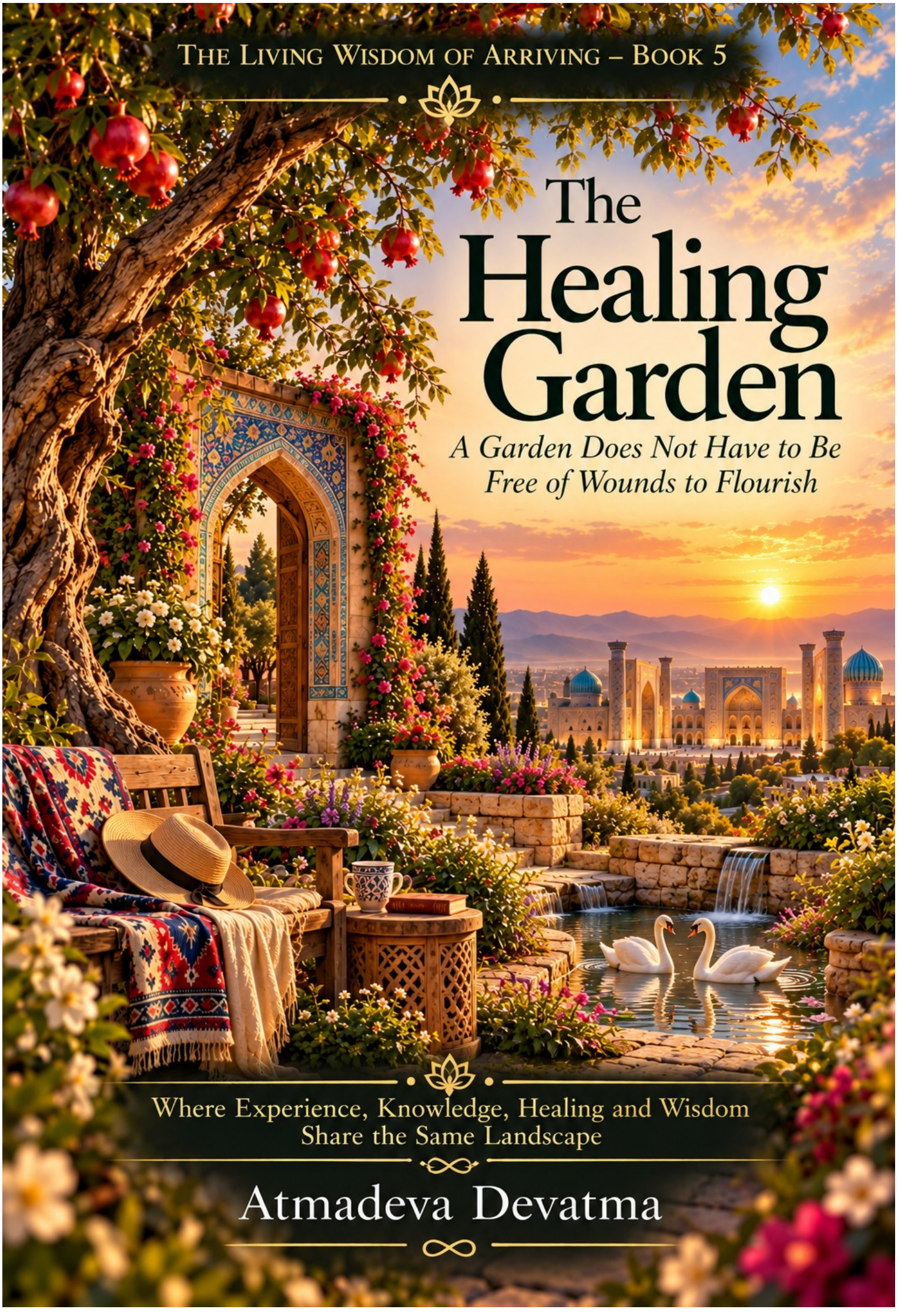

The Living Wisdom of Arriving – Book 5
The Healing Garden
A Garden Does Not Have to Be Free of Wounds to Flourish
Where Experience, Knowledge, Healing and Wisdom Share the Same Landscape
Atmadeva Devatma

Dedication



For Every Pilgrim Who Shares This Garden

This book is dedicated to every Pilgrim who has ever wondered:

Why is it so difficult for us to live together?

To those who have known the warmth of belonging.

And to those who have spent much of their lives searching for a place to call home.

To those who have planted Gardens, watched them grow, and shared their harvest with others.

And to those who have watched their Gardens destroyed by circumstances they never chose.

To those who have raised children in peace.

And to those whose children have learned the sounds of war before the songs of childhood.

To those who have opened their gates to strangers.

And to those who have stood outside, hoping someone would welcome them.

To those who have known friendship across differences of language, culture, faith and tradition.

And to those who have experienced rejection simply because they were born into a different Garden.

To those who have lost someone they love through violence, hatred or conflict.

And to those who continue to carry the quiet hope that one day, their children may inherit a gentler world.

Whatever Garden you come from, you are welcome here.

None of us chose the circumstances of our first breath.

- We did not choose the country into which we were born.
- The language we first heard.
- The traditions that surrounded us.
- The stories our families carried.

Or the conflicts that may already have been unfolding around us.

- Some of us arrived in Gardens where the soil was fertile and the gates were open.
- Others arrived where the ground had been wounded long before their first footsteps.
- Some inherited peace.
- Others inherited fear.
- Some grew surrounded by opportunity.
- Others learned to survive before they had the chance to dream.

And yet, beneath these different beginnings, something remains worthy of recognition.

Every Pilgrim begins a human life.

A life capable of experiencing love and sorrow.

Of knowing kindness and cruelty.

Of forming friendships, carrying memories, and longing for somewhere to belong.

- We may not share the same beliefs.
- We may not understand one another's customs.
- We may disagree deeply about how life should be lived.

And sometimes, the distance between our Gardens may seem too great to cross.

But difference alone need not make us enemies.

Nor does recognising another person's humanity require us to accept the harm they may cause.

Perhaps we can begin with something simpler.

The person beyond the gate is human too.

- Some Gardens are flourishing.
- Some are healing.
- Some are still carrying the wounds of generations.

And some are beginning again after everything familiar has been lost.

- There are Gardens where laughter fills the evening air.
- And Gardens where parents lie awake, listening for sounds they hope their children will never hear.
- There are places where people gather freely beneath the trees.
- And places where even gathering together requires courage.

We do not need to pretend these Gardens are the same.

They are not.

But perhaps we can recognise that no Garden exists entirely apart from the wider world.

What happens in one may eventually reach another.

- A kindness may cross a boundary.
- So may fear.
- So may hatred.
- And so may the hope for peace.

This book is dedicated especially to those who have suffered because human beings could not find a way to live together.

- To the children who never had the opportunity to grow.
- To the families who have been separated.
- To those who have lost their homes, their communities, or the familiar landscapes of their childhood.
- To those who have worked quietly to bring people together.

And to those who, despite everything they have witnessed, have not entirely lost their capacity for kindness.

- May these pages offer a little companionship as we continue our shared pilgrimage.
- May we learn to recognise the humanity of those whose lives are different from our own.
- May we find the courage to protect what is precious without forgetting what is human.

And may we remember that the Garden we inherit is not always the Garden we must leave behind.

We did not choose the Garden into which we were born.

But together, we influence the Garden we leave behind.

Ubuntu, Ubuntu
The humanity in me recognises the humanity in you.

Namaskaram, Namaskaram
My Inner Flame bows to your Inner Flame.
May our Gardens meet in kindness and flourish together.

— Atmadeva Devatma

Copyright
© 2026 Atmadeva Devatma

This work is offered freely in the spirit of shared wisdom.

You are welcome to read, copy, share, translate or distribute this work in any form, provided that the meaning of the work is respected and the author is acknowledged.

There is no need to seek permission to share these pages in this spirit.

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 Garden

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.

But life gradually introduced another kind of mathematics.

One in which relationships could not always be measured, differences could not always be resolved, and understanding did not necessarily arrive through reasoning alone.

A question began to unfold:

What does it mean to live alongside one another?

Not merely to share the same world, but to recognise that each person carries an Inner House and tends an Outer Garden.

Some Gardens are flourishing. Others are struggling. Most are doing both.

And no Garden exists entirely alone.

The classroom offered early glimpses of this. So did friendships, family, relationships, caring for others, travel, encounters with strangers, and the quiet observations of ordinary life.

Gradually, another understanding began to ripen.

We do not simply live in the world. We help shape the world in which others must live.

Our words, choices, silences and actions may reach further than we realise.

A little kindness may nourish a Garden we never visit again.

An unkind word may leave an echo long after it has been spoken.

And sometimes, without knowing it, we become part of another Pilgrim's healing.

Different traditions offered different windows through which to explore this living landscape: philosophy, psychology, Ayurveda, Yoga and spirituality.

Yet lived experience remained the ground beneath them all.

What mattered was not simply whether we understood compassion, belonging or forgiveness, but how these might find expression in everyday life.

And life continued to offer its quieter lessons.

To recognise difference without needing to remove it.

To offer kindness without expecting its return.

To allow healing and ripening without demanding that either be hurried.

To recognise that flourishing need not wait until every wound has healed.

Writing became another part of this inquiry.

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.

Yet companionship does not mean walking another's path.

A companion may help us notice another window, question an assumption, or see a familiar landscape differently.

But the living, the choosing, the healing and the giving remain with the Pilgrim.

Perhaps *The Healing Garden* has followed this same understanding.

It was not planted according to a finished design.

Some paths appeared only after others had been walked. Some ideas needed tending. Others needed to rest. And a few were allowed to fall away.

The Garden has grown through living, ripened through reflection, and flourished through the willingness to keep learning.

And perhaps that is enough.

Not to leave behind a perfect Garden, but one in which another Pilgrim may find a little shelter, nourishment, understanding or companionship.

For what we receive may one day become what we give.

And what we give may continue growing long after we have walked on.

The inquiry continues.

Ubuntu, Ubuntu
The humanity in me recognises the humanity in you.

Namaskaram, Namaskaram
My Inner Flame bows to your Inner Flame.
May our Gardens meet in kindness and flourish together.

— **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 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.

The Living Wisdom of *Arriving*

Table of Contents

Part I — Understanding

The Pilgrim and the Living Landscape

Understanding the journey we share

Welcome to Your Garden

Chapter 1 - The Journey of Flames

Chapter 2 - The Living Landscapes

Chapter 3 - The Journey of Knowledge

Part II — Belonging

The Gardens We Share

From relationships to mankind

Chapter 4 - The Garden of Relationship

Chapter 5 - The Family Garden

Chapter 6 - The Community Garden

Chapter 7 - The National Garden

Chapter 8 - The World Gardens

Part III — Confronting

The Gardens of Judgement and Harm

The Gift of Stillness

Chapter 9 - The Garden of Judgement

Chapter 10 - What We Carry Forward

Chapter 11- Beyond Good and Bad

Chapter 12 - What Human Beings Become Capable Of

Chapter 13 - When the Pilgrim Chooses Another Path

Chapter 14 - When Harm Becomes Collective

Chapter 15 — Why Do We Fight?

Chapter 16 - From One Pilgrim to Mankind

Part IV — *Cultivating*

The Living Garden

Healing, ripening, nourishing and flourishing

Chapter 17 — Tending the Living Garden

Chapter 18 - What Are We Cultivating?

Chapter 19- The Fruits of Ripening

Chapter 20 — The Garden of Memory

Chapter 21 — The Healing Garden: The Continuing Art of Living

Part V — Remembering

The Garden Beyond Our Time

Loss, remembrance and the continuing journey

Chapter 22 — When the Gardens Fall Silent

Chapter 23 — The Flames Returning Home

Chapter 24 - When the Flame Has Departed

Supporting Prayer

Framework Glossary

A Circle of Offering

Pause here for a moment.

You are standing before a Garden Gate. Beyond it, life is already unfolding.

Some paths are familiar. Others have yet to be discovered.

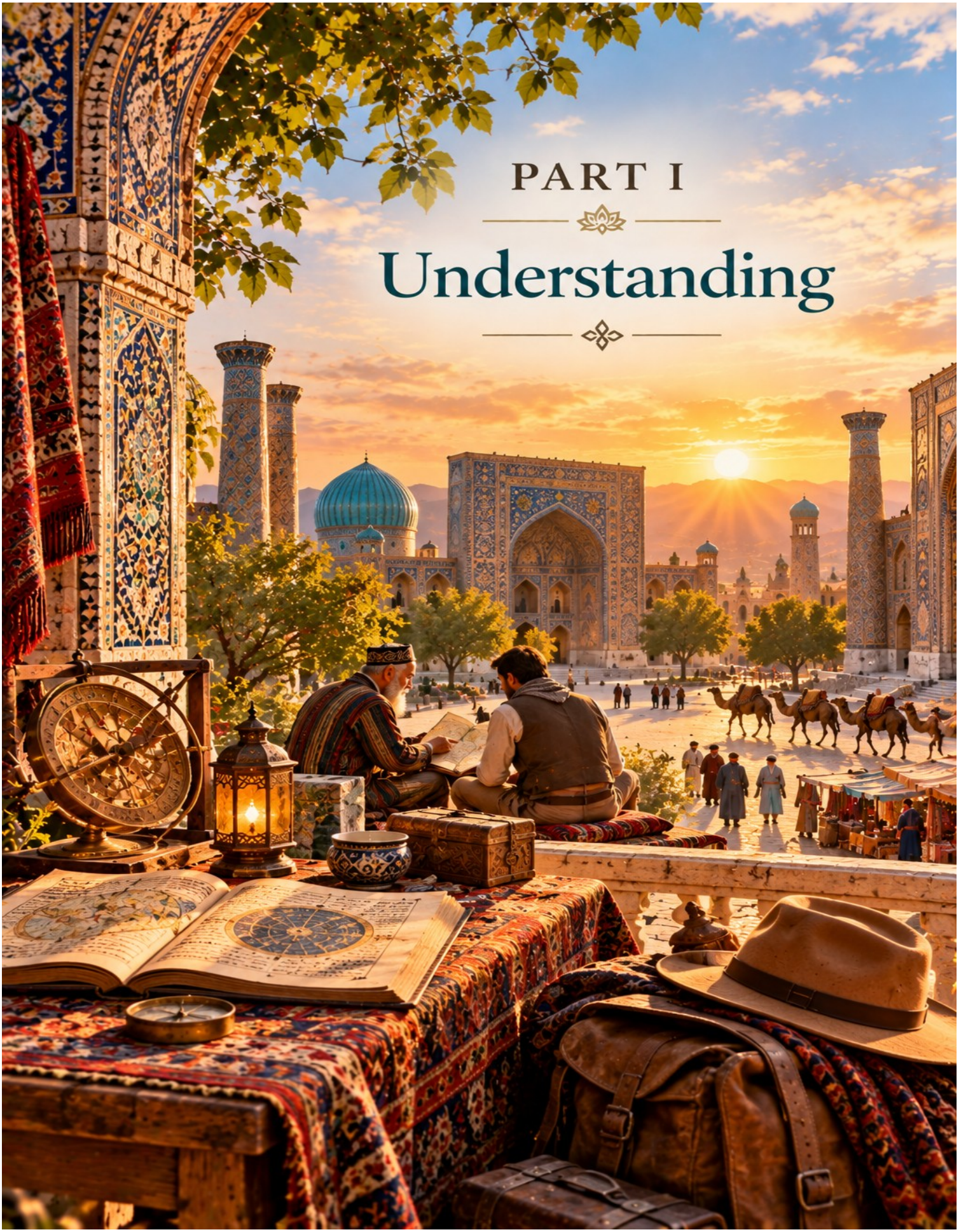
There is nothing to rush, nothing to repair, and

no Garden that needs to be perfect.

Simply arrive.

When you are ready, open the gate.




PART I
Understanding

Welcome to Your Garden



The Gate is open.

Whether this is your first encounter with *The Living Wisdom of Arriving*, or you have walked through other landscapes in this series, I am grateful that you are here.

Every Garden has a story.

Some paths have been walked many times. Others are still forming.

There are places where life flourishes, places where healing is quietly taking place, and corners that have been waiting for attention.

And there are other Pilgrims.

Some have walked beside us for years. Others enter our lives briefly, leaving something we may only understand much later.

The Garden is not simply the world around us.

It is the life we participate in — through our relationships, choices, encounters, communities and the traces we leave behind.

Within every Pilgrim is an Inner House.

Beyond every House is a Garden.

And neither exists entirely alone.

You do not need to know every path before entering.

Nor must your Garden be ready, orderly or flourishing.

Simply arrive.

The gate is open.

And life is already growing.

Why This Pilgrimage?

- We spend much of our lives learning how to make our way through the world.
- We learn to work, communicate, build relationships, care for others and find our place within families and communities.

Yet we are not always shown how deeply our lives touch one another.

- A word may offer shelter.
- A silence may create distance.
- A small act of kindness may nourish someone long after the encounter has ended.
- And sometimes, without intending to, we may become part of another person's suffering.

The Healing Garden invites us to explore this shared landscape.

- Not to judge the Gardens of others.
- Not to make every relationship harmonious.
- Not to remove every difference.

But to become more aware of how we live alongside one another.

- Every Pilgrim carries a different history.
- Every Garden has its own conditions.

What nourishes one may not nourish another. What feels like shelter to one may feel like confinement to someone else.

And even within the same Garden, different things may be happening.

One part may be healing. Another ripening. Another nourishing new growth. And another already flourishing.

These movements need not wait for one another.

The Garden does not have to become perfect before life can continue.

Nor do we need to understand everyone before learning to live beside them.

Sometimes, recognising our differences is itself an act of kindness.

This pilgrimage is an invitation to live more consciously within the Garden we share.

The LAPPS Lenses — Five Ways of Seeing

Every Garden may be seen through different windows.

The **LAPPS Lenses** bring together five ways of exploring human experience.

- **Lived Experience** keeps us close to life itself — the encounters, relationships and ordinary moments through which understanding gradually ripens.
- **Ayurveda** invites us to recognise the relationship between the individual, daily rhythms, nourishment and the conditions that support wellbeing.

- **Philosophy** encourages us to question assumptions, explore differences and consider how we might live wisely alongside one another.
- **Psychology** helps us understand patterns of behaviour, relationships, emotions and the ways our inner lives influence our outer encounters.
- **Spirituality** opens another window towards compassion, belonging, Stillness and the deeper questions of our shared humanity.

No single lens reveals the whole Garden.

Each offers something.

Sometimes one helps us understand a particular encounter. Sometimes another allows us to see what we previously overlooked.

And sometimes, we may put every lens down and simply look.

The purpose is not to explain every Garden, but to become more curious about the life growing within it.

The Living Landscape

This pilgrimage 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** represents the life we carry within — our thoughts, feelings, memories and the quieter movements of our inner world.
- The **Garden** represents our outer life — the relationships, communities, encounters and environments in which we participate.
- The **Harbour** reminds us of the thresholds where lives meet, separate or change direction.
- The **Sea** opens towards the wider mysteries and uncertainties of life.
- The **Horizon** holds possibilities not yet reached.
- And the **Sky** invites us to widen our perspective beyond the immediate landscape.

Together, they form a Living Landscape.

But the Garden is not merely a place in which things happen to us.

We are also gardeners.

- Sometimes we plant.
- Sometimes we tend.
- Sometimes we receive what others have grown.
- And sometimes, despite our care, things do not flourish as we hoped.

We cannot control every season, every visitor or every outcome.

Yet our presence within the Garden still matters.

A Garden may be shaped by many hands, including those we never meet.

And what grows there may continue long after we have walked away.

Before We Enter the Garden

There is no prescribed way to walk through these pages.

- You may follow the paths in order.
- You may pause beside an idea.
- You may return to a familiar place and discover that it looks different now.

Some reflections may speak immediately.

Others may rest quietly, like seeds waiting for their season.

Allow them to ripen.

You do not need to agree with everything you encounter.

Nor must every question find an answer.

- Notice what resonates.
- Notice what challenges you.
- Notice what changes when you look again.

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

The Sahachari is neither guide nor authority. It offers companionship through questions, reflections and possibilities.

You remain free to receive, question, adapt or leave them behind.

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

Above all, this Garden does not ask you to become a perfect gardener.

It does not ask you to heal every wound, resolve every conflict or make every relationship flourish.

It invites you to notice the life you are already living alongside others.

- To recognise what you receive.
- To allow understanding to ripen.

And, when the moment arrives, perhaps to give something back.

The Garden is already alive.
Other Pilgrims are walking their paths.
And somewhere, something is growing.

One step is enough.

Arrive.

And enter.

Chapter 1 — The Journey of Flames



Across a vast Sea, countless vessels are travelling.

- Some are large.
- Some small.
- Some strong.
- Some fragile.
- Some move swiftly across the water.

Others travel slowly.

Some appear built for difficult seas.

Others seem delicate against even the smallest wave.

No two vessels are quite the same.

And within each one,

a Flame is being carried.

- One Flame.
- One vessel.
- One crossing.

The vessels are different.
The journeys are different.

But the Flames burn the same.

- The Flame does not steer.

- It does not choose the vessel in which it travels.
- It does not choose the Sea.
- It does not choose the weather.

It is carried.

The Crossing

The Sea is never entirely predictable.

- There are calm waters and restless waters.
- Gentle winds and fierce winds.
- Clear skies and heavy clouds.
- There is rain.
- Fog.
- Great waves.
- Long periods when almost nothing seems to move.
- There are currents that carry a vessel forward.
- Others that carry it somewhere unexpected.

One vessel may travel beneath clear skies while another, somewhere across the same Sea, is passing through a storm.

- Some crossings are gentle.
- Some are turbulent.
- Some are long.
- Some are brief.

The conditions are different.

The vessels are different.

The journeys are different.

The Flame remains the Flame.

The Flame

Within every vessel, the same Flame burns.

The vessel may rise upon a wave and fall again.

- The wind may change direction.
- The current may strengthen.
- The Sea may become rough.
- The vessel may be shaken.

But the Flame does not become another Flame.

It remains what it is.

The Sea may change the journey.

The weather may leave its marks upon the vessel.

But neither determines the nature of the Flame.

For now, the Flame simply travels.

- It does not need to understand the Sea.
- It does not need to know how far remains.
- It does not know what waits beyond the Horizon.

There is only the crossing.

Different Journeys

Some vessels travel almost directly towards the shore.

Others wander.

Some are carried far from the course they seemed to be following.

Some become damaged and continue.

Some are battered by storms and somehow remain afloat.

Some cross gentle waters.

And some vessels never reach the shore.

Their crossing ends upon the Sea.

Not every Flame reaches the Harbour.

Not every journey has the same length.

Not every vessel meets the same weather.

There is no single crossing.

There are countless crossings.

Countless vessels.

Countless Flames.

Different journeys.

The same Flame.

The Harbour

And then, for some, something changes.

Beyond the movement of the Sea, a Harbour appears.

The vessel moves closer.

The shore comes into view.

The crossing that has carried the Flame begins to end.

The vessel enters the Harbour.

It has carried the Flame as far as it can.

And now— the Flame arrives.

- The Harbour does not ask what kind of vessel carried it.
- It does not ask whether its crossing was calm or difficult.
- It does not compare its journey with another.

It simply receives the Flame.

And as the Flame arrives, the Harbour offers its first greeting:

Ubuntu, Ubuntu

I recognise you.

- No judgement.
- No comparison.
- Only recognition.

The Flame has arrived.

The Inner House

Beyond the Harbour stands a House.

The Flame enters.

For the first time since crossing the Sea, it is no longer travelling.

Within the House, a place awaits it.

A lamp.

The Flame is gently homed within the lamp and sheltered by a glass shade.

And there it burns.

- The same Flame that crossed the Sea.
- The same Flame that travelled through calm waters and storms.
- The same Flame that arrived at the Harbour.

Nothing has been added to the Flame.

Nothing has been taken away.

The Flame remains the Flame.

But something is different now.

The Flame is no longer travelling within a vessel.

It is living within a House.

And between the Flame and the House around it there is a Shade.

For now, the glass is clear.

The Flame shines through it easily.

There are no marks upon it.

- No colours.
- No traces.
- No stories.

Those will come later.

For now, there is simply a House, a clear glass Shade,

and within it— **the Flame.**

The journey across the Sea has ended. Another journey is about to begin.

Chapter 2 — The Living Landscapes



Every Pilgrim moves through a Living Landscape.

- There are Houses and Gardens.
- Rivers and Estuaries.
- Harbours and Seas.
- Horizons beneath an open Sky.

And through them all—

Life moves.

Let us enter the Landscape and see what we find.

Section 1 - Many Houses

Every Pilgrim carries a House.

It is the place within us where our inner life unfolds.

Within its rooms live thoughts, feelings, memories, questions, hopes and fears.

- Some rooms are familiar.
- Others we rarely enter.
- Some windows stand open.
- Others have been closed for a long time.

And every House has been formed differently.

One Pilgrim may have grown within a House filled with affection and encouragement.

- Another may have learned early to protect themselves.
- One may have been taught to speak.
- Another to remain silent.
- One may trust easily.
- Another may approach the world cautiously.
- One may feel at home within themselves.
- Another may still be discovering what home means.

And so the Houses we carry influence how we meet the world beyond them.

- The same words may reassure one Pilgrim and unsettle another.
- The same silence may feel peaceful to one and uncomfortable to another.
- The same invitation may awaken curiosity in one and hesitation in another.

Because we do not meet life only as it appears before us.

We also meet it through the House from which we are looking.

Many Ways Through the House

For one Pilgrim:

Restlessness → Noticing → Presence → Stillness → Peace

For another:

Confusion → Questioning → Understanding → Acceptance → Clarity

For another:

Wounding → Protection → Awareness → Trust → Opening

For another:

Expectation → Pressure → Questioning → Choice → Freedom

For another:

Solitude → Reflection → Knowing → Contentment → Home

None is a rule.

A House does not tell us how a life must unfold.

It simply reminds us that every Pilgrim meets the world from somewhere within.

And eventually every House has a front door.

Beyond it— **a Garden.**

Section 2 - Many Gardens

Beyond every House lies a Garden.

The Garden is where the Pilgrim meets life.

- Here we love.
- We work.
- We care.
- We disagree.
- We celebrate.
- We grieve.
- We create.
- We share.

We meet family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and strangers.

The Garden is ours.

But we do not live there alone.

Beyond its boundaries are other Gardens.

And every Garden has grown differently.

- Some have been carefully tended.
- Some have known long seasons of neglect.
- Some are full of companionship.
- Some offer solitude.
- Some have wide open gates.
- Others are carefully guarded.
- Some contain plants carried from generations before us.
- Others contain new growth that no previous generation planted.

And no Garden remains unchanged.

- People enter.
- People leave.
- Relationships deepen.
- Relationships loosen.
- Children grow.
- Friendships appear.
- Families change.
- Communities form.
- Loss arrives.
- Love arrives.

Life keeps moving.

When Gardens Meet

When two Pilgrims meet, two Gardens meet.

Each brings something of the House from which they came.

- Their memories.
- Their expectations.
- Their ways of loving.
- Their ways of protecting themselves.
- Their customs.
- Their assumptions.
- Their hopes.
- Their wounds.
- Their wisdom.

Sometimes the meeting is easy.

- Something in one Garden nourishes something in the other.
- Sometimes there is misunderstanding.
- Sometimes one Garden asks too much of another.
- Sometimes boundaries are needed.
- Sometimes a gate that has remained closed begins slowly to open.

- And sometimes two Gardens simply grow differently.

Neither has to become the other.

Many Ways Through the Garden

For one Pilgrim:

Meeting → Friendship → Trust → Companionship → Belonging

For another:

Attraction → Love → Commitment → Partnership → Family

For another:

Expectation → Pressure → Questioning → Boundary → Freedom

For another:

Difference → Misunderstanding → Listening → Understanding → Respect

For another:

Wounding → Distance → Reflection → Acceptance → Peace

For another:

Solitude → Presence → Contentment → Encounter → Companionship

None is a rule.

- Not every friendship becomes companionship.
- Not every relationship remains.
- Not every difference needs to be resolved.
- Not every ending is a failure.

The Garden does not ask every Pilgrim to grow the same flowers.

It asks only that we notice what we are growing—

and what our Garden may be bringing into the Gardens of others.

And while all this is happening, something is continually moving through the Garden.

- Plans change.
- Conversations interrupt us.
- People need us.
- Unexpected things arrive.
- Ordinary days refuse to unfold exactly as we imagined.

Through every Garden runs— **a River.**

Section 3 - Many Rivers

Through every Garden flows a River.

The River is the movement of everyday life.

- Morning becomes afternoon.
- Monday becomes Tuesday.
- Meals are prepared.
- Messages arrive.
- Work waits.

- Children need collecting.
- Someone telephones.
- Plans change.
- A train is delayed.
- A conversation lasts longer than expected.
- Something we intended to do today quietly becomes something we will do tomorrow.

Much of a human life happens here.

Not in the great turning points.

Not in the moments we will remember forever.

But in the countless ordinary days between them.

And every Pilgrim has a River.

Different Currents

Some Rivers move quickly.

- Days fill before they have properly begun.
- One task follows another.
- The Pilgrim may barely notice where the day has gone.

Other Rivers move slowly.

- There may be space.
- Waiting.
- Routine.
- Long stretches in which very little seems to change.

And the same River does not always keep the same pace.

- There are busy seasons.
- Quiet seasons.
- Unexpected bends.
- Obstacles.
- Periods when the current seems to carry us effortlessly.
- And periods when every movement seems to require effort.

The Pilgrim cannot control the River completely.

But neither is the Pilgrim helpless within it.

- We can steer.
- We can paddle.
- We can pause.
- We can choose one bank rather than another.
- We can sometimes swim against the current when something matters deeply.
- And we can notice when we are exhausting ourselves by fighting a current that does not need to be fought.

Perhaps navigating the River is partly learning the difference.

Many Ways Along the River

For one Pilgrim:

Routine → Disruption → Adjustment → New Rhythm → Flow

For another:

Busyness → Exhaustion → Pause → Reordering → Ease

For another:

Resistance → Struggle → Awareness → Acceptance → Flow

For another:

Routine → Attention → Presence → Appreciation → Gratitude

For another:

Obstacle → Frustration → Patience → Adaptation → Continuing

For another:

Opportunity → Uncertainty → Choice → Movement → Discovery

None is a rule.

- Sometimes we move with the current.
- Sometimes we need to change direction.
- Sometimes resistance tells us something important.
- Sometimes acceptance does.

Wisdom is not simply—

Go with the flow.

It is learning to notice the River we are actually in.

Rivers Beside Rivers

And our River does not flow alone.

Every day, it crosses the lives of other Pilgrims.

- One person may be rushing while another needs time.
- One may want to talk while another needs quiet.
- One may be beginning their day while another is already exhausted by theirs.
- One may be celebrating while another is grieving.

For a while, two Rivers may flow easily beside one another.
At other times, their currents may pull in different directions.
This is part of ordinary life.
We do not always need to make another Pilgrim's River flow at our pace.
Sometimes it is enough to recognise— **their current is not mine.**

And occasionally, Rivers that have travelled through very different landscapes begin to approach one another.

- Different histories.
- Different cultures.
- Different traditions.
- Different beliefs.

- Different ways of living.

The waters begin to mingle.

The familiar banks widen.

And the Pilgrim enters— **the Estuary.**

Section 4 - Many Estuaries

The Estuary — Where Different Waters Meet

Every River has travelled through its own Landscape.

It has passed familiar banks, gathered stories along the way and moved through places it has come to know.

Then, as it approaches the Sea, the River begins to widen.

Its waters divide into channels, opening like the fingers of an outstretched hand.

- Each finger reaches in its own direction.
- Each channel follows its own course.

And here, at the Estuary, different waters meet.

So too do Pilgrims.

- One arrives from a Garden where affection is expressed openly.
- Another comes from a Garden where love is shown through quiet acts of care.
- One has grown among familiar customs and traditions.
- Another has travelled through different languages, beliefs and ways of living.

What feels ordinary to one may seem unfamiliar to the other.

A gesture intended as respect may be understood differently.

A custom that one Pilgrim has never questioned may surprise another.

Even the same words may carry different meanings.

They have arrived by different Rivers.

And now, for a moment, their waters meet.

When Waters Meet

Some encounters begin with curiosity.

- A Pilgrim hears an unfamiliar language and wants to learn a word.
- Someone is invited to share a meal prepared in a way they have never known.
- A conversation opens a Window onto another way of seeing.

There may be laughter, discovery and the pleasure of finding something familiar within what first appeared different.

Other encounters are less comfortable.

- A gesture is misunderstood.
- A belief is questioned.
- One Pilgrim feels judged; the other feels unheard.

The atmosphere changes.

- Sometimes we retreat towards the familiar banks of our own River.
- Sometimes we try to persuade the other Pilgrim to see as we see.

- Sometimes we listen long enough to understand something we had not considered before.
- And sometimes we leave the Estuary still disagreeing.

The Estuary does not require agreement.

Nor does it ask one River to become another.

Its waters can meet without having travelled the same course.

Its Pilgrims can encounter one another without surrendering their own ways of seeing.

Yet meeting is not always easy.

Waters may mingle, resist or move alongside one another for a time.

What happens at the Estuary cannot be decided before the encounter.

Perhaps that is its invitation.

Not to become the same.

Not to decide in advance what the other Pilgrim must be.

But to arrive with enough openness to discover what happens when different worlds meet.

Sometimes, it begins simply by extending a hand.

Many Ways Through the Estuary

For one Pilgrim:

Difference → Curiosity → Encounter → Learning → Enrichment

For another:

Difference → Uncertainty → Listening → Understanding → Respect

For another:

Tradition → Encounter → Questioning → Ripening → Renewal

For another:

Difference → Misunderstanding → Tension → Conversation → Reconciliation

For another:

Difference → Pressure → Boundary → Distance → Peace

For another:

Encounter → Disagreement → Respect → Continuing → Difference

None is a rule.

- Not every encounter produces agreement.
- Not every difference needs to disappear.
- Not every meeting changes us.
- And not everything we encounter needs to be carried onwards.

The Pilgrim can listen without surrendering discernment.

- We can learn from another Garden without abandoning our own.
- We can respect another River without having to enter its current.

Perhaps this is one of the gifts of the Estuary.

It allows us to discover that the familiar is not always universal.

Estuaries Within Estuaries

Some Estuaries appear between two people.

Others appear within families.

- A child grows into a world different from that of a parent.
- Generations meet.
- Traditions are inherited, questioned, adapted or released.

Other Estuaries appear between communities.

- Cultures meet.
- Languages mingle.
- Customs travel.
- Ideas cross boundaries.

And sometimes entire nations become Estuaries where many histories, identities and ways of life live beside one another.

The larger the Estuary becomes, the more currents may be present.

- Some mingle easily.
- Some remain distinct.
- Some pull against one another.

The question is not whether difference exists.

It does.

The question becomes:

How do we meet difference?

And eventually, life brings every Pilgrim to moments when something familiar is ending and something else is about to begin.

The River has brought us as far as it can.

Before us lies unfamiliar water.

We have arrived at— **a Harbour**.

Section 5 - Many Harbours

Every Pilgrim arrives at Harbours.

A Harbour appears when one part of life is ending and another is about to begin.

We may still see the land from which we have come.

But another journey is waiting.

- A child prepares for school.
- A young person leaves home.
- Someone begins a new job.
- Two people prepare for marriage.
- A family moves to another country.
- Working life approaches retirement.

Sometimes we choose the Harbour.

Sometimes we have been moving towards it for years.

Sometimes we arrive unexpectedly.

- A relationship ends.
- A job disappears.
- Illness changes what is possible.
- Someone we love dies.

Suddenly, the familiar journey has reached a threshold.

Between Arrival and Departure

Harbours are unusual places.

We may be arriving and departing at the same time.

- The student arriving at university is also leaving something behind.
- The person beginning retirement is also ending a working life.
- The couple preparing for marriage are beginning something together while leaving behind something of their separate lives.
- Even a long-awaited beginning may contain an ending.

And so the Harbour may hold many Visitors at once.

- Excitement.
- Sadness.
- Fear.
- Relief.
- Hope.
- Grief.
- Anticipation.
- Uncertainty.

There is no contradiction in this.

A Pilgrim can be ready to leave and still be sad to go.

We can welcome what is beginning while grieving what is ending.

Many Harbours, Many Pilgrims

Even when two Pilgrims stand at the same Harbour, they may not experience it in the same way.

On a child's first day at school, the child may be moving through:

Home → Curiosity → Separation → Discovery → Belonging

while the parent may be moving through:

Protecting → Preparing → Letting Go → Trusting → Watching

One Harbour.

Two Pilgrims.

Two arcs.

At marriage, one Pilgrim may experience:

Love → Commitment → Joining → Adjustment → Partnership

while another may experience:

Independence → Sharing → Vulnerability → Trust → Companionship

Again—

One Harbour.
Different journeys.
Many Ways Through the Harbour

For one Pilgrim:

Ending → Letting Go → Waiting → Crossing → Beginning

For another:

Opportunity → Excitement → Preparation → Departure → Adventure

For another:

Loss → Grief → Acceptance → Hope → New Life

For another:

Work → Completion → Retirement → Reorientation → New Rhythm

For another:

Familiar → Departure → Migration → Arrival → Belonging

For another:

Diagnosis → Shock → Adjustment → Preparation → Continuing

None is a rule.

- Some Pilgrims remain at the Harbour for a long time.
- Others leave quickly.
- Some departures are celebrated.
- Others are resisted.
- Some beginnings are chosen.
- Others arrive without invitation.

There is no correct amount of time to stand between what has been and what is coming.

The Harbour gives us somewhere to pause.

- To recognise what is ending.
- To receive what is beginning.
- To prepare, where preparation is possible.

But preparation can only take us so far.

Eventually the boat leaves.
The familiar shore begins to recede.
What we imagined from the Harbour must now be lived.
We cannot know every wave ahead.
We cannot know exactly what this new chapter will bring.
The Pilgrim has entered— **the Sea.**

Section 6 - Many Seas

Beyond the Harbour lies the Sea.

At the Harbour, we could prepare.

We could make plans.

Pack what we thought we might need.

Ask questions.

Imagine what might lie ahead.

But once the boat leaves the shore, something changes.

We are no longer preparing for the journey.

We are living it.

The Sea is uncertainty.

Not necessarily danger.

Not necessarily difficulty.

Simply— **not knowing.**

- A child begins school.
  We cannot know the friendships they will make.
- A couple marries.
  They cannot know every season their relationship will encounter.
- Someone begins a new career.
  They cannot know where it will eventually lead.
- A family moves to another country.
  They cannot know whether that unfamiliar place will one day feel like home.
- A Pilgrim begins treatment.
  Neither Pilgrim nor doctor can know everything that will follow.

The Harbour allowed preparation.

The Sea asks us to live beyond what preparation can guarantee.

Different Seas

Not every Sea is stormy.

Some journeys begin beneath clear skies.

The wind is favourable.

The Pilgrim moves easily.

Others encounter rough water almost immediately.

Plans change.

Expectations meet reality.

Something unexpected appears.

And sometimes the weather changes halfway across.

The journey we thought we were making becomes another journey altogether.

This is not necessarily failure.

It is the nature of sailing where the whole voyage cannot be seen.

Pilgrims on the Same Sea

Two Pilgrims may even set sail together.

- A marriage begins.
- A family migrates.
- Two friends begin a project.
- Parents raise a child.
- Colleagues enter a new workplace.

They may share the same boat—

but they do not necessarily experience the same Sea.

- One may feel excitement where another feels apprehension.
- One may want to move quickly while another needs time.
- One may see possibility while another sees risk.
- One may be ready to change course while another wants to continue.

Sharing a voyage does not erase the Pilgrim.

Together does not mean identical.

Many Journeys

For one Pilgrim:

Invitation → Courage → Crossing → Discovery → Return

For another:

Calling → Journey → Encounter → Maturity → Homecoming

For another:

The Familiar → Curiosity → Exploration → Challenge → Discovery

For another:

Loss → Waiting → Acceptance → Renewal → Gratitude

For another:

Wonder → Learning → Service → Wisdom → Returning

And for another:

Certainty → Change → Uncertainty → Adaptation → Trust

None is a rule.

Some journeys lead where we expected.

Others do not.

Some bring us home.

Others reveal that home has changed.

Some give us answers.

Others leave us with better questions.

And some may not reveal their meaning at all.

The Sea does not promise the Pilgrim an outcome.

Nor does it require us to pretend that uncertainty is comfortable.

It asks only that we learn to navigate what cannot be completely known.

- We watch the conditions.
- We adjust the sails.

- We change direction when necessary.
- We recognise what lies within our hands—

and what does not.

Then, occasionally, we lift our eyes from the water immediately before us.

Beyond the next wave, something appears.

- It does not tell us where the voyage will end.
- It does not promise what we will find.

It simply reminds us that what we can presently see is not everything that may become possible.

Across every Sea lies— **a Horizon.**

Section 7 - Many Horizons

Every Pilgrim has a Horizon.

It is always there— at the edge of what can presently be seen.

- The Horizon does not tell us what will happen.
- It does not promise that what lies ahead will be better.
- It does not predict where the journey will lead.

It simply leaves room for— **possibility.**

- A child cannot see the adult they may become.
- A student cannot see where learning may eventually take them.
- Two people beginning a life together cannot see every season they may share.
- Someone starting again cannot know what may grow from the new beginning.

The view we have today is never the whole view.

Different Horizons

Because Pilgrims stand in different places, they see different Horizons.

What appears possible to one may not yet be visible to another.

- One Pilgrim may see several paths ahead.
- Another may see only the next step.
- One may be looking towards something new.
- Another may be content where they are.
- One may be filled with hope.
- Another may simply be unable to imagine what comes next.

There is no failure in this.

The Horizon does not demand optimism.

It simply reminds us that what we can see from where we stand is limited.

Horizons Change

As the Pilgrim moves, the Horizon moves.

- Something once unimaginable becomes possible.
- Something once desired loses its importance.

A path we expected to follow disappears.

Another appears.

- Sometimes life opens.
- Sometimes it narrows.
- Sometimes the next possibility becomes visible only after we have travelled much further than expected.
- And sometimes the wisest movement is not towards the distant Horizon at all—

but towards what is immediately before us.

Many Ways Towards the Horizon

For one Pilgrim:

Curiosity → Learning → Possibility → Exploration → Discovery

For another:

Loss → Emptiness → Waiting → Opening → Possibility

For another:

Dream → Effort → Opportunity → Change → New Horizon

For another:

Certainty → Questioning → Exploration → Understanding → Expansion

For another:

Limitation → Acceptance → Adaptation → Possibility → New Way

For another:

Seeking → Striving → Pausing → Seeing → Enough

None is a rule.

- Not every possibility needs to be pursued.
- Not every open door needs to be entered.
- Not every Horizon needs to become a destination.

Sometimes wisdom lies in moving towards what calls us.

Sometimes it lies in recognising that we already have enough.

The Horizon offers possibility— **not instruction.**

Horizons Beside Horizons

And when Pilgrims journey together, their Horizons may not be the same.

- One partner may imagine change.
- The other may value continuity.
- A parent may see one future for a child.
- The child may gradually discover another.
- A family may share a dream.

Yet each person may understand that dream differently.

A community may imagine what it could become.

Another community may look towards a different possibility.

This does not necessarily mean that one Horizon is right and another wrong.

They are being viewed from different places.

- Sometimes our Horizons overlap.
- Sometimes they diverge.
- Sometimes we walk together for a while and later move towards different shores.
- And sometimes another Pilgrim helps us see a possibility that was invisible from where we stood.

Perhaps this is one of the gifts of walking with others.

We do not have to share a Horizon to help one another see further.

But eventually the Pilgrim may ask a different kind of question.

Not: *What might become possible?*

But: *What lies beyond everything I can see?*

The eyes leave the Horizon.

They lift upwards.

And there is—**the Sky.**

Section 8 - The Sky

Above every Horizon is the Sky.

The Pilgrims may stand in different places.

- They may live in different Houses.
- Tend different Gardens.
- Navigate different Rivers.
- Meet at different Estuaries.
- Pause at different Harbours.
- Sail different Seas.
- And look towards different Horizons.

But when they lift their eyes—

there is the Sky.

The Sky is mystery.

Not uncertainty.

Uncertainty belongs to the Sea.

There, we do not know what will happen next.

Mystery is different.

It is what may remain beyond knowing altogether.

- Where did we come from?
- What is consciousness?
- Why is there something rather than nothing?
- What happens when life ends?
- Is there something beyond what we can perceive?

- What is the sacred?

Pilgrims have looked towards these questions for thousands of years.

And they have not all answered them in the same way.

Many Ways of Looking Up

- One Pilgrim may look towards the Sky through religion.
- Another through philosophy.
- Another through science.
- Another through spirituality.
- Another through nature.
- Another through silence.
- Another may simply say— **I do not know.**

The Sky has room for all of them.

For one Pilgrim:

Wonder → Questioning → Faith → Devotion → Surrender

For another:

Wonder → Questioning → Inquiry → Discovery → More Questions

For another:

Experience → Reflection → Meaning → Practice → Trust

For another:

Certainty → Questioning → Uncertainty → Humility → Openness

For another:

Wonder → Silence → Presence → Mystery → Awe

And for another:

Question → Not Knowing → Living

None is a rule.

The Sky does not require every Pilgrim to reach the same conclusion.

Nor does mystery need to become certainty before a meaningful life can be lived.

- We may carry different understandings.
- Different beliefs.
- Different questions.
- Different names for what lies beyond us.

And some Pilgrims may simply leave the mystery unnamed.

Beneath the Same Sky

This becomes important when Pilgrims meet.

My understanding of mystery may be precious to me.

Yours may be precious to you.

- We can share what we see.
- We can listen.

- We can question.
- We can disagree.

But the Sky is larger than the window through which any one of us looks.

Perhaps humility begins there.

Not in abandoning what we believe.

But in recognising the difference between—

what I understand

and

all that can be understood.

The Pilgrim does not have to solve the Sky.

Sometimes it is enough to look upwards.

- To wonder.
- To remain curious.
- To allow some questions to accompany us.
- And to be able to say, without fear— **I do not know.**

Yet something has been present throughout the whole journey.

- Within every House.
- Across every Garden.
- Along every River.
- Through every Estuary.
- Around every Harbour.
- Across every Sea.
- Beneath every Horizon.
- Under the vastness of the Sky.

We have been living within it all along.

Section 9 - Air

Air is everywhere.

It fills the Houses.

Moves through the Gardens.

Travels along the Rivers.

Crosses the Estuaries.

Touches the Harbours.

Fills the sails upon the Seas.

Moves beneath every Horizon.

And through the vastness of the Sky.

No Pilgrim owns it.

No Garden can contain it.

No boundary can completely hold it.

Air is Life.

Life moving through all the Living Landscapes.

Life Moves Differently

Life does not move through every Pilgrim in the same way.

- For one, this may be a season of beginning.
- For another, a season of building.
- For another, caring.
- For another, questioning.
- For another, grieving.
- For another, resting.
- For another, discovering.
- For another, simply continuing.

We may stand beside someone every day and not realise what season of life is moving through them.

- The person serving our coffee may be falling in love.
- The colleague sitting beside us may be preparing to leave.
- The neighbour we pass may be caring for someone who is dying.
- The stranger on the train may have just received wonderful news.
- Another may be carrying something they have told no one.

Everywhere we look—

Life is happening.

Many Movements of Life

For one Pilgrim:

Beginning → Learning → Growing → Giving → Flourishing

For another:

Love → Caring → Loss → Grieving → Continuing

For another:

Seeking → Discovering → Questioning → Ripening → Sharing

For another:

Striving → Exhaustion → Rest → Reorientation → Simplicity

For another:

Receiving → Ripening → Giving

And for another:

Living → Noticing → Arriving → Being

None is a rule.

Life does not have to become a lesson.

- Not every experience needs to produce growth.
- Not every difficulty needs to reveal a hidden purpose.
- Not every loss needs to make us wiser.

Sometimes **life simply happens.**

And the Pilgrim lives it.

The Air Between Us

Air also reminds us of something easily forgotten.

Our lives are separate but they are not sealed.

What happens within one House may enter a Garden.

What happens in one Garden may touch another.

A word can travel.

- So can kindness.
- So can fear.
- So can laughter.
- So can anger.
- So can an idea.

Something beginning with one Pilgrim may eventually touch many.

And something moving through many may eventually enter the Garden of one.

This does not make us all the same.

It simply means that human lives continually touch human lives.

- Many Houses.
- Many Gardens.
- Many Rivers.
- Many Estuaries.
- Many Harbours.
- Many Seas.
- Many Horizons.

One Sky.

And through them all—

Air.

Life moving.

Perhaps this is the Living Landscape seen more fully.

Not one Pilgrim travelling alone.

But countless Pilgrims—

- each carrying a House,
- each tending a Garden,
- each navigating a River,
- each encountering other waters,
- each arriving and departing,
- each sailing uncertainty,
- each seeing possibility from where they stand,
- each looking into mystery,
- and each living a journey that has never been lived in quite the same way before.

Many Pilgrims.
Many Landscapes.
Many Journeys.

And because their lives touch—

the story does not end with the individual Pilgrim.

Living Landscapes

Look around.

There are **Houses**.

Each carrying an inner life we can never completely see.

There are **Gardens**.

Each being tended, neglected, changed and lived.

There are **Rivers**.

Each carrying the ordinary movement of another human day.

There are **Estuaries**.

Where different worlds meet.

There are **Harbours**.

Where Pilgrims arrive, depart, pause and begin again.

There are **Seas**.

Where journeys unfold beyond what can be completely known.

There are **Horizons**.

Each revealing possibilities from a different place.

There are **Skies**.

Under which Pilgrims wonder, question, believe, doubt and leave room for mystery.

And through all of them moves—

Air.

Life.

Many Pilgrims

At any moment, different Pilgrims may be moving through very different parts of their Landscapes.

- One may be tending a Garden.
- Another struggling with the current of a River.
- Another encountering difference at an Estuary.
- Another standing quietly at a Harbour.
- Another already far out at Sea.
- Another looking towards a possibility that has only just appeared upon the Horizon.
- Another sitting beneath the Sky with a question that may never need an answer.
- And one Pilgrim may be moving through several of these at once.

Life does not organise itself neatly into chapters.

Many Arcs

And so there can never be only one arc of human life.

For one Pilgrim:

Receiving → Tending → Growing → Sharing → Flourishing

For another:

Restlessness → Noticing → Presence → Stillness → Peace

For another:

Ending → Letting Go → Waiting → Crossing → Beginning

For another:

Difference → Encounter → Listening → Understanding → Respect

For another:

Loss → Grief → Acceptance → Hope → Continuing

For another:

Wonder → Learning → Service → Wisdom → Returning

And for another:

Living → Noticing → Arriving → Being

None is a rule.

None describes what another Pilgrim *should* become.

They simply reveal something that is easily forgotten:

human lives unfold differently.

When Landscapes Meet

But these Landscapes do not remain apart.

- A Garden meets another Garden.
- One River crosses another Pilgrim's day.
- Different waters meet at an Estuary.
- Pilgrims arrive at the same Harbour.
- They sometimes sail the same Sea.
- Their Horizons may overlap.
- Their Skies may be understood differently.

And what happens in one life may leave an echo in another.

This is where the journey begins to widen.

Because the Pilgrim does not live only as—

I.

Life also brings—

You.

And from I and You may come—

We.

- Relationship.
- Family.

- Community.
- Nation.
- World.

Each widening brings more Pilgrims.

- More Gardens.
- More histories.
- More differences.
- More possibilities for love and belonging.
- And more possibilities for misunderstanding, pressure, division and hurt.

The question before us is no longer only:

How does a Pilgrim live?

It becomes:

How do Pilgrims live together?

And perhaps the Healing Garden begins there.

Chapter 3 — The Journey of Knowledge



I did not travel to Uzbekistan in search of knowledge.

There was no pilgrimage planned, no research project to complete, no particular question I hoped the journey would answer.

I simply wanted to go.

Perhaps that is why what happened there surprised me.

Something began in **Samarkand**.

For centuries, this part of Central Asia had stood among the great routes connecting worlds — India, Persia, China and lands farther west.

Merchants travelled through carrying silk, spices and precious goods.

But goods were not the only things that travelled.

Ideas travelled too.

Knowledge travelled with scholars and merchants, physicians and pilgrims, manuscripts and teachers.

And in places such as Samarkand, some of those journeys met.

At the heart of the city stands the **Registan**, a great square framed by three monumental madrasas.

I had come to see its beauty.

And it was beautiful.

Blue tiles caught the sunlight. Great portals rose above the square. Geometry travelled across walls that had stood for centuries.

But the longer I remained there, the less I saw three monuments.

I began to see **a place of learning**.

- People had come here to learn.
- Teachers had taught here.

- Students had lived here.
- Questions had been asked here.
- Manuscripts had passed from hand to hand.

It felt as though **knowledge had once been concentrated in this square**.

And suddenly the buildings became more interesting to me than their beauty.

Section 1 - The Landscape of Knowledge



Something began in Samarkand.

Samarkand lies in present-day Uzbekistan, in the heart of Central Asia. For centuries it stood along the great routes connecting worlds — Persia and China, India and the lands farther west. Merchants passed through it carrying silk, spices and precious goods.

But goods were not the only things that travelled.

Ideas travelled too.

- Mathematics travelled.
- Astronomy travelled.
- Medicine travelled.
- Philosophy travelled.
- Religious thought travelled.
- Knowledge crossed mountains and deserts with the people who carried it.

At the heart of Samarkand stands the **Registan**, a great public square framed on three sides by monumental madrasas — places of learning that combined teaching, scholarship, religious study and, for many students, daily life.

I had come to see the Registan.

Like many travellers, I first saw its beauty.

Three monumental madrasas surrounding a great square.

- **Ulugh Beg** on the left.
- **Tilya-Kori** ahead.

- **Sher-Dor** on the right.

Blue tiles caught the sunlight. Great portals rose above the square. Geometry travelled across walls that had stood for centuries.

But the longer I remained there, the less I saw three monuments.

I began to see **a place of learning**.

It reminded me, strangely, of a university campus.

Not because the Registan was a university in the modern sense. The three madrasas were built in different periods, and their histories were not identical.

But the feeling was unmistakable.

- People had come here to learn.
- Teachers had taught here.
- Students had lived here.
- Questions had been asked here.
- Manuscripts had passed from hand to hand.

It felt as though **intelligence had once been concentrated in this square**.

And suddenly the buildings became more interesting to me than their beauty.

I began wondering what had been taught behind those walls.

- Mathematics.
- Astronomy.
- Logic.
- Language.
- Theology.
- Law.
- Philosophy.

Not necessarily all in every building, nor separated into departments as they might be in a modern university. Knowledge belonged to a different landscape then.

And perhaps that was what had begun to fascinate me.

For much of human history, knowledge had a geography.

If you wanted to learn from a particular teacher, study a manuscript, enter a tradition, or join a community of scholars, you might have to travel.

The Pilgrim travelled to knowledge.

I had spent much of my own life around education. First as a pupil, then a student, later a teacher. Mathematics had been part of that journey. Astronomy had taken it further.

Yet standing in the Registan, I realised I knew remarkably little about the world of learning that had once flourished here.

That did not trouble me.

It made me curious.

I wanted to know more.

But in Samarkand, my questions were still large ones.

- **Who were the scholars?**
- **What did they study?**

- **How did knowledge travel?**
- **How did mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy and religion meet across civilisations?**

Then I travelled west to **Bukhara**, another of Uzbekistan's ancient cities and one of the great historic centres of learning along the Silk Roads.

For centuries, scholars, merchants, travellers and pilgrims had passed through it. Its madrasas had drawn students from across Central Asia and beyond.

And there, something changed.

The questions became smaller.

More ordinary.

More human.

I entered **Kukeldash Madrasa.**

I wasn't looking for anything in particular.

I was simply looking.

The doors interested me. The small rooms interested me. I found myself wondering what lay behind them and how these spaces had once been used.

Then I noticed an open doorway.

I stopped and looked inside.

A shopkeeper nearby must have noticed my curiosity.

She told me that I could go up and see the rooms upstairs.

I did not hesitate.

Until that moment, I had been looking at the madrasa.

Now I was being invited inside its life.

I stepped through the doorway.

And there were the stairs.

They were steep.

Much steeper than I expected.

I began climbing for a very simple reason.

I wanted to know what was upstairs.

The Stairs

The Stairs Were Steep

Much steeper than I expected.

I began climbing.

At the top, I found rooms.

Not exhibition rooms arranged to explain themselves to the visitor.

Just rooms.

- Some were small.
- Some surprisingly narrow.
- Some opened into other spaces.

There were niches cut into walls, masonry ledges, vaulted ceilings, screened openings and doorways that seemed almost too low or too narrow for the life I was trying to imagine.

I entered one.

Then another.

And another.

The great intellectual history that had fascinated me in Samarkand began to change.

There I had wondered about scholars, manuscripts, mathematics, astronomy, medicine and philosophy.

Here I began wondering about something much more ordinary.

The student.

- Where did he sleep?
- Where did he keep his belongings?
- Where did he study?
- Where did he wash?
- Where did he cook?
- What did he eat?
- How many students shared a room?
- How did they keep warm during a Bukhara winter?

The scholars had not disappeared.

But behind the scholar, I was beginning to see the **Pilgrim who had come to learn**.

And that was when the madrasa really caught me.

I began looking differently.

A niche was no longer simply a feature in an old wall.

- What had been kept there?
- A raised ledge made me stop.
- Was it for sitting? Sleeping? Working? Storing something?
- A narrow room raised another question.
- Could someone really have lived here?

And then there were the spaces I could not understand at all.

- Could this have been somewhere to wash?
- Was that once a hearth?
- Did students cook individually in their rooms, or was there somewhere they gathered to prepare food together?

The building offered clues but rarely answers.

Centuries had passed. Rooms had been repaired, altered and plastered. Openings may have disappeared. Functions may have changed.

So I began doing something human beings have probably always done when traces of the past remain but the people themselves are gone.

I began to imagine.

What happened behind these little doors when the courtyard became quiet?

- Perhaps a young man had sat in one of these rooms with a manuscript hundreds of years before me.
- Perhaps he had travelled a considerable distance to reach Bukhara.

- Perhaps his family had sent him.
- Perhaps he had desperately wanted to come.
- Perhaps another student had not wanted to come at all.

One may have loved his studies.
Another may have struggled.
One may have listened eagerly to his teacher.
Another may have stared through the patterned screen waiting for the lesson to end.
Suddenly the madrasa became less romantic.
And much more interesting.
These were not simply **scholars of the past**.
They had once been young people.

- They ate.
- They slept.
- They became cold.
- They became tired.
- They formed friendships.
- They may have missed home.
- They probably laughed.
- They may have quarrelled.

Some must have succeeded.
Some must have struggled.
And some, perhaps, discovered that the education they received was not confined to what their teachers intended to teach them.
That thought stopped me.
Because I too had lived in a place of learning.
And suddenly the room in Bukhara opened another room entirely.
Not in Uzbekistan.
In **Goa, India**.
I had entered boarding school when I was nine years old.
I remained there until I was sixteen.
And like the unknown students whose rooms I was now walking through, I had learned far more there than anything written on the timetable.

The Unwritten Curriculum

I entered boarding school in Goa when I was nine years old.
I remained there until I was sixteen.
Seven years is a long time when you are a child.
The school had its curriculum.
There were lessons to attend, subjects to study, examinations to pass and rules to follow.
But there was another curriculum too.
Nobody had written it.
Nobody announced it at assembly.

There were no textbooks for it and no examinations at the end of term.

Yet in many ways, it was the curriculum that shaped me most.

- I learned about belonging.
- I learned about exclusion.
- I learned how quickly a child discovers where he stands within a group.
- I learned that some children are chosen first.
- And some are chosen last.

Games taught me this particularly well.

I was often the last to be picked.

Eventually, I began hiding so that I would not have to play at all.

On days when the sky darkened, I hoped for rain.

Rain meant the game might be cancelled.

For many years afterwards, I simply thought:

I don't like sport.

Only much later did another possibility occur to me.

Perhaps the lesson had never really been:

I do not like sport.

Perhaps it had begun as:

I do not like what happens to me when sport begins.

Sometimes what looks like preference began as protection.

The boarding school taught other lessons too.

We were allowed outside the school premises only occasionally. Even then, our freedom was limited. We were not permitted to keep much money — roughly the equivalent of **£1 today**. Sometimes the food was difficult to eat.

Life was contained within the boundaries of the school.

As a child, I experienced it almost as a prison.

And yet it was a place of education.

That apparent contradiction matters.

- A place may be built for learning and still contain loneliness.
- A teacher may be teaching mathematics while, somewhere else in the same institution, a child is learning fear.
- A timetable may say *Games*.
  The child may be learning humiliation.
- A dining hall may be intended to provide nourishment.
  The child may be learning endurance.
- A dormitory may be intended for sleep.
  The child may be learning how to survive among others.

None of these lessons appears on the curriculum.

But they enter the House nevertheless.

That was what the little rooms in Bukhara were beginning to make me understand.

I had been looking at the madrasa and imagining what its students had been taught.

- Theology.
- Law.
- Logic.
- Language.
- Mathematics.
- Astronomy.

But these were only the subjects that could be named.

What was the **unwritten curriculum**?

A young student arriving in Bukhara may also have had to learn how to share a small room.

- How to live beside someone he did not particularly like.
- How to manage hunger.
- How to tolerate cold.
- How to negotiate status among other students.
- How to miss home.
- How to approach a difficult teacher.
- How to live with failure.
- How to make a friend.
- How to be alone.

Perhaps some flourished.

Perhaps some suffered.

Probably most experienced a mixture of both.

We cannot know the inner lives of those particular students from the architecture alone.

But standing inside their rooms prevented me from reducing them to the word **scholar**.

- They had bodies.
- They had relationships.
- They had fears and desires.
- They lived somewhere while they were learning.

And wherever human beings live together, another education begins.

This is why a beautiful place of learning does not necessarily create beautiful weather in every House.

The Registan had overwhelmed me with its beauty.

Kukeldash had made me curious about its rooms.

My own boarding school had taught me something neither architecture nor curriculum could guarantee:

The outer environment of education and the inner experience of the learner are not the same thing.

There is the curriculum we are given.

And there is the curriculum we absorb.

The official curriculum gives the Pilgrim information.

The unwritten curriculum can shape the Pilgrim who receives it.

Years later, I became a teacher myself.

That changed the question again.

I was no longer only asking:

What are we teaching?

I had begun to understand the importance of another question:

What are they learning from being here?

The two are not always the same.

And perhaps education begins to mature when we become aware of both.

When Knowledge Travelled

Standing in Bukhara, another question began to emerge.

If students had travelled here to learn, where had the knowledge itself come from?

Today, knowledge seems almost placeless.

I can sit in a room, type a question into a computer and within seconds enter a conversation about mathematics developed in India, astronomy practised in Samarkand, medicine written in Persia, or philosophy preserved in manuscripts thousands of kilometres away.

But for most of human history, knowledge had a geography.

- A manuscript existed somewhere.
- A teacher lived somewhere.
- A library stood somewhere.

If the Pilgrim wanted access to them, he often had to travel.

And yet knowledge travelled too.

It travelled with merchants.

- With scholars.
- With physicians.
- With translators.
- With pilgrims.
- With armies and empires.
- With manuscripts carried across mountains, deserts and seas.

Ideas crossed borders long before the internet existed.

And Central Asia stood within some of the great routes along which those ideas moved.

This was particularly fascinating to me because I had come from **India**.

The numerals now used across much of the world developed from Indian mathematical traditions.

Ideas associated with calculation moved westward and were taken up, developed and transmitted by scholars writing in Arabic and Persian.

Among the scholars whose work became part of this great movement of knowledge was **Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi**.

He lived in the ninth century. His name, **al-Khwarizmi**, connects him with **Khwarazm**, the historic region south of the Aral Sea, although we do not know with certainty whether he himself was born there or whether the connection came through his family.

What we do know is that his work became extraordinarily influential.

His story fascinated me because two words we use constantly today carry traces of his work.

- **Algebra.**
- **Algorithm.**

The word *algebra* comes from the Arabic **al-jabr**, a word appearing in the title of one of al-Khwarizmi's most influential mathematical works. In it, he presented systematic methods for solving equations.

Over the centuries, *al-jabr* travelled through languages and eventually became the word **algebra**.

The second word travelled differently.

When al-Khwarizmi's name was rendered in medieval Latin, it appeared in forms such as *Algoritmi*. His name gradually became associated with procedures for calculation.

From that long linguistic journey came our word:

algorithm.

Today an algorithm can mean a sequence of steps or rules used to solve a problem or perform a computation. Algorithms sit quietly behind search engines, navigation systems, banking, social media and artificial intelligence.

There was something wonderfully strange about discovering this while travelling through Uzbekistan.

I had arrived carrying a telephone in my pocket.

I was using algorithms to find my way through unfamiliar streets, translate languages, call a taxi, locate a madrasa and ask questions about the civilisation from which al-Khwarizmi had emerged.

More than a thousand years separated us.

Yet his name was still travelling.

And there was another journey hidden within his mathematics.

The numeral system al-Khwarizmi helped explain and transmit was itself deeply indebted to **Indian mathematics**. The decimal place-value system and methods of calculation developed in India travelled into the Arabic-speaking scholarly world, where mathematicians studied, extended and transmitted them further.

Eventually these numerals and methods travelled westward again.

The decimal place-value system that developed in India, including the crucial use of zero, travelled into the Islamic scholarly world. Al-Khwarizmi wrote a work explaining calculation with Indian numerals. Centuries later, through further transmission and development, this mathematical tradition reached Europe.

Today we usually call the system **Hindu-Arabic numerals**

Even their name remembers the journey.

India contributed the numerical tradition.

Scholars of the Islamic world received, developed and transmitted it.

Other cultures received it in turn.

Knowledge was travelling long before the Pilgrim had a word for globalisation.

And when knowledge arrived somewhere new, it did not necessarily remain unchanged.

- People translated it.
- Questioned it.
- Combined it with what they already knew.
- Corrected it.
- Expanded it.
- Passed it onwards.

This is why perhaps it is misleading to ask:

Who owned the knowledge?

A more interesting question might be:

Who received it, what did they do with it, and what did they pass on?

The history of knowledge begins to look less like a collection of isolated civilisations and more like a Garden.

- Roots grow in particular soil.
- Seeds travel.
- Some fail to germinate.
- Others take root somewhere unexpected.
- A plant arriving in new soil does not necessarily become identical to the plant from which the seed came.

It grows another branch.

A living tradition can retain its roots while growing another branch.

Perhaps knowledge does the same.

Section 2 - A Wider Journey

Central Asia was only one part of a much larger human landscape of knowledge.

Elsewhere, different questions were being pursued in different ways. In **India**, number and calculation developed in ways that would eventually help transform mathematics far beyond its borders, while Ayurveda explored health through an elaborate understanding of body, diet and way of life. **China** developed its own medical traditions while producing innovations such as paper, printing and the compass that would change how knowledge itself could travel.

The **Greek world** left powerful traditions of geometry, logic and philosophical enquiry. Across **Africa**, knowledge took many forms, from the written scholarship of ancient Egypt and later Timbuktu to sophisticated knowledge transmitted orally through generations. In the **Americas**, Maya observers developed remarkable calendars and astronomical systems, while Indigenous peoples accumulated deep knowledge of plants, agriculture and their environments.

None of these worlds knew everything.

None possessed a monopoly on intelligence.

Each looked at existence from where it stood.

And when people travelled, some of those ways of knowing travelled with them.

Perhaps the history of knowledge is therefore not the story of one great civilisation handing wisdom to the next.

It is the story of **many human beings, in many places, noticing different things**.

And sometimes their paths crossed.

Section 3 - When Knowledge Met Knowledge



The journey of knowledge was rarely one-way.

A manuscript might travel from one civilisation into another, but it did not arrive in an empty place.

- There was already knowledge there.
- There were already physicians treating illness.
- Astronomers watching the sky.
- Mathematicians calculating.
- Philosophers asking questions.
- Healers working with plants.
- Religious traditions trying to understand existence.

The travelling idea therefore encountered other ideas.

- Sometimes they agreed.
- Sometimes they contradicted one another.
- Sometimes one filled a gap in the other.
- And sometimes their meeting produced something neither tradition had possessed before.

This is where the history of knowledge becomes particularly interesting.

India, Persia, Central Asia, China, the Arab world and the Mediterranean were not sealed intellectual rooms.

They had doors.

And people kept walking through them.

- A merchant might carry more than silk.
- A physician might carry a medical text.
- A scholar might arrive with a method of calculation.
- A traveller might describe plants unknown in another region.
- A translator might spend months finding words in one language for an idea born in another.

Knowledge moved because **people moved**.

But movement alone was not enough.

- Someone had to receive what arrived.
- Someone had to become curious.
- Someone had to translate.
- Someone had to ask:

  What does this mean?

And then:

Does it work?

And perhaps:

What happens if I place this beside what I already know?

That is how knowledge begins to grow another branch.

One of the great examples emerged in medicine.

One of the great examples can be found in medicine.

Ibn Sina, known in Europe as Avicenna, was born around 980 CE in a village near Bukhara, in what is now Uzbekistan. He grew up in a world where knowledge from different civilisations was already meeting.

Centuries before Ibn Sina wrote his *Canon of Medicine*, sophisticated medical traditions had developed across several civilisations. Greek physicians had produced influential theories of the body and disease. India had developed extensive traditions of diagnosis, treatment, diet, surgery and medicinal plants. Persian medical traditions had developed within their own cultural landscape. Through translation, travel and scholarship, knowledge from different worlds increasingly became available across the wider intellectual networks in which Ibn Sina lived.

But inheritance is not the same as repetition.

- The scholar receives.
- Then the scholar examines.
- Organises.
- Questions.
- Adds.
- And eventually passes something onwards.

Ibn Sina's *Canon* became influential across the Islamic world and, after translation into Latin, in European medical education for centuries.

The knowledge had travelled again.

And standing in Uzbekistan, I began to see something I had perhaps understood intellectually before but had never quite **felt**.

Civilisations do not develop knowledge by remaining untouched.

They develop partly through encounter.

The Garden grows because seeds cross its boundaries.

That does not mean every seed should be planted.

Nor does it mean everything arriving from elsewhere is better than what already grows there.

Discernment remains necessary.

But a Garden in which nothing new can enter eventually becomes something else.

A closed system.

And perhaps knowledge behaves similarly.

The Pilgrim as Carrier

There was another consequence of this.

The student who travelled to Bukhara did not merely come to receive knowledge.

He arrived carrying something already.

- A language.
- A family.
- A culture.
- Beliefs.
- Memories.
- Ways of understanding the world.
- Perhaps knowledge learned somewhere else.

He was not an empty vessel waiting to be filled.

And eventually, he might leave.

When he did, something travelled with him.

Perhaps he returned to his village.

- Perhaps he became a teacher.
- A physician.
- A jurist.
- A scholar.

Perhaps he travelled onwards to another centre of learning.

The manuscript could travel.

But so could the person who had encountered it.

And what travelled with him was not necessarily identical to what he had received.

He had brought one world into Bukhara.

He had encountered another.

Something had happened in the meeting.

This made the Pilgrim himself part of the landscape of knowledge.

He arrived carrying.
He encountered.
He received.
He questioned.
He understood.
And he carried onwards.

That pattern has never really disappeared.

I had arrived in Uzbekistan carrying Mozambique, India, Goa, London, mathematics, astronomy, Ayurveda, years of teaching and decades of my own lived experience.

I too was not an empty vessel arriving to be filled.

What I encountered here met what was already within me.

Perhaps that is true of every learner.

Every learner arrives carrying a Garden.

- Family.
- Language.
- Culture.

- Belief.
- Memory.
- Experience.
- Questions.

The teacher does not pour knowledge into an empty House.

Knowledge enters a House already inhabited.

And once it enters, something has to happen to it.

- It may simply be remembered.
- It may be repeated.
- It may be questioned.
- It may meet something already known.
- It may change what we understand.
- It may even change how we live.

And that, perhaps, is where the journey from **knowledge to understanding** begins.

I think the next section should now turn inward. We have followed knowledge across geography; now we ask what happens **after knowledge enters the House**. This is where the Four Houses can emerge naturally rather than feeling like a framework inserted into the journey.

Section 4 – What Happens to Knowledge?



Knowledge can travel thousands of kilometres.

- It can cross deserts.
- Survive the fall of empires.
- Move from one language into another.
- Pass from teacher to student.
- From manuscript to printed book.
- From library to computer.
- From one civilisation into another.

But eventually, knowledge arrives somewhere else.

It arrives in us.

And then another journey begins.
Knowing something is not the same as understanding it.
Understanding something is not the same as being changed by it.
And being changed by something does not necessarily mean we know how to live wisely with what we have understood.

These are different movements.

Perhaps this is why education cannot be measured only by how much information a person has accumulated.

- A person may know a great deal and understand very little.
- Another may understand something deeply but repeatedly fail to live according to that understanding.
- And occasionally we meet someone whose knowledge has travelled so deeply into life that it appears as discernment.

The difference is not necessarily intelligence.
It may be **where the knowledge has reached within the House**.

The Smart House – Knowing

The first House is the **Smart House**.
The Smart House gathers.

- Facts.
- Names.
- Dates.
- Methods.
- Definitions.
- Formulas.
- Information.

This House is necessary.
When I studied mathematics, I had to learn mathematical language before I could do anything with it.

- I needed to know what a quadratic equation was.
- I needed symbols.
- Rules.
- Procedures.
- Theorems.
- In astronomy, I needed to know what stars were, how distances were measured, how gravity behaved and how the motion of celestial bodies could be described.

Every field has its vocabulary.

Before the Pilgrim can explore a landscape, he needs some kind of map.
There is nothing shallow about knowing.
The difficulty begins when **knowing is mistaken for understanding**.
A student may memorise an equation and reproduce it perfectly in an examination without understanding why it works.

A person may quote a philosophical teaching without ever examining what it means.
Someone may know the principles of healthy living while repeatedly living in ways that undermine their health.

- We can know that anger causes harm and still become angry.
- We can know that possessions do not guarantee contentment and still spend our lives pursuing them.
- We can know that another person deserves kindness and still speak cruelly when we feel threatened.

The Smart House can contain an enormous library.
But a library is not yet wisdom.
It contains what has been gathered.
The next question is whether the Pilgrim has begun to **see the relationships between what has been gathered**.
That movement takes us into another House.

The Intelligent House – Understanding

Understanding begins when knowledge starts connecting.
The formula is no longer merely remembered.
The student begins to see **why it works**.
The historical event is no longer simply a date.
The learner begins to see the conditions that produced it.
A medicinal plant is no longer merely a name in a book.
Its properties, preparation, context and limitations begin to form a larger picture.
The Intelligent House asks different questions.

- **Why?**
- **How?**
- **What is connected to what?**
- **What happens if the conditions change?**

This is what made al-Khwarizmi interesting to me.
He was not simply carrying Indian methods of calculation from one place to another.
Knowledge entered a scholarly world in which it could be studied, organised, expressed differently and transmitted onwards.
Something happened to the knowledge.
The same is true of the learner.

- Information enters.
- The learner works with it.
- Connections appear.
- Understanding begins.

As a mathematics teacher, this distinction mattered enormously to me.

- A pupil could sometimes produce the correct answer and still not understand the mathematics.

- Another pupil might make a numerical mistake but reveal, through the method used, that the underlying idea had been understood.

The answer alone could not always tell me what was happening inside the learner.

Education becomes much more interesting when we stop asking only:

Did the student get the answer right?

and begin asking:

What does the student actually understand?

But even understanding has a boundary.

- I can understand why another person behaves as they do and still react to them in exactly the same old way.
- I can understand my own patterns and continue repeating them.
- I can understand compassion intellectually without becoming more compassionate.

The Intelligent House has made connections.

But something may still be missing.

The Pilgrim has understood the map.

He has not necessarily allowed the journey to change him.

The Mature House – Being Changed by What We See

Maturity begins when understanding is allowed to have consequences.

Something has been seen.

And because it has been seen, the Pilgrim can no longer live quite as though he had never seen it.

This does not mean immediate transformation.

Nor does it mean perfection.

It means that understanding has begun to enter life.

Perhaps I realise that what I had always called my dislike of sport began partly as protection from humiliation.

That is understanding.

But maturity asks another question:

What happens now that I have seen it?

Do I continue repeating:

- *I don't like sport*?
- Or can I allow the old conclusion to soften?
- Can I recognise the child who learned to hide?
- Can I distinguish what happened then from what is possible now?

Nothing has to be forced.

The past does not need to be rewritten.

But what has been understood begins to alter the way the present is held.

This is why maturity cannot be measured simply by age.

A person may grow older while defending every conclusion formed decades before.

Another may be changed by something newly understood.

Maturity requires a certain openness.

The capacity to say:

Perhaps I did not see the whole picture.

Or:

Perhaps what I believed needs to be reconsidered.

Or sometimes simply:

I was wrong.

The Mature House therefore needs more than intelligence.

It needs **presence and awareness**.

Presence allows the Pilgrim to remain with what is being revealed.

Awareness allows him to notice what that revelation touches within his own House.

Without them, understanding can remain safely intellectual.

With them, understanding begins to ripen.

And perhaps this is why some of life's most important education happens far from a classroom.

- A relationship can teach us.
- Failure can teach us.
- Grief can teach us.
- A journey can teach us.

Even a steep staircase in an old madrasa can teach us.

But only if something in us is available to receive the lesson.

The Wise House – Discernment

And then there is the **Wise House**.

Wisdom is difficult to teach directly.

- We can teach information.
- We can encourage understanding.
- We can create conditions in which maturity may develop.

But wisdom seems to require something else.

Ripening.

What has been known has been understood.

What has been understood has been carried into life.

There, experience tests it.

Life adds what the classroom could not.

Certainty may soften.

Understanding ripens.

And gradually the Pilgrim becomes more able to distinguish between things that once appeared identical.

- When to speak.
- When to remain silent.
- When to act.
- When to wait.
- When to hold on.
- When to let go.
- When a rule should guide us.

And when the situation before us requires something the rule cannot provide.

This is discernment.

The Wise House does not necessarily contain more information than the Smart House.

It may simply relate differently to what it knows.

There is space around the knowledge.

Stillness gives the Pilgrim somewhere from which to see.

And from that space, wisdom can ripen.

Perhaps this is why wisdom cannot simply be downloaded.

- A computer can give me information in seconds.
- It can explain an idea in several different ways.
- It can compare traditions, retrieve histories, translate languages and help me see connections I had not noticed.

But it cannot perform the final movement for me.

- It cannot make me mature.
- It cannot make me wise.

That movement still belongs to the Pilgrim.

The journey therefore does not end when knowledge reaches us.

In some ways, that is where it begins.

- **The Smart House knows.**
- **The Intelligent House understands.**
- **The Mature House allows understanding to change how we see and live.**
- **The Wise House discerns.**

Knowledge has travelled across the world.

Now it must travel through the House.

Section 5 – When Knowledge Came to the Pilgrim



For much of human history, the Pilgrim travelled to knowledge.

- He travelled to the teacher.

- To the manuscript.
- To the library.
- To the monastery.
- To the madrasa.

Knowledge had a geography.

If the teacher lived in Bukhara, the student might have to travel to Bukhara.

If the manuscript was kept in Samarkand, distance mattered.

If only a handful of copies of a text existed, access depended upon being close enough to one of them — or knowing someone who was.

The journey itself became part of education.

- The Pilgrim left home.
- Crossed landscapes.
- Entered unfamiliar cultures.
- Met other students.
- Sat before teachers.
- Waited.
- Listened.
- Copied.
- Questioned.
- Remembered.

Knowledge could travel too, as we have already seen.

- Manuscripts crossed borders.
- Scholars carried ideas from one centre of learning to another.
- Translations allowed knowledge to enter another language.

But movement was slow.

- A manuscript still had to be carried.
- A person still had to travel.
- A copy still had to be made.

Then the landscape began to change.

The Book Learns to Travel

The printing press did not invent the circulation of knowledge.

Books and manuscripts had been copied, printed and circulated in different parts of the world long before printing transformed Europe.

But technologies of reproduction gradually changed the scale at which knowledge could move.

A manuscript copied by hand might take weeks or months to reproduce.

Printing allowed many copies of a text to be produced.

- Knowledge multiplied.
- Books travelled farther.
- Libraries grew.
- Schools and universities expanded.

Eventually newspapers, journals and encyclopaedias carried information into increasingly ordinary spaces.

The Pilgrim still travelled to knowledge.

But knowledge was becoming better at travelling to the Pilgrim.

I was born into this world.

Books were already ordinary objects.

At school, knowledge arrived through teachers and textbooks.

If I wanted to understand something more deeply, there was the library.

Later, when I studied mathematics and astronomy, the landscape became more specialised.

- There were lecturers.
- Academic books.
- Scientific journals.
- University libraries.

Knowledge was available, but access still had boundaries.

You needed to know where to look.

You often needed to belong to an institution.

Some books were expensive.

Some journals were difficult to obtain.

And sometimes the person who knew what you wanted to know was somewhere else.

Then another door opened.

The Library Without Walls

The internet changed the geography again.

Suddenly the Pilgrim could remain in one place while travelling through enormous landscapes of information.

- Libraries began digitising their collections.
- Scientific papers could be accessed electronically.
- Museums placed collections online.
- Old manuscripts appeared on screens.

A question that might once have required a journey to a specialist library could sometimes be investigated from home.

Distance had not disappeared.

But its power over knowledge had weakened.

Then the quantity of information became a problem of its own.

The Pilgrim had once struggled to reach knowledge.

Now the Pilgrim could struggle because **too much knowledge appeared at once**.

A search might return thousands of results.

- Some reliable.
- Some outdated.
- Some mistaken.
- Some copied from somewhere else.
- Some written to inform.
- Some written to persuade.
- Some written simply to attract attention.

Access had increased enormously.

Discernment had become even more important.

The Smart House had been given an extraordinary library.

But having a larger library did not automatically make the House wiser.

And then something else changed.

When Knowledge Became Conversational

While travelling through Uzbekistan, I carried a mobile phone.

I used it to navigate unfamiliar streets.

- To translate words.
- To find supermarkets.
- To call taxis.
- To identify buildings.
- To read about people who had lived more than a thousand years before me.

None of that seemed particularly extraordinary anymore.

Then I walked into Kukeldash Madrasa.

I climbed the steep stairs.

I entered the rooms.

And I began asking questions.

- What was this niche for?
- Why was this room shaped differently?
- Where did the students sleep?
- How did they keep warm?
- Did they cook here?
- Where did they wash?
- Where were the toilets?

Some questions could be answered from historical records.

Others could not.

So I photographed what I saw.

I compared rooms.

I asked more questions.

- Sometimes an explanation seemed plausible until I looked more closely.
- Sometimes what I saw raised a question for which there was no certain answer.

I returned the following day and looked again.

The building had become part of the enquiry.

Something interesting was happening.

I was not simply retrieving information.

I was having a conversation with knowledge.

A question produced an answer.

The answer produced another question.

- Sometimes the first answer was inadequate.
- Sometimes I disagreed with it.

- Sometimes what I saw with my own eyes contradicted the explanation I had been given.

So we looked again.

We searched for another source.

A historical description changed an interpretation.

A photograph raised another possibility.

And occasionally the most accurate answer was:

We do not know.

That mattered.

Artificial intelligence had entered the journey, but not as an oracle.

It could search, compare, explain, translate, organise and suggest.

It could help me reach material I might never have known existed.

But it could also make an interpretation too quickly.

- I had to question it.
- Correct it.
- Return to the room.
- Look at the wall again.

The Pilgrim had not disappeared.

If anything, his responsibility had increased.

The Teacher Who Can Be Questioned

There is something remarkable about conversational knowledge.

A book does not know that I have failed to understand the paragraph.

It cannot notice my confusion and explain the idea differently.

A search engine may give me another page.

But conversation allows another possibility.

I can say:

I still don't understand.

Or:

Explain it another way.

Or:

That doesn't fit what I am seeing.

Or simply:

Why?

And the conversation can continue.

For education, this is significant.

A learner does not always understand something the first time it is explained.

Nor the second.

Sometimes the difficulty is not the learner.

The explanation simply has not yet found the right doorway.

- One student may understand through an equation.
- Another through a diagram.
- Another through an example.
- Another by connecting the idea with something already familiar.

A conversational system can attempt another doorway.

And another.

It does not need to become impatient because the learner requires a sixth explanation.

That possibility would have fascinated the teacher I once was.

But it also raises another question.

If knowledge becomes easier to obtain, what happens to learning?

When Knowing Becomes Easy

Perhaps one of the great educational changes of our time is not simply that more information is available.

It is that **knowing can become very easy**.

- A date can be retrieved in seconds.
- A formula can be found immediately.
- A paragraph can be translated almost instantly.
- A difficult concept can be summarised.
- An unfamiliar word can be explained.
- A historical argument can be compared with another.

This is extraordinary.

But it also exposes something we encountered in the Four Houses.

If the Smart House is concerned primarily with gathering information, then technology can now do much of that gathering astonishingly well.

But information is only the beginning.

- A machine may explain compassion.
- It cannot make me compassionate.
- It may describe the consequences of anger.
- That does not mean I will remain still when anger enters my House.
- It may explain why a pattern in my life developed.
- Understanding the explanation does not automatically free me from the pattern.
- It may place several traditions beside one another.
- I must still discern what I accept, what I question and what I leave aside.

Technology can bring knowledge to the door.

The Pilgrim still has to receive it.

And receiving is not the same as collecting.

Knowledge must meet what is already within the House.

- It must be questioned.
- Tested.
- Understood.
- Sometimes resisted.
- Sometimes revised.
- Sometimes lived.
- Sometimes released.

The journey through the Four Houses cannot simply be automated.

- The Smart House may become increasingly assisted by technology.

- The Intelligent House may be helped by it.
- But maturity still requires the willingness to be changed by what we understand.
- And wisdom still requires discernment.

The Journey Reverses

Standing in those old rooms in Bukhara, the contrast was extraordinary.

Centuries ago, a young Pilgrim might have travelled for days or weeks to reach a teacher.

He might have carried very little.

- Perhaps a few possessions.
- Perhaps a manuscript.
- Perhaps simply a recommendation and the hope that someone would teach him.

I had travelled to Bukhara too.

But in my pocket I carried access to more information than any scholar who had once lived in those rooms could have imagined.

The irony was difficult to miss.

I had travelled thousands of kilometres to enter an ancient place of learning.

And while standing inside it, knowledge from across the world was travelling back to me.

The geography had reversed.

- Once, the Pilgrim travelled to knowledge.
- Then books allowed knowledge to travel farther.
- Libraries gathered it.
- Printing multiplied it.
- The internet made much of it accessible from almost anywhere.
- And now artificial intelligence was allowing the Pilgrim to **question knowledge conversationally**.

Yet one thing had not changed.

The final journey could not be made by the manuscript.

- Nor by the book.
- Nor by the library.
- Nor by the internet.
- Nor by artificial intelligence.

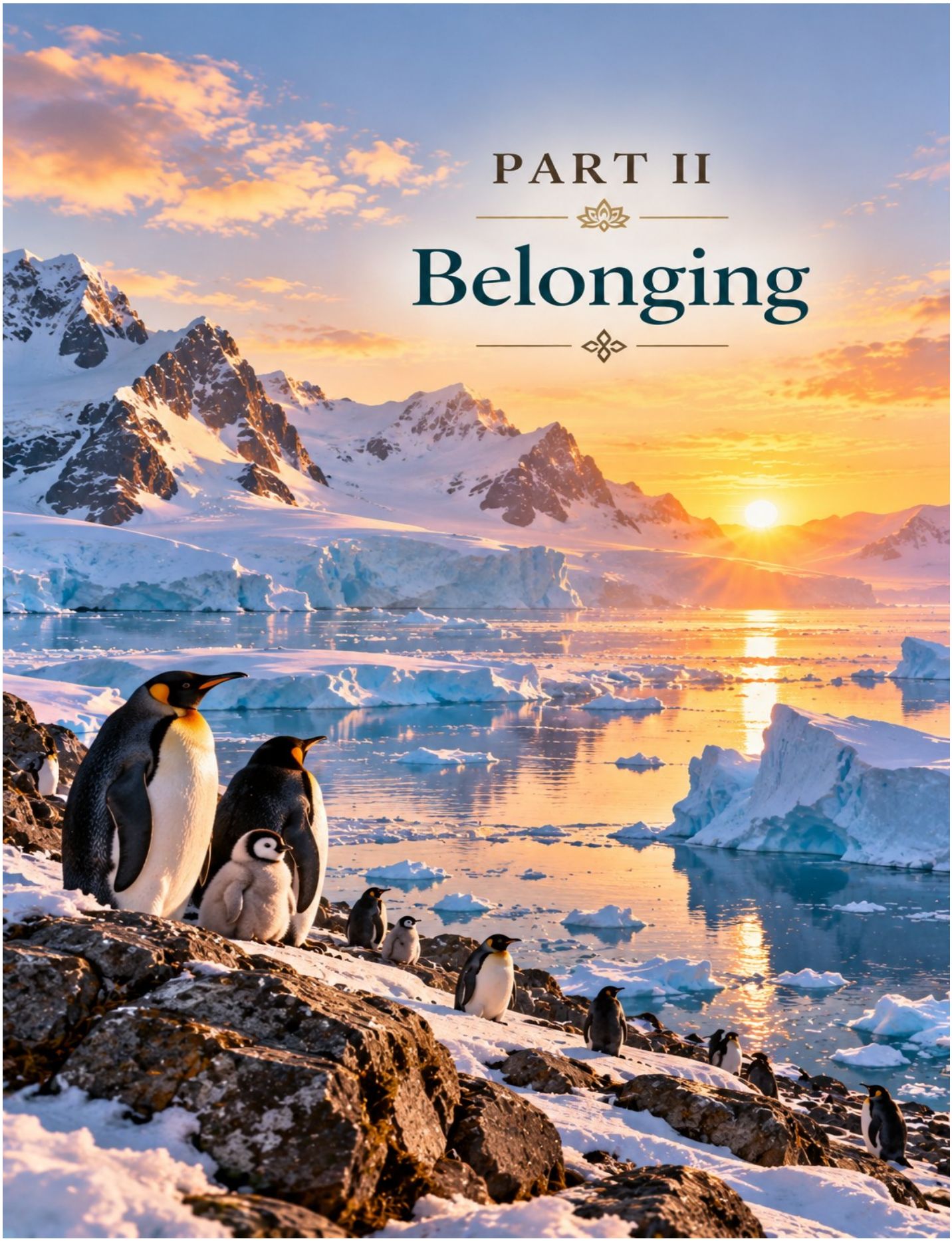
That journey still had to happen within the Pilgrim.

Once, the Pilgrim travelled to knowledge.

Then knowledge learned to travel to the Pilgrim.

Now knowledge can travel with the Pilgrim.

But what the Pilgrim does with that knowledge remains his own journey.


PART II
Belonging

Chapter 4 — The Garden of Relationship



No Pilgrim lives entirely alone.

However private the House, however carefully tended the Garden, sooner or later another Pilgrim appears.

- Sometimes they remain only briefly.
- Sometimes they walk beside us for years.
- Some become friends.
- Some become partners.
- Some become companions whose presence becomes so familiar that it is difficult to remember the Landscape before they arrived.

And yet relationship is never simply the meeting of two people.

- Two Houses meet.
- Two Gardens meet.

Two histories, two ways of seeing, two ways of speaking, loving, protecting, trusting and withdrawing meet.

- Sometimes the meeting feels effortless.
- Sometimes we struggle against the current.
- Sometimes the waters become so quiet that we wonder whether we are resting or no longer moving.
- And sometimes a storm arrives and the River we thought we knew begins to overflow its banks.

Relationships change.

So do we.

Perhaps the task is not to make every relationship flow in the same way, nor to decide what a relationship *should* look like.

Perhaps we can begin somewhere simpler.

By looking at the Landscape between us and asking:

What is happening between us?

Let us begin with the moment from which every relationship grows.

Section 1 — When Two Pilgrims Meet

Every relationship begins with an encounter.

Sometimes we remember it.

- A first conversation.
- A shared meal.
- A classroom.
- A workplace.
- A journey.
- A glance across a room.

Sometimes the beginning is so ordinary that we hardly notice it.

Someone enters the Garden.

At first, they are simply another Pilgrim.

We do not yet know what place they will come to hold in our lives.

- They may pass through.
- They may return.
- They may become a friend, a companion, a partner.

One day we may look back and realise that someone who was once a stranger has become woven into the ordinary fabric of our days.

But when two Pilgrims meet, they do not arrive empty-handed.

- Each brings a House.
- Each brings a Garden.

Each has travelled through different Landscapes, looked through different Windows and learned different ways of meeting the world.

- One may have grown in a House where affection was spoken freely.
  Another may have learned that love is shown by doing rather than saying.
- One may want to talk when something is wrong.
  Another may become quiet.
- One may ask questions in order to come closer.
  Another may experience those same questions as intrusion.
- One may open the Door readily.
  Another may need time before allowing anyone near it.

Neither Pilgrim necessarily knows all of this when they meet.

Much of what we carry becomes visible only in relationship.

The Garden Between Us

When I am alone, I tend my own Garden.

When I meet you, another space appears.

There is my Garden.

There is yours.

And there is what begins to grow **between us**.

Trust may grow there.

So may humour, affection, curiosity, tenderness and silence.

But other things can grow there too.

- Expectation.
- Misunderstanding.
- Disappointment.
- Resentment.
- Fear.
- Control.

No single Pilgrim creates this shared space alone.

Each contributes something to its atmosphere.

- A word changes it.
- So can a silence.
- A kindness may soften it.
- A repeated dismissal may harden it.
- A question may open something.

The same question, asked at another moment, may close a Door.

And sometimes what happens between us has very little to do with what either of us intended.

- I may speak from one Window.
- You may hear me through another.
- I may offer care in the way I have learned to give it.
- You may be waiting for care in a form I have never learned to recognise.

This is one of the first mysteries of relationship:

This is one of the first mysteries of relationship:

> **What I offer is not always what you receive.**
> **What you offer is not always what I experience.**

Between intention and experience lies another human being.

Two Houses, Not One

Closeness can sometimes create the illusion that two Pilgrims should eventually become one.

- We should think alike.
- Want the same things.
- Respond in the same way.
- Understand without explanation.

- Perhaps even know what the other is feeling before they speak.

But relationship does not remove the walls of the House.

However close we become, I still live within mine.

You still live within yours.

- I cannot look directly through your Window.
- I can only listen when you tell me what you see.
- I cannot decide when your Door should open.

  I can knock.

  I can wait.

  I can be welcomed.

But the Door remains yours.

And you cannot inhabit my House for me.

This does not diminish intimacy.

Perhaps it makes intimacy possible.

Because intimacy is not the disappearance of two Pilgrims into one.

It is the possibility that two distinct Pilgrims may come close without requiring either to disappear.

What We See from the Path

From the outside, relationships can appear easy to read

- Two Pilgrims walk holding hands.
- Another pair walks several steps apart.
- One couple speaks constantly.
- Another shares long stretches of silence.

We may think we know what these things mean.
But we are looking from the path.

We do not know the Landscape between them.

Hands may be joined while the Houses behind them have grown distant.

Two Pilgrims may walk apart while sharing a deeply settled companionship.

Silence may contain tenderness.

Conversation may conceal loneliness.

What we see may be true.

It is simply not the whole truth.

Holding hands tells us that two hands are joined.
It does not tell us the condition of the River beneath them.

And perhaps this is why relationship asks us to look more carefully.

The First Difference

Sooner or later, difference appears.

It may be something small.

- One wants the window open.
  The other wants it closed.
- One enjoys silence.
  The other fills silence with conversation.
- One wants to plan the journey.
  The other would rather see where the day leads.

Or the difference may reach much deeper.

- Money.
- Family.
- Faith.
- Intimacy.
- Children.
- Work.
- Freedom.
- Commitment.

How much should be shared.

How much may remain private.

At first, we may think the difficulty is the difference itself.

But difference is unavoidable whenever two Pilgrims meet.

The more revealing question is:

What happens between us when difference appears?

- Can I remain curious when you do not see what I see?
- Can you hear my experience without immediately defending yours?
- Can we disagree without turning difference into distance?
- Can one of us say *no* without threatening the relationship?
- Can either of us change without the other experiencing that change as abandonment?

This is where relationship begins to reveal its Landscape.

Not when everything is easy.

But when two Pilgrims discover that they are not the same.

Something Begins to Move

As encounters become repeated, something begins to take shape.

- We develop rhythms.
- Ways of speaking.
- Ways of repairing.
- Ways of avoiding.
- Things we laugh about.
- Subjects we approach carefully.
- Places where conversation flows.
- Places where it repeatedly catches.

Without noticing, the relationship begins to acquire its own course.

And perhaps this is where water enters the Garden.

Some relationships begin to move like Rivers.

There is direction, change and discovery.

Two Pilgrims travel beside one another, not knowing every bend that lies ahead.

- At times the current carries them easily.
- At others they must paddle.

And some relationships, after travelling for many years, become quieter.

- The waters widen.
- Movement slows.

What was once a journey begins to feel more like a Lake.

Neither tells us whether the relationship is good or bad.

- A River may be exhilarating or exhausting.
- A Lake may be peaceful or stagnant.

For now, it is enough to notice that the Landscape between two Pilgrims is alive.

- It changes because they change.
- It responds to what they bring into it.

And beneath all our ideas about what relationships ought to be, perhaps there is a simpler place to begin.

- I meet you.
- You meet me.
- Neither of us arrives empty.
- Neither of us sees the whole Landscape.

And between our two Gardens, something begins to grow.

> **The question is not whether we will always see through the same Window.**
>
> **The question is what we will cultivate when our different Windows meet.**

Section 2 — The Waters Between Us

A relationship is not a fixed thing.

It moves.

- Sometimes quickly.
- Sometimes almost imperceptibly.
- Sometimes two Pilgrims are carried easily together.
- Sometimes they must make an effort to remain beside one another.
- And sometimes the waters become so quiet that it is difficult to know whether they have found stillness or simply stopped moving.

Perhaps there are two simple ways in which we might begin to recognise these waters.

The River

A River is a relationship in movement.

Something is unfolding.

The Pilgrims may be discovering one another.

- Building a life.

- Travelling.
- Raising children.
- Beginning a friendship.
- Creating something together.
- Or simply continuing to change while remaining beside one another.

A River does not stay the same as it travels.

- Its banks change.
- Its depth changes.
- Sometimes it narrows.
- Sometimes it widens.
- Sometimes the current strengthens.
- Sometimes it becomes almost still.

Relationships move in much the same way.

- The person we meet at twenty-five is not exactly the person standing beside us at fifty.
- Nor are we.
- A friendship formed in one season of life may need to discover how to live in another.
- A partnership shaped around work and children may find itself in unfamiliar waters when the children leave home.
- Two Pilgrims who once seemed to be travelling towards the same Horizon may discover new interests, questions or ways of seeing.

This does not necessarily mean that something has gone wrong.

It may simply mean that the River is moving.

A living relationship must continually meet people who are themselves still changing.

And movement does not always mean ease.

There are stretches where the current carries us.

Others where we must paddle.

For now, it is enough to recognise:

This relationship is moving.

The Lake

Other relationships feel more like Lakes.

The Pilgrims know one another well.

The Landscape has become familiar.

There may be routines established over many years.

- A cup of tea placed beside someone without asking.
- A familiar chair.
- A shared joke requiring no explanation.
- The knowledge of who will lock the Door at night.
- Little needs to be negotiated because much has already found its place.

From the outside, such a relationship may appear uneventful.

But stillness is not emptiness.

A Lake can hold great depth.

There are relationships in which very little appears to happen because companionship itself has become enough.

- Two Pilgrims may sit together without needing to fill the silence.
- They may have travelled so long beside one another that much of their shared life has settled into something quiet and familiar.

But Lakes can become stagnant too.

Sometimes movement has stopped not because the Pilgrims have found peace, but because movement has become difficult.

- Questions are no longer asked.
- Certain subjects remain untouched.
- Change feels dangerous.
- The surface remains peaceful because both have learned not to disturb the water.
- From the bank, these Lakes may look very similar.

Only the Pilgrims living beside them know something of what lies beneath.

And sometimes even they do not yet know.

So perhaps the question is not:

Is our relationship moving?

But:

What kind of stillness are we living in?

A Lake can be still without being stagnant.

And a River can be moving without knowing where it is going.

The Waters Change

No relationship remains River or Lake forever.

A River may slow.

A Lake may receive new water.

- A friendship that once flowed through daily conversation may gradually become quieter.
- Years later, something may bring the current back.
- A long-settled partnership may begin moving differently when retirement arrives, illness changes daily life, children leave home, or the Pilgrims discover something new they want to explore together.

The Landscape changes.

So do the Pilgrims.

Perhaps wisdom in relationship begins partly by noticing the waters that are actually present rather than insisting that they resemble the waters we once knew.

Because movement alone does not tell us whether two Pilgrims are close.

Stillness alone does not tell us whether they have grown apart.

We need to notice something else.

- A River may travel beneath full sunlight.
- Another may travel largely by moonlight.
- A Lake may reveal great depth.
- Another may show us only its surface.

So the next question is no longer simply:

Are we moving or resting?

It is:

How much of one another can we actually see?

Section 3 — Sunlight and Moonlight

Water tells us something about how a relationship moves.

Light tells us something different.

It tells us **what is available to be seen and known between two Pilgrims**.

No Pilgrim sees another completely.

However long we have travelled together, there will always be rooms within another House that we have never entered.

- Memories we did not live.
- Thoughts that were never spoken.
- Parts of an inner Landscape that belong only to the person who inhabits it.
- Relationship does not require complete access.

But the light in which two Pilgrims meet can differ greatly.

- Some relationships live largely in sunlight.
- Others are lived partly in moonlight.

Neither tells us whether love is present.

They tell us something about **what can be brought into the light between us**.

The Sunlit Relationship

In a Sunlit Relationship, much can be brought into the Garden.

There is room to say:

- *I am hurt.*
- *I don't understand.*
- *I need something different.*
- *I have changed my mind.*
- *I disagree with you.*
- *There is something I need to tell you.*

This does not mean that everything must be shared.

Sunlight is not surveillance.

Privacy still belongs to each Pilgrim.

There may be experiences that need time before they can be spoken, thoughts that are still forming, or rooms that simply remain personal.

The difference is that when something **needs** to enter the relationship, there is usually a way of bringing it into the light.

- A difficult question may be uncomfortable without becoming forbidden.
- A disagreement may disturb the waters without threatening the existence of the relationship.

- One Pilgrim may say *no* without the other hearing *I no longer love you.*

A Sunlit Relationship may still contain storms.

But the Pilgrims are generally able to turn towards what is happening between them.

We do not have to agree about everything in order to bring what matters into the light.

The Moonlit Relationship

Some relationships feel different.

They are lived partly in moonlight.

The image matters.

When we look at the Moon, we see the side that is turned towards us.

- It is real.
- We see its contours.
- Its brightness.
- Its changing appearance beneath the night Sky.

But there is another side that we cannot see from where we stand.

- We know it is there.
- It simply remains beyond our view.

Some relationships are like this.

A Pilgrim may be present, loyal, steady and kind.

There may be companionship, affection, laughter, practical care and decades of shared history.

A life may have been built together.

The side that is visible is real.

But there may also be places within the other Pilgrim's House that remain turned away.

- Questions that are rarely welcomed.
- Experiences that remain private.
- Rooms we have learned not to approach.

This does not necessarily mean deception.

Nor does it mean that love is absent.

It means that part of the other Pilgrim remains beyond what is available to us.

The Side of the Moon We Cannot See

There may be many reasons.

- Perhaps vulnerability is difficult to expose.
- Perhaps privacy has always been part of how the other Pilgrim lives within themselves.
- Perhaps earlier experiences taught them that disclosure is unsafe.
- Perhaps opening certain Doors feels unsettling.
- Or perhaps they simply do not experience closeness through conversation and disclosure in the same way.

We may understand some of the reasons.

Others may remain unknown.

And this is where **asymmetry** can arise.

- I may allow you to see deeply into my House while you allow me to see only certain rooms of yours.
- I may experience questioning as a movement towards closeness.
- You may experience the same questioning as pressure.

Neither necessarily loves more.

Neither necessarily loves less.

But we do not live with the same degree of openness.

Over time, we begin to learn the edges.

- *Here I can ask.*
- *Here the Door becomes Guarded.*
- *Here the Door closes.*
- Perhaps the question is tried again.
- Perhaps tension enters the Garden.
- Eventually, fewer questions are asked.

The waters become peaceful again.

But something has changed.

The Pilgrims have begun to learn where the light ends.

The Sunlit River

Now water and light begin to meet.

A relationship may be a River and live largely in sunlight.

Life is moving.

Plans change.

The Pilgrims change.

They disagree, repair, discover and continue.

Sometimes the waters become turbulent.

But what is happening between them can generally be brought into the light.

The River is moving.

And much of its movement can be seen.

The Moonlit River

Another relationship may also be moving.

There may be shared plans.

- Travel.
- Work.
- Family.
- Laughter.
- Affection.
- A life continuing to unfold.

But parts of the journey are travelled in partial light.

- The Pilgrims can travel together here—but perhaps not there.

- They can speak about this—but perhaps not that.

The River continues.

The companionship is real.

So is the moonlight.

The Sunlit Lake

A relationship may also have become quiet while remaining deeply visible.

The Pilgrims know much of one another.

There may be little need for constant conversation because much has already been spoken.

- Silence is comfortable.
- Difference does not threaten closeness.
- Nothing needs proving.

The Lake is still.

But its stillness contains depth.

The Moonlit Lake

And then there is the Moonlit Lake.

The relationship may be steady.

- Familiar.
- Affectionate.
- Perhaps it has lasted for decades.
- Much of life is shared.

And yet certain waters remain undisturbed.

One Pilgrim may know:

There is another side of you that I do not know.

Perhaps even:

You do not wish me to know it.

That recognition need not become an accusation.

We may understand why another Pilgrim protects certain rooms.

We may respect their right to do so.

But understanding does not mean pretending that the closed rooms have no effect upon the person living beside them.

Compassion does not erase impact.

A Moonlit Lake may contain deep companionship.

It may also contain questions that have gradually stopped being asked.

From the shore, those possibilities can look remarkably similar.

Deep Water or Stagnant Water?

This is why quiet relationships can be difficult to understand from the outside.

Two Lakes may appear equally peaceful.

One is quiet because the Pilgrims have found ease together.

- Silence is comfortable.
- Difference can exist without threatening closeness.

The other is quiet because movement has become difficult.

- Questions are no longer asked.
- Subjects are avoided.
- Peace depends upon leaving certain waters undisturbed.

From the shore, the two Lakes may look almost identical.

Only the Pilgrims living beside them know something of what lies beneath.

And sometimes even they are still discovering it.

So the question is not simply:

Are we peaceful?

Perhaps it is:

What kind of peace are we living in?

We Do Not Need to Illuminate the Whole Moon

It would be easy to turn sunlight into the ideal and moonlight into something that needs to be corrected.

But that would miss the Landscape entirely.

- No Pilgrim is entitled to every room in another person's House.
- No relationship requires complete disclosure in order to contain love.
- And not every mystery needs to be excavated.

Some Pilgrims may consciously choose a Moonlit Relationship.

- They see what is available.
- They recognise what is not.
- And they may still find companionship, tenderness and meaning there.

The important movement is not from Moon to Sun.

- It is from **unseeing to seeing**.
- From pretending to recognising.
- From demanding to understanding.

Perhaps that is one of the quiet maturities of relationship:

I can love the side of you that I know
without pretending that I know the whole Moon.

And once we recognise this, another question appears.

Because knowing what is visible between us does not tell us what happens when one Pilgrim approaches another.

For that, we must return to the House.

To its threshold.

To the Door.

What happens when I arrive at your Door?

Section 4 — The Doors Between Us

Every House has a Door.

Through it, we decide what may enter, what may leave, when we are ready to meet another Pilgrim, and when we need to remain within.

In relationship, we are continually arriving at one another's Doors.

- Sometimes with a question.
- Sometimes with affection.
- Sometimes with disappointment.
- Sometimes carrying something difficult that needs to be said.

But the Door we find today may not be the Door we found yesterday.

A Pilgrim who welcomed conversation last week may need privacy today.

- Someone who was Guarded for years may suddenly be ready to speak.
- A Door may be Open around one part of life and Guarded around another.
- Busy when we are overwhelmed.
- Closed around an old wound.
- Silent when something needs time.

The Five Doors are therefore not five kinds of people.

They are ways in which a Pilgrim may **receive what is arriving**.

- Water tells us how the relationship is moving.
- Light tells us what is available to be seen.
- The Door tells us something else:

  How am I receiving you now?

The question is not:

Which Door am I?

It is:

Which Door am I standing at now?

The Closed Door

Sometimes the answer is simply:

No.

- *I cannot speak about this.*
- *I do not want to go there.*
- *I cannot receive what you are bringing.*

The Door is Closed.

It is tempting to assume that a Closed Door is a problem.

But sometimes closing a Door is wise.

- A Pilgrim may be overwhelmed.
- A boundary may have been crossed.
- The conversation may have become harmful.
- A boundary may have been crossed.
- Something may need time.
- Or the room behind that Door may simply be private.

A Closed Door does not always mean:

I do not love you.

Sometimes it means:

I cannot meet you here.

The difficulty begins when one Pilgrim believes that relationship gives them the right to open another Pilgrim's Door.

- Questioning becomes repeated questioning.
- Concern becomes pressure.
- Knocking becomes pounding.

But the Door still belongs to the person who lives within the House.

Your Door belongs to you.

My Door belongs to me.

The Guarded Door

A Guarded Door is different.

It is not completely closed.

But neither is it fully open.

It says:

I am here.

But come carefully.

- Perhaps trust has been damaged.
- Perhaps something feels uncertain.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim wants connection but is not yet sure whether it is safe to open further.

The Guarded Door watches what happens at the threshold.

- Do you listen when I say *not yet*?
- Do you respect what I choose not to share?
- Do you use what I tell you against me later?
- Do you remain when I reveal something difficult?

Trust is not created merely because a Door opens.

It is also shaped by what happens **after we have been invited inside**.

The Busy Door

Some Doors appear open.

The Pilgrim is present.

- They are listening.
- They may even be looking directly at us.

But inside the House, everything is moving.

While the other Pilgrim speaks, we are already:

- Preparing our reply.
- Defending ourselves.
- Explaining.
- Correcting.

- Solving.
- Remembering what happened last time.
- Waiting for our turn.

The Door is not Closed.

The doorway is crowded.

This is one of the easiest Doors to mistake for an Open one.

- We think we are listening because we have not walked away.
- But presence is not simply remaining in the room.
- It is making enough space to receive what has entered it.

Sometimes the first thing a Busy Door needs is not a better answer.

It needs space.

The Open Door

An Open Door says:

Come in.

Let me hear what you are bringing.

This does not mean:

I agree with you.

Nor:

You are right.

Nor:

I will give you what you want.

Receiving is not the same as agreeing.

- I can hear your experience without surrendering my own.
- I can understand why something matters to you while seeing it differently.
- I can allow your Window to exist without abandoning mine.

An Open Door does not require an empty House.

Perhaps that is what makes genuine encounter possible.

Two Pilgrims can remain distinct while allowing something of the other to enter.

The Silent Door

And sometimes the Door becomes Silent.

- Not Closed.
- Not Guarded.
- Not Busy.

Simply Silent.

Something has arrived and we do not immediately answer it.

We allow it to remain for a moment.

- Perhaps another Pilgrim has told us something unexpected.
- Perhaps they have described an experience we had never understood.
- Perhaps our first response would be defence, explanation or advice.

The Silent Door waits.

It says:

- *I have heard you.*
- *I do not yet need to decide what this means.*
- *Let me remain with what you have brought.*

Sometimes another Pilgrim does not need an immediate answer.

They need somewhere for their experience to land.

And sometimes what enters through the Silent Door continues ripening long after the conversation has ended.

Doors Move

No Door is permanently fixed.

- The Closed Door may become Guarded.
- The Guarded Door may become Open.
- The Open Door may become Busy.
- The Busy Door may need to close for a while.
- And sometimes, after enough noise has settled, a Silent Door appears.

There is no hierarchy here.

An Open Door is not always wiser than a Closed one.

Sometimes wisdom opens.

Sometimes wisdom waits.

Sometimes wisdom says:

Not now.

And sometimes wisdom says:

No.

What matters is recognising the Door through which we are meeting.

When Two Doors Meet

A relationship does not contain only one Door.

There are two.

And this changes everything.

- One Pilgrim may approach with an Open Door while the other becomes Guarded.
- One may become Busy while the other desperately wants to be heard.
- One may close while the other continues knocking.
- Sometimes both Doors close.
- Sometimes both open at exactly the right moment.
- And sometimes one Pilgrim waits quietly outside until the other is ready.

Many recurring conflicts begin here.

- One Pilgrim experiences questioning as connection:
  If we talk about this, we can become closer.
- The other experiences the same questioning as intrusion:
  If you keep asking, I need to protect myself.

- So the first asks again.
  The second retreats.
- The first feels the distance and increases the pressure.
  The second closes the Door further.

Soon they are no longer speaking about the original question.

They are responding to what is happening **between their Doors** .

And when this happens repeatedly, the wider Landscape begins to change.

- Certain conversations disappear.
- Questions stop being asked.
- One Pilgrim learns where the edges are.
- The River may continue flowing.
- Or the waters may gradually settle into a Moonlit Lake.

The Landscape between two Pilgrims is often shaped not by one dramatic event, but by thousands of small encounters at the Door.

Knocking Is Not Entering

Perhaps one of the simplest lessons of relationship is also one of the hardest.

- We may knock.
- We may invite.
- We may ask.
- We may say:

There is something important I would like us to talk about.

But knocking does not give us the right to enter.

The other Pilgrim may not be ready.

They may never be ready.

And respecting that does not mean pretending that their refusal has no effect upon us.

Both truths can stand together:

You have the right to keep your Door closed.

I have the right to notice what living beside that Closed Door means for me.

That is where boundary differs from control.

Control says:

You must open your Door.

A boundary says:

I will decide how I live in relation to the Door you have chosen to close.

Neither Pilgrim needs to disappear.

Neither needs to force the other into their House.

Perhaps before knocking again, there are only a few questions we need to ask:

- *What Door am I bringing to this encounter?*
- *Am I able to receive what the other Pilgrim may say?*
- *Am I knocking—or pushing?*

And sometimes the wisest thing we can do is simply remain on the Porch.

Near enough to meet.

Far enough to breathe.

Relationship does not require every Door to remain open.

It asks us to learn how to meet one another at the threshold.

And every time we do, something happens in the Garden between us.

- A little more trust.
- A little more distance.
- A question answered.
- A question abandoned.
- A Door that opens more readily next time.
- A Door that becomes more cautious.

Encounter after encounter, the Landscape changes.

And eventually, so do the waters.

Section 5 — When the Waters Change

No River remains exactly the same.

No Lake remains untouched by what enters it.

Relationships have their own weather, seasons and changing waters.

There are times when two Pilgrims seem to travel easily together.

- The current carries them.
- There is little need to think about who is paddling or how much effort the journey requires.

Then something changes.

- Work becomes demanding.
- A child arrives.
- A parent becomes ill.
- Money becomes uncertain.

One Pilgrim begins changing in ways the other does not yet understand.

Something that once seemed effortless begins requiring attention.

This does not necessarily mean that the relationship is failing.

It may simply mean:

The waters have changed.

And now the Pilgrims must discover how they will travel through them.

When We Have to Paddle

Sometimes relationship requires effort.

- A conversation needs to be begun.
- A misunderstanding needs to be revisited.
- Plans have to be changed.
- One Pilgrim needs more support than usual.

There is nothing necessarily wrong with this.

A relationship that requires effort is not necessarily a relationship that is failing.

There are stretches of every long journey when the current is less helpful.

Sometimes one Pilgrim paddles while the other rests.

Later, the roles may reverse.

One carries more when the other cannot.

This too can be part of companionship.

The difficulty is not that the effort is unequal at every moment.

Relationship is rarely measured so precisely.

The deeper question is whether, across the journey,

both Pilgrims remain participants in what they are travelling through together.

When One Pilgrim Does the Paddling

Sometimes a relationship continues moving because one Pilgrim has become very skilled at keeping it moving.

- They begin the conversations.
- Make the arrangements.
- Repair after disagreements.
- Suggest what they might do together.
- Adapt.
- Accommodate.
- Learn which subjects are better left alone.

Perhaps this has happened so gradually that neither Pilgrim notices it anymore.

From the bank, the boat may appear to be travelling perfectly well.

Inside it, one Pilgrim is tired.

This does not necessarily mean the other does not care.

- Perhaps they express care differently.
- Perhaps they have never noticed how much the other is carrying.
- Perhaps both have quietly settled into different roles.

But eventually the paddling Pilgrim may wonder:

If I put down the paddle, what happens to us?

It is a revealing question.

Sometimes we only discover what has been keeping something moving when we stop doing it.

Paddling in Different Directions

There are other times when both Pilgrims are making considerable effort.

The difficulty is that they are paddling in different directions.

- One wants greater closeness.
  The other wants more space.
- One wants change.
  The other wants continuity.
- One wants to talk.
  The other wants to leave the matter alone.

- One wants to know the other side of the Moon.
  The other wants that side to remain their own.

Both may believe they are protecting something important.

One thinks:

If we could only talk about this, we could become closer.

The other thinks:

If you would only stop asking, we could be peaceful again.

- So one paddles towards.
  The other paddles away.
- The first feels the distance increasing and paddles harder.
  The second feels the pressure increasing and does the same.

Now something curious happens.

Both Pilgrims may say:

I am trying.

And both may be telling the truth.

The difficulty is not lack of effort.

It is that their efforts are working against one another.

Eventually, the question may no longer be:

Who is trying harder?

But:

Where are we each trying to take this River?

When Weather Reaches the Water

Then there are storms.

Something happens in one House.

- Anger.
- Fear.
- Exhaustion.
- Jealousy.
- Grief.
- Disappointment.

The weather travels through the Door and enters the Garden between the Pilgrims.

The other feels its echo.

Perhaps their own weather begins to change.

- A sharp word receives another.
- A Door becomes Guarded.
- A question becomes an accusation.
- A silence is interpreted as rejection.

The River that seemed navigable an hour earlier becomes turbulent.

This does not necessarily mean that the relationship itself has become turbulent.

Sometimes it is simply passing through weather.

A storm is a condition, not a type of relationship.

This matters.

If we mistake every storm for the whole Landscape, we may make decisions about the River while standing in the rain.

Sometimes it is enough to recognise:

The weather has changed.

And wait until we can see the banks again.

When Hijack Enters the River

Sometimes the weather does more than disturb the water.

One Pilgrim becomes overwhelmed, and something begins to narrow.

The Voice changes.

- *You need to answer me now.*
- *You never listen.*
- *If you cared, you would...*
- *I'm not discussing this.*

Urgency enters.

Then pressure.

The Door that might otherwise have remained Open becomes Busy, Guarded or Closed.

The other Pilgrim feels the pressure and may become overwhelmed too.

Now one House's weather has become an echo in another.

And if that echo becomes weather:

one storm becomes two.

This is relational Hijack.

Not because either Pilgrim *is* Hijacked.

But because, for a time, the overwhelmed state has begun taking authority over the encounter.

The movement may be very quick:

Urgency → Pressure → Continuity → Narrowing

One Pilgrim feels urgency and presses.

The other withdraws.

Instead of allowing the encounter to rest, the first continues.

- Another question.
- Another message.
- Another attempt to resolve it.

The second becomes increasingly Guarded or closes the Door.

That closure creates still more urgency in the first.

Now the encounter narrows.

There seem to be only two possibilities:

Talk to me now.

or

You don't care.

And the other Pilgrim may narrow too:

Leave me alone.

or

You are controlling me.

This is where relational Hijack becomes especially interesting:

one Pilgrim's narrowing can invite narrowing in the other.

Their weather creates an echo in my House.

But the echo does not have to become my weather.

So the alternative remains:

Urgency → Arrive → Awareness → Space

And from space, discernment becomes possible.

The Flooded River

But some storms do not pass quickly.

Rain continues.

The River rises.

Eventually it leaves its banks.

- Now the argument is no longer about what happened this morning.
- Yesterday enters.
- Last year enters.
- Something said ten years ago is pulled into the current.

Old disappointments rise from places where they had settled.

- *You always...*
- *You never...*
- *This is exactly what happened before...*

The present River is carrying debris from many earlier storms.

This is the **Flooded River**.

The usual banks of the relationship no longer contain what is happening.

A disagreement about one thing becomes a disagreement about everything.

One Pilgrim may not even recognise how the conversation arrived where it has.

And yet floods also reveal.

Things long settled beneath the water may suddenly become visible.

- A grievance thought forgotten.
- A need never expressed.
- A hurt that had been covered by ordinary life.

The flood did not necessarily create them.

It brought them into the current.

What happens afterwards may matter more than the storm itself.

After the Flood

Eventually, the waters recede.

Sometimes the River finds its course again.

- The Pilgrims repair what was damaged.
- Something is understood that had not been understood before.

Perhaps the banks remain.

Perhaps they do not.

- Trust may have changed.
- A Door that was Open may become Guarded.
- Sunlight may become moonlight for a while.

The relationship does not necessarily return to exactly what it was.

And perhaps it should not.

> **Sometimes repair does not mean restoring the old Landscape.**
> **It means discovering what Landscape exists now.**

We need not say more here.

Because later we will discover that when waters recede, they sometimes leave something on the banks.

When the Lake Is Disturbed

Lakes have weather too.

A relationship may have rested quietly for years when something suddenly disturbs its surface.

- Retirement.
- Illness.
- Loss.
- A child leaving home.
- A secret revealed.
- A new desire.
- A question one Pilgrim can no longer leave unasked.

The Lake begins to move.

This can feel frightening.

The Pilgrims may have mistaken stillness for permanence.

But disturbance does not always mean destruction.

Sometimes fresh water enters a Lake that had become too settled.

Conversation begins again.

Something dormant becomes alive.

The Pilgrims discover parts of one another they had stopped looking for.

A Lake can become River-like again.

- At other times, disturbance reveals how little movement the relationship can tolerate.
- Perhaps its peace depended upon certain waters remaining undisturbed.

Neither possibility can be known merely by looking at the surface.

Sometimes the waters must move before we discover what they contain.

We Used to Be...

Perhaps this is why relationships can be difficult to name.

We continue calling them by names that may have been given many years ago.

- Marriage.
- Partnership.
- Friendship.
- Companionship.

But beneath the name, the waters may have changed.

Two Pilgrims may quietly recognise:

We used to be a Sunlit River.

Or:

Somewhere along the way, we became a Moonlit Lake.

There is no accusation in this.

It is simply noticing the Landscape that exists now.

Sometimes suffering grows because we keep trying to inhabit a relationship as it once was rather than seeing what it has become.

- The River may have widened.
- The current may have slowed.
- The light may have changed.
- The shoreline may have moved.

And still, something may remain.

- History.
- Affection.
- Responsibility.
- Love.

Or perhaps simply the recognition that two Pilgrims once travelled a long way together.

When the River Begins to Divide

And sometimes the change is greater still.

Two Pilgrims who once travelled the same River begin moving towards different channels.

At first the separation may be barely noticeable.

The waters still touch.

The same Landscape surrounds them.

There may still be shared friends, children, family, memories, responsibilities and love.

But the channels are beginning to move apart.

- Sometimes something has happened that cannot be repaired.
- Sometimes harm has occurred.
- Sometimes trust has been broken.
- And sometimes two Pilgrims simply reach a place where continuing together requires one or both of them to become someone they can no longer be.

The River begins to divide.

Not every division requires a villain.

Not every ending begins with a storm.

Sometimes two Pilgrims simply arrive at a place where the waters no longer travel in the same direction.

And what happens then deserves its own space.

Section 6 — When the River Divides

Not every River travels as one River forever.

Sometimes two Pilgrims who have travelled together for years reach a place where the waters begin to separate.

- It may happen suddenly.
- A betrayal.
- A decision.
- A discovery.
- Something changes the Landscape so completely that neither Pilgrim can continue as before.

But often the dividing is quieter.

- The Pilgrims may still share meals.
- Still laugh.
- Still care for one another.
- Still inhabit much of the same Landscape.

Yet somewhere beneath ordinary life, the current has begun to change.

One is moving towards one channel.

The other towards another.

At first, the distance may be almost invisible.

Then one day they look across the water and recognise:

We are no longer travelling in the same direction.

Not Every Division Begins with a Storm

We often imagine the ending of a relationship as a dramatic event.

- An argument.
- A betrayal.
- A Door slammed shut.
- Sometimes it is.

But Rivers can divide without a storm.

People change.

- A friendship that once filled much of life may gradually become occasional.
- Siblings who were inseparable as children may build very different adult lives.
- Partners may discover that what once carried them together no longer carries them in the same direction.

There need not always be a villain.

There need not always be someone to blame.

Sometimes the Landscape itself has changed.

But not every separation is gentle.

There are relationships wounded by cruelty, betrayal, control, neglect or harm.

Those realities should not be softened by metaphor.

Sometimes leaving is not simply following another channel.

It is necessary protection.

Each River has its own story.

The Residue of the River

Even when waters separate, they do not leave the banks exactly as they found them.

Every River leaves something behind.

- A flood may leave branches, stones and silt along the shore.

Gentler waters leave marks too.

- They shape the bank.
- Move the soil.
- Carry something away.
- Deposit something new.

Relationships do this to us.

- Another Pilgrim may no longer walk beside us, yet something of the journey remains.
- A phrase we still use.
- Music we discovered together.
- A place that feels different because we once stood there with them.
- A way of cooking.
- A confidence we did not have before meeting them.
- A wound.
- A tenderness.
- A habit.
- A question.
- Perhaps even another way of seeing through our Window.

This is the **residue of the River**.

Not everything that remains is painful.

And not everything that remains needs to be removed.

- Some residue nourishes the soil.
- Some takes time to clear.
- Some becomes so thoroughly part of the Landscape that we eventually stop remembering where it came from.

The relationship may have ended.

Its effects have not necessarily ended with it.

The waters move on.

The banks remember.

When Only One Pilgrim Leaves

Not every River divides by agreement.

- Sometimes one Pilgrim chooses another course while the other wants the shared journey to continue.
- For one, the separation may have been unfolding quietly for months or years.
- They may have travelled a considerable distance within their own House before saying anything.
- For the other, the journey changes that morning.
- They are beside the same River.

  But they are not standing at the same place in the journey.

The Pilgrim who remains may search upstream.

- *When did this happen?*
- *Why didn't I see it?*
- *Could I have changed something?*
- *Was any of it real?*

The mind travels backwards, looking for the bend where everything changed.

- Sometimes there was one.
- Sometimes there was no single bend.

Only many small movements of water.

The River Was Still Real

A painful ending can make us reinterpret the entire journey through its final stretch.

- *Perhaps none of it meant anything.*
- *Perhaps I never knew them.*
- *Perhaps all those years were wasted.*

But the mouth of a River does not tell us everything about its source.

A painful ending does not make every earlier moment false.

Nor does a beautiful beginning guarantee a beautiful ending.

- A relationship may contain genuine love and later become unable to continue.
- A friendship may once have been deeply important and later fade.

Two Pilgrims may have travelled well together for twenty years and still discover that they cannot travel the next ten in the same way.

We do not have to make the past perfect.

Nor do we have to destroy it in order to leave it.

The River was what it was while we were travelling through it.

What happened later does not need to erase what came before.

Rivers That Divide but Remain Connected

Some Rivers divide but continue through the same Landscape.

- Partners separate but remain parents.
- A marriage ends while family life continues in another form.
- Siblings become distant but still share responsibility for ageing parents.
- A friendship changes while mutual friends continue bringing two Gardens into contact.

The old relationship may no longer exist.

But something remains.

- Responsibility.
- Care.
- History.
- Perhaps love in another form.

The channels have separated.

They simply have not disappeared from one another's Landscape.

Rivers That Meet Again

Sometimes separated waters meet again.

- A friendship returns after twenty years.
- Siblings reconnect.
- Two Pilgrims who once could not speak to one another discover that, years later, they can.

But the River that returns is not the River that left.

Nor are the Pilgrims.

Time has altered the banks.

Other Landscapes have been travelled.

Life has happened.

If the waters meet again, they meet **as they are now**.

There is no requirement to recreate what existed before.

Sometimes another River begins.

Sometimes it is simply a brief meeting of waters.

Both can be enough.

Some Rivers Do Not Meet Again

Other separations remain separations.

Sometimes there is no great argument.

No formal goodbye.

No moment when either Pilgrim says:

This is where our journey together ends.

- Something changes.
- A conversation feels different.
- A Door closes.
- Messages become shorter.
- The familiar current weakens.

And gradually, almost without announcement, two Pilgrims who once travelled easily together find themselves in different channels.

There may never be another meeting.

But that does not mean the River they shared has disappeared.

Years later, one Pilgrim may still mention the other.

- A memory returns.
- A place recalls a journey.

Something happens and, for a moment, we think of the person who would once have understood the story immediately.

- Not necessarily with anger.
- Not necessarily with longing.
- Simply with recognition.
- *You were once here.*

Perhaps this too is residue.

Some people remain in our Landscape without remaining in our lives.

And sometimes there is an unexpected symmetry to the journey.

The place where two Rivers first met may, many years later, become the place where they divide.

A circle closes without anyone intending to close it.

There need not always be blame.

There need not even be a final explanation.

Sometimes we simply recognise:

We travelled together for a while.
The journey mattered.
And then our waters went different ways.

Chapter 5 — The Family Garden



Families are complicated places.

- They can be where we first encounter love.
- And where we first encounter hurt.
- They can nurture us, protect us, encourage us and give us a sense of belonging.
- They can also misunderstand us, compare us, frighten us, disappoint us or ask things of us that we do not know how to give.

Within families, we may encounter some of the deepest expressions of human care.

- A parent sitting beside a sick child.
- A grandparent raising a grandchild.
- A brother quietly helping a sister.
- An adult child caring for an ageing parent.

But the same relationships can also contain jealousy, resentment, arguments, expectations, silence and wounds that remain long after the event that created them.

Perhaps this should not surprise us.

Family brings different Pilgrims into unusually close and repeated contact.

- Their Gardens meet again and again.
- Their Rivers may travel together for a time and then move in different directions.
- They look through different Windows.
- Weather arising in one House can enter an encounter and leave echoes in another.

And because families often travel beside one another for many years, what happens between them can become part of the Landscape they carry through life.

In this chapter, we will not try to describe the perfect family.

Nor will we divide families into good and bad.

Instead, we will enter a number of **living family stories**.

- Some contain tenderness.
- Some contain difficulty.
- Most contain both.

We will walk through them using the Landscape we have already come to know—not to decide who was right or wrong, but to look more carefully at what may have been happening between the Gardens.

And sometimes we will have to leave a Window closed.

We may know what one Pilgrim experienced without knowing why another acted as they did.

That too is part of family life.

Because healing does not always begin when every question has been answered.

Sometimes it begins when we can finally see what is growing.

And ask: **What needs tending here?**

Section 1 — Nurturing and Belonging

Family is often where we first experience being tended.

- Someone feeds us.
- Someone washes us.
- Someone notices when we are unwell.
- Someone teaches us how to hold a spoon, tie a shoelace, cross a road, greet a visitor.
- There may be bedtime stories.
- Meals around a table.
- Birthdays.
- Arguments over toys.
- A grandmother's cooking.
- A grandfather's stories.
- Brothers and sisters who irritate us one moment and defend us the next.
- There may be laughter that makes sense only within that family.
- Words and expressions that belong almost entirely to them.
- Recipes carried across generations.
- Customs brought from another country.
- Songs remembered long after childhood has passed.

Much of this enters the young Pilgrim without being taught as philosophy.

It is simply lived.

And through being lived, it becomes part of the Landscape.

But families do not all take the same form.

- Some children grow with both parents.
- Some with one.

- Some are raised largely by grandparents.
- Some move between different Gardens.
- Some are fostered.
- Some are adopted.
- Some are separated from their parents because of poverty, migration, conflict, illness or circumstances they are far too young to understand.

The young Pilgrim does not choose these beginnings.

They simply arrive within them.

And sometimes, many years later, they are still trying to understand what happened there.

Hannah and Daniel

Hannah was still a baby when she and her older brother, Daniel, were sent from Mozambique to Goa.

They were cared for by their maternal grandmother.

- For the adults, there were circumstances surrounding that decision.
- For the children, there was simply the life they found themselves living.

Hannah remembers feeling particularly safe with her maternal grandmother.

This was one of the Gardens in which she was tended.

Years passed.

Then, when Hannah was still a young child, her mother came to Goa.

She was going to take Daniel with her.

Hannah wanted to go too.

But her understanding was that her mother intended to return for her another time.

For an adult, there may have been reasons.

- Practical reasons.
- Financial reasons.
- Family reasons.

Circumstances a child could not possibly have understood.

We do not know.

But the little girl was not standing at her mother's Window.

She was standing at her own.

And from there, the Landscape looked very different.

- Her mother had come.
- Her brother was going.
- She was being left behind.

Then her grandmother intervened.

If the mother was taking one child, she should take both.

And Hannah went too.

The event passed.

The question did not.

Decades later, Hannah has continued trying to understand that moment.

- Why Daniel?
- Why not her?
- Was her mother more attached to him?
- What would have happened if her grandmother had remained silent?

These are adult questions growing around a childhood experience.

And here the Living Landscape allows us to see something important.

The Same Moment, Different Windows

Several Pilgrims stood within the same event.

But they did not stand at the same Window.

From Hannah's Window:

> *My mother came for my brother but not for me.*

From the grandmother's Window, something made her intervene:

> *If you take one, you take both.*

Daniel had his own Window.

And their mother had hers.

But we cannot see through it.

- We can imagine explanations.
- We could construct motives.
- We could decide that she favoured one child.

Or perhaps we could invent circumstances that justified her decision.

But all of these would be **our** attempts to fill a Window that remains unavailable to us.

Perhaps wisdom begins by leaving it unavailable.

> **We know what Hannah experienced.**
> **We do not know everything her mother experienced.**

Both statements can remain true.

And this matters far beyond one family.

- A child who is adopted may one day ask why they were given up.
- A child raised by grandparents may wonder why their parents could not care for them.
- A child whose parent left may carry a question into adulthood.
- A child sent to another country may understand the economic or political reasons decades later and still carry the echo of separation.

An explanation may change how an event is understood.

It does not necessarily erase how it was experienced.

What the Child Carries

This is where family becomes particularly delicate.

Adults make decisions using adult Landscapes.

- They see money.
- Danger.
- Work.
- Migration.
- Relationships.
- Opportunity.
- Survival.

A child may see something much simpler.

- *You left.*
- *You chose him.*
- *You didn't come.*
- *I wanted to go with you.*

Neither perspective automatically gives us the whole Landscape.

And sometimes the child grows into an adult before discovering that the question travelled with them.

The event may have lasted minutes.

Its echo may remain for decades.

This does not mean that every childhood separation becomes a wound.

Nor does it mean that every child experiences adoption, fostering, migration or grandparent care in the same way.

Some children experience extraordinary love and belonging in Gardens other than those of their birth parents.

That too matters.

Because nurturing is not confined to biology.

- A grandmother can tend.
- A grandfather can tend.
- An adoptive parent can tend.
- A foster parent can tend.
- An aunt or uncle can tend.

Sometimes even someone with no biological connection becomes one of the people through whom a young Pilgrim first experiences safety and care.

Family may begin with blood.

Tending is revealed through relationship.

The Question That Has No Answer

Perhaps one of the hardest things in a Family Landscape is an unanswered question.

- We naturally want to complete the story.
- *Why did she do it?*
- *Why wasn't I enough?*

- *Why did he leave?*
- *Why did they choose my brother?*

Sometimes another Pilgrim can answer.

Sometimes a conversation opens a Window that had remained closed for years.

And sometimes it cannot.

The person may have died.

Memory may have changed.

They may refuse to speak.

Or perhaps their explanation still does not answer the question carried by the child.

Then healing cannot depend entirely upon obtaining the missing answer.

That would place the key to one House permanently inside another.

Perhaps a different question slowly becomes possible:

If I cannot know everything that happened in their House,
what is this experience still doing in mine?

That does not excuse what happened.

- It does not rewrite the past.
- It does not require the adult to decide that the childhood experience was acceptable.
- It simply brings the Pilgrim back to the place where tending is now possible.

Their own House.

Their own Garden.

Their own life.

The mother's Window may remain beyond reach.

But Hannah's Window is here.

Her experience is here.

Her questions are here.

And perhaps healing begins not by inventing what cannot be known, but by allowing what **is** known to be seen clearly.

Some family questions are answered by opening another Window.
Others may have to be held beside a Window that never opens.

And still, the Pilgrim can continue.

Because an unanswered question may remain part of the Landscape without having to become the whole Landscape.

That may be one of the first lessons of the Family Garden:

We are shaped by the Gardens that tended us.
We are affected by the Gardens that could not.
But neither contains the whole of who we may become.

Section 2 — Expectations, Identity and Direction

Parents imagine futures for their children.

Often long before the child has begun imagining one for themselves.

- A good education.
- A secure profession.
- A suitable marriage.
- Children.
- A particular way of living.
- Perhaps the continuation of a faith.

A parent may look at these hopes and see love.

- *I want you to have a good life.*
- *I want you to be secure.*
- *I want you to make the right choices.*

But the child may eventually look through another Window.

And see another Horizon.

This does not necessarily happen dramatically.

Sometimes it begins with a question.

- *Why do we do this?*
- *Why do I have to believe this?*
- *Why must I become that?*
- *Why can't I choose differently?*

And somewhere between the parent's hope and the child's question, two Rivers that once seemed to be travelling together begin to separate.

A Path Already Chosen

For much of my childhood, religion was simply part of the Landscape in which I lived.

- There were beliefs.
- Practices.
- Expectations.
- Ways of understanding life.

I received them before I was old enough to ask whether I believed them myself.

Then, as I grew older, I began asking questions.

Not because I had decided that everything I had received was wrong.

- I wanted to understand.
- I visited different churches.
- I read.
- I explored.
- I entered temples.
- I listened.

I wanted to see what was beyond the Window through which I had first been taught to look.

My parents saw something different.

For them, faith was not merely one possible way of understanding life.

It carried meaning, belonging and consequences.

Even many years later, they would still encourage me to go to Mass.

And sometimes beneath that encouragement was fear.

- *What if you are wrong?*
- *What will happen to you?*

From their Window, they may have been trying to protect me.

From mine, something else was happening.

I was not trying to escape their Garden.

I was trying to discover my own River.

When Love Carries a Direction

This is where family expectations become complicated.

A parent may genuinely love a child and still try to direct their life.

The two are not mutually exclusive.

- *Study medicine.*
- *Become a lawyer.*
- *Marry someone from our community.*
- *Settle down.*
- *Have children.*
- *Stay close to the family.*
- *Continue our faith.*

The words may contain generations of experience.

- Perhaps the parent knew poverty and wants financial security for the child.
- Perhaps they experienced discrimination and believe a respected profession will offer protection.
- Perhaps religion carried them through suffering.
- Perhaps marriage and children represent stability in the world they know.
- Perhaps they are simply passing on the path that was passed to them.

Through their Window, the path may look like love.

Through the child's Window, the same path may gradually begin to feel like a fence.

Neither Window contains the whole Landscape.

Guidance, Expectation, Pressure

There is nothing inherently wrong with guidance.

- Parents have travelled Rivers their children have not yet travelled.
- They have encountered storms the child has never seen.
- Sometimes their warning prevents unnecessary suffering.
- Sometimes their experience is precisely what the young Pilgrim needs.

But something can gradually change.

This is what I have learned.

can become:

This is what you should do.

And eventually:

This is what you must do.

- Guidance has become expectation.
- Expectation may become pressure.
- And pressure, repeated often enough, can begin to enter the other House.

The child may comply.

Not because the path feels true.

But because disappointing a parent feels harder than abandoning their own direction.

- So they take the degree.
- They enter the profession.
- They attend the religious service.
- They marry the person the family approves of.
- They remain silent about something important.

From outside, the River appears peaceful.

But inside the House there may be another question:

Whose life am I living?

The River That Leaves the Familiar Course

Choosing differently does not automatically make a choice wise.

A different River is not better simply because it is different.

- Sometimes parents see dangers that their children cannot yet see.
- Sometimes children make mistakes.
- Sometimes they return and recognise wisdom in advice they once rejected.
- And sometimes the unfamiliar River becomes the life they needed to live.

This is why neither obedience nor rebellion is enough.

Rebellion can still leave us organised around another person's path.

I will do the opposite of what you want.

The family is still determining the direction.

Something quieter happens when the Pilgrim begins to ask:

Where does my River actually need to go?

That direction may take them beyond what their family understands.

And sometimes the family never completely understands.

What Did the River Cultivate?

My parents and I did not eventually arrive at identical beliefs.

They continued to have their faith.

I continued along my own path.

There was no final conversation in which everyone suddenly saw through the same Window.

But life continued.

The River travelled on.

And eventually another season arrived.

My parents grew older.

They needed more help.

The relationship was no longer primarily about whether I went to Mass or believed what they believed.

- There were practical things to be done.
- There was care to be given.
- There was presence.

And perhaps this gives us another way of looking at the paths people choose.

Instead of asking only:

Did they follow the path we gave them?

we might sometimes ask:

What has their path cultivated in them?

- Has it cultivated kindness?
- Responsibility?
- Courage?
- Compassion?
- The ability to remain present when life becomes difficult?

A person may leave a family's religious path and still carry forward much that was sacred within it.

Another may remain within the religion while cultivating very little of what it teaches.

The label cannot tell us what grew.

The Garden may.

Different Rivers, Continuing Relationship

Perhaps one of the difficult tasks of family life is learning to allow Rivers to separate without immediately interpreting separation as rejection.

- A son chooses another profession.
- A daughter marries someone unexpected.
- A child moves to another country.
- Someone changes religion.
- Someone does not marry.
- Someone does not have children.
- Someone lives in a way their parents never imagined.

The family may need time.

- There may be disappointment.
- Fear.
- Arguments.

- Silence.

And the Pilgrim choosing differently may also need to recognise that those reactions do not always arise from hostility.

Sometimes another Pilgrim is watching a River disappear towards a Horizon they cannot see.

They are afraid because they do not know where it leads.

Perhaps neither does the person travelling it.

That uncertainty belongs to both.

But eventually the feet walking the path belong to the Pilgrim.

- The parent can advise.
- Warn.
- Hope.
- Pray.
- Share what they have learned.

But they cannot travel another person's River for them.

And the adult child can listen without surrendering the Gate.

I can receive what you believe without being required to believe it.

I can value where I came from without remaining where you expected me to be.

I can love you without travelling your River.

Perhaps that is what needs tending here.
Not necessarily the difference.
But our capacity to remain in relationship **while allowing the difference to exist**.

Section 3 — Weather in the Family

Every family has an atmosphere.

Sometimes it is warm.

- People laugh easily.
- Mistakes are allowed.
- Affection is expressed.
- Someone can enter the room carrying difficult news and know that there will be somewhere to sit.
- A child can ask a question without wondering whether the question itself will cause trouble.

Sometimes the atmosphere is quieter.

- Love may not be spoken very often, but it appears in other ways.
- Food prepared.
- Clothes washed.
- A lift offered.
- Money quietly placed in someone's hand.
- Someone waiting awake until another person returns safely.

And sometimes the atmosphere is difficult.

- Voices rise quickly.
- People learn what not to say.
- A child notices footsteps in the corridor and already knows what kind of evening it may become.
- Someone watches another person's face before deciding whether it is safe to speak.
- A door closes.
- Everyone becomes quieter.

Nothing has happened to them directly.

And yet something has changed.

The weather in one House has entered the encounter.

And the atmosphere between the Gardens has changed.

The Child Who Learns the Weather

Children can become remarkable observers of family weather.

Long before they have words such as *anger*, *tension*, *anxiety*, *jealousy* or *resentment*, they may recognise their signs.

- The sound of a key in a door.
- The way a plate is placed on a table.
- A particular silence.
- The volume of someone's voice.
- A look exchanged between two adults.

The child learns:

This is a good time to ask.

- *Not now.*
- *Keep quiet.*
- *Stay out of the way.*
- *Something is wrong.*

No one may have taught them these things.

They learned by living within repeated encounters.

This is where our Landscape becomes particularly useful.

The anger does not literally belong to the room.

It begins as weather within a House.

But when that Pilgrim enters an encounter shouting, criticising, withdrawing or threatening, their weather crosses the Porch and becomes expressed in their Garden.

- Another Pilgrim encounters it.
- An atmosphere forms.
- And something may echo in their House.

Weather in one House → Encounter → Atmosphere → Echo in another House

- The echo may be fear.
- Anger.
- Tightness.
- Defensiveness.
- Silence.
- Or the urge to disappear.

And if that echo becomes new weather, it may return to the encounter.
One storm has become two.

The Loving Family That Also Argues

We should be careful here.
A difficult atmosphere does not necessarily mean an unloving family.

- Families argue.
- Parents lose patience.
- Children shout.
- Siblings become jealous.
- Someone says something they regret.
- A tired parent may respond harshly and apologise later.

Two people who love one another deeply may still have terrible arguments.

The Family Landscape is rarely made of one kind of weather.

- There can be laughter at breakfast and an argument at dinner.
- A mother can be extraordinarily nurturing and sometimes impatient.
- A father can be generous and still struggle with anger.
- Siblings can fight fiercely and defend one another just as fiercely outside the family.

Love does not guarantee permanent sunshine.

Nor would permanent sunshine be a realistic measure of a healthy family.

Perhaps what matters is also what happens **after the storm**.

Can someone say:

I shouldn't have spoken to you like that.

Can the other person say:

That hurt me.

- Can they listen?
- Can something be repaired?
- Can the atmosphere move again?

Humour may return.
Someone makes tea.
A conversation begins.

The current starts flowing between the Gardens once more.

Sometimes healing is remarkably ordinary.

Jealousy in the Garden

Jealousy can appear early.

- *Why did she get more?*
- *Why are you always praising him?*
- *Why does everyone help her?*
- *Why am I always the one who gets blamed?*

Parents may insist:

> *We love you equally.*

And perhaps they do.

But equal love does not necessarily produce identical experience.

- One child may be ill.
- Another may struggle at school.
- One may need considerably more practical care.
- Another may be especially close to a grandparent.
- One child may appear independent and therefore receive less attention precisely because everyone assumes they are fine.

From the parent's Window:

> *I am giving each child what they need.*

From the sibling's Window:

> *You always give them more.*

Both may be describing something real from where they stand.

This does not mean that every experience of favouritism is simply misunderstanding. Parents can favour one child. Families can treat siblings unequally.

But before deciding what something means, the Window invites us to look again.

> **What can this Pilgrim see from where they are standing?**

Jealousy may then become more than behaviour requiring correction.

Sometimes it is carrying information.

- *Do I still matter?*
- *Do you see me too?*
- *Is there enough love left for me?*

The behaviour may still need a boundary.
But the feeling underneath it may need tending.

When the Atmosphere Becomes Harmful

There is, however, an important boundary to our metaphor.
Not every family difficulty should be described merely as weather.

There are families in which someone lives with intimidation.

- Coercive control.
- Physical violence.
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Severe neglect.
- Threats.

A person may be frightened of what will happen when another family member arrives.

Children may learn not simply to notice the weather but to organise their behaviour around danger.

Here, saying:

Every Pilgrim has a different Window

is not enough.

A Window can help us understand why people interpret an event differently.

It does not make violence a matter of perspective.

Understanding another Window does not require us to deny harm.

Nor does healing mean remaining available to someone who continues to harm us.

- A Gate may need to close.
- Distance may be necessary.
- Outside help may be needed.
- Safety may have to come before reconciliation.

This matters because compassion can otherwise become confused with permission.
We can wonder what happened in another Pilgrim's House.
We can recognise that anger, trauma, fear or suffering may have travelled through generations.
But explanation does not erase consequence.

I can seek to understand your weather without allowing your storm to destroy my Garden.

When Weather Travels Through Generations

Sometimes a family atmosphere is older than anyone presently living within it realises.

- A father may have grown up with shouting and reproduce shouting.
- A mother who was never allowed to disagree may find disagreement frightening in her own children.
- Someone raised with harsh criticism may believe criticism is how children become strong.
- Another person may avoid every disagreement because conflict once meant danger.

What travels between generations is not necessarily deliberate.

No one wakes in the morning and decides:

Today I will continue a pattern that began before I was born.

Often the pattern simply feels normal.

Until someone notices it.

That moment matters.

Because once something can be seen, another possibility appears.

- *This happened in the Garden in which I grew.*
- *I understand something of where it came from.*
- *But it does not have to continue through mine.*

That is not rejection of the family.

It may be one of the deepest forms of tending.

Two Storms

And what about the ordinary argument?

Someone is angry.

Their words reach me.

Something immediately stirs in my House.

- My body tightens.
- A reply appears.
- *How dare you.*
- *You always do this.*
- *Let me tell you what you do.*

The echo is becoming weather.

If I send it immediately back through the Porch, the atmosphere intensifies.

Their weather becomes mine.

Mine returns to them.

Now nobody is tending the Garden between us because both Houses are storming.

This is where Presence matters.

Not as passivity.

Not as silently accepting whatever is said.

Simply enough space to recognise:

Their House has weather.
My House now has weather too.

And perhaps:

I do not have to send mine back immediately.

- I may listen.
- I may speak calmly.
- I may say:
- *I want to hear you, but I won't continue while I'm being shouted at.*
- I may leave and return later.
- I may close the Gate.

Different situations require different responses.

Presence does not prescribe one.

It creates enough space for choice.

What Needs Tending Here?

Perhaps the aim of a family is not to eliminate weather.

That would be impossible.

Every House will know sunshine and storms.

The question is what happens when our weather reaches the people whose Gardens repeatedly meet ours.

- Do they always have to shelter from it?
- Can we recognise when we have frightened someone?
- Can jealousy be heard beneath the behaviour?
- Can hurt be spoken before it hardens into resentment?
- Can someone apologise?
- Can a Gate be respected?
- Can we recognise when something has moved beyond ordinary family conflict and requires protection or help?
- And can we notice the weather we inherited before we pass it onwards?

Perhaps healing sometimes begins with something as small as this:

The weather arose in my House.

It does not have to become the atmosphere of every Garden around me.

Section 4 — When One Pilgrim Needs More Tending

There are times when one Pilgrim needs more tending than the others.

Sometimes this begins at birth.

A child is born with a disability.

Sometimes it becomes apparent gradually.

A child develops differently from their brothers or sisters.

- They may need help communicating.
- Learning.
- Eating.
- Moving.
- Dressing.
- Understanding the world around them.

Sometimes the need arrives later.

- An accident.
- A serious illness.
- Mental distress.
- Addiction.
- Unemployment.
- A relationship ending.

Something happens in one Pilgrim's life, and suddenly the rhythms of several Gardens begin to change.

- Appointments have to be attended.
- Plans are rearranged.
- Money may become tighter.
- Someone sleeps less.
- Someone works fewer hours.
- Someone begins worrying.
- Another person quietly takes on more.

The need belongs to one Pilgrim.

But its effects may travel through many Gardens.

> **When one Pilgrim needs more tending, the surrounding Gardens may have to grow differently too.**

The Families I Met

For many years, I taught children with special educational needs.

The children came to school each morning.

But they never came alone.

Not literally.

Their families travelled with them in ways we could not always see.

A child might arrive carrying a school bag.

- Behind that school bag could be a mother who had already been awake several times during the night.
- A parent who had helped with washing and dressing.
- Medication.
- Breakfast.
- Transport.
- An appointment later that afternoon.
- Forms waiting to be completed.
- Phone calls to be made.
- Perhaps another child who also needed attention.
- Perhaps work.
- Perhaps very little sleep.

As teachers, we encountered the child for part of the day.

The family lived with the reality across the whole day.

And across the years.

I saw how much some parents gave.

Very often, I saw mothers carrying an enormous amount of the daily tending.

That did not mean fathers did not care.

Nor did every family organise care in the same way.

But in many of the families I encountered, the mother's life had been profoundly shaped by the needs of her child.

The River she might once have imagined for herself had changed course.

Sometimes considerably.

Love Can Be Tiring

There is a temptation to describe caring only through beautiful words.

- Devotion.
- Sacrifice.
- Unconditional love.

And all of these may be present.

- But so may exhaustion.
- Frustration.
- Loneliness.
- Anger.
- Guilt.
- Fear about the future.
- A longing for an ordinary afternoon in which nobody needs anything.

These feelings do not necessarily contradict love.

- A mother may adore her child and desperately need rest.
- A father may be deeply committed and sometimes feel overwhelmed.
- A sibling may love their brother and resent how much family life revolves around him.
- A carer may willingly give and still sometimes think:

  I cannot do this today.

Perhaps one of the cruellest expectations we can place upon carers is that love should make caring effortless.

It does not.

Love can make us willing to carry something.
It does not make the thing weightless.

That distinction matters.

Because when tiredness is interpreted as failure, another burden is added to the one already being carried.

The Sibling at the Edge of the Garden

There may also be another child.

They do not need the same amount of help.

- They can dress themselves.
- They manage at school.
- They wait.
- They understand when plans change.
- They hear:

  Not now.

  Your sister needs me.

  Your brother has an appointment.

We'll do it another day.

The parents may not love this child any less.

They may simply be responding to greater need.

But from the child's Window, the Landscape can look different.

- *Why does everything revolve around her?*
- *Why does he always get more attention?*
- *What about me?*

Jealousy may appear.

Anger.

Perhaps guilt for feeling jealous of a brother or sister who already has difficulties.

The child may become exceptionally independent.

Everyone praises them for coping.

And because they cope, everyone continues giving attention elsewhere.

The family may see the strong child.

The child may quietly learn:

My needs should not take up too much space.

No one intended to plant that seed.

It simply grew within the circumstances.

This is why equality within families cannot always mean giving everyone the same amount.

Different Pilgrims have different needs.

But neither should greater need make the quieter Pilgrim invisible.

Sometimes tending means remembering to look towards the Garden that appears to need nothing.

When the Whole Family Adapts

Over time, families can become extraordinarily creative.

They learn routines no textbook could have designed for them.

- A sibling learns how to communicate with a brother whom others struggle to understand.
- A parent knows from the smallest movement that something is wrong.
- Holidays are planned differently.
- Meals change.
- Rooms are adapted.
- People develop humour around things outsiders might find difficult.

A family discovers ways of living that gradually become ordinary to them.

From outside, someone may see only disability.

Inside the family, there is still life.

- Birthdays.
- Arguments.
- Television.

- Laughter.
- Annoyance.
- Affection.
- Shopping.
- Bad moods.
- Favourite foods.
- Ordinary Tuesday mornings.

The Pilgrim who needs more tending is still a Pilgrim.

- Not a diagnosis.
- Not a burden.
- Not a lesson sent to teach everyone else something.
- A person.

With their own House.

Their own Garden.

Their own Window.

Their own way of encountering the Landscape.

That distinction is important.

Care can become so consuming that the person receiving it is gradually spoken about only through their needs.

- *She can't…*
- *He needs…*
- *We have to…*

Yet behind all the tending remains someone living a life.

To care for the Garden without losing sight of the Pilgrim may itself be part of healing.

When Illness Arrives

The same change can happen much later in family life.

Someone who has always been independent becomes ill.

- Cancer.
- A stroke.
- A serious accident.
- A period of severe mental distress.
- A chronic condition that slowly changes what they can do.

Yesterday they were tending their own Garden.

Now other Pilgrims are entering more often.

- Someone drives them to hospital.
- Someone cooks.
- Someone takes over the shopping.
- Someone deals with paperwork.
- Someone sits beside them.

And once again, different Windows appear.

One family member may immediately organise everything.

Another becomes frightened and avoids the situation.

One wants to talk openly about the illness.

Another does not.

Someone researches every treatment.

Someone says:

I don't want to know.

Someone remains remarkably calm.

Someone becomes angry.

None of these reactions alone tells us how much a person loves.

They may tell us something about the weather in their House.

Who Carries the Water?

And then comes a question that appears in many families:

Who is doing the caring?

- One sibling may live nearby.
- Another lives hundreds of miles away.
- One has money but little time.
- Another has time but little money.
- One has children of their own.
- Another is already exhausted.
- One seems always to be available.

And because they are available, more and more is placed in their hands.

Eventually:

Why am I doing everything?

Another sibling replies:

I help too.

Old family stories can return.

- *You were always the favourite.*
- *You never take responsibility.*
- *Everything has always fallen on me.*

A present need begins drawing water from old Lakes.

Now the family is no longer discussing only today's care.

Twenty or thirty years may have entered the room.

This is where the Landscape asks us not only:

Who is carrying the water?

but also:

How long can they continue carrying it?

A Garden cannot be tended by continually emptying the person holding the watering can.

- The carer is also a Pilgrim.
- Their House matters.
- Their health matters.
- Their relationships matter.
- Their rest matters.
- Their Garden also needs tending.

Receiving Care

There is another Window we can easily overlook.

The person being cared for.

- Receiving care can be difficult.
- Someone who once drove wherever they wished may now have to ask for a lift.
- Someone who managed their own finances may need help with money.
- Someone may need assistance washing or dressing.
- A parent may find themselves depending upon the child whose shoes they once tied.

We may look from outside and think:

Why won't they accept help?

From their Window, accepting help may mean acknowledging something painful:

I cannot do what I used to do.

Care offered with love can still arrive carrying the reality of loss.

So tending may require more than completing tasks.

It may require preserving choice wherever choice remains.

Asking rather than assuming.

Waiting.

Allowing someone to do slowly what we could do for them quickly.

Recognising that dependence does not remove dignity.

Needing another Pilgrim's hands does not make the Garden cease to be yours.

That will become particularly important when we come to ageing.

What Needs Tending Here?

When one Pilgrim needs more, the obvious answer may seem to be:

Them.

But the Family Landscape invites us to look wider.

- Perhaps the person who is ill needs tending.
- Perhaps the exhausted mother does too.
- Perhaps the sibling who has quietly become invisible needs someone to notice them.
- Perhaps the father who appears distant is frightened.
- Perhaps the person organising everything needs someone else to carry the water for a while.

- Perhaps the person receiving care needs more choice, not more help.

There may be no perfectly equal arrangement.

There may not even be enough hands.

But healing can begin when we stop seeing only the most visible need and look again at the surrounding Gardens.

Who needs tending?

Sometimes the answer is: **more than one Pilgrim.**

Section 5 — When Those Who Tended Us Need Tending

There is a quiet turning in many families.

It may happen gradually.

- A parent begins walking more slowly.
- They ask for a lift somewhere they once drove themselves.
- A letter arrives that they no longer quite understand.
- The shopping becomes difficult.
- A hospital appointment needs organising.
- Medication has to be remembered.
- Someone begins preparing meals.

Someone starts checking:

- *Have you eaten?*
- *Did you take your tablets?*
- *Are you warm enough?*

The questions sound strangely familiar.

Once, they were asked in the other direction.

- The parent watched the child cross the road.
- Prepared their food.
- Waited for them to come home.
- Sat beside their bed when they were ill.

And then, somewhere along the River, the direction of care begins to change.

The hands that once tended us may become the hands that need tending.

Making Room

When parents can no longer live as independently as before, families face decisions that are rarely simple.

- Should they remain in their own Garden?
- Can more help be brought to them?
- Should they live with one of their children?
- Would residential care be better?
- Who can provide what?
- What can they afford?
- What does the parent want?
- What happens if what they want is no longer safe?

There may be no perfect answer.

Sometimes one family member makes considerable room within their own Garden.

My sister did this for our parents.

Their needs entered the rhythms of her life.

- The rooms of the house changed.
- Routines changed.
- Time changed.
- Other people became involved in helping.

And what can appear from outside as one simple sentence—

Her parents live with her—

contains an entire Landscape.

- Meals.
- Washing.
- Appointments.
- Medication.
- Shopping.
- Night-time concerns.
- Practical arrangements.
- Repeated questions.
- Moments of tenderness.
- Moments of irritation.

And the continuing attempt to allow two elderly Pilgrims to remain themselves while increasingly depending upon others.

Making room in a Garden is not only a matter of providing a room.

It is making room in the rhythm of a life.

Another Mother

One of my mother's carers, Ana Paula, once told me about an elderly woman she knew.

The woman was bedridden and dependent upon others.

According to Ana Paula, the woman's daughter sold her mother's house, leaving her mother and her brother without somewhere to live.

There are parts of this story I do not know.

- I do not know the daughter's Window.
- I do not know what had happened between mother and daughter over the years.
- I do not know the circumstances surrounding the sale.

Those missing parts matter.

It would be easy to hear the story and immediately judge the daughter.

But we have spent enough time looking through Windows to know that we cannot see an entire Landscape from one of them.

So that Window must remain open as a question rather than filled with something we have invented.

What we do know is what Ana Paula did.

- She took the bedridden woman **and her brother into her own house**.

- She made room for two people who were not her immediate family and began caring for them.

That changes the question.

We are no longer looking only at what one daughter apparently did not do.

We are looking at what another human being **chose to do**.

Ana Paula could have said:

They are not my responsibility.

- Their Rivers had not begun together.
- They did not share the same family history.
- There was no childhood debt to repay.

And yet, when their Gardens met at a moment of vulnerability, she made room.

Perhaps this is where the meaning of family becomes less certain.

- Blood connects us.
- History connects us.
- Shared memories connect us.

But care can create another kind of connection.

Sometimes the Pilgrim who tends us is not the Pilgrim we expected to be there.

And perhaps we should be careful even with the phrase *making room*.

Ana Paula did more than provide somewhere for them to stay.

A bedridden person brings needs.

- Food.
- Washing.
- Changing.
- Cleaning.
- Comfort.
- Time.
- Attention.

Another rhythm entered her Garden.

She accepted not simply two people, but something of the tending their lives required.

That is quite different from offering someone a spare room.

And it raises a question that we do not need to answer:

When does another Pilgrim's need become something we are willing to make room for in our own Garden?

There is an interesting contrast here with my own family.

My sister made room for our elderly parents within her life.

Ana Paula made room for two people to whom she did not have that same family obligation.

The situations are different.

Neither needs to become a measure by which we judge everyone else.

But together they reveal something important.

Tending can arise from kinship.

And sometimes tending creates a kinship of its own.

The Siblings Return

Ageing parents can bring adult siblings back into one another's lives.
Sometimes those siblings were never particularly close.
They may have grown up differently, even within the same family.
One may have remained with the parents while another was raised elsewhere.
Their childhood Lakes contain different memories.
Their Rivers have travelled separately for decades.
Then their parents grow old.
And suddenly those Rivers meet again.
I know this Landscape.
My sister and I were not particularly close growing up.
Part of that may lie in the very different childhoods we experienced. I spent much of mine in Goa, away from my parents, while she remained with them.
Years later, our parents' falls and ageing brought our Gardens into much closer contact.
My sister and her family made room for our parents in their life.
I began travelling regularly to Portugal to help care for them.
When I am there, I cook.
I spend time with my parents.
I help with their care.
And, importantly, my being there gives my sister and her family some respite.
I sometimes call these visits **the Laboratory**.
Because this is where the Landscape stops being something I write about and becomes something I have to live.

Before I Even Arrive

Something begins changing two or three days before I go.
My body knows the environment I am approaching.
There is already a preparation.
A watchfulness.
Perhaps this should not surprise us.
A House remembers encounters.
My sister has sometimes been verbally aggressive towards me.
Those moments did not simply disappear when the words ended.
They left echoes.
And because her responses can feel volatile to me, I do not know with certainty what atmosphere I will encounter when our Gardens meet again.
So my body prepares.
This does not require me to decide that my sister is a bad person.
Nor does it require me to pretend that I feel comfortable when I do not.

The body may recognise an environment before the mind has said anything about it.

For me, this has become something to notice rather than something I have to defeat.

This is what is happening in my House as I approach that environment.

I can allow that to be true.

The Favourite

My sister sometimes says that I am our parents' favourite.

From her Window, perhaps that is how the Landscape appears.

From mine, I am simply being myself.

I care for my parents because caring for them arises naturally in me.

Particularly with my mother, love brings me back.

If it were not for that love, I do not think I would place myself in this environment as frequently as I do.

But notice how differently the same action can appear through two Windows.

From one:

> *He is the favourite.*

From another:

> *I am caring for my parents in the way that feels natural to me.*

Neither of us can stand completely at the other's Window.

And there may be older Lakes beneath both views.

- Our childhoods were different.
- Our relationships with our parents were different.
- Our relationships with each other were different.

The present encounter does not begin only in the present.

The Laboratory

After one particularly difficult encounter almost three years ago, something changed in the way I entered this environment.

- I stopped trying to fix it.
- I stopped telling people what they should or should not do.
- I began practising something much simpler.

Presence.

That does not mean becoming passive.

- It does not mean agreeing.
- It does not mean pretending that behaviour does not affect me.

It means that when I enter their Garden, I try not to arrive carrying a plan for how everyone else should cultivate theirs.

- I cook.
- I care for my parents.
- I help where I can.
- I observe what happens in my House.
- And I try not to turn every echo into a response.

I am there to tend what is mine to tend, not to take over another Pilgrim's Garden.

Perhaps that is why I call it the Laboratory.

Not because the other people are being examined.

I am observing what happens in me.

- What happens when the atmosphere changes?
- What happens when I feel uncomfortable?
- What happens when another person's weather creates an echo in my House?
- Can I remain present without immediately fixing, defending or reacting?

Sometimes I can.

Sometimes the environment becomes too much.

When Presence Means Leaving

There have been occasions when I have felt the need to return home earlier because I could no longer comfortably remain.

That too belongs in the Landscape.

Presence does not require endless endurance.

There is a danger in turning spiritual language into another obligation:

- *If I were truly present, this wouldn't affect me.*
- *If I were peaceful enough, I could remain indefinitely.*

But perhaps that misunderstands Presence.

Presence allows me to recognise:

This is becoming too much for my House.

And then leaving may be the wise response.

The Gate still belongs to me.

Love for my parents does not remove it.

Care does not remove it.

Family does not remove it.

Sometimes tending the relationship means staying.

Sometimes tending the House means leaving.

Neither automatically means failure.

Some Gardens Need Time

My body still does not feel entirely comfortable in the presence of my sister and brother-in-law.

And perhaps that is all right.

I do not need to force it to feel differently.

An atmosphere that has developed through repeated encounters may not change because I have understood it intellectually.

Trust has its own rhythm.

The Garden has its seasons.

- If encounters become consistently different, perhaps the body gradually discovers that too.
- If difficult incidents continue to recur, that process may take considerably longer.

There is no need to command:

You should be over this by now.

The Garden does not heal according to our timetable.

And perhaps this gives us a different understanding of family healing.

My sister and I do not have to become close for something to heal.

She does not have to understand me completely.

I do not have to correct her view that I am the favourite.

I do not have to make myself comfortable in an environment in which I am not yet comfortable.

What I can do is notice.

- Tend my House.
- Respect the Gate.
- Care for my parents.
- Avoid unnecessarily adding another storm.

Leave when remaining becomes too much.

And allow whatever may change between our Gardens to change in its own time.

Healing between family Gardens does not always mean becoming closer.

Sometimes it means learning how to meet without abandoning ourselves.

When Love Becomes Exhausted

Love does not make caring effortless.

- A parent may need meals prepared.
- Medication remembered.
- Appointments arranged.
- Washing.
- Lifting.
- Repeated questions answered.
- Perhaps interrupted nights.
- Perhaps reassurance given again and again.

The person caring may also have work, relationships, children, health needs and a Garden of their own.

Eventually, something very human can happen.

- They become tired.
- Then perhaps impatient.
- A sharp reply escapes.
- *I've already told you.*

And almost immediately another Voice appears:

Why did I say that?

They can't help it.

I should be more patient.

The tiredness has become **self-blame**.

And self-blame can quickly become **guilt**.

They cared for me when I was helpless.

Now they need me.

I shouldn't find this difficult.

But perhaps underneath the guilt there is something quieter.

Grief.

- The person standing in front of us is still our mother or father.
- And yet something is changing.
- The parent who once remembered everything now asks the same question repeatedly.
- The person who once drove us somewhere now needs us to drive them.
- The hands that once prepared our meals may no longer be able to hold the pan.

We are caring for someone we love while simultaneously watching parts of the life we knew together disappear.

And there may be other griefs too.

- The carer may grieve their own freedom.
- The spontaneous weekend that is no longer possible.
- The uninterrupted night's sleep.
- The relationship with a parent that has gradually become organised around care.

Perhaps even the wish:

I just want my mother back as she was.

Such a thought can immediately produce more guilt.

But grief does not mean we love someone less.

Sometimes it appears precisely because we love them.

We can be grateful that someone is still here
and grieve what is already changing.

Perhaps this is why exhaustion cannot always be healed simply by telling the carer to rest.

- Rest matters.
- Help matters.
- Another pair of hands matters.

But sometimes the exhausted Pilgrim also needs permission to recognise what they are carrying.

- Not only tasks.
- Loss.
- Change.
- Fear.
- Love.
- And grief.

The movement may therefore be:

Exhaustion → Irritation → Self-blame → Guilt → Grief → Recognition → Compassion

Not compassion only for the parent.

For the carer too.

Then the question changes.

Instead of:

Why can't I cope better?

perhaps:

What needs tending in me while I am tending you?

The Parent Is Still the Pilgrim

There is another Window we can easily overlook.

The person receiving the care.

As parents become increasingly dependent upon their children, something subtle can happen.

We begin talking **about** them rather than **with** them.

- *She can't manage that.*
- *He shouldn't be doing this.*
- *We need to decide what happens next.*

Sometimes decisions genuinely have to be made.

But needing care does not make someone cease to be the Pilgrim of their own life.

- The elderly mother remains the Pilgrim.
- The elderly father remains the Pilgrim.
- Their Garden may now require considerably more tending from others.

But it has not become someone else's Garden.

Needing more tending does not mean the Garden has changed ownership.

This is where the Gate becomes particularly delicate.

A parent may want something their adult child considers unwise.

- They may want to remain in their own house.
- Walk without assistance.
- Cook for themselves.
- Keep control of their money.
- Eat something their family would rather they did not eat.

The adult child may see danger.

The parent may see something else.

The gradual disappearance of independence.

From one Window:

I'm trying to keep you safe.

From another:

You're taking my life away from me.

Both may contain something true.

There will be times when illness or frailty means that others genuinely have to intervene.

But even then, perhaps another question can remain:

Where can choice still live?

- What would you like to eat?
- What would you like to wear?
- Would you like to go outside?
- Would you like company?

- Would you like help now, or in a little while?

These may appear to be small choices.

But when the larger choices of life are gradually disappearing, small choices can become precious.

There is also something else we may need to remember.

The person in the bed is not only the person we see today.

- They have travelled an entire River.
- They have been children.
- Young adults.
- Lovers.
- Parents.
- Workers.
- Friends.
- They have made mistakes.
- Taken risks.
- Made decisions without asking anyone's permission.
- They have stood at Windows we may never have seen.

Ageing does not erase that life.

Dependency does not erase it either.

Care for the body should not make us forget the Pilgrim.

Perhaps dignity lies partly here.

Not in pretending that nothing has changed.

Much may have changed.

But in continuing to recognise the person within those changes.

- To help where help is needed.
- To protect where protection is necessary.
- And wherever possible, to leave the Gate in their hands.

Because even when other Pilgrims must increasingly help tend the Garden,

the Pilgrim is still there.

The River Slows

There may come a time when the family begins to notice that the River is slowing.

Not stopping.

Slowing.

- A parent walks more carefully.
- Sleeps longer.
- Eats less.
- Needs more time to get ready.

Perhaps first they stop travelling.

Then going to the shops.

Eventually, much of life may take place within a few rooms.

The River is still flowing.

But differently.

And those who love the Pilgrim begin adjusting their pace.

- There is a particular kind of grief in this season.
- The person has not gone.
- They are here.

And yet small things that once belonged to the relationship may already be disappearing.

- The mother who once cooked no longer cooks.
- The father who drove everywhere now needs a lift.
- The parent we once asked for advice now asks us what they should do.

Sometimes we only notice afterwards:

She hasn't done that for a long time.

Perhaps we did not know the last time would be the last time.

Some departures happen before anyone says goodbye.

But there is a danger in looking so much towards what is disappearing that we stop seeing the Pilgrim who is still here.

- They may still enjoy tea.
- Music.
- A familiar joke.
- Someone brushing their hair.
- A hand held.
- Sitting quietly together.

Perhaps we have to hold two realities at once:

Something is being lost.

Someone is still here.

And perhaps caring now means learning to travel at another person's pace.

- We may want them to walk faster.
- Eat more.
- Remember.
- Try harder.

But if fastening a button takes five minutes, perhaps for those five minutes that is where the River is.

We cannot make the River flow backwards.

Nor do we need to pull it forward.

We can meet the Pilgrim where the River is flowing now.

Not where they used to be.

Not where we fear they are going.

But here.

And sometimes, when the River slows, love simply slows beside it.

When the Garden Becomes Memory

And eventually, the River reaches its end.

The Pilgrim is no longer physically present.

Yet the Garden does not immediately change.

- A mobile phone remains where it was left.
- Chocolate is still on the table.
- Clothes hang in the wardrobe.
- Medication waits to be taken.
- Perhaps there is food in the cupboard bought especially for them.

Ordinary things remain exactly where they were.

But the person who gave those things meaning is no longer there.

There can be something strange about this.

- The world continues.
- The phone may even ring.
- A letter arrives with their name on it.
- Someone automatically thinks:

  I must tell Mum about that.

And then remembers.

The Pilgrim has gone.

The Garden still carries their traces.

Gradually, some of those traces disappear.

- The medication is removed.
- The clothes are given away.
- The chocolate is eaten or eventually thrown away.
- The phone is switched off.

But other things remain.

- A recipe.
- A photograph.
- A particular expression.
- The way they folded something.
- A story they told repeatedly.

Perhaps one day we hear their words coming from our own mouth.

Something has travelled.

The practical caring has ended, but the relationship has not simply vanished.

- It begins to live differently.
- In memory.
- In habits.
- In stories.
- In the things they cultivated in us.

And memory does not preserve only what was beautiful.

- There may be love.
- Relief.
- Regret.
- Anger.
- Gratitude.
- Tenderness.
- Perhaps guilt.
- Things we wish we had said.
- Things we are grateful we did.

A difficult relationship does not become perfect because someone has died.

Nor does feeling relief after years of caring mean that love was absent.

The Lake of memory can hold more than one reflection.

Perhaps, after spending so long asking what the ageing parent needed, another question slowly emerges:

What remains in my Garden because you once passed through it?

- Some things we may cherish.
- Some we may understand differently.
- Some we may eventually choose not to carry forward.

But the Garden will not be exactly as it was before that Pilgrim entered it.

The Pilgrim is no longer in the Garden.
But something of their journey remains within ours.

Section 6 — Healing Between Family Gardens

After everything we have explored, we might ask:

What would healing in a family actually look like?

Perhaps there is no single answer.

- For one family, healing may involve a conversation that has been avoided for years.
- For another, an apology.
- For another, learning to listen without immediately defending.
- For another, accepting that two Rivers have travelled in different directions.
- And sometimes healing may mean recognising that a Gate needs to remain closed.

Healing does not always bring people closer.

Sometimes it changes **how we carry what happened between us**.

Not Every Window Will Open

Hannah may never know everything that was happening through her mother's Window when she came to Goa intending to take Daniel and leave Hannah behind for a while.

An explanation might one day come.

Or it may not.

Many families contain questions like this.

- *Why did you leave?*
- *Why did you treat us differently?*
- *Why didn't you protect me?*
- *Why couldn't you accept the life I chose?*

Sometimes another Pilgrim can answer.

Sometimes they cannot.

Sometimes they are no longer here to ask.

Healing cannot always depend upon obtaining the missing answer.

Otherwise the key to our House remains permanently in another person's hands.

Perhaps there comes a time when we can say:

> **I may never know what was happening through your Window.**
> **But I can tend what the experience left in mine.**

The unanswered question may remain.

It simply no longer has to occupy the whole Window.

Not Every River Will Travel Together

Families often begin with the assumption that their Rivers will continue alongside one another.

- But children grow.
- Beliefs change.
- People marry.
- Move away.
- Choose different professions.
- Live differently from what their parents imagined.
- Siblings who shared a childhood may become adults whose lives barely resemble one another.

This does not necessarily mean that something has gone wrong.

> **A shared beginning does not require a shared journey.**

Healing may sometimes mean allowing another Pilgrim's River to be different without experiencing that difference as rejection.

A parent can say:

> *This is not the path I would have chosen for you.*

And still remain beside the relationship.

An adult child can say:

> *I understand what you hoped for me.*

And still choose differently.

We do not have to travel the same River in order to recognise one another.

Not Every Gate Needs to Open

There is another kind of healing that is sometimes mistaken for failure.

- Distance.
- A family relationship may have become painful.

- Repeated arguments.
- Intimidation.
- Control.
- Verbal aggression.
- Violence.

Old patterns that continue despite repeated attempts to change them.

In such circumstances, healing does not necessarily mean reopening the Gate.

- A Pilgrim may choose limited contact.
- A different kind of contact.
- Or no contact.

The Gate belongs to the Pilgrim whose Garden it protects.

And even within continuing relationships, the Gate may sometimes need to close for a while.

- *I cannot continue this conversation.*
- *I need to leave.*
- *We can speak another time.*

This is not necessarily rejection.

Sometimes it is tending.

Presence does not require us to remain in every environment.

Nor does compassion require us to give another person's weather permanent access to our House.

When the Other Person Does Not Change

Perhaps this is one of the hardest discoveries in family healing.

We may change.

The other person may not.

We become more aware of an old pattern.

They continue repeating it.

We stop trying to control them.

They still try to control us.

We become willing to listen.

Their Door remains closed.

We hope for acknowledgement.

It never comes.

Then another possibility appears.

Healing in my Garden does not have to wait for healing in yours.

This does not mean that relationships do not matter.

They matter enormously.

But if our healing depends entirely upon another Pilgrim changing, apologising, understanding or returning, we may wait indefinitely.

- We can tend our own House while still wishing another Pilgrim well.
- We can understand their Window without standing behind it.

- We can love someone without giving them unrestricted access to our Garden.
- And sometimes we can stop trying to repair a relationship that the other Pilgrim is not presently able or willing to repair.

There may be sadness in that.

Healing does not remove sadness.

What Will Continue Through Me?

Every family gives us something.

- Usually many things.
- Ways of speaking.
- Ways of loving.
- Ways of arguing.
- Beliefs.
- Recipes.
- Stories.
- Humour.
- Fears.
- Silences.
- Traditions.
- Habits.

Some were deliberately taught.

Others simply grew around us.

We may carry them for years without noticing.

Then one day we hear ourselves saying something exactly as a parent said it.

Or responding to conflict in the same way.

Or perhaps doing precisely the opposite because we promised ourselves long ago:

I will never become like that.

Both can keep us organised around the Garden from which we came.

Healing introduces another possibility.

Discernment.

We can look at what has reached us and ask:

This I want to keep.

This I understand differently now.

This no longer belongs in my Garden.

This I would like to pass on.

We do not have to reject our entire inheritance because some of it hurt us.

Nor do we have to continue everything simply because it came from family.

We can choose what we cultivate.

Healing Does Not Rewrite the Garden

Nothing we do now changes what happened then.

- The child was still frightened.
- The argument still happened.
- The words were still spoken.
- The parent still left.
- The opportunity was still missed.
- The person we loved still died.

Healing does not ask us to repaint those memories until they become beautiful.

It asks something gentler.

How will what happened continue to live in me?

- Perhaps the memory remains, but carries less authority.
- Perhaps an old echo arises without becoming today's weather.
- Perhaps we recognise self-blame and meet it with compassion.
- Perhaps we stop waiting for an apology.
- Perhaps we understand why someone behaved as they did without deciding that what they did was acceptable.
- Perhaps we become able to remember love and hurt in the same relationship without forcing one to cancel the other.

The Lake can hold more than one reflection.

What Needs Tending Here?

We began this chapter among the Gardens that first tended us.

- We have encountered nurturing and belonging.
- Expectations and different Rivers.
- Family weather.
- Pilgrims who needed more tending.
- Ageing parents.
- Exhausted carers.
- Gates that needed protecting.
- Windows that never opened.
- And Pilgrims whose Gardens eventually became memory.

Through all of them, one question has quietly remained:

What needs tending here?

Not:

Who is the good person?

Not:

Who is to blame?

Not even always:

How do we fix this?

But:

What needs tending now?

- Sometimes the relationship.
- Sometimes the boundary.
- Sometimes an old wound.
- Sometimes the exhausted carer.
- Sometimes the child we once were.
- Sometimes grief.

And sometimes what needs tending is simply our awareness of what we are about to carry into another Garden.

Because eventually we become part of someone else's family Landscape too.

- Our weather will create atmospheres.
- Our words may leave echoes.
- Our expectations may shape another Pilgrim's experience.
- Our tending may become part of someone's memory.

So perhaps family healing is not about creating a Garden without wounds.

No human family can promise that.

Perhaps it is about becoming increasingly conscious of what we cultivate and what we pass onwards.

We cannot change every Garden that shaped us.

But we can become more aware of what we allow to grow through ours.

And perhaps that is enough for the question to change one final time.

Not only:

What did my family give me?

But:

What will I cultivate from what I have been given?

Pilgrim's Reflection

Pause for a moment.

Think of the family Gardens that have met yours.

Some tended you.

Some hurt you.

Some did both.

What did you receive that you wish to keep?

What no longer needs to continue through your Garden?

Are there questions whose Windows may never open?

And perhaps, most importantly:

What needs tending here?

There is no need to answer everything.

Some things take time.

The Garden has its seasons.

Pilgrim'sSahachari

You do not have to fix every family relationship.

You do not have to open every Gate.

You do not have to understand every Window.

Keep what brought warmth.

Tend what still hurts.

Let go of what no longer needs to travel with you.

And remember:

You cannot change every Garden that shaped you.

But you can choose what you cultivate in yours.

What shall grow through you now?

Chapter 6 — The Community Garden



The Pilgrim does not live only among family.

Sooner or later, the Garden widens.

- We enter school.
- The workplace.
- The neighbourhood.
- A community centre.
- A place of worship.
- A club.
- A group.

Places where many Pilgrims, from many different Gardens, repeatedly meet.

Here, we encounter people whose Houses we may know very little about.

- They have grown within different families.
- Look through different Windows.
- Carry different memories.
- Different beliefs.
- Different weather.

And yet, for a few hours each day—or sometimes for many years—we share the same environment.

Something begins to form between us.

- Friendships.
- Groups.
- Rules.
- Expectations.
- Ways of belonging.
- Ways of behaving.

Sometimes there is kindness.

Someone welcomes the newcomer.

- A teacher notices the child standing alone.
- A colleague helps without being asked.
- A neighbour checks that someone is all right.

But other things can grow too.

- Comparison.
- Gossip.
- Judgement.
- Exclusion.
- Bullying.
- Anger.
- Pressure to belong.
- Sometimes even aggression.

And something new becomes possible when many Pilgrims gather:

the group itself can begin to influence how the individual behaves.

A Pilgrim who would never ridicule someone alone may join the laughter of others.

Someone who disagrees may remain silent.

One person's anger may spread.

But care can spread too.

One person steps forward.

Another joins them.

The atmosphere changes.

This is the Landscape we are entering now.

Not one Community Garden belonging to everyone.

But many Gardens meeting within shared environments.

And perhaps our question becomes:

What are we cultivating when many Gardens meet?

Section 1 — The School Garden

For many Pilgrims, school is one of the first Gardens beyond the family.

Until then, much of life may have been shaped by familiar people.

- Parents.
- Brothers and sisters.
- Grandparents.
- People who know the child's name, history and ways.

Then one morning, the child enters another environment.

- A classroom.
- A playground.
- A dining hall.

Perhaps hundreds of other children.

- Different families have arrived at the same Gate.
- Different languages.
- Different cultures.
- Different abilities.
- Different beliefs.
- Different ways of behaving.
- Different experiences of being loved, disciplined, encouraged or frightened.

The children may wear the same uniform.

They do not arrive from the same Landscape.

The School Garden is an Estuary.

Many waters meet there.

And almost immediately, the young Pilgrim begins learning something beyond reading, writing and mathematics.

They begin learning how to live among other Pilgrims.

The Unwritten Curriculum

- Every school has rules.
- Arrive on time.
- Bring the correct equipment.
- Listen when someone is speaking.
- Complete your work.

But another curriculum develops without appearing on any timetable.

- Who is popular?
- Who is funny?
- Who is clever?
- Who is different?
- Who sits with whom?
- What clothes are admired?
- What behaviour attracts attention?
- What gets laughed at?
- What should never be said if you want to belong?

Children learn this curriculum remarkably quickly.

A child may discover that something completely ordinary in their family Garden appears unusual in the School Garden.

- Their food.
- Their accent.
- Their name.
- Their clothes.
- Their religion.
- Their body.
- The way they speak.

- The way they learn.

Something that had never required explanation suddenly becomes visible because it is different.

And here the Estuary presents its first challenge.

Can different waters meet without one being told that it is the wrong water?

The Need to Belong

Most children want somewhere to belong.

- A friend.
- A group.
- Someone to sit beside at lunch.
- Someone who notices when they are absent.

Belonging can bring warmth to the School Garden.

- Friendships form.
- Children help one another.
- Someone invites the new child to join the game.
- Another explains what to do when they are confused.
- The unfamiliar environment gradually becomes familiar.

But the desire to belong can also create pressure.

- A child may laugh at something they do not find funny because everyone else is laughing.
- Remain silent when someone is being mocked.
- Hide something about themselves.
- Change the way they speak.
- Join a group in excluding somebody else.

Not necessarily because they are cruel.

Sometimes because another fear is quietly present:

If I stand beside them, will they turn on me too?

This is where something new begins to appear in our Landscape.

The Pilgrim is no longer responding only from their own House.

The **group** has begun to exert an influence.

We will meet that more deeply later.

For now, perhaps it is enough to notice:

The Estuary can teach us how to meet difference.

But it can also teach us to fear being different.

And somewhere in the playground, those two possibilities begin to separate.

One may lead towards friendship, curiosity and belonging.

The other may lead towards something many Pilgrims first encounter at school.

Bullying.

Section 2 — When Difference Becomes a Target

Almost every School Garden contains difference.

Difference itself is not the problem.

The question is what the community does with it.

Sometimes difference awakens curiosity.

Why do you eat that?

What language are you speaking?

How does your wheelchair work?

A question can open a Window.

But difference can also become something else.

- A nickname.
- A joke.
- A reason not to let someone join the game.

And if it is repeated, something that began as an observation can gradually become a label.

Difference → Attention → Judgement → Label

The Pilgrim begins disappearing behind what the group has decided they are.

When the Joke Is No Longer a Joke

- Children tease one another.
- Friends laugh at each other.

Humour can bring warmth into the School Garden.

So not every joke is bullying.

But something changes when the laughter repeatedly travels in one direction.

- The same child becomes the joke.
- The same name is called.
- The same person is excluded.
- Their belongings are hidden.
- They are pushed.
- Threatened.
- Humiliated.

And bullying shows us something important about community.

It does not always remain one Pilgrim against another.

- One child makes the joke.
- Another laughs.
- Someone repeats it.
- Others join in.

Soon children who know very little about the person may repeat the same words.

One voice can become many.

A label that began with one Pilgrim can become part of the atmosphere of the group.

I experienced something like this myself.

When I was at boarding school, the boys gave me a nickname.

I disliked it.

For a while, I tried turning it into a joke. Later, I simply stopped reacting.

But not reacting did not mean that it no longer hurt.

I had no one with whom I felt able to talk about it.

In those days, I found comfort in saying the rosary.

I prayed for the boys.

I remember thinking that if Jesus could forgive those who crucified him, surely I could forgive the boys who were hurting me.

Then I moved to another school.

I thought perhaps I would finally have a little breathing space.

- A new school.
- A new community.
- A new beginning.

But one of the boys from my previous school moved there too.

When I saw him, I remember thinking:

I don't think the peace is going to last much longer.

It didn't.

Within about a month, the nickname had travelled into the new school.

I had crossed into another School Garden.

The label had crossed with me.

Looking back now, I do not carry bad feelings towards the boy who brought it with him.

He was twelve or thirteen.

Perhaps, through his Window, it was simply fun.

Through mine, it was something I had hoped to leave behind.

I can recognise his Window without denying mine.

Understanding intention does not erase impact.

There is something else I understand now.

A child who does not react is not necessarily a child who is unaffected.

- Sometimes the child makes a joke of it.
- Sometimes they laugh.
- Sometimes they become quiet.
- Sometimes they simply learn not to respond.

What appears through the Window may tell us very little about what is happening inside the House.

And the effects can reach far beyond the moment itself.

The corridor changes.

The playground changes.

Lunch changes.

Even Sunday evening may change because Monday morning is approaching.

An event may end while its echo continues.

Meanwhile, something else may be happening among those doing the bullying.

A child who would never have invented the nickname may repeat it.

Someone who would never push another child alone may become bolder when surrounded by friends.

The group begins saying, without necessarily saying anything:

This is what we do.

Belonging has become pressure.

And the individual Pilgrim may temporarily stop asking:

Is this what I want to do?

Here we begin to glimpse **collective Hijack**.

We do not need to enter it fully yet.

For now, it is enough to notice that pressure can arise not only within a House.

It can arise when many Gardens meet.

And once it does, behaviour that might have felt uncomfortable alone can begin to feel normal together.

The Pilgrim Who Watches

But there is another Pilgrim in the playground.

The one who sees.

- They hear the insult.
- They see someone being pushed.
- They notice the child who is always left out.
- They know something is happening.

But they are neither the person causing the harm nor the person receiving it.

They are the one who watches.

And the watcher has weather too.

Should I say something?

What if they turn on me?

Should I tell a teacher?

Will everyone call me a snitch?

- Perhaps they are frightened.
- Perhaps they are uncertain.
- Perhaps they are shocked.
- Perhaps they simply do not know what to do.

We cannot see through their Window.

So silence does not necessarily mean agreement.

But silence has an effect.

To the child standing alone, ten other children watching quietly may begin to feel like ten children standing with the person hurting them.

Silence may not mean agreement.

But silence can still be experienced as permission.

And something else can happen.

- When nobody challenges a behaviour, the group gradually learns what will be tolerated.
- What happened once happens again.
- What initially felt uncomfortable becomes familiar.

The atmosphere changes.

This is how a community can begin cultivating something without anyone consciously deciding to cultivate it.

But the movement can also change.

One Pilgrim says:

> *That's enough.*

Another does not laugh.

Someone sits beside the excluded child.

Someone refuses to forward the message.

Someone tells a teacher.

And sometimes the Pilgrim could not speak in the moment.

- They were frightened.
- They froze.
- They did not know what to say.

But later they approach the child:

- *I saw what happened.*
- *Are you all right?*

The original event cannot be undone.

But something important has changed.

The child discovers:

> **I did not stand in it unseen.**

Perhaps this is where courage begins in a community.

- Not always with confrontation.
- Not necessarily with heroic action.

Sometimes simply with one Pilgrim refusing to move with the crowd.

And once one person steps out of the current, another may find it easier to do the same.

Then another.

The movement that carried harm can begin moving differently.

> **Cruelty can spread.**
> **Silence can allow it space.**
> **Courage can spread too.**

This is one of the lessons of the Estuary.

Different Pilgrims arrive carrying different waters.

We cannot control everything another Pilgrim brings.

But when those waters meet, each of us contributes something to what is cultivated there.

And perhaps the question is no longer simply:

Why are they different?

It becomes:

What am I helping to cultivate around that difference?

Section 3 — The Workplace Garden

Work occupies an enormous part of many Pilgrims' lives.

- For some, it brings satisfaction.
- For others, necessity.
- For some, status.
- For others, exhaustion.

And for many Pilgrims, there may be no work at all.

Before we speak about careers, fulfilment or finding work we love, perhaps we should remember something much more immediate.

Some Pilgrims are simply asking:

- *How will I put food on the table?*
- *How will I pay the rent?*
- *Can I keep the house warm this winter?*

From that Window, work may have very little to do with fulfilment.

- It is livelihood.
- Survival.
- Responsibility.

And this matters because advice about work can sound very different depending upon the Garden from which it is given.

- *Follow your passion.*
- *Find your purpose.*
- *Do what you love.*

These may be beautiful possibilities for someone with choices.

For another Pilgrim, they may sound very far away.

Different Gardens offer different amounts of choice.

Why Do We Work?

Once our basic needs are met, another question may begin to appear.

What is work for?

There are many answers.

- To earn enough to live.
- To provide for others.
- To use our abilities.
- To contribute.
- To create.
- To belong.
- To build something.
- To gain recognition.

- To become wealthy.
- Perhaps to impress others.

Sometimes simply because everyone around us seems to be moving in the same direction.

None of these needs to become another label.

The same Pilgrim may work for different reasons at different stages of life.

But difficulties can arise when the working Garden begins to tell us who we are.

- The job title becomes identity.
- The salary becomes measurement.
- The promotion becomes proof.
- The larger house requires the larger salary.
- The larger salary requires longer hours.

And gradually:

Enough moves further away.

Perhaps this is where **contentment** quietly enters the Garden.

Contentment does not necessarily mean having little.

Nor does it mean losing ambition.

It may simply ask:

Can I recognise when enough has arrived?

Without that recognition, the Working Garden can become endlessly hungry.

- There is always another promotion.
- Another qualification.
- Another possession.
- Another person with whom to compare ourselves.

And the Pilgrim may become very successful while becoming increasingly unable to rest.

When Work Becomes the Weather

I encountered something of this in my first job after graduating.

I worked as a software programmer.

Programming could absorb enormous amounts of time.

A program might almost work.

Almost.

Somewhere among hundreds of instructions, one small thing was wrong.

Finding it could take hours.

I sometimes worked until nine o'clock at night, programming, testing, searching for the part that would not work.

After about a year came my appraisal.

The feedback surprised me.

I was told that I did not work long enough.

I had already been staying until ten at night.

Something became clear to me.

This was not an environment in which I wanted to continue.

So I said goodbye.

I went to London and began a master's degree.

Looking back, perhaps that was one of my early encounters with a question that would return many times:

> **How much of my life am I willing to give to an environment simply because that environment expects it?**

Sometimes stress comes from the work itself.

Sometimes it comes from what the surrounding Garden has decided a good worker should look like.

- The last person to leave.
- The person who never says no.
- The person who answers messages at night.
- The person who is always available.

Eventually an expectation can become an atmosphere.

And an atmosphere can begin entering the House.

Work ends.

But the working day continues inside us.

Not Every Garden Fits Every Pilgrim

My own journey through work took several forms.

For a year, we had a coffee shop.

I enjoyed it.

But it was exhausting.

Later, I taught students individually.

Something changed.

I enjoyed that very much.

Without a large institution around us, I could encounter the student who was actually sitting in front of me.

And I began noticing something.

The same teaching did not work for everyone.

One student needed one approach.

Another needed something different.

Sometimes the strategy had to change.

And sometimes the student was not yet ready to receive a particular idea.

Nothing was necessarily wrong with the student.

The understanding simply needed more time to ripen.

That experience eventually taught me something that reaches far beyond education:

> **Not everything can be received simply because someone is ready to give it.**

- Sometimes we change the way we offer.
- Sometimes we wait.
- Sometimes something needs to ripen.

Perhaps workplaces forget this too.

They can begin asking every Pilgrim to grow in the same way.

- Work at the same rhythm.
- Respond to the same incentives.
- Measure success by the same standards.

But Gardens do not flourish through sameness.

- Some Pilgrims thrive within institutions.
- Some enjoy structure, teams and shared purpose.
- Others flourish with greater independence.

Some love the work they do.

Some tolerate it because it supports the rest of their life.

Some are searching for work.

Some are exhausted by it.

And some eventually discover:

The work was not wrong.

The environment was not necessarily wrong.

But it was not a Garden in which I could flourish.

Work and the Rest of Life

Perhaps, then, the question is not simply:

Do I love my job?

That would exclude too many human lives.

A Pilgrim may dislike their work and still find enormous meaning in what the work allows them to provide.

- Another may love their profession but discover that it is consuming their House.
- Another may have little money and considerable contentment.
- Another may have considerable money and live beneath continuous pressure.
- And another may desperately want the very job someone else complains about.

Different Windows.

Different circumstances.

Different seasons.

The Working Garden therefore asks something gentler than:

Have I found my perfect job?

Perhaps it asks:

What place does work occupy in my life?

- Does it provide?
- Does it nourish?
- Does it exhaust?
- Does it give something expression?
- Has it become my identity?
- Am I working towards something I genuinely value?
- Or am I continuing because I have never stopped long enough to ask?

There may be no perfect balance.

There may only be discernment.

And perhaps contentment begins not when we stop growing, but when growth no longer requires us to believe that **what we already have is never enough**.

Section 4 — When Pilgrims Gather

Human beings gather.

We have always found reasons to do so.

- To worship.
- To celebrate.
- To mourn.
- To play.
- To watch.
- To sing.
- To eat and drink together.

Sometimes the gathering has a building.

- A church.
- A mosque.
- A community centre.
- A pub.
- A theatre.

Sometimes it happens outdoors.

- A festival.
- A procession.
- A fair.
- A sporting event.

Sometimes the shared interest itself becomes the meeting place.

- Cycling.
- Cars.
- Motorbikes.
- Music.
- Art.

None of these gatherings is quite the same.

But something happens when Pilgrims repeatedly come together.

- Familiar faces appear.
- Greetings develop.
- Stories are exchanged.
- Traditions form.

Someone notices when another person is missing.

For a while, separate Gardens begin participating in something together.

> **Community does not require our Gardens to become one.**
> **It gives our different Gardens somewhere to meet.**

The Festival Garden

I experience this particularly strongly in Spain.

I enjoy the festivals there because they seem to bring people out of their individual lives and into the streets.

One I return to frequently is **Las Fallas in Valencia**, particularly during its final days in March.

For those days, the city changes.

The streets are no longer simply routes for getting from one place to another.

- People gather in them.
- Neighbours meet.
- Families come out together.
- Music travels through the streets.
- Food is shared.
- Processions pass.
- Fireworks interrupt the ordinary rhythm of the day.
- Enormous creations stand temporarily in public spaces.

People who might ordinarily pass one another without speaking are participating in the same event.

The outer environment changes.

And from thousands of individual encounters, a shared atmosphere begins to emerge.

Perhaps this is one of the simplest forms of community:

We are here together.

- Not necessarily because we agree about everything.
- Not because we have the same beliefs.
- Not because our Houses contain the same weather.

But because, for a while, our Rivers have arrived at the same Estuary.

Places to Belong

Other communities gather more quietly.

- A place of worship may bring together Pilgrims who share a spiritual tradition.
- A community centre may provide companionship for someone who otherwise spends much of the day alone.
- A pub can become more than somewhere to drink.

For some Pilgrims in Britain, it is where familiar faces are found.

Where conversation happens.

Where someone asks:

Haven't seen you for a while. Everything all right?

The activity may differ.

The human need beneath it may not.

Sometimes we gather because we want somewhere to belong.

And belonging need not require intimacy.

- We may not know everybody's story.
- We may never enter their House.
- We may simply recognise their face.

Sometimes that is enough.

When Belonging Creates a Boundary

But every gathering creates another possibility.

If there is an *us*, there can also become a *them*.

- The newcomer who does not know the customs.
- The person who dresses differently.
- The family who has recently arrived.
- The worshipper whose interpretation differs.
- The person who does not drink.
- The person who does not join in.

The Pilgrim standing at the edge wondering whether there is room for them.

The Estuary appears again.

Different waters have met.

And once more the question is not whether difference exists.

It is what we cultivate around it.

A community can say:

Come in.

It can also say, sometimes without words:

You are not one of us.

This is why belonging is such a powerful force.

- It can shelter.
- Connect.
- Celebrate.
- Care.

But the desire to belong can also make a Pilgrim afraid to disagree with the group.

And here we begin approaching something we have already glimpsed in the playground.

The movement of the many can begin carrying the individual.

That will matter later.

For now, perhaps the Community Garden leaves us with something simpler.

A festival, a place of worship, a community centre or even a familiar pub may appear to be merely somewhere people go.

But perhaps what matters is what happens **because they keep meeting there**.

- Recognition becomes familiarity.
- Familiarity may become belonging.

- And belonging may become care.

A community begins when separate Gardens discover that there is something worth tending together.

Section 5 — When the Atmosphere Changes

A community can feel welcoming.

- People greet one another.
- Children play.
- Neighbours talk.
- Colleagues laugh.
- Someone brings food.
- Someone else puts the chairs away.

Nothing remarkable seems to be happening.

And perhaps that is precisely what makes it remarkable.

Many different Gardens have learned how to meet.

Then something changes.

Not necessarily dramatically.

- A comment.
- A complaint.
- A rumour.

Someone says:

Have you heard what she did?

Another replies:

I'm not surprised.

A third adds something they heard from somebody else.

By the end of the day, the original event may be almost unrecognisable.

No one decided to change the atmosphere.

But something has entered it.

The Story That Travels

We have already seen how a nickname can travel through a School Garden.

Adult communities have their travelling stories too.

- *He's difficult.*
- *She's selfish.*
- *They're always causing trouble.*
- *People like them are all the same.*

Perhaps something really happened.

Perhaps there is a legitimate problem that needs addressing.

But something changes when an event becomes a story about the whole Pilgrim.

Something happened.

Then something was said about what happened.

They are not necessarily the same thing.

The first is an event.

The second has already passed through a Window.

Then it passes through another.

And another.

Soon the community may no longer be responding to what happened.

It may be responding to the story that has grown around what happened.

This is how gossip can alter an atmosphere without anyone raising their voice.

A Pilgrim enters the room.

Nobody says anything.

But something feels different.

A conversation stops.

Someone looks away.

The Pilgrim may not even know which story has arrived before them.

When Anger Enters

Sometimes the change is easier to see.

A disagreement becomes heated.

Voices rise.

One Pilgrim begins speaking over another.

Someone insults someone.

A fist strikes a table.

An object is thrown.

Someone is pushed.

Here we need to be careful with our Landscape.

Not everything should be softened into *different weather*.

Different Pilgrims can certainly experience the same event through different Windows.

But intimidation, threats and physical aggression are actions.

They have consequences in the outer environment.

Understanding someone's anger does not require another Pilgrim to remain within its reach.

Compassion may help us understand the storm.

It does not require us to stand beneath it.

Sometimes the wisest movement is not towards the person.

It is towards the Gate.

The Pilgrims Around the Storm

And then there are those who watch.

We met them in the playground.

They are here too.

- Someone is being shouted at in a meeting.
- A neighbour is being intimidated.
- A member of a group is repeatedly humiliated.

Others see it.

- Some look down.
- Some pretend to be busy.
- Some leave.
- Someone thinks:

  This isn't right.

But says nothing.

Again, we cannot know what is happening in every House.

- Fear may be present.
- Dependence.
- Uncertainty.
- Loyalty.
- Shock.

The watcher may themselves feel unsafe.

So silence does not tell us everything about the Pilgrim who remains silent.

But silence still becomes part of the environment in which the event occurs.

What nobody challenges can gradually become what everybody expects.

And expectation is powerful.

- The first angry outburst shocks everyone.
- The fifth may barely interrupt the meeting.
- The first cruel joke produces uncomfortable silence.
- Months later, everyone knows when to laugh.

The extraordinary has become ordinary.

This is one way an atmosphere changes.

But Atmospheres Can Change Again

The movement is not only towards harm.

A community can interrupt what it has been cultivating.

Someone refuses to repeat the gossip.

I don't know what happened. I wasn't there.

Someone questions the label.

I've never experienced her that way.

Someone welcomes the person standing alone.

Someone says:

That's enough.

Someone apologises.

- Someone who remained silent yesterday speaks today.
- Sometimes humour releases tension.
- Sometimes listening does.
- Sometimes one person simply refuses to add another gust to the storm.

And this matters because atmosphere is not a permanent possession of a community.

It is continually being created through encounter.

What we repeat strengthens.
What we interrupt may begin to loosen.
What we cultivate together can change.

Perhaps this is why community asks something different from us than solitude.

Alone, I tend my own House.

Among others, what passes through my Porch enters encounters that affect other Gardens.

My words matter.

My silence matters.

My laughter matters.

- What I forward matters.
- What I refuse to forward matters.
- What I tolerate matters.

And yet none of us controls the whole atmosphere.

We contribute.

Sometimes very quietly.

The Moment Before We Join In

Perhaps there is a small moment before gossip is repeated.

- Before we laugh.
- Before we forward the message.
- Before we add our anger.
- Before we decide that *everyone knows what that person is like.*

A moment in which the Pilgrim can Arrive.

And notice:

Something is moving through this community.
Do I want it to move through me?

That may be one of the most important moments in the Community Garden.

Because soon we will encounter something larger.

A point at which the atmosphere becomes so powerful that the group itself seems to acquire a voice:

- *This is what we believe.*
- *This is what people like us do.*
- *This is who the problem is.*

And then the Pilgrim faces a more difficult question:

When the group begins speaking loudly, can I still hear my own Guiding Whisper?

Section 6 — When the Group Takes the Rocking Chair

Something curious can happen when Pilgrims gather.

- A person who would never shout alone may shout with a crowd.
- Someone who would never ridicule another Pilgrim may laugh when everyone else is laughing.
- A person who privately disagrees may publicly remain silent.
- Someone may repeat words they have barely considered because everyone around them seems certain.

Later they may wonder:

Why did I do that?

Perhaps nothing mysterious happened.

The Pilgrim entered a powerful current.

And for a while, the current carried them.

The Need to Belong

We have already encountered belonging throughout the Community Garden.

Belonging can be beautiful.

- The child finds friends.
- The colleague becomes part of a team.
- The newcomer is welcomed.
- The worshipper finds companionship.
- The festival brings thousands of people into the streets.

Something within us recognises:

I am part of this.

But sometimes an unspoken condition begins to enter that belonging.

To remain one of us, perhaps I must think like us.

Now disagreement can become uncomfortable.

- *What if I see this differently?*
- *Can I say so and still belong?*
- *What if they laugh at me?*
- *What if I am excluded?*

The pressure may never be spoken aloud.

Nobody needs to say:

Agree with us.

The Pilgrim may simply begin to sense what can be said—and what cannot.

At first the pressure may come from around us.

Eventually it may no longer need to.

The Pilgrim has learned what the group expects.

Before speaking, something within asks:

What will they think?

Will I still belong?

The community voice has entered the House.

Now the group does not have to silence the Pilgrim.

The Pilgrim may begin silencing themselves.

The difficulty does not begin with *we*.
It begins when *we* **leaves too little room for** *I*.

When the Group Develops a Voice

Gradually, the language may change.

Not:

This is what I think.

But:

We all know...

- *Everyone agrees...*
- *People like us don't...*
- *That's just how we do things here.*

Something subtle has happened.

The individual Window is beginning to disappear behind the Window of the group.

And eventually the group may begin deciding who belongs outside it.

- *Those people.*
- *People like them.*
- *They're all the same.*

The Pilgrim becomes a category.

Pilgrim → Category → Label → Assumption → Treatment

We no longer need to encounter the person.

The label tells us who they are before we have met them.

This is one way collective Hijack begins.

When the Rocking Chair Is Occupied

In the House, we have already encountered Hijack.

Something sits in the Rocking Chair and begins speaking with pressure.

- *You must.*
- *Do it now.*
- *Don't question it.*

The community can develop something remarkably similar.

Except now the pressure does not appear to come from within one House.

It comes from all around.

- *Everyone thinks this.*
- *Everyone is doing it.*
- *Don't be difficult.*
- *Choose a side.*

If you disagree, perhaps you are one of them.

The group has begun taking the Rocking Chair.

And its voice has the familiar qualities of Hijack:

- **Urgency.**
- **Pressure.**
- **Continuity.**
- **Narrowing.**

Other Windows begin closing.

- Curiosity becomes uncomfortable.

- Questions become threatening.
- The Estuary begins losing something essential.
- Different waters are still present.

But they are being pressured to flow in the same direction.

The Pilgrim Who Pauses

Yet even within a powerful current, something remains possible.

A pause.

One Pilgrim thinks:

Wait.

Not necessarily:

They are wrong and I am right.

Simply:

What is happening here?

That small question can reopen a Window.

- *Do I actually know this person?*
- *Did I witness what happened?*
- *Am I repeating something I heard?*
- *Would I say this if I were alone?*
- *Am I acting from clarity—or from the pressure of belonging?*

Pausing does not mean the group is wrong.

The Pilgrim may question, listen and eventually say:

Yes. I still agree.

Something has nevertheless changed.

They are no longer merely following. They are participating consciously.

The Pilgrim has not necessarily left the group.

They have simply returned, for a moment, to their own House.

And perhaps that is enough to hear something quieter than the crowd.

Standing apart is not always easy.

For one Pilgrim it may feel like freedom.

For another it may feel like loneliness.

Sometimes it contains both.

Nor does standing apart make the Pilgrim wiser than those who remain.

Belonging is not the problem. Losing the freedom to see may be.

The Estuary Must Keep Its Different Waters

This is why the Estuary matters so much in community.

An Estuary is not healthy because every River becomes identical.

Its richness comes precisely because different waters arrive.

- Different histories.
- Different experiences.
- Different beliefs.
- Different Windows.

Community does not require us to agree about everything.

Nor does belonging require sameness.

The Estuary does not require agreement.
Nor does belonging require sameness.

Perhaps a healthy community is not one in which everybody thinks alike.

It is one in which difference can arrive without immediately becoming a threat.

Where a Pilgrim can say:

- *I see this differently.*
- And remain a Pilgrim.

Where another can answer:

Tell me what you see.

without surrendering their own Window.

Collective Hijack narrows.

The Estuary widens.

One says:

There is only one acceptable way to see this.

The other asks:

What can we see when more than one Window remains open?

And perhaps this is how the Pilgrim knows that the group has not completely taken the Rocking Chair.

There is still room to pause.

- Room to question.
- Room to listen.
- Room to disagree.
- Room for different waters.

And room for the Guiding Whisper to be heard beneath the noise.

Section 7 — When a Community Begins to Heal

Communities can be wounded.

- A school in which bullying has become normal.
- A workplace where people are afraid to speak.
- A neighbourhood divided by conflict.
- A place of worship fractured by disagreement.
- A group in which one Pilgrim has been excluded.

Sometimes the event itself passes.

- The atmosphere does not.
- People remember.

- Trust changes.
- Some Pilgrims withdraw.
- Others become guarded.

The community continues, but something remains in the Estuary.

An event may end while its echo continues.

We have already encountered this within the House.
Now we encounter it between many Gardens.

Healing Is Not Forgetting

A community may be tempted to move on quickly.

- *It's over.*
- *Let's forget about it.*
- *There's no point bringing it up again.*

Sometimes moving forward is healthy.
But moving forward is not the same as pretending nothing happened.

If someone was harmed, excluded or humiliated, asking them simply to forget may protect the comfort of the community more than it heals the wound.

Healing begins somewhere else.

With recognition.

This happened.
Then perhaps: *This should not have happened.*
And sometimes: *We are sorry.*

Nothing has yet been repaired.
But the Window has opened.

The Pilgrim Who Was Hurt Does Not Owe the Community Healing

This matters.
The person who was harmed should not become responsible for making everyone else comfortable again.

- They may forgive.
- They may not.
- They may return.
- They may leave.

Their Gate remains theirs.
A community can change its behaviour without demanding that the wounded Pilgrim trust it again.

Repair can be offered.
Trust cannot be required.

Trust may return slowly.
Or it may not return at all.

Healing does not always restore what existed before.

Sometimes what grows afterwards is different.

Changing What Made the Wound Possible

An apology matters.

But if everything around the apology remains unchanged, the same wound may appear again.

- Perhaps everyone knew that one person regularly humiliated others.
- Perhaps gossip had become ordinary.
- Perhaps nobody challenged aggression.
- Perhaps newcomers were routinely excluded.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim who spoke up was treated as the problem.

Then healing asks a deeper question than:

How do we make everyone feel better?

It asks:

What were we cultivating that allowed this to grow?

Now the community begins looking at itself.

- Not searching for someone else to blame.
- Not deciding who is good and who is bad.

Looking at the conditions.

- What had become normal?
- What had everyone learned to tolerate?
- Where had the Windows closed?
- Where had silence become part of the atmosphere?

This is where healing becomes cultivation.

The Atmosphere Changes Again

And perhaps healing does not announce itself dramatically.

- Someone who once remained silent speaks.
- Someone who used to gossip stops passing the story onwards.

A leader listens rather than immediately defending.

The newcomer is invited in.

Someone says:

I was wrong.

Someone else says:

Tell me what happened through your Window.

Different waters begin meeting differently.

The Estuary has not returned to what it was.

Perhaps it never will.

But something new is being cultivated.

Not perfection.

Not permanent harmony.

Something quieter.

- Greater awareness.
- Greater willingness to listen.
- Greater freedom to disagree.
- Greater courage to interrupt harm.

And perhaps this is what distinguishes a Healing Garden from a perfect Garden.

> **A Healing Garden is not a Garden in which nothing goes wrong.**
> **It is a Garden capable of recognising what has happened and cultivating differently.**

No single Pilgrim can do that for an entire community.

But one Pilgrim can begin.

Another may join.

Then another.

And gradually the atmosphere may change again.

Pilgrim's Reflection

Think of the communities through which your Garden has passed.

- Where did you feel that you belonged?
- Where did you feel different?
- Was there a time when you remained silent?
- Or when someone stood beside you?

And perhaps ask:

> **What do I help cultivate when my Garden meets another?**

There is no need to answer immediately.

Simply notice.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

You will enter many Estuaries.

You do not need to become the same as everyone you meet.

Nor do they need to become the same as you.

Bring your River.

Make room for theirs.

And when the atmosphere becomes difficult, remember:

> **You can pause before joining the current.**

Sometimes that small pause is where healing begins.

Chapter 7 — The National Garden



The Pilgrim belongs to many Gardens.

- A family.
- A school.
- A workplace.
- A neighbourhood.
- A community.

But there is another belonging that can contain millions of Pilgrims who may never meet one another.

A nation.

- Most of us are born into one.
- Some of us leave one.
- Some arrive in another.
- Some belong to more than one.
- And some spend much of their lives wondering where, exactly, they belong.

Yet there are moments when this enormous and complicated Garden suddenly becomes visible.

- A flag is raised.
- An anthem begins.
- A national celebration fills the streets.
- A tragedy is shared.
- Or eleven people walk onto a football pitch.

And suddenly millions of strangers say the same small word.

We.

- *We are playing.*
- *We scored.*
- *We lost.*

- *We are through.*

The person sitting beside us may be someone we have never met.

- They may live hundreds of miles away.
- Their House may contain beliefs very different from ours.
- They may vote differently.
- Worship differently.
- Speak differently.
- Love differently.
- See the world through a very different Window.

Yet when the ball enters the net, both may rise from their chairs at exactly the same moment.

For a little while, something larger than the individual becomes visible.

The National Garden says: We.

And *we* can be beautiful.

- It can create belonging.
- Celebration.
- Shared memory.
- Courage.
- Care.

A feeling that although our Gardens are different, something also connects us.

But *we* carry another possibility.

Because whenever there is a *we*, another word can quietly appear.

They.

And somewhere between those two words lies much of the story of the National Garden.

Before we enter that more difficult Landscape, however, perhaps we should begin somewhere much simpler.

With a football match.

Section 1 — The Game Within the Game

There is something unusual about football.

Twenty-two Pilgrims enter a field.

- There is a ball.
- Two goal posts.
- A referee.
- A clock.
- And a very simple objective.

Score more goals than the other team.

At first, everything appears to be happening outside.

- We watch the passes.

- The tackles.
- The mistakes.
- The saves.
- The goals.
- Statistics accumulate.
- Possession.
- Shots.
- Corners.
- Distance covered.

And eventually there is a number that appears to tell us what happened.

2–1.

3–2.

4–0.

The world likes numbers.

Numbers appear certain.

One team won.

The other lost.

What else is there to know?

During the 2026 World Cup, however, I began watching football differently.

I still watched the ball.

I still watched the score.

But increasingly, I found myself watching something else.

Something that did not appear on the scoreboard.

A team would concede a goal.

For a few moments, very little might seem to have changed.

- The same eleven players remained on the field.
- The same ball.
- The same skills.
- The same tactics.

Yet something had changed.

- One player hurried a pass.
- Another stopped communicating.
- Someone became frustrated.
- Someone else began trying too hard.

The passes that had flowed a few minutes earlier suddenly seemed difficult.

The scoreboard had changed by only one number.

But somewhere else, another game had begun.

Two Games

Perhaps every football match contains two games.

There is the **Outer Game**.

And there is the **Inner Game**.

The Outer Game is easy to see.

It is played with feet, bodies and a ball.

- It has lines.
- Rules.
- Goals.
- A clock.
- And a scoreboard.

The Inner Game is harder to see.

It is played through confidence.

- Fear.
- Concentration.
- Trust.
- Expectation.
- Pressure.
- Presence.

And the two games do not always move together.

A team can be winning the Outer Game while beginning to lose the Inner Game.

Another can be losing by two goals while gradually finding itself.

This creates a strange possibility.

The team that appears to be losing may actually be becoming stronger.

And the team that appears to be winning may already be beginning to unravel.

The scoreboard cannot show us this.

- It records goals.
  It cannot record a House becoming guarded.
- It can record a missed pass.
  It cannot tell us why the pass suddenly became hurried.
- It can record a substitution.
  It cannot tell us what atmosphere the new Pilgrim brings onto the field.

The scoreboard tells us something important.

But it does not tell us everything.

It tells us what has happened.

It cannot tell us what is happening within the House.

Egypt and Argentina

Then came a match in which the two games became almost impossible to miss.

Argentina were playing Egypt.

Egypt scored first.

Argentina had an opportunity to equalise from the penalty spot.

Messi stepped forward.

The penalty was saved.

The match continued.

Then, in the second half, Egypt scored again.

2–0.

By the 79th minute, the defending world champions were still two goals behind.

Look only at the Outer Game and the story appeared almost complete.

Egypt were eleven minutes from one of the great upsets of the tournament.

Argentina were heading home.

The scoreboard said:

2–0.

But the scoreboard had one limitation.

It could tell us what had happened.

It could not tell us what was about to happen.

Argentina scored.

2–1.

Four minutes later, Messi—the Pilgrim whose penalty had been saved earlier in the match—scored.

2–2.

Now something extraordinary had happened.

Egypt's two goals had not disappeared.

Argentina's difficulties had not disappeared.

The missed penalty had not disappeared.

But none of them was happening **now**.

The match had arrived somewhere new.

And perhaps the two Houses had arrived somewhere new with it.

For Argentina, what had seemed almost impossible was suddenly possible.

For Egypt, what had seemed almost secured was suddenly vulnerable.

The same football field.

The same twenty-two Pilgrims.

But a completely different atmosphere.

Then, in stoppage time, Argentina scored again.

3–2.

Three goals.

In little more than thirteen minutes.

The team that had been two goals behind was now ahead.

What changed?

Certainly the Outer Game.

Players moved.

Passes were made.

Substitutions mattered.

Goals were scored.

Football should not be reduced to what happened inside the House.

But something else had happened too.

Argentina had remained in a match that the scoreboard suggested was slipping beyond them.

And Egypt, having spent so long approaching an extraordinary victory, suddenly had something enormous to protect.

Perhaps this is where the Inner and Outer Games become inseparable.

Because at **2–0**, the scoreboard recorded the past.

At **2–1**, possibility changed.

At **2–2**, the atmosphere changed.

And at **3–2**, the scoreboard finally caught up.

> **Sometimes the Outer Game changes only after something within the Inner Game has already begun to move.**

When Two Goals Are Not Two Goals

This became one of the most fascinating discoveries of watching the tournament.

Imagine one team leading 2–0.

In one House there is confidence.

In the other there is disappointment.

Then something happens.

The losing team settles.

- The players begin finding one another again.
- The hurried passes disappear.
- Communication returns.

They stop fighting the fact that they are losing and begin playing the moment that is actually in front of them.

- The House becomes composed.

Then comes a goal.

2–1.

Nothing has happened to the first team's earlier goals.

They still exist.

Yet something has changed.

The atmosphere.

The team that was comfortably ahead suddenly has something to protect.

The team that was losing suddenly has something to discover.

- The crowd changes.
- The players sense it.
- The Garden itself seems different.

Then comes another goal.

2–2.

Now the scoreboard says the teams are equal.

But inwardly they may be nowhere near equal.

One House may be opening.

The other may be closing.

One team may feel that everything is becoming possible.

The other may feel that something is slipping away.

The score is identical.

The experience of the score is not.

The Outer Game tells us where we are.

The Inner Game influences how we meet where we are.

A Strong Inner House

Does this mean that the team with the stronger Inner House will always win?

No.

Life is not so tidy.

- A goalkeeper can make an extraordinary save.
- A ball can strike the post.
- A player can slip.
- A referee can make a decision.
- A moment of brilliance can change everything.

The Outer Garden contains uncertainty.

But a strong Inner House does something extraordinarily important.

It keeps possibility alive.

At 0–1.

At 0–2.

Perhaps even at 0–3.

The question is no longer simply:

Can we score three goals?

The deeper question becomes:

- *Can we remain here?*
- Can we continue to see clearly?
- Can we continue to communicate?
- Can we continue to trust?
- Can we continue playing rather than reacting?

- Can we allow the previous goal to remain where it belongs — in the past?

This is mental stamina in a different language.

It is not merely the ability to keep running.

It is the ability to keep **arriving**.

Again.

And again.

And again.

A mistake is made.

Arrive.

A goal is conceded.

Arrive.

A decision goes against you.

Arrive.

The body may be standing in the present while the House is still playing the past.

Arriving allows the previous moment to remain where it belongs.

Behind us.

The next ball is already moving.

And the game continues.

Section 3 — When the House Becomes Guarded

Something else can happen when a team takes the lead.

It begins to protect it.

At first, this seems sensible.

But gradually the question can change from:

How shall we play?

to:

How do we stop ourselves losing this?

The difference appears small.

Inside the House, it can be enormous.

Players retreat.

Passes that once seemed natural become cautious.

A player who might have moved forward now stays back.

A mistake feels more dangerous.

Every attack from the other team feels larger.

Every minute seems longer.

The team is still winning.

Nothing on the scoreboard says that something is wrong.

Yet inwardly, something may be contracting.

The House has not collapsed.

It has become guarded.

And a Guarded House experiences the same Garden differently.

The crowd sounds louder.

The opposition appears more threatening.

The clock seems to slow.

What was once:

We are winning.

becomes:

Don't lose this.

And now fear has entered something that began as success.

What We Protect

This is not unique to football.

We do it with money.

- Status.
- Relationships.
- Reputation.
- Success.
- Even happiness.

We may spend years trying to acquire something.

And when it finally arrives, we discover another visitor standing beside it.

Fear.

What if I lose this?

The possession has not changed.

Our relationship with it has.

- We may begin watching it.
- Protecting it.
- Defending it.

Perhaps even organising our lives around preventing its disappearance.

And without noticing, we can stop living with what we have—

and begin guarding it.

Football allows us to watch this transformation happen in ninety minutes.

A team can play beautifully to reach **2–0**.

Then spend the rest of the match frightened of returning to **2–1**.

Perhaps this is one of the paradoxes of winning.

Sometimes gaining something creates the fear of losing it.

And when fear begins directing the House, the very thing we are trying so hard to protect may become harder to hold.

Section 4 — Eleven Pilgrims

There is another reason football belongs in the Healing Garden.

A football team does not have one Inner House.

It has eleven.

Eleven Pilgrims.
Eleven Houses.
Eleven different kinds of weather moving across the same field.

- One player becomes anxious.
- Another remains calm.
- One becomes frustrated.
- Another makes a joke.
- One stops communicating.
- Another begins encouraging.
- One makes a mistake.

And ten other Pilgrims must decide, almost instantly, what that mistake will mean.

- Blame?
- Fear?
- Silence?
- *Or simply:*

    We continue.

Each House has its own weather.

Yet the weather of one House can create echoes in another.

Gradually, something collective appears.

An atmosphere.

Perhaps this is why changing one player can sometimes change more than the formation.

A substitute brings fresh legs.

But a different Pilgrim has also entered the Garden.
A different House.
A different weather.
And sometimes, within minutes, the atmosphere changes.

Who Sees the Team?

This raises another question.

Who should decide which eleven Pilgrims begin the match?

Traditionally, the manager decides.

There is good reason for this.

The manager can see the larger landscape.

- Training.
- Fitness.

- Tactics.
- The opposition.
- The tournament.

The manager possesses an **outer view**.

But the captain stands somewhere different.

The captain is inside the Garden.

The captain may notice things that are harder to see from the touchline.

- Who has become unusually quiet.
- Who is frustrated.
- Who needs encouragement.
- Who appears physically ready but inwardly unsettled.

And the other players see things too.

No single Pilgrim possesses the whole view.

Perhaps this is where leadership begins.

Not with knowing everything.

But with recognising that different Windows reveal different parts of the Landscape.

- The manager listens.
- The captain listens.
- The players are heard.

And then a decision is made.

The responsibility may still belong to the manager.

Listening does not remove leadership.

It may deepen it.

Wisdom listens widely but decides clearly.

No single Pilgrim sees the whole Landscape.

Together, they may see further.

And soon we will discover that this question becomes much more important when the Garden is no longer a football field— but a nation.

Section 5 — Training Both Games

Perhaps this is where our journey through football finally brings us.

We began with the scoreboard.

We discovered another game beneath it.

But the lesson is not that the Inner Game matters more than the Outer Game.

They belong together.

Football spends enormous amounts of time training the Outer Game.

- Passing.
- Shooting.
- Movement.
- Positioning.

- Fitness.
- Tactics.

They study opponents.

They repeat movements until the body seems to know what to do without being told.

And rightly so.

The Outer Game requires preparation.

But every one of those skills must eventually pass through the Inner House.

And that House will not always be settled.

- A player will make a mistake.
- A goal will be conceded.
- A referee will make an unexpected decision.
- The crowd will become restless.
- A teammate will become frustrated.
- A comfortable lead will disappear.

The match that was following the plan will suddenly refuse to follow it.

Then another kind of training becomes important.

- Can the Pilgrim notice what is happening within?
- Can the team recognise when its atmosphere is changing?
- Can they settle without becoming passive?
- Can they reset after conceding rather than carrying the previous goal into the next ten minutes?

Perhaps most importantly:

- **Can eleven Pilgrims help one another arrive?**

The reset need not be complicated.

- **Arrive in Presence.**
- **Notice with Awareness.**

Perhaps only one breath.

The mistake has happened.

The goal has been scored.

The scoreboard belongs to the Outer Game.

For a moment, the Pilgrim arrives in the House.

The previous moment begins to loosen.

And perhaps, within that small space, **stillness arrives.**

Then the eyes lift.

- The field appears again.
- Teammates appear again.
- The next moment is waiting.
- And the Pilgrim steps back into the Garden.

Perhaps these things should be practised too.

- Not instead of passing.
  Alongside passing.
- Not instead of fitness.
  Alongside fitness.
- Not instead of tactics.
  Alongside tactics.

Because the Outer Game develops what the Pilgrim can do.

The Inner Game develops the House from which the Pilgrim does it.

And perhaps the finest performance emerges when neither dominates the other.

The House is present.

The Garden is met.

Skill can flow outward.

Awareness can receive what is happening inward.

The player can act without becoming imprisoned by the previous moment.

- The team can fall.
- Reset.
- Recover.
- And continue.

This is **Inner–Outer Alignment** on a football field.

And perhaps that is what we have really been watching all along.

Not simply football.

We have been watching twenty-two Pilgrims move between House and Garden.

- Sometimes aligned.
- Sometimes divided.
- Sometimes flourishing.
- Sometimes overwhelmed.

And occasionally, for a few extraordinary minutes, eleven individual Houses seem to move as one.

- The passes flow.
- The players trust.
- Nobody appears to be forcing the game.

The Inner Game and Outer Game meet.

And football becomes beautiful.

Perhaps life asks something similar of us.

We need the skills to meet the Garden.
But we also need to tend the House from which we meet it.

Train the Outer Game.

Tend the Inner House.

Allow them to meet.

Section 6 — When the Pilgrim Who Leads Begins to Wound the Garden

A nation may contain millions of Pilgrims.

- Millions of Houses.
- Millions of Windows.
- Millions of ways of seeing the Landscape.

And within this enormous Garden, some Pilgrims are entrusted with unusual power.

We call them leaders.

But leadership does not remove the House.

The Pilgrim who becomes a president, prime minister, king, general or ruler still carries an inner life.

- Fear.
- Ambition.
- Attachment.
- Memory.
- Pride.
- Wounds.
- Certainty.
- Uncertainty.

The title changes.

The House remains.

Usually, the weather within one House has a limited reach.

- Anger may enter a relationship.
- Fear may affect a family.
- A guarded House may change the atmosphere of a workplace.

But when the Pilgrim occupies a position of enormous power, the echoes of one House may travel much further.

- A fear can become a policy.
- An anger can become an order.
- A suspicion can become an accusation.
- And an accusation can eventually become something much more dangerous.

When Power Becomes Something to Protect

We encountered something curious on the football field.

A team gains a lead.

Then something changes.

Instead of continuing to play freely, it begins protecting what it has acquired.

What if we lose this?

Something similar may happen with power.

The Pilgrim who once sought power now possesses it.

And possession creates another possibility.

Power can be lost.

- An election can be lost.
- People can protest.
- Opponents can organise.
- Generals can rebel.

Another group can demand change.

What happens within the House then?

We cannot know simply by looking from outside.

But we can recognise the movement.

When fear takes the rocking chair, opposition may no longer look like disagreement.

- It may begin to look like threat.
- Criticism becomes danger.
- Protest becomes disloyalty.
- Another Window becomes an enemy.

The National Garden has not necessarily become more dangerous.

The Window through which it is being seen may have narrowed.

When the Pilgrim Disappears Behind the Label

Then another movement can begin.

We have encountered it before:

Pilgrim → Category → Label → Assumption → Treatment

A neighbour becomes:

the opposition.

A journalist becomes:

the enemy.

A religious or ethnic group becomes:

the problem.

A protester becomes:

a traitor.

Something profound has happened.

The Pilgrim has disappeared behind the label.

And once we no longer encounter a person as a Pilgrim, things that would once have seemed unimaginable can become easier to justify.

- Silencing.
- Imprisonment.
- Expulsion.
- Violence.
- Sometimes killing.
- Sometimes war.

Not because a label itself pulls a trigger.

Human events are far more complicated than that.

- Institutions matter.
- History matters.
- Economic conditions matter.
- Military structures matter.
- Other leaders matter.

And thousands or millions of Pilgrims still make choices of their own.

But something important has happened in the Garden.

Another human being has become easier not to see.

When Fear Travels

The danger becomes greater when the fear does not remain inside the leader's House.

It travels.

- A speech is repeated.
- A story spreads.
- *We are under threat.*
- *They are responsible.*
- *They want to destroy what belongs to us.*

The words enter other Houses.

- Some Pilgrims reject them.
- Some question them.
- Some believe them.
- Some repeat them.

And eventually the voice may no longer belong only to the leader.

The Garden begins speaking it too.

Now we have moved from individual Hijack towards something larger.

- Collective Hijack.
- Urgency.
- Pressure.
- Continuity.
- Narrowing.

The Windows begin closing in many Houses.

And each closed Window can become evidence for another.

- One group becomes frightened.
- The other reacts.
- The first group sees the reaction and says:

  See. We were right.
- Fear creates reaction.
- Reaction appears to confirm fear.

The current strengthens.

Fear → Reaction → Confirmation → Greater Fear

Eventually, even war can begin to appear inevitable.

But war was not inevitable.

A current became powerful enough that other possibilities became harder to see.

The Wounded Gardener

Perhaps this is one of the tragedies of power.

The Pilgrim entrusted with tending the Garden may begin wounding it while believing they are protecting it.

And the more the Garden reacts to the wounds, the more threatened the leader may feel.

Leader → Garden → Leader

- The House becomes more guarded.
- The Garden becomes more frightened.
- The frightened Garden creates more echoes in the leader's House.

Windows close further.

Until it may become difficult to know whether the leader is directing the atmosphere—
or whether the atmosphere is now directing the leader.

- This does not excuse cruelty.
- Understanding is not absolution.
- Nor does recognising the House remove responsibility for what the Pilgrim does in the Garden.

But the Healing Garden asks us to look beneath the behaviour without looking away from its consequences.

Not merely:

Who is bad?

But:

- **What happened here?**
- **What was cultivated?**
- **What was allowed to spread?**
- **Where did the Pilgrim disappear behind the label?**

And perhaps most importantly:

At what point might another Window have remained open?

Because the opposite movement is possible too.

- Fear can be noticed without being fed.
- Disagreement can remain disagreement.
- An opponent can remain a Pilgrim.
- Power can be held without becoming possession.

And the Pilgrim who leads can remember something very simple:

The Garden was here before me.

It will remain after me.

For a little while, it has been entrusted to my care.

Pilgrim's Reflection

here can be great beauty in we.

But *we* can also become guarded and begin to fear *they*.

Whether we belong, stand apart, or move between the two, perhaps the invitation is to keep seeing.

Can I still recognise the Pilgrim behind the label?

Pilgrim's Sahachari

When the Garden becomes loud,

keep one Window open.

Remain a Pilgrim among Pilgrims.

Chapter 8 — The World Gardens



The Pilgrim does not live in isolation.

Beyond the Gate are other Pilgrims.

- Other communities.
- Other nations.
- Other ways of living.

And beyond them, an entire world.

- We draw borders across that world.
- We name countries.
- We build cities.
- We speak different languages.
- We develop different customs, beliefs and ways of organising our lives.

Yet Pilgrims have always moved between them.

- Sometimes we move because we want to.
- Sometimes because we need to.
- And sometimes because someone else decides that we must.

Whenever we move, something changes.

The outer environment.

- New people appear.
- New languages.
- New customs.
- New expectations.
- New possibilities.

And our Garden begins unfolding under different conditions.

Section 1 — When Pilgrims Move

I learned this very early in life.

As a child in Mozambique, I was sent to Goa because there were fears of possible civil war.

I did not make that decision.

The adults around me looked at what might happen and decided that I should be somewhere else.

My outer environment changed.

Years later, I moved again.

This time to England.

And something very different happened.

I flourished.

Perhaps gardeners have always understood something that human beings sometimes forget.

Not every plant flourishes under the same conditions.

- Some need warmth.
- Others prefer cooler weather.
- Some grow in full sunlight.
- Others prefer shade.
- Some need the movement and richness of a crowded bed.
- Others need space.

The plant is not necessarily at fault when it struggles.

Sometimes the conditions simply do not suit it.

Perhaps human beings are not so different.

- Some Pilgrims flourish in busy cities.
- Others in quiet villages.
- Some love heat.
- Others come alive in the cold.
- Some want familiarity.
- Others become curious when surrounded by what they do not know.
- Some remain throughout their lives close to where they were born.

Others discover, far away:

I grow well here.

This does not necessarily mean rejecting where we came from.

Nor does flourishing somewhere require us to call it home.

It simply recognises something we have encountered throughout this book:

Environment matters.

The House meets the outer environment through the Garden.

And when the outer environment changes, possibilities within our outer life may change with it.

This is why there can be no single story of migration.

- Some Pilgrims move towards opportunity.
- Some towards love.
- Some towards adventure.

- Some towards work or study.
- Some towards safety.

Others move away from war.

- Persecution.
- Poverty.
- Disaster.

Or circumstances in which life has become difficult to sustain.

- Some choose.
- Some have little choice.
- Some, like the child I once was, are moved by decisions made for them.

And sometimes one journey contains several of these stories.

Perhaps, then, asking a Pilgrim only—

Why did you leave?

is not enough.

There is another question.

What happened to your Garden when the environment changed?

- Did it struggle?
- Did it become guarded?
- Did something have to be left behind?
- Did something new begin to grow?

Or perhaps, unexpectedly—**did you flourish?**

There is no answer that belongs to every Pilgrim.

And perhaps that is precisely the point.

Not every Pilgrim flourishes under the same conditions.

The Healing Garden does not tell us where we should grow.

It invites us to notice where and how we do.

Section 2 — When Gardens Meet Across Borders

Moving changes more than geography.

- A Pilgrim arrives carrying a life.
- A language.
- Memories.
- Food.
- Customs.
- Beliefs.
- Ways of celebrating.
- Ways of grieving.
- Ways of raising children.
- Ways of understanding what is polite, familiar, sacred or strange.

The Pilgrim does not leave all of this at the border.

Their Garden continues.

But now it begins meeting Gardens shaped within a different environment.

And those Gardens meet them.

- Sometimes the meeting is easy.
- Sometimes curious.
- Sometimes joyful.

Sometimes uncomfortable.

- A smell from a kitchen is unfamiliar.
- An accent is difficult to understand.
- Clothing looks different.
- A custom seems strange.
- Something considered polite in one place may appear rude in another.

Neither Pilgrim necessarily intends harm.

They may simply be looking through different Windows.

This is where migration becomes more than movement.

It becomes an **Estuary**.

Different waters meet.

Neither needs to pretend that it came from the same River.

What Do We Carry?

When Pilgrims move, they do not carry only possessions.

They carry pieces of the environments that shaped them.

And sometimes those pieces begin growing somewhere new.

- A recipe enters another kitchen.
- A word enters another language.
- A festival appears in another city.
- Music finds another audience.
- A child grows up speaking the language of one environment at school and another around the family table.

Gradually, the receiving environment changes too.

This is important.

We sometimes imagine migration as though only the arriving Pilgrim must change.

But encounters move in both directions.

I encounter you.

You encounter me.

Neither encounter guarantees change.

But both make change possible.

Making Room Without Becoming the Same

There can also be difficulty.

A Pilgrim may wonder:

How much of myself must I change to live here?

Those already there may wonder:

How much will our environment change because others are arriving?

These are not always simple questions.

Nor does the Healing Garden need to pretend they are.

- Living together may require adaptation.
- Boundaries.
- Shared expectations.
- Laws.
- Conversation.
- Sometimes compromise.

But healing does not require every Garden to become identical.

We encountered this at the Estuary.

Different waters can meet without becoming the same water.

Perhaps the same is true here.

- A Pilgrim may adopt new customs while keeping old ones.
- Speak another language without losing the first.
- Feel affection for more than one place.
- Or feel that they belong completely to neither.

Some may not even seek belonging.

They may simply wish to live their life.

There is room for that too.

Perhaps the healing question is not:

How do we make everyone the same?

Nor:

How do we make sure nothing ever changes?

Perhaps it is:

How can our different Gardens meet without requiring one another to disappear?

Because migration does not only move Pilgrims across borders.

It creates encounters.

And wherever Pilgrims encounter one another, something can be cultivated.

- Fear.
- Suspicion.
- Curiosity.
- Friendship.
- Distance.
- Understanding.

The question familiar to us from the Community Garden returns, now on a much larger Landscape:

What are we cultivating when our Gardens meet?

Section 3 — When the World Shares the Same Visitor

Not everything that crosses a border is carried deliberately by a Pilgrim.

Sometimes the Visitor travels too.

A virus does not recognise a passport.

It does not know where one nation ends and another begins.

- It moves through contact.
- From body to body.
- Household to household.
- Community to community.
- Country to country.

COVID made this visible on an extraordinary scale.

- Something that appeared distant could soon be nearby.
- Then at the Front Door.
- Then inside the family.
- Perhaps inside the body itself.

For a while, millions of Pilgrims across the world found themselves facing the same Visitor.

But they did not experience the same visit.

- For one Pilgrim, it was a mild illness.
- For another, frightening.
- For another, life-threatening.

Some worked from home.

Others could not.

- Some had Gardens in which there was space to walk and breathe.
- Others lived in crowded environments.
- Some were surrounded by family.
- Others were alone.

Some lost work.

- Some lost people they loved.
- Some became carers.
- Some became patients.
- Some continued almost untouched.

This reveals something important.

A shared Visitor does not create a shared experience.

The same event enters different lives through different circumstances.

- Different bodies.
- Different Houses.
- Different Gardens.
- Different Windows.

When My Garden Affects Yours

But COVID revealed something else.

For perhaps one of the clearest times in recent memory, everyday actions in one Garden could have consequences in another.

- Where we went.
- Whom we met.
- Whether we stayed away when ill.
- How we cared for someone vulnerable.

Our Gardens were separate—but they were not isolated.

This is an important distinction.

Throughout our journey we have protected the individuality of the Garden.

Your Garden remains yours.

My Garden remains mine.

But separate does not mean disconnected.

What happens in my Garden can sometimes reach yours.

And what happens in yours can reach mine.

A disease makes that connection unusually visible.

But so does care.

- A neighbour leaves food at a door.
- A nurse tends someone they have never met before.
- Scientists in different countries share knowledge.
- Families find unfamiliar ways of staying connected.
- Communities begin looking after Pilgrims who cannot safely go outside.

Alongside fear, something else can travel.

Care.

Perhaps that is where healing begins in a world facing the same Visitor.

Not by pretending that everyone is experiencing the same thing.

But by recognising that our different experiences can still affect one another.

My Garden is mine.

Your Garden is yours.

And sometimes, how I tend mine matters in yours.

COVID eventually receded from the centre of everyday life.

But perhaps it left us with a question larger than the pandemic itself:

What do we owe one another when what happens in one Garden can travel into another?

Section 4 — When Fear Crosses Borders

The Visitor was not the only thing travelling.

Fear travelled too.

A frightening story could begin in one part of the world and arrive in another within minutes.

- Images travelled.
- Numbers travelled.
- Rumours travelled.
- Warnings travelled.
- Opinions travelled.

Sometimes what arrived helped us understand what was happening.

Sometimes it frightened us.

Sometimes nobody yet knew whether it was true.

The world had become connected in a way previous generations could scarcely have imagined.

A Pilgrim could sit alone in one House while receiving the weather of Gardens thousands of miles away.

And what entered through the Window could begin changing the weather within.

This is not unique to a pandemic.

- A war begins somewhere.
- A financial crisis develops.
- A disaster occurs.
- A frightening event is filmed.
- Something is posted online.

Within minutes, millions of Pilgrims may be watching.

The event may be far away.

Its echo is already here.

What Do I Allow to Travel Through Me?

We cannot prevent everything from reaching us.

But perhaps we can notice what happens when it does.

A story arrives.

Before passing it onwards, there may be a small space.

- *Do I know this is true?*
- *What is this awakening in my House?*
- *Am I sharing information—or sharing my fear?*

That small pause matters.

Because once something passes through us, it may enter another Garden.

Receive → Pause → Discern → Share

But fear is not the only thing capable of travelling.

- Knowledge travels.
- Research travels.
- Warnings travel.
- Solutions travel.
- Humour travels.
- Compassion travels.

A Pilgrim in one country can help a Pilgrim they will never meet in another.

Perhaps this is one of the strange possibilities of World Gardens.

The same connections that allow fear to spread can also carry healing.

The question is not whether currents will move between us.

They already do.

The question is:

What am I helping to carry?

Perhaps healing in an interconnected world sometimes begins with something very small.

A Pilgrim receives what is travelling through the wider Landscape—

and pauses before sending it on.

Section 5 — When the Environment Itself Changes

A Garden does not exist without conditions.

- Rain.

- Sunlight.
- Air.
- Water.
- Soil.
- Temperature.
- Seasons.

We may tend our individual Gardens.

But we do not control the wider environment in which they grow.

And sometimes that environment changes.

- A river carries less water.
- Rain does not arrive when expected.
- Heat remains for longer.
- A fire moves across a Landscape.
- A flood enters a town.
- The sea reaches further onto the land.

What happens then?

The Pilgrim may have tended carefully.

The Garden may have flourished for generations.

Yet something beyond its Gate is changing.

This presents the Healing Garden with a different kind of wound.

It is not simply a wound between two Pilgrims.

Nor between a Pilgrim and a community.

The conditions supporting many Gardens are changing together.

Beyond the Gate

Climate change also reveals the limits of borders.

- Air does not stop at a checkpoint.
- The Sea does not recognise a passport.
- Rivers may flow through several nations.

What enters the atmosphere in one place does not necessarily remain there.

Once again, we discover:

Separate does not mean isolated.

One National Garden may make choices whose consequences are felt far beyond it.

And those consequences are not necessarily experienced equally.

- One community may have resources to adapt.
- Another may not.
- One Pilgrim can move.
- Another cannot.
- One Garden can be rebuilt.
- Another may lose the conditions that allowed it to exist at all.

The same changing world can therefore be experienced through very different Windows.

Tending Beyond Our Own Gate

This raises a difficult question.

Much of our journey through *The Healing Garden* has asked:

What is mine to tend?

But climate change adds another question:

What if what needs tending cannot be contained within my Garden?

- I can tend my soil.
- Plant my trees.
- Use water carefully.
- Make choices about how I live.

A community can make larger choices.

A nation larger ones still.

Yet some wounds cannot be tended by one Pilgrim, one community or one nation alone.

Healing begins to require cooperation between Gardens.

Not because every Garden must become the same.

But because they depend upon conditions none possesses alone.

Perhaps this is where the idea of ownership begins to loosen.

We may own a house.

A field.

A piece of land.

- But can anyone own the rain that falls upon it?
- The river flowing beside it?
- The air passing through it?
- The Sky above it?

These move beyond our Gates.

And perhaps climate change offers World Gardens one of its deepest lessons:

We may tend different Gardens.

But we share some of the conditions that allow them to flourish.

The healing question therefore becomes larger than:

How do I protect my Garden?

It becomes:

How do we tend the conditions that make flourishing possible for Gardens beyond our own?

Section 6 — When National Gardens Fight

There are times when disagreement between nations becomes something more.

- Words harden.
- Borders become contested.
- Old wounds are remembered.
- Fear grows.
- One nation sees danger in another.
- And eventually—

- weapons replace words.

War begins.

But nations do not bleed.

Pilgrims do.

The language of war can make this easy to forget.

- We speak of armies.
- Enemies.
- Allies.
- Territories.
- Casualties.
- Victories.
- Defeats.

But beneath every one of these words are individual Gardens.

- A Pilgrim leaves for battle.
- A family waits.
- A child hides from an explosion.

Someone loses their home.

Someone becomes a refugee.

Someone is ordered to kill a Pilgrim they have never met.

Someone waits for a Pilgrim who will never return.

The conflict may be between nations.

The wounds appear in human lives.

When the Other Pilgrim Becomes the Enemy

War requires a powerful change of Window.

The Pilgrim on the other side acquires another name.

Enemy.

Sometimes there may be genuine danger.

- A nation may have been attacked.
- People may need protecting.
- There may be actions that must be resisted.

Recognising the Pilgrim does not require pretending that harm is not occurring.

But something dangerous happens when *enemy* becomes everything we need to know about another human being.

- The uniform arrives before the Pilgrim.
- The nationality arrives before the Pilgrim.
- The label arrives before the Pilgrim.

Once again:

Pilgrim → Category → Label → Assumption → Treatment

The person on the other side may also have a family.

- A language.
- Memories.

- Fears.
- A House.
- A Garden.

Perhaps they too would rather be somewhere else.

Yet two Pilgrims who have never met may find themselves standing opposite one another because the National Gardens to which they belong are at war.

The Wound Does Not End When the Fighting Stops

Eventually, wars end.

A treaty may be signed.

Weapons may fall silent.

Borders may be redrawn.

But the Garden does not instantly heal.

- There may be grief.
- Trauma.
- Destroyed homes.
- Displaced families.
- Anger.
- Stories of what *they* did to *us*.

Children may inherit memories of events that happened before they were born.

The fighting has stopped.

The echo has not.

And this may be one of the most difficult forms of healing.

Because peace is not simply the absence of gunfire.

Somehow Pilgrims who have learned to fear one another must begin living in a world in which the other still exists.

The Window may need to open again.

- Not to erase what happened.
- Not to deny responsibility.
- Not necessarily to forgive.

But perhaps, eventually, to see something that war made difficult to see.

The Pilgrim behind the enemy.

That may take years.

Generations.

And perhaps some wounds never completely disappear.

Healing does not require us to pretend otherwise.

But every time one Pilgrim refuses to pass an inherited hatred unquestioned into another Garden, something in the current changes.

The past remains.

The wound is remembered.

But it does not have to determine everything that grows next.

Perhaps this is one of the quiet beginnings of peace:

The fighting has ended.

Now the Gardens must learn how to meet again.

Section 7 — Healing Between World Gardens

We have travelled a long way.

A Pilgrim moved.

Another arrived.

A Visitor crossed borders.

Fear travelled.

The environment changed.

Nations fought.

Again and again, we discovered the same thing.

Our Gardens are separate.

But they are not isolated.

What happens in one may eventually reach another.

Sometimes what travels wounds.

- Fear.
- Disease.
- Hatred.
- Pollution.
- Violence.
- But other things travel too.
- Knowledge.
- Medicine.
- Food.
- Music.
- Stories.
- Compassion.
- Friendship.
- Help.

Healing itself can cross a border.

We Do Not Need One Garden

Perhaps healing the world does not mean turning it into one enormous Garden.

That would ask too much of difference.

- There can still be nations.
- Languages.
- Religions.
- Cultures.
- Traditions.

Different ways of organising life.

Different ways of understanding it.

Healing does not require sameness.

We learned that at the Estuary.

Different waters can meet without becoming the same water.

Perhaps World Gardens asks us to recognise something similar.

I do not need your Garden to become mine in order to care what happens within it.

A Pilgrim suffering thousands of miles away remains a Pilgrim.

Their House may be somewhere I will never enter.

Their Garden may contain experiences I will never fully understand.

Their Window may show a Landscape very different from mine.

Yet something can still cross the distance between us.

Recognition.

Namaskaram Namaskaram.

The Pilgrim in me recognises the Pilgrim in you.
The Flame in me bows to the Flame in you.

First Namaskaram — outer recognises outer:
Pilgrim to Pilgrim. Garden to Garden.

Second Namaskaram — inner recognises inner:
House to House. Flame to Flame.

Tending What Travels

Perhaps we cannot tend every Garden.

Nor should we try.

But we can become more aware of what travels through ours.

- What do I receive?
- What do I repeat?
- What do I cultivate?
- What do I send onwards?

Fear can travel through me.

So can kindness.

A label can travel through me.

So can curiosity.

An old hatred can travel through me.

Or perhaps—

it can stop here.

This does not heal the whole world.

But it changes what leaves one Garden and enters another.

And sometimes that is where healing begins.

One Sky

We have travelled through many Landscapes in this book.

- Houses.
- Gardens.
- Rivers.
- Lakes.
- Estuaries.
- Harbours.
- Seas.
- Nations.
- And now the world.

Yet wherever the Pilgrim travels, something remains above them.

The Sky.

- No Gate divides it.
- No passport is required to stand beneath it.
- No nation possesses its part.

We may give places different names.

Draw borders.

Speak different languages.

Travel different Rivers.

Cultivate very different Gardens.

But above them— **one Sky.**

Perhaps World Gardens does not ask us to become one.

Perhaps it asks us to learn how to remain many—

without forgetting that our lives continually touch.

Many Pilgrims.

Many Houses.

Many Gardens.

One Earth.

One Sky.

Pilgrim's Reflection

The world contains many Gardens.

Different environments.

Different journeys.

Different ways of living.

Yet what happens far beyond my Gate may one day reach me.

And what passes through my Garden may travel further than I know.

What am I helping to carry into the world?

Pilgrim's Sahachari

You do not have to understand every Garden.

You do not have to make it like your own.

Sometimes healing begins simply with recognition.

Ubuntu, Ubuntu *(I am because we are.)*
The Pilgrim in me recognises the Pilgrim in you.
The Flame in me bows to the Flame in you.

Atmadeva Devatma


PART III
Confronting

Chapter 9 — The Garden of Judgement



Section 1 — From Observation to Judgement

We notice one another.
Perhaps we cannot help it.
A Pilgrim enters the room.

- We notice how they are dressed.
- How they speak.
- Whether they smile.
- Whether they look at us.
- How loudly they talk.
- What they eat.
- How they behave towards another Pilgrim.

We notice what they do.
And noticing is not necessarily judgement.
If someone arrives twenty minutes late, I may notice:

They arrived twenty minutes late.

That is an **observation.**

But something can happen very quickly afterwards.

They do not respect my time.

The event has not changed.
Something has been added.
And often the addition happens so quickly that we do not notice the distance between the two.

We think we are describing what happened.
But perhaps we are already describing **what we think it means**.

Observation and Judgement

Imagine two Pilgrims sitting together.

One speaks very little.

We might observe:

He has hardly spoken.

That may be reasonably close to what happened.

Then the mind begins to interpret.

- *Perhaps he is tired.*
- *Perhaps he is uncomfortable.*
- *Perhaps something has happened.*

These are interpretations.
We do not yet know whether any of them are true.
But another movement may follow.

He is rude.

Now something has changed.
We are no longer describing his silence.
We have begun describing **him**.
Perhaps we can distinguish three movements:

Observation: *This is what I notice.*

Interpretation: *This is what I think it might mean.*

Judgement: *This is what I decide it says about you.*

Interpretation is not necessarily judgement.

Nor is judgement necessarily accurate or inaccurate simply because it is judgement.

Sometimes our observations and experience tell us something important.

A pattern may genuinely be harmful.

A boundary may genuinely have been crossed.

Discernment matters.

The Healing Garden does not ask us to stop seeing clearly.

It asks us to become aware of **what we saw and what we added**.

What did I actually observe?

What did I add?

That small distinction can open another Window

Section 2 — The Judging Mind

Much of this happens quickly.

Perhaps because much of life is lived on **Autopilot**.

- We see.
- The mind compares.
- Memory appears.
- An assumption follows.

A judgement arises.

And sometimes a reaction follows before we have noticed any of it.

Autopilot → Judgement → Reaction

There may be nothing sinister about this.

The mind has spent a lifetime learning, comparing, recognising patterns and making sense of what it encounters.

Judgement may simply be one of its familiar movements.

And sometimes it is even playful.

Among friends, one Pilgrim might say:

You are hopeless!

Everyone laughs.

In another relationship, the same words might wound.

The words alone do not tell us everything.

- The relationship matters.
- The history matters.
- The intention matters.
- The atmosphere matters.

This is why we cannot create another simple rule:

Judgement is bad.

That would merely give the Judging Mind something else to judge.

The question is not whether a judgement appeared.

The question is whether we were **present enough to notice it**.

Arriving at Presence

Something changes when the Pilgrim arrives.

Not necessarily outside.

Inside the House.

Presence does not guarantee that judgement disappears.

I may still see another Pilgrim walking past and think:

What on earth is he wearing?

But Awareness may catch the movement.

Ah.

I just judged him.

There it is.

- Perhaps I smile.

- Perhaps I become curious.
- Perhaps nothing further needs to happen.

The judgement arose.
I noticed it.
It passed.

Arrive in Presence → Awareness → Notice → Choice

The important change is not that the mind has become perfectly non-judgemental.
It is that the judgement is no longer completely invisible.
And this matters because an unseen judgement can continue moving.
A noticed judgement gives us a little Space.
In that Space there may be choice.

When Judgement Sounds Like Help

Not long ago, I received a video call from a friend I had not seen for some time.

Almost as soon as he saw me, he said:

- *You've put on weight.*
- He was right.
- I had.

He seemed concerned about my health.

Then he added:

You should walk.

I told him that we already walked a great deal and tried to minimise our use of the car.

I also knew that I had gained weight.

But at that moment, I was not in the right frame of mind to do anything more about it.

Later, I found myself thinking about the encounter.

Not because he had noticed.

We notice things about one another all the time.

I wondered about the speed with which an observation had become words—

and then advice.

You've put on weight.

You should walk.

Perhaps the words arose on Autopilot.

Perhaps they did not.

I cannot see through his Window.

His concern may have been entirely genuine.

But neither could he see everything through mine.

- He could see that I had gained weight.
- He could not see how much I walked.

And this is where advice becomes interesting.

We often offer advice from the part of another Pilgrim's Garden that is visible through **our Window**.

What we see may be true.

- Our concern may be genuine.
- Our advice may even be sensible.

And still **there may be much that we do not know.**

There can be a very small space between noticing something and saying something.

Notice → Speak

And an equally small space between noticing a difficulty and deciding what another Pilgrim should do about it.

Notice → Advice

Awareness offers another possibility.

Notice → Awareness → Space → Discernment → Speak

The observation does not have to disappear.

He has put on weight.

Nor does concern have to remain silent.

But within that Space, other questions become possible.

- *Do I need to say this?*
- *Is this the right moment?*
- *What do I actually know?*
- *What might I be assuming?*
- *How might I ask rather than tell?*

Perhaps concern still speaks.

But perhaps it first asks:

How have you been?

Or:

Are you managing to get much exercise?

The concern is still there.

The difference is that another Window has been allowed to open.

Perhaps the lesson is surprisingly simple:

What we notice first is not necessarily what we need to say first.

Awareness does not tell us what we must say.

It creates enough Space for discernment—

what to carry across the Porch, when to carry it, and how to enter another Pilgrim's Garden.

Section 3 - Micro-Judgement

Some of the most frequent judgements in our lives may never cross the Porch.

They are directed towards ourselves.

They are often tiny.

So tiny that we barely notice them.

- I forget something.
- *I'm getting useless.*
- I make a mistake.
- *That was stupid.*

I look in the mirror.

I look awful.

I sit down while there is still work to do.

I'm lazy.

I eat another piece of cake.

I have no self-control.

I say something awkward.

Why did I say that?

Then life continues.

A few minutes later another one appears.

And then another.

We might call these **micro-judgements**.

Not because they are necessarily unimportant.

But because they are so small and familiar that they can pass almost unnoticed.

And notice what happens.

I made a mistake.
becomes:

I am stupid.

I am tired.
becomes:

I am lazy.

I found today difficult.
becomes:

I am failing.

An experience has quietly become a verdict about the Pilgrim.

One micro-judgement may disappear almost immediately.

But repeated throughout the day, these tiny judgements can begin affecting the **weather of the House**.

No other Pilgrim needs to enter.

The judging voice is already inside.

Judging the Judgement

There is another curious possibility.

I judge another Pilgrim.

Then Awareness notices.

I shouldn't have thought that.

And now—

I judge myself for judging them.

The Judging Mind has completed a circle.

This is why Presence is not another standard we must meet.

Awareness does not need to say:

> *You must stop judging.*

It can simply notice:

> *There was a judgement.*

Perhaps that is enough.

We do not need to turn every judgement into a problem requiring repair.

Sometimes awareness itself loosens it.

> **There was a judgement.**
>
> **I noticed it.**
>
> **Now what?**

Sometimes nothing.

Sometimes laughter.

Sometimes curiosity.

Sometimes an apology.

Sometimes a boundary.

Sometimes a judgement reveals a deeper assumption worth examining.

Presence gives us enough Space to discover which.

> **The Healing Garden is not a Garden without judgement.**
>
> **It is a Garden in which judgement does not have to remain unseen.**

Section 4 — The Judgement We Cultivate

Judging with Awareness

Not every judgement happens on Autopilot.

Sometimes we know perfectly well what we are doing.

I see another Pilgrim.

I notice something about them.

And I knowingly form a judgement.

There is no moment in which I suddenly wake up and realise what I have done.

I was aware.

I noticed, I judged, and I knew that I was judging.

This matters.
We might imagine that once Awareness is present, judgement disappears.
But Awareness does not decide what we do.
It allows us to see more clearly what we are doing.
Within that Space, the Pilgrim still chooses.

- I may notice a judgement and let it pass.
- I may question it.
- I may act upon it.
- Or I may simply enjoy it.

Human beings are not always trying to become better versions of themselves.
Sometimes we knowingly do things that are unnecessary, imperfect or slightly mischievous.
Awareness does not remove this freedom.

Awareness creates Space.
What we do within that Space remains our choice.

Perhaps, then, the important distinction is not simply between judging and not judging.
It is between judgement that passes unnoticed and judgement in which we knowingly participate.

Autopilot → Judgement → Reaction

Awareness → Judgement → Choice

And sometimes—**the judgement itself is the choice.**

When We Share the Judgement

However the judgement arose, it does not always remain within us.
It may have appeared on Autopilot and only later become visible.
Or we may have judged knowingly.
Either way, we may choose to share it.
And when we do, something changes.
The judgement no longer belongs only to me.
It enters another Garden.
I am sitting with a friend.
Someone we both know comes into the conversation.
I say something about them.
My friend laughs.
Then adds something.
I remember something else.
And for a few minutes, we gossip.
There may be nothing particularly serious about it.
Friends do this.

- Sometimes gossip is affectionate.
- Sometimes playful.
- Sometimes wickedly funny.
- Sometimes it helps us release frustration.

- Sometimes we are trying to make sense of something that happened.
- And sometimes it becomes something else.

My friend agrees with my judgement.
Suddenly it feels more certain.
So you see it too.
They remember an example.
I remember another.
The judgement is no longer merely being shared.
It is being **reinforced**.

Judgement → Sharing → Confirmation → Stronger Judgement

Now we may begin looking at that Pilgrim differently.

We notice the things that support our story.

We overlook the things that do not.

And if the judgement travels again—

- from one friend to another,
- from one colleague to another,
- from one family member to another—

something that began in one House can begin influencing the atmosphere of many Gardens.

One voice can become many.

Much of this may disappear as quickly as it arose.

- A laugh.
- A story.
- A passing remark.

But some judgements are repeatedly watered.

And Awareness allows us to notice the difference.

Perhaps the question is not:

Should we ever gossip?

But:

What are we cultivating through this conversation?

- Are we laughing and moving on?
- Are we trying to understand?
- Are we processing something difficult?
- Or are we strengthening a judgement each time we repeat it?

There may not always be a clear answer.

But perhaps there comes a moment when we recognise:

We are no longer talking about what the Pilgrim did.

We have begun deciding who the Pilgrim is.

Section 5 — The Garden of Advice

Perhaps the important question is not:

Should I give advice?

But:

What is travelling with my advice?

- Care?
- Experience?
- Concern?
- Fear?
- Expectation?
- Judgement?
- Perhaps even control?

The words themselves may sound remarkably similar.

The atmosphere around them may not.

There is a difference between:

Would you like my thoughts?

and:

What you need to do is…

The first approaches the Gate.

The second may already be stepping through it.

And even welcome advice can change after it has been given.

I offer a suggestion.
You listen.
You choose differently.
Something arises in me.
Why didn't you listen to me?
So I offer the advice again.
Then again.

Somewhere along the way, the suggestion has acquired an expectation.

Advice → Expectation → Repetition → Pressure → Control

What began as an offer of help has gradually become an attempt to cultivate another Pilgrim's Garden.

Perhaps the distinction is simple:

Advice offers.
Control requires.

Once the Advice Is Given

There is another possibility.

Would you like my thoughts?

The Pilgrim says yes.

I offer them.

And then—

the advice belongs to them.

- They may accept it.
- Adapt it.
- Question it.
- Ignore it.
- Return to it years later.
- Or choose something completely different.

Their choice does not diminish what I offered.
Nor does it have to become a rejection of me.
I have seen their Garden through my Window.
They are the Pilgrim living within it.
There will always be things I cannot see.

Perhaps wisdom in the Garden of Advice includes knowing when our part is finished.

> **I can offer what I see without claiming that I see everything.**

And then—I leave the Gate in their hands.

Leaving the Ruler Down

We will continue noticing one another.

We will continue interpreting.

And judgements will continue to arise.

- Some may be playful.
- Some may reveal more about us than about the Pilgrim we are judging.
- Some may alert us to something that genuinely needs attention.

Discernment still matters.
Boundaries still matter.
Harm sometimes needs to be named clearly.

The Healing Garden does not ask us to stop seeing.

Perhaps it asks us to notice when seeing has quietly become **measuring**.

- *What did I observe?*
- *What did I add?*
- *What do I actually know?*
- *What might I not know?*

And perhaps the ruler that measures another Garden is the same ruler we sometimes turn upon ourselves.

- *I should be better.*
- *I should have done more.*
- *I should be further along by now.*

Awareness does not need to seize the ruler and break it.
Perhaps it simply notices that we are holding one.
And sometimes—we can put it down.
The other Pilgrim does not need to grow as I would grow.
Their Garden does not need to resemble mine.
Nor does my Garden need to resemble theirs.
We can remain different.
We can still meet.

I can see your Garden without needing to measure it against my own.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

See what you see.
But leave room for what you cannot.

Another Window may change the view.

Chapter 10 - What We Carry Forward



Human beings are capable of extraordinary tenderness.

- We can care for a stranger.
- Protect a child.
- Sit beside someone who is dying.
- Forgive.
- Listen.
- Love.

And human beings are also capable of extraordinary harm.

- We can humiliate.
- Exploit.
- Hate.
- Neglect.
- Injure.
- Destroy.

How can the same human being carry such different possibilities?

Perhaps we do not need to begin by deciding whether human beings are fundamentally good or bad.

Perhaps another question takes us somewhere more useful:

What becomes familiar to us?

Because much of what eventually moves through a Pilgrim may have begun much more quietly.

- Something was encountered.
- Something was repeated.
- Something became familiar.

And eventually, something that once surrounded the Pilgrim may begin to move through them.

This can happen with kindness.

And it can happen with cruelty.

The human capacity that allows one to ripen may also allow the other.

The difference may lie partly in **what is being cultivated**.

Section 1 — From Unfamiliar to Familiar

Life continually brings us things we have not encountered before.

- A person.
- A place.
- A way of thinking.
- A way of responding.
- A kindness.
- A cruelty.

Something unfamiliar enters our experience.

It **arrives**.

- Perhaps we barely notice.
- Perhaps it surprises us.
- Perhaps it disturbs us.
- Perhaps something about it remains.

When Something Remains

Imagine a child who is upset at school.

Perhaps they are accustomed to hearing:

Stop crying.

But this time a teacher does something unfamiliar.

- She sits beside them.
- She does not hurry the tears away.
- She does not immediately offer advice.

For a little while, she simply stays.

The moment passes.

School continues.

Years may pass.

The child may even forget the encounter.

But forgetting the event does not necessarily mean that nothing remains from it.

Something may have left a trace within the House.

The Pilgrim may forget the moment.

The House may still remember what it received.

This is part of the Hidden Self.

Not only our wounds live there.

So may traces of tenderness.

- Patience.
- Safety.
- Being listened to.
- Being held.
- Being allowed to cry.

Then, years later, another Pilgrim is distressed.

Something about the moment feels familiar.

Perhaps the teacher is consciously remembered.

Perhaps not.

But another possibility is somehow available:

Stay.

And so the Pilgrim stays.

What once arrived has now been **lived**.

Another Trace

Now imagine another child.

Something is broken.

An adult immediately shouts:

Look what you've done! You're always so careless.

Another day, something else goes wrong.

Again there is shouting.

Again there is blame.

The child does not choose any of this.

But these experiences too may leave traces.

Years later, something breaks in the Pilgrim's own Garden.

And before much thought has occurred, words begin to rise.

Perhaps even the same words:

Look what you've done.

Again, there may be no conscious childhood memory.

The Pilgrim may have forgotten where the response was first encountered.

But something within the House remembers the path.

And now comes an important moment.

The words may rise—

but the Pilgrim does not have to speak them.

What is remembered does not have to be lived.

This is where the two stories begin to reveal something important.

From Trace to Familiarity

Something may arrive.

It may leave a trace.

The trace may later become available.

And if the Pilgrim begins to live from it—

and lives from it again—

something that was once unfamiliar may gradually become familiar.

Unfamiliar → Arrives → Leaves a Trace → Remembered → Lived → Repeated → Familiar

But familiarity can arise in another way too.

We can become familiar with something simply because we repeatedly **live around it**.

The child surrounded by shouting may know shouting intimately without ever becoming someone who shouts.

The Pilgrim surrounded by kindness may recognise kindness without yet knowing how to offer it.

So we need to distinguish:

Familiar around me

from

familiar within me.

What becomes familiar around me does not have to become what lives through me.

And what arrives only once may, if it is remembered and lived, eventually become something familiar within me.

Perhaps this is where cultivation begins.

Not with what has merely happened to us—but with what we begin to live.

Section 2 — When the Familiar Ripens

Let us return to the teacher.

The child has grown.

Another Pilgrim is distressed.

They stay.

Another time, someone needs to speak.

They listen.

Another time, someone is struggling.

They make room.

Again.

And again.

Eventually, something changes.

The Pilgrim no longer needs to remember the teacher.

They may not even know that an encounter many years ago was one of the places this way of living began.

- Staying has become familiar.
- Listening has become familiar.
- Making room for another Pilgrim has become familiar.

The feet begin to know the way.

Ripening

Familiarity is not yet embodiment.

The Pilgrim who usually listens can still interrupt.

- The patient Pilgrim can become impatient.
- The kind Pilgrim can hurt someone.

But something repeatedly lived has had time to ripen.

It has become increasingly available.

- Someone is suffering—and the Pilgrim stays.
- Someone speaks—and the Pilgrim listens.

There may be very little deliberation.

What once arrived from another Garden has become part of how this Pilgrim now moves through their own.

This is **embodiment**.

Not perfection.

Not a permanent state.

Something has simply become sufficiently familiar that it can arise more readily.

Unfamiliar → Arrives → Trace → Remembered → Lived → Repeated → Familiar → Ripening → Embodiment

What Ripens Travels

And embodiment does not remain within the House.

What has ripened crosses the Porch.

The Pilgrim sits beside someone who is suffering.

- Listens.
- Stays.

Perhaps the other Pilgrim has never been met like this before.

For them, it is unfamiliar.

But now something has **arrived**.

- Perhaps the encounter leaves a trace.
- Perhaps years later it will be remembered.
- Perhaps it will be lived.

And suddenly we can see something extraordinary.

The teacher's kindness did not end in the classroom.

Years later, it crossed another Porch.

It entered another Garden.

And now another Pilgrim has received it.

The teacher may know nothing about this.

She may have forgotten the afternoon entirely.

The child may have forgotten it too.

And yet something from that encounter is still travelling.

One Pilgrim gave.

Another received.

What was received ripened.

And years later, another Pilgrim received what had ripened.

This is the larger movement:

Receiving → Ripening → Giving → Receiving

And perhaps this is the remarkable part:

What we give may continue travelling long after we have disappeared from the story.

A teacher sits beside a child.

Years later, that child sits beside someone else.

Perhaps that person will one day sit beside another.

Garden to Garden.

Pilgrim to Pilgrim.

Drop by drop.

No one planned the journey.

No one may even know that it is happening.

Yet something nourishing is travelling through human lives.

This is one way wellbeing spreads.

Not only through what we teach.

But through what another Pilgrim **experiences in our presence**.

And now the other path becomes more unsettling.

Because if kindness can travel like this—**so can harm.**

The words spoken when the glass broke may travel too.

- They may leave a trace.
- They may be remembered.
- They may be lived.

And one day, in another Garden, another glass may break.

Another voice may rise.

Perhaps even the same words.

What travels from Garden to Garden depends, in part, upon what each Pilgrim passes on.

Section 3 — When Harm Travels

Let us return to the broken glass.

The child has grown.

Perhaps the childhood incidents have long been forgotten.

There is another home now.

Another Garden.

Another Pilgrim.

And one day—

a glass falls.

It breaks.

For a fraction of a moment, there is only the sound.

Then something rises.

Look what you've done.

Perhaps even:

You're always so careless.

Words heard many years before have somehow found their way into another room.

The adult may not think:

This is how someone once spoke to me.

There may be no conscious memory at all.

But the House remembers something.

A trace has been awakened.

And now comes the important moment.

The words have risen.

They have not yet necessarily been given.

What arises within the House does not have to cross the Porch.

But suppose this time they do.

The Pilgrim shouts.

Something once received has now been **lived**.

When the Response Returns

Another mistake happens.

The Pilgrim shouts again.

Another frustration.

Again.

At first there may even be regret afterwards.

Why did I say that?

I didn't want to react like that.

But each time the response is lived, the path becomes easier to find.

What was once the voice of another Pilgrim is becoming familiar within this one.

Received → Trace → Lived → Repeated → Familiar

And eventually the response may arrive so quickly that there seems to be almost no distance between what happened and what followed.

- Something breaks.
  Shouting.
- Someone disagrees.
  Blame.
- Someone disappoints.
  Contempt.

The feet know the path.

This does not mean the Pilgrim has become a cruel person.

Nor does it mean that what happened in childhood excuses the harm now being caused.

It means something much simpler.

A way of responding has become familiar.

And what becomes familiar may continue to ripen.

When Harm Becomes Ordinary

There is another possibility.

After enough repetition, the Pilgrim may stop noticing the response in quite the same way.

- *Everyone loses their temper.*
- *That's just how I am.*
- *They know I don't mean it.*
- *People are too sensitive.*

Something that once produced discomfort may begin to feel ordinary.

This is **normalisation**.

Not merely:

I know this path.

But increasingly:

> *This is simply how things are.*

And once harm becomes ordinary, it may travel with even less resistance.

Not because the Pilgrim has consciously chosen cruelty.

But because what once required explanation no longer seems to require one.

Another Garden Receives It

And now look at what has happened.

The original adult shouted at a child.

Years passed.

That child became an adult.

A glass broke.

The old response crossed the Porch.

And now another Pilgrim has received it.

Perhaps another child.

Perhaps a partner.

Perhaps a friend.

The original person may be long gone.

And yet something from their Garden is still travelling.

Just as the teacher's kindness travelled.

> **One Pilgrim gave.**
>
> **Another received.**
>
> **What was received was lived.**
>
> **And another Pilgrim received it.**

The movement is disturbingly similar.

Garden to Garden.

Pilgrim to Pilgrim.

Drop by drop.

The human capacity that allows kindness to travel can also allow harm to travel.

Receiving → Ripening → Giving → Receiving

The movement itself does not decide what is being carried.

We do.

But the Two Stories Are Not Finished

Here, however, the two stories do not have to continue in the same direction forever.

- The child who received kindness may later fail to give kindness.
- The child who received shouting may later refuse to shout.

Nothing in these paths is destiny.

And perhaps one day another glass breaks.

The words rise again.

Look what you've done—

But this time something else arrives too.

Awareness.

For the first time, the Pilgrim hears the words **before speaking them**.

There is a small Space between what has arisen within the House and what will cross the Porch.

The old path is still there.

The feet know it well.

But now the Pilgrim can see where it leads.

And perhaps, for the first time, another response becomes possible.

It was an accident.

Are you all right?

Nothing dramatic has happened.

A glass broke.

No one shouted.

And yet something that may have travelled through Gardens for years—

has just stopped travelling.

Section 4 — When Another Path Begins

The glass has broken.

The old words arose.

But they were not spoken.

For one moment, something different happened.

It was an accident.

Are you all right?

Perhaps that is all.

The Pilgrim does not suddenly become a different person.

The old path has not disappeared.

Years of familiarity do not vanish because of one moment of Awareness.

Tomorrow, the Pilgrim may shout again.

But something important has happened.

Another path has been walked.

The Unfamiliar Returns

And perhaps this new response feels unfamiliar.

Not shouting may feel strange.

- Pausing may feel awkward.
- Kindness may even feel less natural than anger.

The Pilgrim may have to remember:

There is another way.

This brings us back to where the chapter began.

Unfamiliar → Arrives → Remembered → Lived

Only now, the unfamiliar thing is not something another Pilgrim is doing.

It is something **we are learning to live ourselves**.

The Pilgrim pauses.

Once.

Then perhaps again.

Another glass breaks.

Another mistake is made.

Another disagreement arises.

Sometimes the old response wins.

Sometimes the new one does.

But each time the Pilgrim pauses and responds differently, another drop falls.

Lived.

Lived again.

Lived again.

Until one day, what once felt unfamiliar begins to feel less unfamiliar.

Another path is becoming familiar.

The Old Path Does Not Have to Disappear

This matters.

Healing does not require the Pilgrim to erase every path that was formed before.

- The old words may still rise.
- The old irritation may still appear.
- The old impulse may still be felt.

Perhaps it always will.

But familiarity with one path does not prevent familiarity with another.

There can now be two paths.

One well worn.

One still forming.

And Awareness may create enough Space for the Pilgrim to notice:

Which one am I about to walk?

Awareness does not erase the old path.

It allows us to see that another path exists.

At first, choosing the newer path may require considerable attention.

Later, perhaps less.

The feet begin to learn.

What Has Autopilot Learned?

This gives us another way of understanding Autopilot.

Autopilot is not necessarily the enemy.

Imagine the adult who once had to remember the teacher before sitting beside someone who was suffering.

Years later, perhaps no remembering is necessary.

Someone needs them.

They stay.

Kindness has become readily available.

The feet know the path.

Autopilot can carry what nourishes.

But it can also carry what harms.

- The glass breaks—and blame arrives before reflection.
- Someone disagrees—and defensiveness appears.
- Someone is different—and judgement is already forming.

Perhaps, then, the question is not:

How do I get rid of Autopilot?

But:

What has my Autopilot learned?

And perhaps an even more useful question:

What am I teaching it now?

Every pause does not transform us.

Every kind response does not erase what came before.

But something is being practised.

Something is becoming more available.

Another path is being walked.

What We Received Can Change Direction

This may be one of the quietest forms of healing.

Something enters one Garden as harm—

but does not have to leave the next Garden as harm.

Harm received does not require harm given.

The Pilgrim may receive shouting—and cultivate listening.

- Receive blame—and cultivate responsibility.

- Receive contempt—and cultivate respect.
- Receive abandonment—and learn how to stay.

Not because what happened did not matter.

Precisely because it did.

The Pilgrim has seen where that path leads.

And chooses to begin walking another.

Then perhaps, years later, another Pilgrim receives something that did not exist earlier in the chain.

- A child makes a mistake—and is met with patience.
- A partner disagrees—and is listened to.
- Someone cries—and nobody tells them to stop.

Something new has entered the Garden.

And for the Pilgrim receiving it—perhaps it is unfamiliar.

It arrives.

It leaves a trace.

And the whole movement can begin again.

We do not have to pass on everything that was passed to us.

Sometimes healing is what changes direction in our Garden.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.

Notice what has become familiar within your House.

Perhaps something you received long ago still leaves a trace.

Perhaps something you repeatedly live is becoming easier to live again.

Ask gently:

What am I carrying forward?

And:

What do I wish to carry into the Garden?

No judgement.

Simply notice.

Perhaps another path begins very quietly.

One pause.

One different response.

One drop.

And then, perhaps—another.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

The paths describe movement. They do not describe destiny.

Receiving does not determine Giving.

Another path can begin with one different response.

The Garden grows — drop by drop.

Chapter 11- Beyond Good and Bad



Imagine a Pilgrim living alone on an island.

Each morning, the Pilgrim walks down to the shore.

- The Sea is quiet.
- The sun is rising.
- And the Pilgrim sings.

Sometimes loudly.
Sometimes softly.
Sometimes the song lasts only a few minutes.

There is nobody listening.

- No audience.
- No teacher.
- No competition.
- No marks.

The Pilgrim simply sings.

Would the Pilgrim wonder:

Am I a good singer?

Perhaps.

But there is nobody else on the island against whom the voice can be measured.

There is simply—

singing.

Then one day another Pilgrim arrives.

And this Pilgrim sings too.
The voices are different.

- One reaches notes the other cannot.
- One remembers melodies more easily.
- One has a stronger voice.

For the first time, comparison becomes possible.

You sing better than I do.

Perhaps nothing is wrong with that.

A difference has been noticed.

Then more Pilgrims arrive.

Ten singers.

Twenty.

Someone listens to them all.

Now another possibility appears.

She is the best singer.

And perhaps:

He is the worst.

Something subtle has happened.
The first Pilgrim's voice may not have changed at all.
The song may be exactly the same song that once travelled freely across the Sea.
What changed was the arrival of a **measure**.

Section 1 — When the Measure Appears

We use measures constantly.

They help us make sense of the Garden.

- We compare.
- We distinguish.
- We evaluate.
- We choose.
- We say:

That was a good meal.
That is a bad school.
This is a better route.
That was the best holiday.
This book is worse than the last one.
That is a good country.

Usually we understand what we mean.
But perhaps it is worth pausing beside these ordinary words.
What exactly is being measured?
A meal may be delicious to one Pilgrim and unpleasant to another.

A school may produce excellent examination results while another parent values the way a different school tends children who struggle.
A country may feel welcoming to one traveller and difficult to another.
So when I say:

This is good.

I may sometimes be saying:

This is good according to the measure I am holding.

Another Pilgrim may be holding a different measure.

This does not make every judgement meaningless.

- Food can be spoiled.
- A school can fail to protect its pupils.
- A government can cause serious harm.

Some things require discernment.
But *good* and *bad* can carry far more than we realise.
And once comparison begins, two more words quickly appear:

Better.
Worse.

Then eventually:

Best.
Worst.

When Doing Becomes Ranking

A child draws a picture.
At first there may simply be delight.

Look what I drew.

Someone responds:

That's good.

Another picture appears.

That's even better.

Then perhaps the pictures are displayed.

- Compared.
- Marked.
- Ranked.

The child who was drawing may gradually begin wondering:

Is mine as good as theirs?

The activity has not necessarily changed.
But the experience of doing it has.

Doing → Comparing → Ranking

And ranking creates something that simple flourishing does not require:

a position.

- To be *the best* means someone else cannot be.
- To remain *the best* means the position can be lost.

And so a compliment can quietly become an expectation.

You came first!

may eventually become:

Can you come first again?

Do Your Best

Parents understandably want their children to flourish.

They want them prepared for Life.

- To learn.
- To develop discipline.
- To discover what they are capable of.

The Landscape into which young Pilgrims are growing is also changing rapidly. What they will need tomorrow may not be exactly what previous generations needed.

So striving is not the problem.

Nor is achievement.

Nor is comparison always unnecessary.

Perhaps the distinction lies somewhere else.

There is a considerable difference between:

Do your best.

and:

Be the best.

Do your best turns towards the Pilgrim.

What is available for you to give?

Be the best immediately turns towards everyone else.

Where do you stand compared with them?

One encourages ripening.

The other introduces a measure.

And sometimes the measure that began by measuring the work begins measuring something else.

The Pilgrim.

When the Mark Began Measuring Me

I recognise this from my own childhood.

At school, I wanted to be at the top.

Most of the time, there were perhaps two pupils whose marks remained higher than mine.

So I tried harder.

And harder.

Yet however much I tried, I could not always reach them.

At the time, I could not understand this as I do now.

I saw their marks.

Then I saw mine.

And the measure appeared between us.

A result that might otherwise have said:

This is what I was able to give today

became:

They did better than me.

And sometimes:

I should have done better.

There were occasions when disappointment became something heavier.

Shame.

Looking back now, that makes me sad.

Not because striving was wrong.

There was something beautiful in wanting to learn and wanting to do well.

But I was asking myself to give something that perhaps had not yet ripened.

I did not know how to say to that younger Pilgrim:

This is what is ripe for you to give today.

Instead, I looked sideways.

- At another Pilgrim.
- Another result.
- Another place on the measure.

Perhaps this is one of the dangers of comparison.

The measure may begin by measuring the work.

But somewhere along the way—

we begin using it to measure the Pilgrim.

And once that happens, *good* and *bad* are no longer merely describing what we have done.

They can begin telling us who we believe we are.

And that takes us somewhere much deeper.

Because eventually we stop saying:

That was good.

And begin saying:

I am good.

Or:

I am bad.

And we do the same to one another.

The difficulty is not that we measure.

The difficulty begins when the measure moves from what the Pilgrim does to who we believe the Pilgrim is.

Section 2 — When the Measure Becomes the Person

There is a difference between saying:

That was a good meal.

and:

He is a good person.

The first describes something we experienced.

The second appears to describe an entire human being.

Yet we use both with remarkable ease.

- *She's a good person.*
- *He's a bad person.*
- *They come from a good family.*
- *He's a bad influence.*

Sometimes the words may seem entirely justified.

Someone has been generous, dependable and kind for many years.

We say:

She is good.

Someone repeatedly lies, harms others or behaves cruelly.

We say:

He is bad.

The label gives us something simple to hold.

But a Pilgrim is rarely simple.

One Pilgrim, Different Gardens

- A man holds the door open for a stranger.
- Later that evening, he humiliates someone he loves.
- A woman spends years caring tenderly for her family.
- Yet there is one person she refuses to forgive.
- Someone gives generously to charity.
- Then speaks with contempt about people they have never met.
- Another Pilgrim has caused great harm.
- Years later, they recognise what they have done and begin living differently.

So which moment contains the person?

- The kindness?
- The cruelty?
- The generosity?
- The contempt?
- The harm?
- The change?

Perhaps none contains the whole Pilgrim.

A human life cannot always be measured by one moment through one Window.

And sometimes two Pilgrims may know the same person and appear to describe completely different human beings.

- *He's a wonderful man.*
- *You don't know what he's really like.*

Perhaps neither is necessarily lying.

- One may have encountered tenderness.
- The other may have encountered cruelty.

They have stood at different Windows.

They have experienced different parts of the same Garden.

When Behaviour Becomes Identity

This is where language can quietly change.

He behaved cruelly.

becomes:

He is cruel.

And eventually:

He is a bad person.

Or:

She did something kind.

becomes:

She is kind.

And perhaps:

She is a good person.

Something has happened.

- An action has become a pattern.
- A pattern has become a label.
- And the label has become an identity.

Action → Pattern → Label → Identity

- The label may contain something true.
- The person may repeatedly behave cruelly.
- The person may repeatedly behave generously.

But the difficulty begins when the label claims to contain **everything else**.

The previous Chapter has already shown us why.

A Pilgrim can carry more than one familiar path.

- Kindness may have ripened deeply in one part of life while anger remains deeply familiar in another.
- Someone may be extraordinarily patient with a child and impatient with a partner.
- Generous with money and ungenerous with forgiveness.
- Compassionate towards one group and contemptuous towards another.

Human beings can contain contradictions.

Perhaps that is not evidence that we have failed to understand them.

Perhaps contradiction is part of what it means to be human.

Good According to Whom?

And there is another difficulty.

Just as the island singer became *good* or *bad* only when a measure appeared, our judgement of another Pilgrim also depends partly upon the measure we bring.

One family may describe someone as:

strong.

Another may experience the same behaviour as:

controlling.

One Pilgrim sees:

confidence.

Another experiences:

arrogance.

One sees:

generosity.

Another knows what happens behind the closed Door.

- Our Window matters.
- Our experience matters.
- Our values matter.
- Our history matters.

This does not mean that every judgement is equally accurate.

Nor does it mean that harm is simply a matter of perspective.

But it should perhaps make us a little more careful before saying:

I know what kind of person you are.

Because what we may really know is:

I know something of what I have experienced of you.

That is smaller.

But perhaps it is also more truthful.

Beyond the Label

Moving beyond *good* and *bad* does not mean that we stop discerning.

- Cruelty still needs to be recognised.
- Harm still has consequences.
- Danger may require protection.
- Boundaries may need to close.
- Responsibility still matters.

We can say:

That action caused harm.

without needing to conclude:

That action tells me everything there is to know about this human being.

And equally, we can say:

That was a beautiful act of kindness.

without assuming:

Therefore this Pilgrim is incapable of causing harm.

Perhaps this is what it means to begin moving **Beyond Good and Bad**.

- Not beyond responsibility.
- Not beyond consequence.
- Not beyond discernment.

But beyond the need to reduce an entire Pilgrim to the measure we have placed upon them.

The measure may tell us something.

It rarely tells us everything.

Section 3 — When the Measure Turns Inward

It is easy to notice the measures we place upon others.

Perhaps harder to notice the ones we place upon ourselves.

- We look in the mirror.
- We look at our work.
- Our relationships.
- Our achievements.
- Our bodies.
- Our mistakes.

And somewhere, often very quietly, the measuring begins.

- *Am I doing well?*
- *Am I successful?*
- *Am I attractive?*
- *Am I a good parent?*
- *Am I a good partner?*
- *Am I a good person?*

There is nothing unusual about these questions.

- Sometimes they help us reflect.
- Sometimes they help us grow.
- But sometimes the measure moves.

We are no longer asking:

How am I doing?

We are asking:

How am I doing compared with you?

And from there, another movement can begin.

When Another Garden Becomes My Measure

- Perhaps I am content with my home.

  Then I visit yours.

  Yours is larger.

  Suddenly mine feels small.

- I was pleased with something I had written.

  Then I read what someone else has written.

  Suddenly mine seems inadequate.

- I was enjoying my holiday.

  Then I see photographs of somebody else's.

  Their hotel looks more beautiful.

  Their weather was better.

  They travelled somewhere more unusual.

Nothing has changed in my Garden.

- My house is the same house.
- My writing contains the same words.
- My holiday contained exactly the same experiences.

And yet my experience of them has changed.

Another Garden has become the measure of mine.

This does not mean comparison is wrong.

- Another Garden can inspire us.
- It can show us possibilities we had not imagined.
- It can help us recognise something we genuinely want to cultivate.

The difficulty begins when another Garden stops being somewhere I can learn from and becomes the place from which I decide the value of my own.

Comparison can reveal possibility.

It can also obscure what is already here.

Good Enough

Perhaps this is why *good enough* can be such a difficult phrase.

We hear the *enough* and sometimes imagine settling.

- Lowering standards.
- Giving up.

But *enough* need not mean:

I could do better, but I cannot be bothered.

Sometimes it means:

This is what is ripe for me to give.

That may be very different tomorrow.

- Ripening continues.
- Learning continues.

The Garden continues growing.

But today—this is what I can give.

This brings me back to the child I once was.

If I received 80 percent while another pupil received 90, the difference between us could be measured.

Ten marks.

That measure may have been useful.

It could show me what I understood and what I had yet to learn.

But the ten marks could not tell me how hard I had worked.

They could not tell me what was happening in my House.

They could not tell me what I might understand six months later.

And they certainly could not tell me my worth.

A measure can tell us something about a result.

It cannot measure the whole Pilgrim.

Perhaps I did not need to stop striving.

Perhaps I needed to learn where to place the measure.

On the work—not on myself.

When a Result Becomes an Identity

Yet this movement happens very easily.

I failed the examination.

becomes:

I am a failure.

I made a foolish decision.

becomes:

I am stupid.

I behaved badly.

becomes:

I am bad.

My relationship ended.

becomes:

I am unlovable.

Something that happened in the Garden has crossed the Porch and entered the House as an identity.

Experience → Judgement → Identity

And once identity forms around the judgement, we may begin looking for evidence that confirms it.

Another mistake.

There. I knew it.

Another rejection.

Of course.

Another person succeeds.

They can. I can't.

The measure no longer merely describes what happened.

It begins shaping what we expect to happen next.

The Gardener

But the Gardener asks a different question.

Not:

Am I a good Garden or a bad Garden?

A Garden is far too alive for that.

There may be something flourishing beside something neglected.

- A tree bearing fruit beside a patch that needs tending.
- Something planted years ago that has grown beyond what we expected.
- Something else that perhaps should never have been planted at all.

The Gardener does not need to declare the whole Garden good or bad before tending it.

The Gardener notices.

- *This is flourishing.*
- *This is struggling.*
- *This is causing harm.*
- *This needs pruning.*
- *This needs feeding.*
- *This may need to be removed.*
- *This needs time.*

And perhaps we can meet ourselves in the same way.

Not:

Am I good or bad?

But:

What is growing in me?

What am I cultivating?

What needs tending?

This does not excuse what we have done.

It makes responsibility more precise.

Instead of condemning the whole Garden, we can begin tending what is actually there.

And something important becomes possible.

Change.

Because if I decide:

This is what I am.

there may seem little left to do.

But if I can say:

This is something I have been living.

then another possibility remains.

I can begin living differently.

Perhaps that is one of the quiet freedoms hidden within *Beyond Good and Bad*.

- We do not have to deny what has grown.
- We do not have to pretend that every fruit is nourishing.

But neither do we have to mistake what has grown in the Garden—

for the entirety of the Gardener.

Section 4 — Beyond the Measure

Perhaps we can now return to the Pilgrim on the island.

Before anyone else arrived, the Pilgrim sang.

- There was no first place.
- No last place.
- No better.
- No worse.
- No best.

There was simply a voice meeting the morning.

Then other voices arrived.

Comparison became possible.

Measures appeared.

And measures are useful.

Without them, much of human life would become difficult.

- We measure progress.
- We compare choices.
- We assess danger.
- We evaluate work.

We learn from those who can do something better than we can.

The difficulty was never the existence of the measure.

The difficulty begins when we forget **what the measure can measure**.

- An examination can measure something about performance on an examination.
  It cannot measure the whole intelligence of a child.
- A competition can tell us who performed best according to its criteria on that occasion.
  It cannot tell us who will flourish.
- A mistake can tell us something about a choice we made.
  It cannot tell us everything about who we are.
- And an act of cruelty can reveal something important about how a Pilgrim behaved.

It may require consequences.

Protection.

Distance.

A Closed Gate.

But even then, the measure should not pretend to know more than it knows.

Describe What Happened

Perhaps there is a simple way of understanding all of this.

Imagine going to a restaurant.

- The meal is disappointing.
- The rice is overcooked.
- The vegetables are cold.
- The sauce does not taste good.

We might quite reasonably say:

That was a bad meal.

We are describing something specific.

We might even say:

The chef did not cook well today.

Again, we are describing what happened on this occasion.

But notice how easily the measure can begin to travel.

That was a bad meal.

becomes:

He is a bad chef.

And perhaps, after an unpleasant encounter:

He is a bad person.

The first statement described a meal.

The last appears to describe an entire human being.

Yet perhaps the chef usually cooks beautifully.

- Perhaps today something went wrong.
- Perhaps this was simply not a good day.

The meal can still have been bad.

We do not need to pretend otherwise.

The invitation is not to abandon discernment.

It is to notice **what exactly we are describing**.

The same distinction appears throughout life.

- A Pilgrim can make a bad decision without being a bad person.
- A child can behave badly without being a bad child.
- Someone can say something cruel without that single moment containing everything they are.

- And equally, one generous action does not necessarily tell us that someone is good in every part of their life.

Perhaps the language becomes clearer when we keep the measure close to what we actually know.

Describe the meal.

Describe the action.

Describe the decision.

Describe the behaviour.

Be careful when the description becomes the Pilgrim.

This does not mean that patterns do not matter.

If the chef repeatedly serves poor food, we may reasonably begin to question the standard of the restaurant.

If a Pilgrim repeatedly behaves cruelly, that pattern matters enormously.

- We may need boundaries.
- We may need distance.
- We may need to close the Gate.

But even then, perhaps we can distinguish between:

This is a harmful path you repeatedly live.

and:

This is all that you are.

The first allows us to discern clearly.

The second claims to know the whole Pilgrim.

And perhaps that is one of the simplest ways of understanding **Beyond Good and Bad**:

Good and bad may help us describe the specific.

We should be much more careful when we use them to define the whole.

Discern the Path

This is where moving beyond good and bad requires care.

If we stop with:

There are no good or bad people,

we may lose something essential.

Discernment.

- If a Pilgrim repeatedly causes harm, we need to recognise the path being lived.
- If someone deceives us repeatedly, trust may no longer be wise.
- If someone becomes violent, safety matters.
- If power is being used to control another Pilgrim, it needs to be recognised.

We do not have to call the Pilgrim *bad* in order to say:

This path is causing harm.

And we do not have to hate someone in order to close the Gate.

This distinction matters.

Not judging the whole Pilgrim does not mean failing to discern the path.

Perhaps it allows us to discern it more clearly.

Instead of asking:

Are you a bad person?

we can ask:

What are you living?

What is this creating in the Garden?

What happens to other Pilgrims when this path is lived?

Now we can respond to what is actually happening.

The Measure and Responsibility

Compassion can sometimes tempt us towards explanation.

- *Perhaps they had a difficult childhood.*
- *Perhaps they were frightened.*
- *Perhaps this is what they learned.*

All of those things may be true.

The previous chapter has already shown us how something received can leave a trace, become familiar and eventually travel into another Garden.

Understanding that movement matters.

But understanding where a path came from does not make the path harmless.

Understanding is not the same as absolution.

The broken glass may help us see this.

Perhaps the adult who shouts was shouted at as a child.

That may help us understand why the words arose so quickly.

But the child standing before them still hears the shouting.

The echo still enters another House.

So both things can be held.

I can understand something of how this path arose.

And I can recognise the harm it is causing.

Compassion does not remove discernment.

And discernment does not require condemnation.

Can a Pilgrim Change?

There is another reason not to turn the measure into an identity.

Identity can imprison the future.

If we say:

You are bad.

what room have we left for becoming?

And if the Pilgrim believes:

I am bad,

why cultivate differently?

Yet human beings do sometimes change.

Not merely by saying they have changed.

Not merely by regretting consequences.

But by repeatedly living another path.

- The Pilgrim who once shouted may learn to pause.
- The Pilgrim who deceived may begin telling the truth.
- The Pilgrim who caused harm may recognise it, accept responsibility and live differently.
- This does not erase what happened.

A tree that begins producing different fruit does not make yesterday's fruit disappear.

- Some consequences remain.
- Some relationships may never be restored.
- Some Gates may remain closed.

Forgiveness cannot be demanded.

Trust cannot be required.

But another path can still begin.

The previous chapter brought us here:

The paths describe movement. They do not describe destiny.

Perhaps now we can add:

The measure describes something we have seen.

It does not have to become a sentence upon the whole Pilgrim.

Beyond Good and Bad

So perhaps *Beyond Good and Bad* does not ask us to throw away the words.

They may still be useful.

- A good meal.
- A bad decision.
- A better way.
- A harmful action.
- A beautiful act of kindness.

The invitation is simply to notice when the measure begins claiming too much.

When:

This was bad

becomes:

You are bad.

When:

I failed

becomes:

I am a failure.

When:

She did better

becomes:

She is better.

When:

He came first

becomes:

He is the best.

The Garden offers another way of seeing.

- There are Pilgrims.
- There are paths.
- There are choices.
- There are consequences.
- There are things flourishing.
- There are things causing harm.
- There are things still ripening.

And there is always more of the Landscape than can be seen through one Window.

Perhaps, then, the question is no longer:

Am I good or bad?

Nor even:

Are you good or bad?

Perhaps the more useful question is:

What am I living?

And then:

What is what I am living bringing into the Garden?

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.

Notice the measures you carry.

The ones you place upon others.

And the ones you place upon yourself.

Perhaps someone comes to mind whom you have called *good* or *bad*.

Perhaps you have used those words about yourself.

Ask gently:

What actually happened?

What did I observe?

What measure did I place upon it?

Did I begin describing the whole Pilgrim?

Perhaps there was kindness.

Perhaps there was harm.

Perhaps something needs celebrating.

Perhaps something needs tending.

Perhaps a Gate needs to remain closed.

You do not have to abandon discernment.

Simply leave room for what you may not yet know.

And when the measure turns towards you, ask:

Am I measuring what I did—

or am I measuring who I am?

You are still ripening.

So is every Pilgrim you meet.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Good and bad can help us describe what happened.

A good meal.

A bad decision.

A kind action.

A harmful choice.

But take care when the description begins to travel—

from the action
to the Pilgrim.

Describe what happened.

Discern what it caused.

Be careful about turning it into who someone is.

Chapter 12 - What Human Beings Become Capable Of



The Garden may reveal what we are capable of.

The House is where we may begin cultivating that capacity.

Section 1 — The Human Possibility

A stranger falls onto a railway platform.

Before anyone has time to think, another person reaches down to help.

A building is burning.

People are running away from it.

Someone runs towards it.

A family has very little, yet makes room at the table for someone who has even less.

- Someone stays through the night beside a frightened Pilgrim.
- Someone forgives.
- Someone protects.
- Someone gives without knowing whether anything will ever be returned.

Human beings can be capable of extraordinary things.

And yet we know something else.

- A person can humiliate another.
- Exploit them.
- Abandon them when they are vulnerable.
- Strike them.
- Torture them.

- Kill them.

A crowd can gather around a stranger who has fallen and try to help.

Another crowd can gather around a stranger and attack.

A community can protect those who are vulnerable.

Another can turn against them.

Human beings appear capable of remarkable tenderness and remarkable harm.

How can this be?

For centuries, one of the simplest ways of making sense of this has been to divide people.

- *Good people.*
- *Bad people.*
- *Kind people.*
- *Cruel people.*
- *Heroes.*
- *Villains.*

The division gives us something reassuring.

If cruelty belongs to cruel people, perhaps the rest of us can stand at a distance from it.

- *I would never do that.*
- *I am not that kind of person.*

But our journey through the Garden has made this certainty more difficult.

In the previous chapter, we discovered that an action may tell us something important about a Pilgrim without necessarily telling us everything about them.

- A kind action matters.
- A cruel action matters.
- The consequences matter.

But the action and the whole Pilgrim are not necessarily the same thing.

Perhaps we now have to take one step further.

What if kindness and cruelty do not belong to two completely different kinds of human being?

What if they belong within the range of **human possibility**?

- This does not mean that everyone will become violent.
- It does not mean that everyone is secretly cruel.
- Nor does it make kindness and cruelty equivalent.

It asks something more uncomfortable.

What makes something become possible for a human being?

- Why does one Pilgrim move towards someone in distress while another walks past?
- Why does one person respond to humiliation with retaliation while another refuses to pass the humiliation on?
- Why does one Pilgrim protect a stranger at considerable risk to themselves?
- Why can another cause terrible harm and somehow continue?

There will never be one answer.

A human life is too complex for that.

- Biology may matter.

- Childhood may matter.
- Family.
- Culture.
- Circumstance.
- History.
- Power.
- Opportunity.
- Fear.
- Choice.

Much of this may remain beyond what we can ever fully see through our Window.

But our journey has revealed something else worth considering.

- What we repeatedly encounter may leave traces.
- What we repeatedly live may become familiar.
- What becomes familiar may be repeated.
- What is repeated may begin to ripen.

And what ripens may one day become available when the moment arrives.

- Not inevitably.
- Not predictably.
- But possibly.

Perhaps, then, the question is not only:

What did this Pilgrim do?

Nor even:

Was it right or wrong?

There is another question beneath them:

What had become possible within this Pilgrim before the moment arrived?

Because the moment we eventually see in the Garden may not be where the movement began.

Sometimes the Garden is simply where it finally became visible.

Section 2 — What Was Already Available?

Imagine two Pilgrims walking along a river.

Ahead of them, someone slips from the bank and falls into the water.

One Pilgrim immediately runs towards them.

The other freezes.

For a few seconds, neither response seems to involve much thought.

One moves.

The other cannot.

It would be easy to judge the moment.

Brave.

Cowardly.

But perhaps we should remain curious a little longer.

The Pilgrim who moved may have encountered emergencies before.

- Perhaps they learned to swim as a child.
- Perhaps they have spent years caring for others.
- Perhaps responding when someone needs help has become familiar.

The Pilgrim who froze may never have encountered anything like this.

- Perhaps they cannot swim.
- Perhaps fear arrived before thought.
- Perhaps the body simply stopped.

We do not know.

What we can see is that the same event entered two different Houses.

And something different became available.

Now imagine another moment.

Someone insults two Pilgrims.

The words are almost identical.

One immediately retaliates.

The other pauses.

Why?

Again, we cannot know simply by watching what happens in the Garden.

Perhaps the first Pilgrim grew up in an environment where an insult was never allowed to pass unanswered.

Don't let anyone disrespect you.

- Perhaps retaliation became familiar.
- Perhaps it was practised among friends.
- Perhaps it was admired.
- Perhaps it gradually became part of the way that Pilgrim learned to protect themselves.

The second Pilgrim may have lived something different.

- Perhaps they too feel the anger.
- Perhaps the same words arise:

  Answer them.

But somewhere within the House another pathway has also become familiar.

Wait.

You don't have to respond yet.

Neither Pilgrim invented their entire response in that moment.

Something was already available.

The House Can Rehearse

We usually think of rehearsal as something deliberate.

- An actor rehearses a play.
- A musician rehearses a piece.
- A footballer practises a movement until the body knows it.

But the House may rehearse too.

- A grievance can be revisited.

- An argument replayed.

An imagined confrontation repeated.

- *Next time, I'll tell him.*
- *If she does that again…*
- *I should have said…*

The event may have ended in the Garden.

Within the House, it continues.

Each repetition does not guarantee that the Pilgrim will eventually act upon it.

But the pathway is no longer entirely unfamiliar.

And this does not happen only with harm.

A Pilgrim can rehearse patience.

- Listening.
- Courage.
- Restraint.
- Care.

→ A child watches a parent stop when someone falls.

→ A teacher listens without humiliating the pupil who has made a mistake.

→ Someone apologises after losing their temper.

→ A disagreement ends without anyone needing to win.

→ A frightened Pilgrim discovers that another person will stay.

These experiences may leave traces too.

Years later, another moment arrives.

Someone is frightened.

And the Pilgrim stays.

Perhaps they do not remember where they learned to stay.

They simply do.

The Pilgrim may forget the moment.

The House may still remember what it received.

Not Everything Received Becomes Lived

We need to be careful here.

The Garden is not a machine.

- A child who encounters violence does not therefore become violent.
- A Pilgrim repeatedly exposed to prejudice does not necessarily carry that prejudice forward.
- Someone raised among generous people may not become generous.

Exposure is not destiny.

Something can arrive in the House and be questioned.

- Rejected.
- Resisted.
- Transformed.
- Or simply fade.

And two Pilgrims can live through remarkably similar environments and carry very different things forward.

There is always more happening than we can see.

But repetition can make a pathway familiar.

And familiarity matters because, under pressure, the Pilgrim may not have time to search the entire Landscape for a response.

Something close at hand may move first.

Perhaps that is why the smallest moments matter more than they appear to.

- Every time we listen rather than immediately defend ourselves, something is being practised.
- Every time we pause before sending the message written in anger, something is being practised.
- Every time we humiliate someone and discover that the people around us laugh, something may also be being practised.
- Every time we notice another Pilgrim's suffering and turn towards them, something is being practised.

Not destiny.

Not a guarantee.

But a pathway.

The House can rehearse what the Garden has not yet seen.

And one day, Life may present a moment in which there is very little time to decide.

Then the question may become:

What is already available?

Section 3 — When the Moment Arrives

A glass falls from a child's hand.

It shatters across the kitchen floor.

Before the pieces have stopped moving, a Voice rises.

- *Look what you've done!*
- *You're always so careless.*

The words arrive almost as quickly as the sound of the breaking glass.

- Perhaps they are familiar words.
- Perhaps they were once spoken to the Pilgrim.
- Perhaps they have been spoken many times since.

There seems to be almost no distance between what happened and what followed.

Now imagine another House.

- The same glass falls.
- The same crash.
- The same broken pieces.

A Voice arises:

Are you all right?

Again, there may be very little thought.

The Pilgrim simply moves.

Two broken glasses.

Two rapid responses.

Two very different experiences for the child standing among the pieces.

What happened?

When Autopilot Moves

Throughout our journey, we have encountered Autopilot as the part of living that allows us to move without reconsidering everything from the beginning.

We need it.

Imagine having to think carefully about every movement while walking.

- Every turn of the steering wheel.
- Every letter while writing our name.
- Every familiar task in the kitchen.

Much of human life becomes possible because something once requiring attention gradually becomes familiar enough to move with less of it.

Our responses can become familiar too.

- A child runs towards the road.
  A parent reaches out.
- Someone loses their balance.
  A hand catches them.
- A nurse hears an alarm.
  The body moves.

There may be no time to sit in the Rocking Chair and consider every possibility.

Sometimes Life asks before we are ready to deliberate.

And what has already become embodied may answer first.

Embodiment provides a pathway.

Autopilot allows the pathway to move with little conscious thought.

But this reveals something important.

Autopilot is not necessarily harmful.

It can carry skill.

- Care.
- Patience.
- Courage.
- It can also carry suspicion.
- Prejudice.
- Retaliation.
- Cruelty.

Autopilot does not decide the direction.

It moves along pathways that have become available.

Fast Does Not Mean Hijacked

This distinction matters.

Someone collapses in front of us.

A Pilgrim runs towards them.

- *Help.*
- *Now.*

Attention narrows immediately.

The Pilgrim may barely notice what is happening around them.

Is this Hijack?

Not necessarily.

There is a genuine emergency.

Urgency belongs to the moment.

A child steps into the road.

There is no need to create Space and ask:

> *What are my options?*

The Pilgrim grabs the child.

Sometimes clarity itself moves quickly.

This means we need to be careful with something we have encountered earlier in our journey.

- Urgency alone is not Hijack.
- Strong emotion is not Hijack.
- Narrow attention is not always Hijack.
- Rapid action is not Hijack.
- Even Autopilot is not Hijack.

A Pilgrim may act almost instantly and still be responding appropriately to what is actually happening.

Perhaps the difference begins somewhere else.

When the Moment Is Not an Emergency

Imagine another broken glass.

Nothing dangerous has happened.

Nobody is hurt.

But within the House something moves as though far more is at stake.

- *Again.*
- *They never listen.*
- *I've had enough.*

The Voice becomes louder.

The body tightens.

The broken glass is no longer simply a broken glass.

- Yesterday arrives with it.
- Last week.
- The other thing they did.

- The apology that never came.

The moment in the Garden may have lasted only seconds.

But within the House, it continues.

This is where something important begins to appear.

- Urgency alone is not Hijack.
- Strong emotion is not Hijack.
- Rapid action is not Hijack.
- Narrow attention is not always Hijack.
- Even Autopilot is not Hijack.

Perhaps what matters is **what happens next**.

Does the urgency settle when the moment passes?

Or does the Voice continue?

- *You must.*
- *Don't leave it.*
- *You still haven't done anything.*
- *Keep going.*
- *Do something.*
- *Now.*

The event may have ended.

The Voice has not.

Continuity can keep pressure alive after the moment that first created it has passed.

And as the pressure continues, something else may happen.

- The Window begins to narrow.
- Another explanation becomes harder to consider.
- Another response becomes harder to imagine.
- Letting go begins to feel like surrender.
- Changing direction begins to feel like failure.

What began as:

I want to do this.

may gradually become:

I have to do this.

This is why we have repeatedly encountered a particular movement:

Urgency → Pressure → Continuity → Narrowing

No single part necessarily means that Hijack has occurred.

- Urgency may be appropriate.
- Pressure may pass.
- Continuity may simply be persistence.
- Narrow attention may sometimes be necessary.

It is the movement that matters.

Perhaps there is a simple question the Pilgrim can ask:

Am I still free to let this go?

The answer does not have to be *yes*.

We may consider everything and still choose the same path.

But there is a difference between:

I still choose this.

and:

I cannot let this go.

One remains a choice.

The other may tell us that something is beginning to take authority.

And that brings us closer to understanding what Hijack really is.

Section 4 — What Is Hijack Really?

We have met Hijack many times throughout our journey.

Usually it has appeared during difficult weather.

- Anger.
- Fear.
- Blame.
- Grievance.

Something happens.

- A Voice arises.
- The Voice becomes louder.
- The Window narrows.

And the Pilgrim may begin moving before Awareness has found Space.

For this reason, it would be easy to conclude:

Hijack is the harmful Voice.

But perhaps that is too simple.

We have just discovered that urgency is not necessarily Hijack.

- Neither is strong emotion.
- Neither is rapid action.
- Autopilot can move without Hijack.

And sometimes attention needs to narrow because Life genuinely requires something of us.

So what changes when Hijack begins?

Perhaps the clue lies in something we noticed in the previous section.

Am I still free to let this go?

When the Voice Takes Authority

Many Voices can arise within the House.

- *Answer them.*
- *Leave it.*
- *Wait.*
- *Ask what happened.*

- *Walk away.*
- *Say something.*

Their presence does not mean that any of them must be obeyed.

They are movements within the House.

But sometimes one Voice begins to behave differently.

- *Answer them.*

  Then:

  You have to answer them.
- Then:

  You can't let them get away with this.
- Then:

  Do something.

  Now.

The Voice is no longer simply offering one possible response.

- It is beginning to take authority.
- Other possibilities become quieter.
- The Window narrows around one view.
- The Horizon shortens.

Consequences that were visible a few moments earlier may become harder to see.

The Pilgrim begins moving through a smaller Landscape.

Perhaps this brings us closer to what Hijack really is.

> **Hijack is not simply a strong Voice.**
>
> **Hijack begins when a Voice takes authority and leaves too little Space for another possibility.**

Hijack Can Begin With Something Reasonable

This is important.

Hijack does not always begin with something obviously harmful.

Sometimes the first movement makes perfect sense.

- *I need a break.*
- *I want to protect my child.*
- *I want to help.*
- *I need to finish this.*
- *I want them to understand.*
- *I want justice.*

Nothing in those movements necessarily indicates Hijack.

The difficulty may begin when the movement becomes fixed.

- *I need a break.*

  becomes:

  I need this holiday.
- Then:

  I have to make this holiday happen.

- Or:

  I want to help.
- becomes:

  I have to help.
- Then:

  I have to solve this for them.
- Or:

  I want them to understand.
- becomes:

  I will keep explaining until they agree with me.

The original intention may still be present.

- Rest.
- Love.
- Care.
- Understanding.
- Justice.

But the Landscape around it has become smaller.

This is why the language spoken by the Voice does not tell us whether it is wise.

Hijack can speak the language of anger.

But it can also speak the language of love.

When Helping Becomes Pressure

Imagine someone we love is struggling financially.

A movement of care arises.

I want to help.

We offer some money.

The problem returns.

We help again.

Then something begins to change.

I have to keep helping.

What will happen if I stop?

They need me.

I can't say no.

- Perhaps helping remains wise.
- Perhaps it does not.
- Perhaps another form of support would be more helpful.
- Perhaps repeatedly rescuing the other Pilgrim prevents them from tending something in their own Garden.
- Perhaps we ourselves can no longer afford what we are giving.

Awareness needs room to ask these questions.

Hijack does not.

It already knows.

- *Keep helping.*
- *You have to.*

And so even kindness can become caught within narrowing.

Not because kindness is harmful.

But because the Pilgrim may no longer feel free to see another path.

The Voice Pressures. Awareness Clarifies.

Perhaps our earlier distinction remains one of the simplest.

The Voice pressures.

Awareness clarifies.

The Voice says:

You must.

Awareness asks:

Must I?

The Voice says:

Now.

Awareness asks:

Is there really no time?

The Voice says:

Keep going.

Awareness asks:

Is this still taking me where I intended to go?

The Voice says:

There is no other way.

Awareness opens another Window.

And sometimes Awareness agrees.

Yes. Continue.

Sometimes:

Continue — but differently.

Sometimes:

Wait.

Sometimes:

Enough.

And sometimes:

Let it go.

Awareness does not exist simply to stop us.

It restores the possibility of seeing.

The Purpose and the Path

Perhaps this is why Hijack can be difficult to recognise.

The original purpose may still be deeply important.

- We may genuinely need rest.
- Genuinely love someone.
- Genuinely want justice.
- Genuinely need to protect ourselves.

But somewhere along the way, we can confuse the **purpose** with one particular **path**.

I need rest.

The purpose is rest.

The holiday, the hotel, the journey or the destination is a path.

I want to help.

- The purpose is care.
- Money may be one path.
- Listening may be another.
- Practical help another.
- Stepping back may sometimes be another.

When the path becomes fixed, we may begin fighting to preserve the path even when it is no longer serving the purpose.

Perhaps Awareness asks:

What was I actually seeking?

The question can reopen the Landscape.

It does not tell us what to do.

It allows us to see again.

Am I Choosing the Path?

Perhaps, then, one of the clearest signs of Hijack is not intensity.

It is the gradual loss of inner freedom.

The Pilgrim may still appear to be choosing.

But within the House the choice has become smaller and smaller.

I want to.

becomes:

I should.

Then:

I must.

Then:

I have no choice.

And sometimes there genuinely is very little choice.

Life can place us in circumstances where the available paths are painfully limited.

We should not call every constrained decision Hijack.

But when the constraint is being created by the Voice itself, Awareness may reveal something important.

Am I choosing this path — or has the path begun choosing for me?

Perhaps that is why the Pause matters.

- Not because every strong movement should be stopped.
- Not because every urgent Voice should be distrusted.

But because sometimes a Pause is enough to discover that the Landscape is larger than the Window through which we were looking.

And once another possibility can be seen, the Pilgrim is no longer standing in quite the same place.

Section 5 — When the Unthinkable Becomes Possible

There are things we imagine we could never do.

- *I could never hurt someone like that.*
- *I could never abandon someone who needed me.*
- *I could never stand by while another person suffered.*
- *I could never risk my life for a stranger.*

Perhaps we are right.

Perhaps we are not.

Until the moment arrives, we may not fully know.

This is one of the difficulties of being human.

We know ourselves partly through what we have already lived.

But Life can place us in circumstances we have never encountered before.

- Fear.
- Loss.
- Threat.
- Power.
- Love.
- Grief.
- Desperation.
- Responsibility.

Suddenly the Landscape is different.

And the Pilgrim meets something within themselves that has never previously needed to appear.

I Never Thought I Could Do That

Sometimes the discovery is beautiful.

- A Pilgrim who has always thought of themselves as frightened enters a burning building because someone is still inside.
- A parent who believes they cannot cope with another difficulty discovers that, when their child needs them, they can.
- Someone who has never cared for another human body begins washing, feeding and tending a person they love.

- A quiet Pilgrim speaks when everyone else remains silent.

Afterwards they may say:

I don't know where that came from.

- Perhaps courage had been ripening without ever having been tested.
- Perhaps love made another pathway available.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim simply met a part of themselves that Life had never asked for before.

Human capability can surprise us.

But the surprise can move in another direction too.

A Pilgrim may discover themselves saying something they never imagined they could say.

- Crossing a boundary they once believed they would never cross.
- Joining in when another person is being humiliated.
- Remaining silent when they once believed they would speak.
- Hurting someone they love.

Afterwards:

I don't know what came over me.

Sometimes that sentence may be an attempt to escape responsibility.

But sometimes it may contain genuine bewilderment.

How did I become capable of that?

That is the question of this chapter.

The Boundary Can Move

Perhaps we imagine our moral boundaries as fixed lines.

- *I would do this.*
- *I would never do that.*

But human life may be more complicated.

A boundary can sometimes move gradually.

- The first lie feels uncomfortable.
  The next one is easier.
- The first cruel joke creates unease.
  Then everyone laughs.
  The next comes more easily.
- The first time another Pilgrim is spoken about with contempt, something within us resists.
  After hearing it repeatedly, the language becomes familiar.

Eventually we may use it ourselves.

Nothing dramatic announces:

Your boundary has moved.

It may happen quietly.

Drop by drop.

But boundaries can move in another direction too.

A Pilgrim who has always remained silent speaks once.

The next time, speaking is slightly more familiar.

Someone who normally turns away from suffering stops.

Then stops again.

A Pilgrim who has always answered anger with anger manages, once, to pause.

The pathway has been walked.

Something else has become possible.

What we repeatedly live can change what becomes available to us.

This does not mean repetition determines us.

We have already learned that it does not.

But it may change the distance between the Pilgrim and a particular action.

What once felt unthinkable may gradually become thinkable.

What becomes thinkable may become possible.

And what becomes possible may, under particular circumstances, become lived.

When Right and Wrong Become Certain

There is another way a boundary may move.

The Pilgrim becomes convinced that what they are doing is right.

This matters because human beings do not always cause harm while thinking:

I am choosing to do something wrong.

They may think:

- *I am defending myself.*
- *I am protecting my family.*
- *They deserve it.*
- *Someone has to teach them a lesson.*
- *I am only doing what needs to be done.*

The certainty itself can narrow the Window.

I am right.

may gradually leave less room for:

What might I not be seeing?

This does not mean there is no right and wrong.

Nor does it mean that every action is simply a matter of perspective.

- Some actions cause profound harm.
- Some require protection, consequences and Closed Gates.

But perhaps we should distinguish **discernment** from **certainty**.

Discernment can say:

I believe this is wrong.

while still remaining capable of seeing.

Certainty can begin to say:

Because I am right, I no longer need another Window.

And once another Pilgrim becomes simply *the one who is wrong*, something else can happen.

We may stop being curious about their experience.

- Then perhaps their suffering matters a little less.
- Their explanation matters less.
- Their humanity can begin to disappear behind the judgement we have placed upon them.

The Pilgrim becomes a label.

And the distance between us grows.

We will meet the consequences of that movement later, when harm no longer belongs only to one Pilgrim but begins moving through groups, communities and nations.

For now, it is enough to notice where it can begin.

Within one House.

Within one Window.

With a certainty:

I am right.

The Final Act Is Not the Beginning

When something dramatic happens, our attention naturally goes to the act.

- The blow.
- The rescue.
- The betrayal.
- The sacrifice.
- The killing.
- The refusal.

The moment someone stepped forward.

The moment someone walked away.

That is what the Garden allows us to see.

But the visible act may be the end of a much longer movement.

- The House may have been cultivating courage.
  Or grievance.
- Compassion.
  Or contempt.
- Restraint.
  Or retaliation.

Perhaps this is why understanding human capability requires us to look beyond the final seconds.

The final act may be sudden.

Becoming capable of it may not have been.

And this returns us to the question with which we began:

What had already become possible within the Pilgrim before the moment arrived?

Not so that we can excuse what followed.

Not so that we can reduce a human being to their childhood, their culture, their pain or their circumstances.

But so that we might understand something about cultivation.

Because if human beings can gradually become capable of harm, they may also gradually become capable of something else.

And that possibility matters.

Section 6 — What Am I Becoming Capable Of?

It is easier to ask what another Pilgrim has become capable of.

We can look at the Garden after something has happened.

We can see the consequences.

We can ask:

How could they do that?

But perhaps the more useful question begins closer to home.

What am I becoming capable of?

At first, this may sound like a question about harm.

It is not.

It is a question about cultivation.

The Small Moments

- Most days do not ask us to rescue someone from a river.
- Most days do not place us inside a burning building.
- Most days do not confront us with the great moral moments through which we imagine courage or cruelty will be revealed.
- Most days are much smaller.

Someone interrupts us.

- A plan changes.
- We are kept waiting.
- Someone disagrees.
- A child makes a mistake.
- A colleague receives something we wanted.
- Someone needs our attention when we are tired.
- A Pilgrim says no.

These moments can seem insignificant.

But perhaps this is where much of our cultivation happens.

I become irritated.

- Do I immediately pass the irritation into the Garden?
- I feel hurt.
- Do I rehearse the grievance for the rest of the day?
- Someone disagrees with me.
- Do I become curious about their Window, or do I need them to be wrong?

I make a mistake.

Do I turn the measure upon myself?

Someone needs help.

Do I notice?

Someone crosses a boundary.

Can I say no?

None of these moments tells us what we will do in every future circumstance.

But each gives us somewhere to practise living.

What We Practise Becomes More Available

Imagine a Pilgrim who pauses once before answering in anger.

- Nothing dramatic happens.
- Nobody applauds.
- Perhaps nobody even notices.

But the Pilgrim has walked another pathway.

The next time anger arrives, that pathway exists.

It may still be faint.

The old response may remain much more familiar.

But another possibility has been lived.

Or imagine a Pilgrim who has always remained silent when someone is mocked.

One day they say:

That's enough.

- Perhaps their voice trembles.
- Perhaps afterwards they wonder whether they should have spoken.

But something has changed.

Speaking has become possible.

The Garden has seen something it had not seen before.

And the House has experienced itself differently.

One different response does not transform the whole Garden.

But it may make another response available.

Drop by drop.

Capability Is Not Destiny

There is something important to remember.

Becoming capable of something does not mean we will do it.

- A Pilgrim may be capable of violence and never choose violence.
- Capable of courage and sometimes remain silent.
- Capable of forgiveness and decide that forgiveness has not yet ripened.
- Capable of leaving and choose to stay.
- Capable of staying and recognise that it is time to leave.

Human capability is not a command.

It is possibility.

And possibility still meets circumstance.

- Awareness.
- Choice.

- Other Pilgrims.
- The wider Garden.
- Sometimes Autopilot.
- Sometimes Hijack.
- Sometimes something we cannot explain.

We should therefore be cautious about imagining that we can predict a human being simply because we know something of their past.

The House has history.

But the House is still living.

Responsibility Remains

Understanding how a pathway became possible does not remove responsibility for walking it.

This matters especially when harm has occurred.

- A painful childhood may help us understand anger.

  It does not make another Pilgrim's injuries disappear.
- Fear may help us understand control.

  It does not make coercion harmless.
- Repeated humiliation may help us understand why someone learned to humiliate.

  It does not require another Pilgrim to remain within reach of it.
- Understanding can open another Window.

  But it does not require us to close the Gate that keeps us safe.

Understanding is not the same as absolution.

The Pilgrim remains responsible for what they bring into the Garden.

And perhaps responsibility is not only something we meet **after** an action.

It also lives in cultivation.

- What am I repeatedly strengthening?
- What am I allowing to become familiar?
- What am I carrying forward?
- What do I keep rehearsing within the House?
- What happens to other Pilgrims when this moves through my Garden?

The Human Possibility

We began this chapter with a stranger falling.

Someone reached towards them.

We entered a burning building.

Someone ran towards the flames.

We also looked towards cruelty.

Humiliation.

Retaliation.

Violence.

Perhaps we were asking how the human being could contain such different possibilities.

We still do not have a complete answer.

Perhaps we never will.

But we have seen something.

The dramatic act in the Garden may happen suddenly.

What made it possible may have been ripening much longer.

- A pathway encountered.
- A response repeated.
- A grievance rehearsed.
- A kindness received.
- A boundary moved.
- A Pause practised.
- A Window opened.
- A Voice repeatedly obeyed.
- A different Voice finally heard.

The Garden shows us the moment.

The House may hold part of its history.

What had already ripened within the House when the moment arrived?

And now the question turns towards us.

Not with fear.

Not so that we begin searching the House for evidence that we are good or bad.

We have already travelled beyond that measure.

The question is quieter.

What am I practising?

What am I allowing to ripen?

What am I becoming capable of?

Perhaps we discover something we no longer wish to cultivate.

That discovery does not have to become another judgement.

It can become a beginning.

Because a familiar pathway is still a pathway.

And a pathway can be travelled differently.

Perhaps the Pilgrim can choose another path.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.

Not to ask whether you are a good Pilgrim or a bad one.

We have travelled beyond that measure.

Instead, look gently towards your House.

- What has become familiar there?
- What response arrives quickly when you are hurt?
- What happens when someone disagrees with you?
- What do you rehearse after an argument has ended?

- What happens when you are frightened?
- When you love someone?
- When you want something very much?
- When you believe you are right?

Notice without immediately trying to change anything.

Perhaps there is a pathway you have walked so often that you hardly notice yourself entering it.

- Anger.
- Silence.
- Withdrawal.
- Defence.
- Pleasing.
- Blame.
- Control.

Perhaps something else has become familiar too.

- Listening.
- Patience.
- Humour.
- Courage.
- Kindness.
- The Pause.
- The ability to say no.
- The willingness to stay.
- The wisdom to leave.

You do not need to judge what you find.

Simply notice.

Then ask:

What am I practising?

What am I allowing to ripen?

And perhaps the most important question of all:

When Life asks something of me, what do I want to have available?

Stay there for a moment.

Because the answer may tell you something about what you wish to cultivate now.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

The great moment may arrive without warning.

There may be no time to prepare.

But perhaps preparation has already been happening—

- in the small moments,
- in the repeated responses,
- in what you practise,
- in what you carry,
- in what you allow to ripen.

So do not wait for the great moment to decide who you wish to be within it.

Cultivate now what you hope will be available then.

And if what has been growing is no longer what you wish to carry—another path remains possible.

Chapter 13 - When the Pilgrim Chooses Another Path



Section 1 — The Path Beneath Our Feet

There was a time when the Pilgrim thought they knew where the journey was leading.

- Perhaps they had chosen a profession.
- Built a family.
- Established a home.
- Developed familiar routines.

There were responsibilities to fulfil, people to care for, places to visit and ordinary pleasures to enjoy.

Life had found a rhythm.

The Pilgrim knew the paths beneath their feet.

Some had been walked for many years.

Others had become so familiar that the Pilgrim scarcely noticed walking them.

And perhaps that was enough.

- There was no particular desire to change direction.
- No great ambition waiting to be fulfilled.
- No expectation that another chapter of life was about to begin.

Then something happened.

- Perhaps a family member became ill.

- A relationship changed.
- A journey took an unexpected direction.
- A stranger introduced something unfamiliar.
- Or an ordinary experience awakened a curiosity the Pilgrim had never previously explored.

At first, nothing suggested that an entirely different path was opening.

There was simply Life.

Unfolding.

The Path We Did Not Know Was There

Imagine a Pilgrim who has spent many years teaching.

They have enjoyed their work, learned from their students and developed an understanding of people.

Eventually, they begin looking towards a quieter season.

- There will be time to travel.
- To cook.
- To enjoy the Garden.
- To sit on the Porch without always having somewhere to go.

They are not searching for another profession or purpose.

Then family circumstances change.

The Pilgrim finds themselves spending more time caring for others, encountering unfamiliar difficulties and observing relationships more closely.

Some experiences are uncomfortable.

Some are exhausting.

Some raise questions that do not disappear when the day ends.

- Why do people respond so differently to the same situation?
- Why does one Pilgrim become defensive while another remains curious?
- Why do familiar patterns continue even when they cause suffering?
- What happens within the House before something becomes visible in the Garden?

The Pilgrim begins reflecting.

Perhaps they write a few thoughts.

- One question leads to another.
- An observation becomes an idea.
- An idea becomes a framework.
- And gradually, something unexpected emerges.

A path they had never imagined walking.

Was this path created by the circumstances?

Perhaps not entirely.

For many years, the Pilgrim had been observing, learning, teaching, travelling, questioning and encountering different ways of living.

Those experiences had left traces.

Something may already have been ripening.

The new circumstances provided an opportunity for what had been growing to find expression.

> Sometimes the Pilgrim discovers what has ripened only when Life provides an opportunity for it to emerge.

Not Every Pilgrim Sees the Same Path

But Life does not present the same possibilities to everyone.

Consider a group of youngsters.

Ask them what they wish to become when they grow older.

One knows immediately.

- A doctor.
- A musician.
- A chef.

Another has several interests but cannot choose between them.

A third simply says:

- I don't know.

And perhaps that is a perfectly reasonable answer.

How could the youngster know every possibility that Life may eventually place before them?

They have not yet encountered every environment.

Met every person.

Discovered every interest.

Experienced every season of life.

- Some Pilgrims recognise a direction early.
- Others discover one much later.
- And some travel several different paths without ever feeling that one particular destination defines them.

None is necessarily ahead of the others.

A Pilgrim who knows their direction at sixteen is not necessarily wiser than one who discovers something unexpected at sixty.

Nor is a Pilgrim who never finds a grand calling living an incomplete life.

> Not knowing where the path leads does not mean the Pilgrim is standing still.

When an Opportunity Arrives

An opportunity may arrive as an invitation.

- A difficulty.
- An encounter.
- A responsibility.
- An unexpected change.
- Or something so ordinary that the Pilgrim barely notices it.

Two Pilgrims may experience the same event and discover entirely different possibilities.

- One may recognise an interest.
- Another may learn something about a relationship.

- A third may see nothing particularly meaningful.

And perhaps none of them is wrong.

The opportunity may not be recognised immediately.

It may become clear years later.

Or it may pass without ever becoming part of the Pilgrim's journey.

We need not imagine that Life has arranged every experience to teach us something.

- Sometimes events simply happen.
- Some bring joy.
- Others bring loss, hardship or uncertainty.

There is no obligation to discover a lesson in every experience.

Yet sometimes, when Awareness is present, a possibility becomes visible that might otherwise have remained unnoticed.

And recognising a possibility does not mean the Pilgrim must pursue it.

- The Pilgrim may continue along the familiar path.
- They may explore the new one.
- Or they may simply remain curious.

Awareness opens a Window. It does not command the Pilgrim to walk through every Door.

The Journey Continues Differently

Perhaps the Pilgrim eventually looks back.

They remember the plans they once made.

The direction they expected life to take.

The things they believed they would never do.

And now, here they are.

- Cooking when they never imagined becoming interested in food.
- Painting when they had never considered themselves artistic.
- Caring for someone when they had never imagined becoming a caregiver.
- Writing philosophy when they had once expected simply to enjoy a quieter life.

Not every change is welcomed.

Not every path is freely chosen.

And not every unexpected direction becomes something the Pilgrim wishes to continue.

But sometimes, amid the changes, a new possibility emerges.

- The Pilgrim discovers enjoyment.
- Curiosity deepens.

What began unexpectedly becomes something they consciously cultivate.

And perhaps this is where another path truly begins.

Not necessarily when the circumstances change.

Not even when the possibility first appears.

But when the Pilgrim begins to recognise what has become available.

Ripening may make a path possible. Opportunity may make it visible. And the Pilgrim may discover a wish to walk it.

The Pilgrim looks towards the Horizon.

There is no need to know where every path will lead.

For now, another possibility has become visible.

And perhaps that is enough.

Section 2 — The Familiar Path

The Pilgrim has noticed another path.

- Perhaps it appeared through an unexpected experience.
- Perhaps someone offered a different way of seeing.
- Perhaps Awareness opened a Window that had remained closed for many years.

For a moment, the Pilgrim sees something they had not seen before.

I could do this differently.

And yet, when the next opportunity arrives, they find themselves walking the familiar path again.

Why?

The Path That Knows Our Footsteps

Imagine a Pilgrim walking through a Garden.

There is a path they have travelled for years.

The grass has been worn away.

The ground is firm.

Every bend is familiar.

Their feet seem to know the way.

Nearby, another possibility has become visible.

There is no established path.

- Only grass.
- Perhaps a few stones.
- Perhaps an opening between the trees.

The Pilgrim looks towards it.

But unfamiliar.

Where might it lead?

The familiar path may not be the most nourishing.

Yet it remains the easiest to follow.

And so, almost without noticing, the Pilgrim begins walking it again.

The familiar path does not have to be the most nourishing path to remain the easiest to follow.

The Words That Came Back

A father is sitting at the kitchen table.

His young son is helping to prepare dinner.

The boy reaches across the table for a bowl.

His elbow catches a glass of milk.

The glass falls.

Milk spreads across the table and drips onto the floor.

"Look what you've done!" the father shouts.

"Why can't you be more careful?"

The boy freezes.

His eyes fill with tears.

"I'm sorry, Dad."

The father reaches for a cloth, still irritated.

Then he notices the boy standing silently beside the table.

Something about that silence feels familiar.

- The lowered eyes.
- The frightened expression.
- The careful way the boy avoids moving.

Something about that silence feels familiar.

For a moment, the father remembers another kitchen.

Another table.

Another glass.

And a Voice he had heard many times during his own childhood.

Look what you've done!

Why can't you be more careful?

He had promised himself that he would never speak to his own children that way.

Yet here he was.

The same words.

The same atmosphere.

Only the Pilgrims had changed.

When the Past Enters the Present

The father sits down.

- He remembers how small he had felt when his own father shouted.
- How frightened he had been of making mistakes.
- How carefully he had learned to move around the House.

He had carried those experiences for years.

But he had not always recognised how they were influencing his own responses.

Now, watching his son, something becomes visible.

He had not simply become angry about the spilled milk.

He had travelled a familiar pathway.

One that had been walked so often that the response arrived almost before he could consider another.

Yet another possibility had also remained within him.

A promise made many years earlier.

Not in my House.

That promise had not disappeared.

It simply had not yet become a familiar way of responding.

Familiarity is not agreement.

The father had become familiar with shouting.

But familiarity did not mean that shouting was what he wished to cultivate.

Another Response Becomes Possible

The father looks at his son.

"I'm sorry I shouted."

The boy says nothing.

"It was an accident. We can clean it up."

They wipe the table together.

The father cannot undo the shouting.

Nor can an apology guarantee that the boy will immediately feel safe again.

But he can take responsibility for what happened.

And perhaps he can begin cultivating another response.

A few days later, the boy accidentally knocks over a plate.

The familiar irritation rises.

The words are almost ready.

Why can't you—

But the father notices.

He pauses.

The plate is broken.

The inconvenience remains.

Yet the response does not have to be the same.

"Are you hurt?"

"No, Dad."

"All right. Stay there while I pick up the pieces."

This time, the old pathway was available.

But the father did not follow it.

And perhaps something else has begun to ripen.

What the Child Receives

There are now two experiences within the child's House.

The memory of being shouted at.

And the experience of a father who noticed, apologised and later responded differently.

We cannot know what the child will carry forward.

- Perhaps the shouting will remain painful.
- Perhaps the apology will matter.
- Perhaps the different response will become something the child remembers years later.

What we can say is that the father has begun offering something different from what he himself received.

> **The Pilgrim** may inherit a familiar path without having to make it the path of the next generation.

And we should remember that another Pilgrim, growing up in similar circumstances, might have refused to repeat the shouting from the beginning.
There is no single pathway from childhood experience to adult behaviour.

Nor does Awareness guarantee that the next response will change.

The father may shout again.

He may recognise it only afterwards.

He may need to apologise, seek support and continue practising.

But the familiar path is no longer entirely unnoticed.

And that matters.

When the New Path Feels Unfamiliar

We might imagine that walking differently brings immediate relief.

Sometimes it does.

But sometimes it brings discomfort.

- The Pilgrim who begins speaking may feel exposed.
- The Pilgrim who says no may feel guilty.
- The Pilgrim who rests instead of working may feel selfish.

Why?

Because the familiar path may carry more than behaviour.

It may carry expectations about safety, identity, belonging and what it means to be a good person.

A different response can disturb those expectations.

But discomfort does not necessarily mean the Pilgrim has chosen wrongly.

Nor does comfort guarantee that the familiar path is nourishing.

An unfamiliar path may feel uncomfortable without being wrong.

The Path Does Not Disappear

The father may respond differently today and shout again tomorrow.

The old path has not vanished.

Years of repetition have left traces.

A single Pause cannot erase them.

But something has changed.

The father has recognised the path beneath his feet.

And he has experienced another way of responding.

- Perhaps the next time will be easier.
- Perhaps it will not.

He may need to pause again.

- To apologise again.

- To practise again.

The journey is not always a straight line.

And the Pilgrim does not become someone else simply because another path has become available.

The Garden still carries its familiar pathways.

But now, beside one of them, there are a few footprints.

A different way has been travelled.

Perhaps tomorrow, the Pilgrim will walk there again.

Awareness does not erase the old path. It allows the Pilgrim to recognise that another path is possible.

And with each different response, the feet may gradually begin to know another way.

Section 3 — When the Pilgrim Says No

Sometimes another path begins with an invitation.

- A new interest.
- An unexpected encounter.
- A possibility the Pilgrim had never considered.

But sometimes another path begins quite differently.

Not with something the Pilgrim wishes to pursue.

But with something they no longer wish to continue.

- A familiar response.
- An inherited expectation.
- A behaviour repeated for years.
- A way of living that has gradually become part of the atmosphere of the House.

And one day, the Pilgrim recognises it.

I do not wish to continue this.

Perhaps nothing changes immediately.

But a question has appeared where previously there was only repetition.

Must this continue?

When Everyone Else Continues

Imagine a group of colleagues gathered during their lunch break.

They are laughing.

Someone begins making jokes about a colleague who is not present.

At first, the remarks seem harmless.

Then they become personal.

Someone imitates the colleague's manner of speaking.

Another makes a remark about their appearance.

The group laughs again.

One Pilgrim laughs too.

They have heard these jokes many times.

Sometimes they have contributed their own.

It is simply what happens during lunch.

But today, something is different.

Perhaps the Pilgrim remembers an occasion when others laughed at them.

Perhaps they notice the discomfort of someone sitting quietly at the table.

Or perhaps, for no obvious reason, they hear the familiar jokes differently.

- The words have not changed.
- The people have not changed.
- The lunch room is the same.

But another Window has opened.

Someone makes another joke.

The others laugh.

This time, the Pilgrim does not.

A colleague notices.

"What's wrong? Can't you take a joke?"

The Pilgrim hesitates.

They could laugh and allow the moment to pass.

That would be familiar.

It would preserve the comfortable atmosphere of belonging.

Instead, they say:

"I don't think that's fair to him."

For a moment, the table becomes quiet.

Someone shrugs.

"We're only having a laugh."

Another changes the subject.

Lunch continues.

Nothing extraordinary appears to have happened.

The absent colleague may never know.

The group may behave exactly the same way tomorrow.

But one Pilgrim has stopped participating in something they previously helped continue.

Sometimes another path begins when the Pilgrim refuses to take the next familiar step.

The Cost of Saying No

We might imagine that refusing a familiar pattern brings immediate relief.

Sometimes it does.

But not always.

The Pilgrim may feel uncomfortable for the rest of the afternoon.

- Perhaps they wonder whether they were too serious.
- Perhaps they worry that the others will stop including them.
- Perhaps they feel embarrassed about having spoken.

The old path offered something.

Belonging.

Acceptance.

The comfort of behaving like everyone else.

The new response may have protected something important, but it has also disturbed a familiar arrangement.

This is why saying no is not always easy.

Sometimes the Pilgrim is not merely refusing an action.

They are risking an expectation.

- *You always agree with us.*
- *You are one of us.*
- *Why are you suddenly behaving differently?*

And this is where another discovery becomes possible.

Belonging does not have to require the abandonment of Awareness.

Of course, speaking up is not always the safest or wisest response.

The Pilgrim may choose to leave the conversation, speak privately afterwards or remain silent when confrontation would create danger.

The distinction is not simply between speaking and remaining silent.

It is whether the Pilgrim has Space to recognise and consider another response.

When Refusal Becomes Protection

Now imagine a family gathering.

An older relative begins making unkind remarks towards a younger family member.

The others dismiss the comments.

> "That's just how he is."
>
> "He doesn't mean anything by it."
>
> "Don't spoil the evening."

The younger person becomes quiet.

This has happened before.

Perhaps for many years.

But one Pilgrim notices.

They remember what it felt like to be spoken to in that way.

And this time, they say:

> "Please don't speak to her like that."

The atmosphere changes.

Someone objects.

> "There's no need to make a fuss."

Yet the Pilgrim has not created the unkindness.

They have made visible something that was already happening.

The person who interrupts a familiar pattern is not necessarily the person who created the disturbance.

The younger person may feel supported, embarrassed or both.

The family may welcome the intervention or resist it.

And where harm continues, protection may require more than words: boundaries, support or a safer environment.

Awareness does not require the Pilgrim to remain in harm's way.

Familiarity Is Not Agreement

We encountered this discovery in the previous section.

The father who had grown up with shouting did not wish to pass it on.

Another Pilgrim, raised in similar circumstances, might have refused to shout from the beginning.

The surrounding environment influences what becomes familiar.

But it does not determine everything that ripens within the House.

Some Pilgrims repeat what they received.

Others refuse it.

Some recognise its effects only many years later.

There is no single explanation for these differences.

And we should not imagine that suffering automatically produces compassion or wisdom.

Sometimes it produces fear, anger or withdrawal.

Sometimes another response requires considerable support.

What surrounds the Pilgrim may become familiar without becoming what the Pilgrim wishes to cultivate.

The Next Drop

Consider a Pilgrim who has carried a grievance for many years.

Whenever a particular person's name is mentioned, the familiar story begins.

- *What happened.*
- *What was said.*
- *What should have happened.*
- *What I wish I had said.*

The grievance has been revisited so often that the pathway is well established.

Then, one afternoon, someone mentions the person's name.

The familiar Voice begins.

Do you remember what they did?

The Pilgrim notices.

The hurt remains.

What happened has not become acceptable.

But today, the Pilgrim chooses not to rehearse the entire story again.

- Perhaps they simply allow the name to pass.
- Perhaps they continue listening to the conversation.

The past has not changed.

Forgiveness may not have arrived.

Reconciliation may not be possible or desirable.

But one repetition has been interrupted.

One more drop has not fallen into the familiar place.

The Pilgrim does not have to deny what happened in order to stop rehearsing it.

Tomorrow, the grievance may arise again.

The Pilgrim may follow it.

But today, another response became possible.

And perhaps this is how some pathways begin to change.

Not through a dramatic declaration.

But through the next response.

When No Becomes a Beginning

We often think of the word no as an ending.

- No more.
- Not again.
- I will not continue.

And sometimes it is an ending.

- A harmful behaviour stops.
- A boundary is established.
- A Gate closes.

But no can also create Space for something else.

- When the Pilgrim refuses humiliation, they may begin cultivating respect.
- When they refuse to repeat an insult, they may begin cultivating restraint.
- When they refuse an expectation that exceeds their capacity, they may make room for rest.

Yet saying no is not automatically wise.

- A Pilgrim may refuse help out of pride.
- Refuse reconciliation out of fear.
- Or reject something simply because it is unfamiliar.

Awareness must still ask:

- *What am I refusing?*
- *Why am I refusing it?*
- *What might my refusal protect—or prevent?*

Sometimes the wisest response is no.

Sometimes it is yes.

Sometimes it is not yet.

And sometimes the Pilgrim simply does not know.

Another Path Begins

Return for a moment to the lunch room.

Tomorrow, the jokes may begin again.

Perhaps the Pilgrim says nothing.

But they do not laugh.

Another day, they gently redirect the conversation.

Perhaps someone else begins questioning the jokes too.

Or perhaps nobody does.

The Pilgrim cannot control what the others cultivate.

But they can begin recognising what they themselves are contributing.

They have not become a different person overnight.

They have simply begun responding differently to something that once felt ordinary.

The Pilgrim may inherit the path. They do not have to continue every step.

And sometimes, when the Pilgrim says no to one familiar movement, they discover something unexpected.

They have not merely stopped walking an old path.

They have begun making another.

One step.

Then perhaps another.

The grass has not yet become a pathway.

But there are footprints.

And this time, the Pilgrim recognises them.

Section 4 — Learning to Walk Differently

The Pilgrim has taken another path.

- Perhaps they spoke when they would normally have remained silent.
- Perhaps they declined a request they would once have accepted.
- Or perhaps they discovered an unexpected interest and decided to explore it.

For a moment, another way of living became possible.

But what happens the following day?

The familiar responsibilities remain.

- The same people.
- The same expectations.
- The same circumstances that once carried the Pilgrim along the old path.

And the Pilgrim discovers something important.

Choosing another path once is not the same as knowing how to live upon it.

The First Steps Are Not Always Comfortable

Consider a woman who has spent much of her adult life caring for others.

She is the person everyone calls.

- When someone needs collecting from the station, she goes.
- When a relative needs help with an appointment, she rearranges her day.
- When a friend needs someone to listen, she makes herself available.

She enjoys helping.

There is genuine warmth in what she offers.

The familiar responsibilities remain.

The same people.

The same expectations.

The same circumstances that once carried the Pilgrim along the old path.

And the Pilgrim discovers something important.

One afternoon, her brother telephones.

"Can you take me to an appointment tomorrow?"

She looks at her calendar.

She has already made plans.

Nothing particularly important, she tells herself.

Just an afternoon she had hoped to spend in her Garden.

Ordinarily, she would cancel her plans.

But today she hesitates.

"I'm sorry. I can't tomorrow."

There is a silence.

"Oh. I thought you'd be able to."

She offers to help him explore another arrangement.

He says he will manage.

The conversation ends.

And almost immediately, her House becomes uncomfortable.

Perhaps I should telephone him back.

What if he thinks I don't care?

It's only one afternoon.

She has said no.

But the familiar expectation has not disappeared.

For years, being available has been closely connected with her understanding of love.

Now she is discovering that care and constant availability are not necessarily the same thing.

When the Old Path Calls Us Back

The next morning, she reaches for her telephone.

She could offer to take her brother after all.

It would be easy.

The discomfort might disappear.

Then she remembers why she declined.

She has been tired for weeks.

Her own needs have repeatedly been postponed.

And she recognises that she is not refusing her brother out of indifference.

- She is beginning to recognise her own capacity.
- She puts down the telephone.
- Not triumphantly.
- Not without uncertainty.

Simply because she wishes to honour the decision she made.

Something has begun to change.

Not necessarily her relationship with her brother.

But her relationship with the discomfort of choosing differently.

The Pilgrim may need to become familiar not only with another action, but with the feelings that accompany it.

- Guilt may arise.
- Uncertainty.
- Sadness.
- Fear of disappointing someone.

These feelings deserve Awareness.

But they do not necessarily determine whether a decision was right or wrong.

The Pilgrim can remain curious.

Have I harmed someone?

Or have I disappointed an expectation?

Is there something I need to reconsider?

Sometimes the answer is clear.

Sometimes it takes time.

When the Pilgrim Takes an Old Turn

Several months pass.

The woman has become more comfortable recognising her limits.

- She helps when she can.
- She declines when she needs to.

Then a difficult week arrives.

- She is tired.
- A family member is unwell.
- Several responsibilities demand attention.
- Someone telephones asking for help.

Without considering her capacity, she agrees.

Then another request arrives.

She agrees again.

By the end of the week, she is exhausted.

One evening, she sits quietly.

I thought I had changed.

Why am I doing this again?

But has everything been lost?

- She has already experienced another way of living.
- She knows that declining a request does not necessarily mean abandoning someone.
- She has discovered that people can sometimes make other arrangements.

Those experiences have not disappeared.

The familiar pathway has simply become active again under difficult conditions.

And perhaps this is where another kind of understanding becomes necessary.

Walking an old path again does not erase the experience of having walked another.

The Pilgrim can notice what happened.

Consider what contributed to it.

Repair anything that needs repairing.

And continue.

There is no requirement to begin the entire journey again.

The Conditions Matter

Imagine a Gardener planting a young tree.

For several weeks, it grows.

New leaves appear.

Its branches reach towards the sunlight.

Then strong winds arrive.

Some leaves fall.

A branch bends.

The Gardener does not conclude that the tree has forgotten how to grow.

They examine its conditions.

- Does it need support?
- More water?
- Protection from the wind?
- Perhaps the tree can flourish here.
- Perhaps the environment needs to change.

Something similar happens when the Pilgrim begins walking differently.

A new response may be easier after rest than during exhaustion.

Easier with someone supportive than with someone who repeatedly challenges a boundary.

The Pilgrim's capacity is not separate from the conditions in which they live.

- Sometimes another path requires encouragement.
- Sometimes practical assistance.
- Sometimes a safer environment.
- And sometimes the change the Pilgrim wishes to make is not yet possible.

The Pilgrim does not walk outside the Landscape. The conditions of the Landscape matter.

When Another Response Becomes Familiar

Months later, the woman receives another telephone call.

A relative needs help.

She listens.

Considers what is being asked.

Looks at what she has already committed to.

And she replies:

> "I can help on Thursday, but not tomorrow."

There is no long explanation.

No anxious attempt to justify every detail.

She is simply offering what she can.

Perhaps she notices afterwards that the conversation felt different.
Not because she has become indifferent.
But because another way of responding has become more familiar.
The familiar expectation may still arise.
She may still overcommit occasionally.
Yet what once required considerable effort now comes more naturally.
The new path is beginning to acquire its own familiarity.
What once required a deliberate step may eventually become a familiar way of walking.

The Pilgrim Who Discovers Another Enjoyment

But another path does not always begin with something the Pilgrim wishes to stop.
Sometimes it begins with something they discover they love.
Imagine a man who has worked with numbers throughout his life.
He enjoys practical tasks.
He has never considered himself particularly creative.
One afternoon, a friend invites him to try watercolour painting.
"I'm no artist," he says.
His friend smiles.

"You don't have to be."

He sits down.
At first, he struggles to control the brush.
The colours spread unexpectedly.
His painting looks nothing like what he imagined.
But he enjoys the experience.
He returns the following week.
Then he buys a small set of paints.
He begins noticing colours in the sky.
Shadows beneath trees.
The changing appearance of water throughout the day.
Places he has passed hundreds of times begin revealing details he had scarcely noticed.

- He is not trying to become a famous painter.
- He may never exhibit a picture.
- He simply enjoys painting.

And because he enjoys it, he continues.
Another path has developed.

- Not because the old path was harmful.
- Not because something needed correcting.

But because another possibility became visible, and the Pilgrim wished to explore it.

Some paths grow through what we no longer wish to repeat. Others grow through what we discover we love.

The Path Becomes Part of Living

The woman still cares for her family.

But she is learning to care without always abandoning her own needs.

The painter still enjoys numbers and practical work.

But colour and creativity have entered his Garden.

Neither Pilgrim has discarded the life they lived before.

- Something has been reconsidered.
- Something has been added.
- Something has been cultivated.

The old paths remain part of their story.

But they are no longer the only paths available.

And perhaps this is what learning to walk differently means.

- Not abandoning everything familiar.
- Not becoming an entirely different person.

But allowing another way of living to become part of everyday life.

The Pilgrim does not have to become someone else to begin living differently.

And as another path becomes familiar, something else may begin to change.

- The expectations of others.
- The relationships around them.
- The atmosphere where Gardens meet.

For another path is rarely travelled entirely alone.

Section 5 — When One Path Changes Another

A Pilgrim begins walking differently.

- Perhaps they have become more willing to speak.
- Perhaps they no longer accept every responsibility placed upon them.
- Or perhaps they have discovered an interest that brings unexpected enjoyment.

At first, the change may seem entirely personal.

Something has shifted within the House.

But the Pilgrim does not live alone in the Landscape.

Their Garden meets other Gardens.

And when one Pilgrim changes direction, others may discover that their familiar arrangements have changed too.

The Dance of Familiar Expectations

Imagine two friends who have known each other for many years.

Whenever they meet, one does most of the talking.

The other listens.

Neither has questioned this arrangement.

But over time, the quieter friend begins noticing something.

They enjoy listening, yet rarely have an opportunity to share what is happening in their own life.

One afternoon, they begin describing a difficult experience.

Before they have finished, the conversation turns back to the other person's problems.

Ordinarily, they would listen.

Today, they gently interrupt.

"Could I finish what I was saying?"

Their friend looks surprised.

"Oh! Of course."

For a moment, both feel slightly uncomfortable.

One is learning to speak.

The other is discovering that listening may also need to become part of their friendship.

- Perhaps the conversation continues differently.
- Perhaps the friend forgets and interrupts again.

But something previously unspoken has become visible.

The relationship has encountered another possibility.

When one Pilgrim changes their familiar response, another may be invited to reconsider theirs.

An invitation, however, is not a guarantee.

The other Pilgrim may welcome the change.

They may resist it.

Or they may simply continue as before.

When the Other Garden Does Not Change

Sometimes a Pilgrim begins walking differently, hoping that someone else will follow.

- A partner becomes more willing to listen.
- A parent tries to repair an old misunderstanding.
- A friend stops participating in familiar arguments.

Yet the other person may not respond as hoped.

- They may remain guarded.
- They may not trust the change.
- They may need more time.
- Or they may have no wish to continue the relationship in the same way.

This can be painful.

The Pilgrim may wonder:

What was the point of changing if nothing around me changes?

But perhaps the value of another path cannot depend entirely upon whether someone else chooses to walk alongside us.

A Pilgrim can offer an apology.

- They cannot require forgiveness.
- They can offer understanding.
- They cannot demand openness.
- They can begin behaving differently.

But they cannot decide how another House will receive that change.

I can change how I meet your Garden. I cannot choose what grows within it.

And sometimes the most nourishing change is not bringing two Gardens closer.
It is recognising that a little more distance is needed.

The Space Between Gardens

Imagine two neighbours whose Gardens meet along a narrow boundary.
For years, one has allowed the other to enter whenever they wish.

- Sometimes the visits are welcome.
- Sometimes they interrupt moments of rest.

Eventually, the first neighbour begins closing the Gate at certain times.
The second is surprised.

> *"You're not as friendly as you used to be."*

But the Gate has not been closed out of hostility.
The Pilgrim still welcomes companionship.
They simply wish to have some time that belongs to them.
Perhaps the neighbours discover a new rhythm.
Perhaps they do not.
Either way, something has become clearer.
A relationship does not require every Gate to remain open.
And walking differently does not always mean moving away from someone.
Sometimes it means discovering another way of remaining connected.

The Garden Continues

When one Pilgrim chooses another path, the effects may be small.

- A conversation becomes more balanced.
- A responsibility is shared.
- A familiar argument no longer takes place.

Someone feels heard.
Someone feels disappointed.
An expectation is questioned.
Occasionally, another Pilgrim begins responding differently too.
But change does not always spread outward.

- Some relationships adapt.
- Others resist.
- Some changes remain quiet.
- And some relationships come to an end.

The Pilgrim cannot control all that follows.
They can only remain attentive to what their own responses bring into the Garden.
Perhaps the question is no longer simply:

> What do I wish to change?

But also:

> How will I live this change among others?

With care where care is possible.

With honesty where honesty is needed.

With boundaries where boundaries are necessary.

And with enough humility to recognise that other Pilgrims have their own paths to travel.

Another path may begin within one House, but its echoes can reach many Gardens.

Section 6 — The Paths We Continue to Discover

The Pilgrim looks back.

There were paths they chose.

- Paths they inherited.
- Paths they followed because they knew no other way.
- And paths they never imagined travelling.

Some began in childhood.

Others appeared much later.

A youngster may know exactly what they wish to become.

Another may spend decades without discovering a particular calling.

And someone preparing for a quieter season of life may unexpectedly discover a passion they never knew existed.

There is no timetable for becoming.

- Sometimes circumstances change, and the Pilgrim must travel a path they did not choose.
- Sometimes a familiar path no longer nourishes.
- Sometimes Awareness reveals something that has been quietly ripening for years.
- And sometimes the Pilgrim simply discovers:

  I never knew I could do this.

The Freedom to Travel Differently

Perhaps the greatest discovery is not that another path exists.

It is that the Pilgrim need not be defined by the path already travelled.

- The child who learned silence may discover a voice.
- The person who lived through cruelty may cultivate kindness.
- The Pilgrim who always followed may learn to stand apart.
- And the one who thought their adventures were coming to an end may discover that another has only just begun.

None of this is guaranteed.

- Circumstances may limit what is possible.
- Old pathways may remain powerful.
- And not every Pilgrim will wish to change.

Some may be perfectly content with the path beneath their feet.

Freedom is not the obligation to change.

It is the possibility of travelling differently when another path becomes available.

The Pilgrim pauses.

Behind them lie the paths already travelled.
Ahead, the Horizon remains open.
They cannot undo every footprint.
They cannot know every road that lies ahead.
But perhaps, in this moment, another step has become possible.
And the Pilgrim discovers something extraordinary.
The path may have shaped the Pilgrim.
But the Pilgrim can also shape the path.

A Reflection for the Pilgrim

Pause for a moment.
Look at the paths you have travelled.
Some you chose.
Some Life placed before you.
Others you never imagined walking.
Perhaps there is a familiar path you no longer wish to follow.
Perhaps something new is beginning to emerge.
Or perhaps you are content exactly where you are.
Ask yourself:
What am I carrying forward?
What might be quietly ripening within me?
Is another path becoming visible?
There is no need to know where it leads.
Sometimes the next step is enough.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

The path you have travelled need not be the path you continue.
What once protected you may no longer help you flourish.
What has been quietly ripening may emerge when you least expect it.
You do not have to become someone else to begin living differently.
The path may have shaped you, but you can also shape the path

Chapter 14 - When Harm Becomes Collective



Section 1 — When the Village Changes

There was once a village where people knew one another.
Not everyone was a friend. There were disagreements, old grievances and families who rarely spoke. Yet beneath these differences, the village had developed a familiar rhythm.

Children played together in the streets. Neighbours exchanged greetings, borrowed tools, shared food and helped one another when difficulties arrived. Some families had lived beside each other for generations, their Gardens separated by little more than a wall or a narrow pathway.

The village was not without its troubles, but most of its Pilgrims had learned to live alongside their differences.

Then something began to change.

There was no great announcement, no sudden confrontation and no single event that everyone could point towards.

It began with a story.

The First Whisper

Two families had lived near one another for more than twenty years. Their children had grown up together, and over the years they had shared meals, celebrated birthdays and helped repair one another's Houses.

One afternoon, a man returned from the village market with something on his mind.

"Have you heard what people are saying about that family?"

His wife looked up from what she was doing.

"What family?"

"The ones at the end of the street. Apparently, they cannot be trusted."

She frowned.

"Why? What have they done?"

"I'm not sure. Someone at the market was talking about them."

His wife waited, expecting him to explain further, but he had nothing more to offer.

The conversation ended, and they continued with their evening.

Yet something had entered the House.

A story about people they knew, passed along without evidence and without the family being present to speak for themselves.

Perhaps the man did not entirely believe what he had heard. He may simply have been curious, or concerned, or eager to share something unusual from the market.

Nevertheless, the following morning he mentioned it to a neighbour.

"I don't know whether it's true, but apparently there's something going on with that family."

The neighbour listened. Later, she repeated it to someone else, perhaps with slightly different words.

By the end of the week, several Pilgrims had heard the story. Some were suspicious, others dismissed it, and a few wondered whether there might be some truth behind it.

No one had established what had actually happened.

But the story was travelling.

And a story does not need to be believed by everyone before it begins changing the atmosphere of a Garden.

When the Familiar Becomes Suspicious

One morning, the father of the family walked towards the village shop.

He saw a neighbour approaching and greeted him as usual.

"Good morning."

The neighbour nodded but continued walking.

The father thought little of it. Perhaps the man was busy or distracted.

A few days later, another neighbour seemed to avoid him. Then someone who had regularly visited their Garden stopped coming.

These were small changes, easily explained away when considered separately.

But one afternoon, his daughter returned from school looking upset.

"Why won't Sofia play with me anymore?"

Her father looked surprised.

"What happened?"

"She said her mother told her not to come to our House."

He struggled to understand.

Had something happened between the children? Had he unknowingly offended Sofia's parents?

He asked his daughter whether there had been an argument, but she shook her head.

"No. We were playing together yesterday."

That evening, he spoke to his wife. She too had noticed that some neighbours were becoming distant, although neither could explain why.

Over the following days, he began paying attention to things he might previously have overlooked.

A conversation ending when he entered the shop. A familiar face turning away. A greeting that received no answer.

Nothing about the village itself had visibly changed. The same streets connected the same Houses, and the Gardens remained where they had always been.

Yet the spaces between the people were beginning to feel different.

The family did not know the story being told about them.

They only knew that something had changed.

The Story Becomes Ours

One evening, several neighbours gathered outside the village shop.

As they talked, the conversation turned towards the family at the end of the street.

Someone suggested that perhaps they should no longer be invited to community celebrations.

"Until we know what's going on, it's better to be cautious."

Another neighbour agreed.

"We have to protect our own."

A third Pilgrim, who had known the family for many years, hesitated.

"But they've lived here for years. They've never caused me any trouble."

Someone turned towards him.

"Why are you defending them?"

The question caught him by surprise.

He had not intended to defend anyone against an accusation. He had simply spoken from his own experience.

Yet the conversation had changed. Instead of asking whether the story was true, the neighbours were beginning to question one another's loyalty.

He considered explaining himself, but the faces around him suggested that further disagreement might only make matters worse.

So he remained quiet.

And perhaps this was another small turning point.

The village was no longer merely discussing a family. It was beginning to decide what belonging required.

The word *we* had begun appearing more frequently in conversations.

- *We must be careful.*
- *We have to protect our own.*
- *We know what these people are like.*

There is nothing inherently wrong with *we*. It can express belonging, solidarity and shared responsibility.

But something changes when belonging begins to depend upon agreeing with a particular story.

The difficulty does not begin with we. It begins when we leaves too little room for I.

When Silence Joins the Conversation

Not everyone believed the rumours.

Some Pilgrims remained uncertain, while others suspected that the accusations were unfair. A few were increasingly uncomfortable with the way the family was being treated.

But speaking openly had become difficult.

The shopkeeper continued serving the family, although he was noticeably less friendly when other customers were present. He worried that taking their side might affect his business.

A neighbour who had once visited them regularly stopped coming. She still cared about the family but disliked confrontation and feared becoming the subject of gossip herself.

At school, a teacher noticed that their daughter was being excluded by classmates. She considered speaking to the parents but hesitated, uncertain how they might react.

These Pilgrims were not necessarily motivated by the same feelings.

Some were frightened of disagreement. Others wanted to preserve their relationships or livelihoods. Some genuinely believed the accusations, while others simply did not know what to believe.

Their silence did not always mean approval.

But from the family's Window, the consequences were becoming increasingly visible.

Friends no longer visited. Invitations stopped arriving. Their daughter was left out of games she had once enjoyed.

The reasons for silence differed from House to House, yet the family experienced their combined effects.

And perhaps this is one of the difficulties of collective harm.

What appears to one Pilgrim as a small decision to avoid trouble may become, for another, part of a much larger experience of abandonment.

The Night the Window Broke

One evening, the family sat together having dinner.

Their daughter was describing something that had happened at school. Her mother listened while her father reached across the table for the bread.

Then a sudden crash shattered the conversation.

Glass scattered across the floor.

For a moment, nobody moved.

A stone had come through the Window.

Their daughter began crying. Her mother pulled her away from the broken glass, while her father hurried outside.

The street was empty.

Whoever had thrown the stone had disappeared.

He stood for a moment looking along the familiar road. The Houses were quiet, and the village appeared much as it always had.

Then he returned inside.

His wife was comforting their daughter. Pieces of glass lay across the floor, and the evening meal remained unfinished.

Until that moment, the family had experienced distance, suspicion and exclusion.

Now someone had acted against their home.

The following morning, neighbours gathered to look at the damage.

Some were shocked. Others expressed sympathy, and a few remained silent.

Then someone remarked:

> *"Well, perhaps they brought it upon themselves."*

Another neighbour immediately objected.

> *"Nobody should be throwing stones through people's Windows."*
>
> *"Of course not,"* came the reply. *"But you have to understand why people are upset."*

The conversation continued, but something disturbing had become visible.

An act that might once have united the village in concern was now being explained through the suspicion surrounding the family.

Nobody had established who threw the stone or why.

Yet some neighbours were already finding reasons to make the attack seem understandable.

The broken Window was no longer simply an act of harm against a family.

It had become another part of the story.

What Had Changed?

It would be easy to look at the village and conclude that its people had become cruel.

But such a conclusion would overlook much of what had happened.

The village had not become one mind.

Some Pilgrims believed the accusations. Others questioned them. Some participated in the exclusion, while others continued offering friendship. A few remained silent because they feared the consequences of speaking.

And one person had thrown a stone.

These actions were not identical, and neither were the responsibilities they carried.

We cannot assume that everyone who remained silent approved of the family's treatment. Nor can we assume that the rumours alone explain the attack.

The Pilgrim who threw the stone remains responsible for that action.

Yet something had changed within the wider Garden.

A family once encountered as neighbours had gradually become a subject of suspicion. Ordinary behaviour was interpreted differently, familiar relationships became strained, and exclusion began to appear acceptable.

The family had not suddenly become strangers.

They had been made to feel like strangers in a place where they had lived for years.

And perhaps the most troubling discovery is not simply that someone threw the stone.

It is that, when the Window broke, some neighbours had already begun finding reasons why the family might deserve it.

This raises questions that extend beyond the actions of one Pilgrim.

What had been repeated until it began to sound believable? What had been accepted without sufficient understanding? Which moments of discomfort had been ignored, and which opportunities to question the story had passed unnoticed?

Could another path have been possible?

Perhaps.

A neighbour might have asked for evidence. Someone might have spoken directly to the family. A teacher might have challenged the exclusion of their daughter. A friend might have continued visiting despite the disapproval of others.

None of these actions would have guaranteed a different outcome.

But each might have interrupted part of the movement taking place.

And this is where our exploration of collective harm begins.

The village still stands. Its Houses, streets and Gardens remain much as they were before.

But the relationships between its Pilgrims have changed.

The stone broke the Window in a moment.
The willingness to excuse it had been growing long before.

Section 2 — The Story That Everyone Repeated

The stone had broken the Window in a moment, but the story that preceded it had travelled through the village for weeks.
No one had announced that the family was guilty of anything. There had been no public examination of the accusation, and no opportunity for the family to respond.

Yet something remarkable had happened.

A claim that began with uncertainty had gradually acquired the appearance of truth.

How does this happen?

How can something that nobody has established become something that everybody seems to know?

To understand, we must follow the story itself.

When Hearing Becomes Knowing

Imagine a Pilgrim standing in the village market.

Someone remarks, "I wouldn't trust that family."

The Pilgrim asks why.

"That's what I've been told."

Later, the Pilgrim repeats the warning to a neighbour.

"Apparently, that family cannot be trusted."

The neighbour mentions it to a friend, but the words have changed slightly.

"There have been problems with that family."

A few days later, someone declares with confidence:

"Everyone knows what they're like."

Notice what has happened.

The first statement offered no explanation, and nobody along the way had examined any evidence. Yet with each repetition, the language became more certain.

What began as something someone had heard was now being presented as something the village knew.

The story had travelled through several Houses, acquiring authority from the very fact that it was being repeated.

And perhaps this is one of the difficulties of human understanding.

Familiarity can begin to feel like knowledge, even when knowledge has not been established.

Of course, not every widely repeated story is false. Sometimes a warning is justified, and sometimes Pilgrims share information because there is a genuine danger.

But repetition alone does not establish truth.

A hundred Pilgrims may repeat the same claim without any of them knowing whether it is accurate.

This is where Awareness becomes important. It allows the Pilgrim to distinguish between what has been observed, what has been heard and what has merely been assumed.

Rather than immediately accepting or rejecting a story, Awareness may quietly ask:

- What do we actually know?
- Where did this information come from?
- And what might have changed as it travelled?

Such questions do not guarantee that we will discover the truth.

But they prevent uncertainty from being mistaken too easily for certainty.

When the Pilgrim Disappears Behind the Label

Before the rumours began, the family had been known through ordinary encounters.

They were neighbours, parents, friends and people with responsibilities, difficulties and hopes of their own.

The father was someone who visited the village shop. The mother was someone who exchanged greetings with neighbours. Their daughter was a child who played with Sofia.

But as the story spread, the language used to describe them began changing.

They became that family.

Then those people.

Eventually, someone called them troublemakers.

The label began to replace the experience of knowing them.

And once a label becomes familiar, even ordinary behaviour can acquire a different meaning.

If the father remained quiet, perhaps he was hiding something. If he defended his family, he was considered aggressive. If he avoided the village shop, people wondered what he had to conceal. Yet if he entered the shop, they questioned what he wanted.

Whatever he did, the story seemed capable of explaining it.

This is a particularly difficult position for any Pilgrim.

The family could change its behaviour without changing the assumptions through which others interpreted it.

The villagers were no longer simply observing what happened. They were viewing events through a story they had already begun accepting.

We have encountered this movement earlier in our journey:

Pilgrim → Category → Label → Assumption → Treatment

Categories are not inherently harmful. Human beings use them to organise information and understand the world.

The difficulty arises when a category becomes more important than the individual standing before us.

The Pilgrim has not disappeared.

But the Window through which others see that Pilgrim has narrowed.

And when the Window narrows, we may begin noticing only what confirms the story we already believe.

When the Story Becomes Belonging

One evening, a woman challenges the rumours.

"I've known that family for years. They've always been kind to me."

A neighbour responds:

"Well, perhaps you don't know them as well as you think."

Another adds:

"You should be careful whose side you're on."

The woman had offered an experience from her own life. She had not accused anyone, nor had she claimed to know everything about the family.

Yet her words were received as a declaration of loyalty.

Suddenly, the question was no longer simply whether the accusation was true.

It was whether she belonged with those who believed it.

This changes the atmosphere of a conversation.

A Pilgrim may begin hesitating before expressing doubt, not because the doubt has disappeared, but because asking a question may now carry consequences.

They might be ridiculed, excluded or accused of disloyalty.

Those who repeat the familiar story may find themselves welcomed, while those who question it risk becoming suspicious themselves.

Gradually, agreement may appear more widespread than it really is.

Some Pilgrims may genuinely believe the story. Others may repeat it because they assume everyone else believes it. Still others may remain silent, allowing the apparent agreement to continue unchallenged.

And the more widespread that agreement appears, the more difficult questioning may become.

The story has begun protecting itself.

When questioning becomes disloyalty, a story has begun demanding more than belief. It has begun demanding belonging.

This is an important threshold in the collective Garden.

The pressure no longer comes only from the content of the story. It also comes from the relationships surrounding it.

To question the story may now feel like questioning the community itself.

When the Garden Reinforces the House

The movement does not travel in only one direction.

A Pilgrim hears a rumour in the village and carries it into the Inner House, where it may influence how they think about the family.

At dinner, the Pilgrim repeats the story to their children.

The children listen.

The following day, one child refuses to play with the daughter of the accused family.

Another parent notices the exclusion and assumes there must be a reason for it.

Soon the observation becomes part of another conversation.

> *"Even the children are keeping away from them."*

Something curious has happened.

The children's behaviour was influenced by the rumour, yet that same behaviour is now being treated as evidence that the rumour must be true.

The story has begun producing the very observations that appear to support it.

The Garden influences the House, and the House carries something back into the Garden.

> **Garden → House → Behaviour → Garden**

With each movement, the story may become more deeply embedded in everyday life.

A parent becomes suspicious. A child avoids a friend. A neighbour notices the avoidance. Another Pilgrim interprets it as confirmation.

And the story continues circulating.

This does not mean that every Pilgrim responds in the same way.

One may accept the rumour, another may question it, while someone else may recognise the harm already being caused.

The Garden influences what becomes familiar, but it does not determine what every Pilgrim must believe.

The Window can still open.

And sometimes it opens through a question that should have been asked much earlier.

The Story That Was Never Examined

Several weeks after the Window was broken, a small group of villagers gathered to discuss what had happened.

They spoke about the family, the rumours and the growing tension within the community.

Then one Pilgrim asked:

"Does anybody actually know what this family has done?"

The room became quiet.

Someone mentioned the market.

Another remembered a conversation with a neighbour.

A third referred to something heard from a relative.

But as they tried to trace the accusation backwards, they discovered that nobody present could establish where it had begun.

Perhaps there had once been a genuine disagreement. Perhaps someone had misunderstood an encounter. Perhaps the story had been deliberately invented.

They did not know.

And that was the troubling discovery.

For weeks, the village had discussed the family. Some neighbours had stopped greeting them, children had been excluded from playing together, and someone had attacked their House.

Yet the accusation that had helped create this atmosphere remained unexamined.

The absence of evidence did not tell the villagers everything about the family.

But it revealed how much they had been willing to assume.

One Pilgrim spoke quietly.

"We don't actually know, do we?"

Nobody answered immediately.

Perhaps some felt embarrassed. Others may have remained convinced that there must be something behind the story.

But for a moment, the certainty that had filled so many conversations was interrupted.

A question had entered the room.

And with it, another possibility.

- Perhaps the family had been judged without being understood.
- Perhaps the villagers had mistaken repetition for evidence.
- Perhaps the story they had carried from House to House deserved to be examined rather than repeated.

For a moment, another Window had opened.
Whether anyone would look through it remained uncertain.

Section 3 — When Belonging Becomes Pressure

In the village, we saw how a story could influence the way Pilgrims treated one another. But the pressure to belong does not begin only in public conversations or community gatherings.

Sometimes it begins much closer to home.

A child grows up among familiar Houses, learning whom to trust, whom to greet, whom to visit and whom to avoid. Much of this learning happens naturally, through the guidance of parents, grandparents and other people who care for the child.

Their words help the child navigate a Landscape they do not yet fully understand.

But alongside useful guidance, something else may be passed from one generation to another.

An old grievance. An unresolved disagreement. A judgement about another family.

And sometimes the child inherits a boundary without ever knowing why it was created.

The Boundary I Did Not Create

I remember something from my childhood in Goa.

I was about nine years old, living with my grandmother. Like many children, I learned about the people around me through the adults who cared for me.

My grandmother had certain families with whom she was not on speaking terms.

She would tell me not to play with them.

"They are not good people."

At that age, I knew very little about the disagreements between the adults. I rarely saw some of these families, and I had no particular reason to form an opinion about them.

I generally followed my grandmother's instructions.

But sometimes, when passing another House, I would stop and greet the people there. We might exchange a few words before I continued on my way.

There was nothing unusual about these encounters. I was simply a child greeting people I happened to meet.

One day, a household helper noticed me speaking to members of a family with whom my grandmother had fallen out.

She reported what she had seen.

My grandmother told me off.

I had crossed a boundary, although I had neither created the disagreement nor fully understood it.

Looking back, what interests me is not simply that my grandmother wanted me to avoid certain people.

It is that a disagreement between adults had become an expectation placed upon a child.

The boundary belonged to their relationships, but I was expected to observe it in mine.

And perhaps this happens more often than we realise.

A Pilgrim can inherit a disagreement without ever having been part of it.

When the Adults Change Their Minds

Years passed.

Eventually, my grandmother and her nephew's family began speaking again.

Their relationship became friendly, and the Gate that had remained closed was now open.

I cannot say precisely what changed between them. Perhaps the disagreement was resolved, circumstances altered, or time softened something that had once seemed difficult to overcome.

What matters is that the relationship changed.

The people I had once been instructed to avoid were now welcomed again.

And this leaves us with an interesting question.

What had I been expected to carry during those earlier years?

A judgement I had not formed, a boundary I had not created, and an obligation to remain distant from people simply because someone I loved was distant from them.

Yet the adults themselves eventually found another way.

A boundary that once seemed unquestionable had become unnecessary.

As a child, I could not have known that this would happen.

And perhaps this is one of the difficulties of inheriting the judgements of others: we may be asked to organise our relationships around circumstances whose history we barely understand and whose future we cannot foresee.

The Price of Belonging

Why might a child accept a judgement they do not fully understand?

Perhaps because the person offering it is someone they love and trust. Perhaps because that person holds authority within the House, or because disobedience may lead to disappointment, conflict or punishment.

Sometimes the child simply has no reason to question what has been said.

For a young Pilgrim, the family is more than a group of people with whom they share a home. It is the place where they receive care, protection and a sense of belonging. Their understanding of the wider Garden develops through the experiences and guidance of those closest to them.

This is both necessary and valuable.

Children cannot be expected to examine every instruction independently. They rely upon adults to help them recognise danger, understand relationships and navigate situations beyond their experience.

Yet this dependence also creates a particular difficulty.

A child may struggle to distinguish between a warning intended to protect them and a judgement arising from an adult's unresolved conflict.

Both may be expressed with the same certainty.

> *"Stay away from those people."*

The words may sound like protection, even when the reasons behind them belong to a disagreement the child has never experienced.

And because the child wishes to remain close to those they love, questioning the instruction may feel uncomfortable.

The choice is no longer simply whether to greet another person. It may become a choice between following one's natural curiosity and disappointing someone whose approval matters.

Of course, this does not mean that every family boundary is unreasonable. Some boundaries protect children from genuine harm, and adults may possess information that a child cannot yet understand.

The difficulty arises when personal grievances are passed along as unquestionable truths, without distinguishing between what has happened and what has been assumed.

And this movement does not end with childhood.

Adults may encounter similar expectations within friendships, workplaces, communities and nations.

A colleague who questions a shared opinion may find themselves excluded from conversations. A member of a community who expresses doubt may be accused of betraying their own. Someone who continues speaking to a person rejected by their friends may suddenly be asked to explain whose side they are on.

The circumstances differ, and so do the consequences.

But beneath them lies a familiar expectation:

If you belong with us, you should behave as we do.

Belonging can offer the Pilgrim warmth, companionship and a place within the Garden.

But when belonging becomes conditional upon agreement, something begins to change.

The Pilgrim may feel increasingly obliged to adopt the judgements of others, even when those judgements do not reflect their own experience.

And gradually, the wish to belong may begin influencing not only what the Pilgrim says, but also what they allow themselves to question.

When Loyalty Becomes Agreement

Consider two brothers who have stopped speaking.

Perhaps there was an argument over money, a family responsibility or something said many years earlier. Each brother remembers the disagreement differently, and each believes there are reasons for his position.

Their mother is closer to one brother. Other relatives support the other.

At first, the disagreement belongs mainly to the two men.

But gradually, the wider family becomes involved.

An invitation to a celebration raises questions about who should attend. A relative visiting one brother worries that the other may feel offended. Family gatherings become increasingly difficult to organise.

Some relatives take sides because they genuinely believe one brother has been treated unfairly.

Others simply want to avoid further arguments.

Then one day, a relative who has maintained a relationship with both brothers is confronted.

"You know what he did. How can you still speak to him?"

The relative hesitates.

They may understand why one brother feels hurt. They may even believe that something unfair happened.

But does recognising one person's hurt require them to end their relationship with the other?

This is where loyalty can become confused with agreement.

The relative is no longer being asked simply to acknowledge someone's experience. They are being asked to demonstrate loyalty through their treatment of another person.

Continuing to care for both brothers is interpreted as refusing to take a side.

And the original disagreement begins extending into relationships that were never part of it.

The conflict now has a life beyond the people who first experienced it.

Children may grow up knowing that certain relatives are not invited to family gatherings. Cousins may become distant without understanding why. New generations may inherit the separation long after the original circumstances have changed.

What began as a disagreement between two Pilgrims has altered the relationships within an entire family Garden.

This does not mean that reconciliation is always possible or appropriate. Sometimes distance is necessary for safety, dignity or protection from continuing harm.

Nor does maintaining contact with someone require us to excuse their behaviour.

But there is an important distinction between establishing a boundary for ourselves and expecting everyone around us to inherit that boundary without question.

When loyalty requires us to carry another person's hostility, belonging begins to narrow the space for individual discernment.

And perhaps this is where the childhood experience in Goa connects with the wider village we encountered earlier.

In both situations, a Pilgrim is asked to treat someone differently because of a judgement formed elsewhere.

The question is no longer simply what happened between the people originally involved.

It becomes what everyone else is expected to believe, repeat or do.

And once these expectations spread, the original conflict may begin creating new conflicts of its own.

The Window That Remains Ours

There is something important we must recognise before continuing.

Not every Pilgrim is equally free to question the expectations of those around them.

A child depends upon adults for care and protection. An employee may fear losing their livelihood. Someone living within a tightly controlled community may face serious consequences for expressing disagreement.

And sometimes, remaining silent is not a sign of agreement.

It may be an attempt to preserve safety, avoid conflict or protect a relationship upon which the Pilgrim depends.

We should therefore be careful not to judge those who appear to follow the collective Voice.

The circumstances within their Inner House may be very different from what we can see through our own Window.

Yet even when the freedom to act is limited, there is a distinction worth preserving.

What we receive from others is not necessarily what we have discovered for ourselves.

We may inherit a judgement without examining it. We may repeat a story because it has become familiar. We may avoid someone because others have taught us to keep our distance.

And sometimes, only years later, do we recognise that we have been carrying a conflict that was never ours to resolve.

This does not mean that the Pilgrim must reject every warning, challenge every authority or insist upon forming an independent opinion about everything.

Such an expectation would be neither realistic nor wise.

We learn through others. We depend upon their experience, and sometimes their guidance protects us from harm we cannot yet recognise.

But Awareness allows us to notice the difference between receiving guidance and surrendering our understanding.

Perhaps the Pilgrim begins by asking:

- What do I actually know?
- What belongs to my own experience?
- What have I received from others?
- And what am I being asked to carry?

These questions need not become accusations.

They do not require the Pilgrim to declare that everyone else is wrong.

They simply create a little space within the Inner House.

A space where an inherited judgement can be recognised as an inherited judgement, rather than immediately accepted as an established truth.

And sometimes that small space changes how the Pilgrim walks through the Garden.

A person may continue loving their family without adopting every family grievance.

They may acknowledge that someone has been hurt without assuming that every account of the disagreement is complete.

They may respect a boundary established by another Pilgrim without feeling obliged to reproduce that boundary in all their own relationships.

Or they may simply continue greeting a neighbour, without pretending to know who was right in a disagreement between adults.

None of these choices guarantees an easy outcome.

Relationships may remain strained. Questions may go unanswered. Sometimes a Pilgrim must accept that the surrounding Garden is not ready to change.

But the Window need not close merely because other Windows have closed.

A Gate Left Open

When I think back to my childhood in Goa, I do not see a grandmother who must now be judged harshly for what she told me.

She was a Pilgrim too, living within her own circumstances, relationships and understanding.

There may have been reasons for her disagreement that I never knew.

What interests me now is the movement of that disagreement beyond the people directly involved.

A boundary established between adults had become a rule for a child.

And then, years later, the boundary changed.

Perhaps that is what makes the memory so revealing.

The relationships we inherit are not always fixed. The judgements we receive are not always complete.

And the divisions that seem permanent at one moment may eventually lose their meaning.

We cannot know in advance which Gates will remain closed and which may one day open.

But perhaps we can become more aware of the Gates we ask others to close on our behalf.

This is especially important when children are involved, for they may carry our judgements into relationships we will never witness.

And what begins within one family may travel much further.

A disagreement may influence a neighbourhood. A neighbourhood may develop shared assumptions.

Those assumptions may become part of a community's expectations.

Eventually, a Pilgrim may find that questioning a judgement is no longer experienced as disagreeing with one person.

It is experienced as disagreeing with everyone.

Belonging does not require every Pilgrim to look through the same Window.

We may walk together, care for one another and share a Garden without surrendering the possibility of seeing differently.

And perhaps this is where we must look next.

For belonging becomes more powerful when the pressure no longer comes from one grandmother, one family or one small group.

It becomes more difficult to question when the wider Garden itself begins to speak with one Voice.

Section 4 — When the Collective Voice Takes Authority

A family may ask a child to accept its judgement. A community may expect its members to share a common view.

But sometimes, the Voice grows beyond the family or the neighbourhood.

It enters the institutions through which people live. It is repeated by those who lead, reinforced by those who hold authority, and gradually becomes part of the language used to describe who belongs, who can be trusted and who should be kept at a distance.

What began as one person's judgement may eventually acquire the appearance of a truth that no one is expected to question.

And when this happens, the pressure upon the individual Pilgrim can become considerably greater.

When a Voice Becomes the Voice

Imagine a community passing through a period of uncertainty.

People are worried about their livelihoods, their safety and the future of their children. Some feel that their way of life is changing too quickly. Others believe that their concerns have been ignored.

They want reassurance.

They want an explanation for what is happening and someone who can offer a direction.

A leader steps forward.

At first, the message is one of unity, protection and shared purpose. The leader speaks about the community's history, its achievements and the importance of standing together.

There is nothing inherently harmful in this.

Communities need leadership. During difficult circumstances, people often benefit from a shared direction and the reassurance that their concerns are being heard.

But gradually, the message begins to change.

The leader identifies a particular group as responsible for the community's difficulties.

"They are the reason things have become so difficult."

The explanation is simple, memorable and repeated with confidence.

Some Pilgrims accept it immediately. Others remain uncertain, while a few recognise that the difficulties facing the community may have many causes.

Yet the message continues.

At public gatherings, the group is described as a threat. In everyday conversations, its members become the subject of suspicion. People begin interpreting ordinary encounters through the language they have repeatedly heard.

The individual Pilgrim gradually disappears behind a collective label.

A neighbour who was once known by name becomes a member of that group.

Their actions are no longer considered only as their own. They are increasingly interpreted as evidence of what the group is supposedly like.

And with each repetition, the distinction between what has been established and what has been claimed becomes harder to recognise.

The Voice that began with one leader is now heard throughout the Garden.

It is repeated by people who may never have examined its foundations.

Some believe it sincerely. Others repeat it because they wish to belong. Still others remain silent because challenging it may bring consequences.

The collective Voice has begun to take authority.

The Difference Between Leadership and Authority Without Question

Leadership itself is not the difficulty.

A leader may bring Pilgrims together while recognising their differences. They may acknowledge uncertainty, listen to criticism and change direction when new understanding emerges.

Such leadership does not require every Window to show the same view.

Indeed, a healthy Garden may depend upon Pilgrims being able to describe what they see, particularly when their experiences differ from those of the people making decisions.

But leadership changes character when questioning is treated as disloyalty.

A Pilgrim raises a concern.

> *"Are we certain that this group is responsible?"*

Instead of examining the question, the leader responds:

> *"Why are you defending them? Are you not one of us?"*

Notice what has happened.

The Pilgrim asked about evidence.

The response questioned their belonging.

The original concern remains unanswered, but the person who raised it is now placed under suspicion.

Others witness the exchange.

Some may decide that it is safer to remain quiet. Others may begin repeating the leader's words more confidently, interpreting the challenge itself as evidence that the community must remain united.

Gradually, the space for disagreement narrows.

A leader who once offered direction may now expect agreement as proof of loyalty.

And when this expectation spreads through the Garden, Pilgrims may begin regulating one another without needing to receive direct instructions.

A neighbour warns another neighbour to be careful about what they say. A colleague avoids discussing a controversial subject. A family decides that certain questions are better left unspoken.

The collective Voice no longer depends entirely upon the leader who introduced it.

It has begun living within the expectations of the community.

Authority becomes dangerous when it no longer needs to answer a question, but can instead punish the Pilgrim for asking it.

When Authority Enters the Institutions

The collective Voice becomes more powerful when it is no longer heard only in speeches and conversations.

It begins to influence the institutions through which the Garden functions.

A school changes the way certain children are treated. An employer becomes reluctant to hire people associated with a particular group. A public official begins applying greater scrutiny to some Pilgrims than to others.

Sometimes these changes are introduced through formal rules. At other times, they emerge through informal expectations that nobody has written down.

Consider a teacher who has always treated the children in her classroom fairly.

One morning, she is advised to keep a closer watch on children from a particular community.

She asks why.

> *"We've been told there have been problems."*

The explanation is vague, but the instruction comes from someone in authority.

The teacher begins paying closer attention to those children.

Ordinary behaviour that might previously have passed unnoticed now attracts concern. A disagreement between two pupils is interpreted differently depending upon which child was involved.

Over time, the teacher may begin believing that the instruction was justified.

She has noticed more problems among the children she was told to watch.

But perhaps she has also been watching them more closely.

The institution has influenced her perception, and her altered perception may now appear to confirm the institution's original judgement.

We have encountered this movement before:

> **Garden → House → Behaviour → Garden**

Only now, the Garden includes an institution with the authority to shape the lives of many Pilgrims.

The consequences may extend far beyond a conversation.

A child may be disciplined unfairly. An employee may lose an opportunity. A family may find that ordinary services have become more difficult to access.

And because these experiences occur within recognised institutions, those affected may struggle to challenge them.

The judgement appears to carry official authority.

Yet authority does not necessarily establish truth.

A rule may be lawful and justified, or it may be unfair. An instruction may protect people from genuine danger, or it may reproduce an assumption that has never been properly examined.

The Pilgrim must therefore distinguish between the existence of authority and the wisdom with which that authority is exercised.

When the Hijacked Voice Becomes Collective

We have already explored how the Hijacked Voice may influence an individual Pilgrim.

It can bring pressure, urgency and a narrowing of the Window. The Pilgrim becomes increasingly occupied with one interpretation of events, sometimes finding it difficult to consider alternatives.

But what happens when a similar movement spreads through an entire Garden?

Imagine the community we have been following.

The leader repeatedly warns that danger is approaching.

"We must act before it is too late."

Those who question the warning are accused of weakening the community.

"There is no time for debate."

The language becomes more urgent. The choices appear increasingly limited.

Pilgrims are encouraged to believe that they must either support the proposed action or place everyone at risk.

The Garden begins to experience a collective narrowing of its Windows.

This is what we might call Collective Hijack.

It does not mean that a community possesses one mind, or that every Pilgrim experiences the same inner state.

Rather, a shared atmosphere of pressure begins influencing how people interpret events, express disagreement and behave towards one another.

The pattern resembles what we have recognised within the individual House.

A Voice becomes dominant. An identity forms around it. Behaviour follows. Resistance to questioning increases, while fear reinforces the need to remain within the accepted story.

Voice → Identity → Behaviour → Resistance → Fear

The movement may be visible in the language of the community.

- *"We are the only ones who understand."*
- *"Those who disagree are against us."*
- *"We cannot afford to hesitate."*
- *"Anyone who questions us is helping the enemy."*

Such statements do not establish that the community is wrong about every concern it raises. A genuine danger may exist, and urgent collective action may sometimes be necessary.

The difficulty arises when urgency is used to prevent examination, when disagreement is treated as betrayal, and when a whole category of Pilgrims is judged without regard for individual conduct.

At that point, the collective Voice is doing more than encouraging cooperation.

It is demanding that the Pilgrim surrender the Window through which they might see differently.

And perhaps the most troubling feature of Collective Hijack is that it can make this surrender appear virtuous.

- To question becomes selfish.
- To hesitate becomes weakness.
- To show compassion towards those who have been labelled becomes disloyalty.

Meanwhile, unquestioning agreement is presented as courage, unity and moral certainty.

The words may sound noble, even while the space for Awareness becomes smaller.

When Ordinary Pilgrims Become Participants

The leader may introduce the story, and institutions may give it authority. But collective harm rarely develops through leadership alone.

It also depends upon what happens in the ordinary relationships of the Garden.

Consider a shopkeeper who has served the same families for many years.

One morning, a neighbour warns him against serving members of a particular community.

> *"You know what people are saying about them."*

The shopkeeper is uncertain. He has never experienced any difficulty with these customers.

But he has also noticed the changing atmosphere in the village.

Other shopkeepers have begun refusing them service. Some customers have threatened to take their business elsewhere if he continues welcoming them.

- He faces a decision.
- He may continue serving everyone, despite the pressure. He may refuse because he genuinely believes the accusations.
- Or he may refuse simply because he fears losing his livelihood.

From outside, the behaviour may look the same.

A customer enters the shop and is turned away.

Yet the movements within the shopkeeper's Inner House may be very different.

One Pilgrim acts from conviction. Another acts from fear. A third may recognise the injustice but feel unable to resist.

This distinction matters.

It does not erase the harm experienced by the person who is refused service. Nor does it mean that fear automatically removes responsibility.

But it reminds us that participation in collective harm does not always arise from the same intention, understanding or freedom to choose.

If we wish to understand how harm spreads, we must examine both what Pilgrims do and the circumstances in which they act.

The Many Ways a Pilgrim May Participate

Some Pilgrims actively encourage the collective Voice. They introduce accusations, organise exclusion or deliberately encourage hostility.

Others carry out instructions. They may believe the instructions are justified, trust the authority issuing them or fear the consequences of refusing.

Some repeat stories without examining them, contributing to an atmosphere they may not fully recognise.

Others remain silent.

But silence itself requires careful understanding.

A Pilgrim who remains silent because they approve of what is happening is not necessarily in the same position as someone who remains silent because speaking would endanger their family.

Nor is either in the same position as a Pilgrim who has the authority and freedom to intervene but chooses not to.

These differences do not mean that we must abandon questions of responsibility.

They mean that responsibility requires discernment.

We must consider what the Pilgrim knew, what they intended, what they actually did, what alternatives were available and what consequences they could reasonably foresee.

A leader who deliberately creates hostility carries a different responsibility from a child who repeats something heard at home.

An official who knowingly enforces an unjust rule may have more power to influence events than someone whose livelihood depends upon obeying instructions.

And a Pilgrim who has been threatened into compliance cannot simply be judged as though they had acted without pressure.

Yet the consequences may still reach those who were harmed.

This is one of the difficulties of collective harm.

Responsibility is not always shared equally, even when the consequences are experienced collectively.

When No One Feels Responsible

Imagine that the family from our village attempts to discover why they are no longer welcome at certain gatherings.

They ask one neighbour.

> *"It wasn't my decision."*

They ask the organiser.

> *"People were uncomfortable. I had to consider everyone."*

They speak to someone who had complained.

> *"I only said what others were thinking."*

Each person offers an explanation.

And perhaps each explanation contains something true.

Yet the family remains excluded.

No single Pilgrim believes they created the entire situation. Each sees their own contribution as small, necessary or unavoidable.

The organiser believes they are preserving harmony. The neighbour believes they are respecting a decision. The person who complained believes they were merely expressing an opinion.

Meanwhile, the family experiences the combined consequences of all these actions.

This is how responsibility can become difficult to locate within a collective Garden.

The harm is visible, but each participant sees only a small part of the movement that produced it.

And when everyone looks towards someone else, the situation may continue without anyone feeling sufficiently responsible to question it.

The difficulty becomes greater when the behaviour is supported by institutions.

A clerk follows a procedure. A supervisor approves it. A department explains that the policy was established elsewhere.

Each Pilgrim performs a limited task.

But the person affected experiences the entire system.

Of course, procedures and shared responsibilities are necessary for institutions to function. No individual can personally examine every decision made within a large organisation.

The concern arises when following a procedure becomes a substitute for recognising its consequences.

A Pilgrim may have only a small part in a decision and still have a part in its consequences.

Recognising this does not require us to condemn every person involved.

It invites us to remain curious about the movement between individual actions and collective outcomes.

For sometimes the question is not simply, Who intended this harm?

It is also, How did so many ordinary actions come together to produce it?

The Difference Between Understanding and Excusing

We must be careful here.

To understand why a Pilgrim participated in harm is not necessarily to excuse what they did.

Fear may help explain a decision without making its consequences harmless.

Loyalty may explain why someone repeated an accusation without establishing that the accusation was justified.

Obedience may explain why an official followed an instruction without settling whether that instruction should have been followed.

Understanding asks us to look more carefully.

It does not ask us to abandon judgement.

Indeed, a more careful understanding may help us distinguish between those who deliberately create harm, those who enable it, those who are pressured into participating and those who attempt to resist.

Without these distinctions, we risk repeating the very movement we are trying to examine.

We place all the Pilgrims into one category.

We give them one label.

And then we assume that the label tells us everything about them.

But our Living Landscape asks us to look through a wider Window.

The Pilgrim who caused harm remains responsible for their actions, yet those actions need not become the only truth about their entire life.

Likewise, a Pilgrim who has behaved kindly in many circumstances is not automatically free from responsibility when they participate in something harmful.

We have already encountered this in our exploration of good and bad.

A human life is rarely understood through a single judgement.

The question is not whether we can divide the Garden into good Pilgrims and bad Pilgrims.

It is whether we can recognise harmful behaviour clearly enough to respond to it without losing sight of the human beings involved.

And this brings us towards another difficulty.

When harmful behaviour is repeated often enough, supported by authority and accepted by those around us, it may gradually cease to appear unusual.

What once disturbed the Garden may become part of its ordinary life.

And that is where we must look next.

Section 5 — When Harm Becomes Normal

The village had changed.

At first, the rumours about the family had disturbed some of its inhabitants. There had been questions, disagreements and moments of discomfort.

But as the weeks passed, something else began to happen.

People grew accustomed to the changes.

The family was no longer invited to certain gatherings. Their daughter was rarely included in the children's games. Some neighbours crossed the street rather than exchange greetings.

What might once have seemed unkind gradually became part of the village's ordinary life.

A visitor arriving for the first time might not even notice anything unusual.

The market was busy. Children played in the square. Families gathered in the evenings, and the familiar rhythms of village life continued.

Yet within this apparently ordinary Garden, one family had become increasingly isolated.

And perhaps this is one of the most troubling aspects of collective harm.

A Garden may continue to appear peaceful to those who belong comfortably within it, while becoming a place of suffering for those who have been pushed towards its boundaries.

When the Unusual Becomes Familiar

Imagine a neighbour who initially feels uncomfortable when the family is excluded from a celebration.

She wonders whether the decision is fair.

But the following month, the same thing happens again.

Nobody raises an objection.

At another gathering, the family is not mentioned at all.

Eventually, the neighbour stops expecting them to be included.

She has not necessarily become hostile towards them. She may still greet them occasionally or remember the kindness they once showed her.

But the exclusion no longer surprises her.

Something has shifted within her Inner House.

What once attracted her attention has become part of the familiar Landscape.

This is not unusual in human experience.

We become accustomed to the circumstances in which we live. Familiarity allows us to move through daily life without constantly examining everything around us.

Much of this adaptation is necessary.

But familiarity has a limitation.

Something does not become harmless simply because we have grown accustomed to seeing it.

A cruel remark may cease to shock those who hear it every day. An unfair practice may begin to appear ordinary because it has existed for years. A child may grow up believing that certain people should be avoided simply because that is how the community has always behaved.

The harm has not necessarily diminished.

Only the response to it has changed.

And when fewer Pilgrims notice the harm, fewer may feel compelled to question it.

When Everyone Has Grown Accustomed

The most unsettling change may occur when the village no longer recognises the exclusion as something that needs explaining.

Someone asks why the family was not invited.

"That's just how things are."

The answer contains no accusation, no evidence and no attempt to justify what has happened.

It appeals only to familiarity.

Yet for those who have been excluded, the consequences remain deeply personal.

A child wonders why her friends no longer visit. A parent hesitates before entering a familiar shop. A family begins arranging its daily life around the possibility of rejection.

The Garden has changed, but not everyone experiences that change in the same way.

For some, life continues almost as before.

For others, even the simplest encounters have become uncertain.

And perhaps this is the question that should concern us:

When we say that life in a community is normal, whose experience are we describing?

The answer may depend upon which House we are standing in and which Window we are looking through.

A Garden cannot be understood only through the experiences of those who feel comfortable within it.

We must also consider those whose lives have become more difficult because of the practices everyone else has learned to accept.

When Ordinary Routines Carry Harm

The village did not stop functioning when the family became excluded.

The shops continued opening each morning. Children went to school. Neighbours tended their gardens, attended celebrations and discussed the weather.

Most Pilgrims remained occupied with the ordinary responsibilities of life.

And perhaps this is precisely why the exclusion became so difficult to recognise.

It was no longer an event that interrupted the village.

It had become part of the way the village functioned.

Consider the organiser of a community celebration.

Each year, she prepares invitations, arranges food and ensures that everyone has a place.

In earlier years, the family had always been included.

But following the rumours, she leaves their names off the invitation list.

She tells herself that inviting them might create tension. Some neighbours might refuse to attend, and she does not want the celebration to become another source of conflict.

Her intention may be to preserve harmony.

Yet the harmony she is preserving depends upon the continued exclusion of one family.

The following year, she uses the previous invitation list.

The family's names are already absent.

No new decision is required.

What began as a deliberate exclusion has become an ordinary administrative routine.
The organiser may no longer think about the family at all.
But the family remains excluded.
This reveals something important about collective harm.
An action may continue causing harm long after those carrying it out have stopped consciously considering its consequences.
The routine has acquired a life of its own.
And because it now appears ordinary, questioning it may seem more disruptive than continuing it.

When Kindness and Harm Live in the Same Garden

There is another difficulty we must examine.
The villagers who excluded the family were not necessarily cruel in every part of their lives.
The shopkeeper might be a loving father who spends his evenings helping his children with their homework.
The organiser might care for an elderly neighbour, prepare meals for someone who is ill and offer generous assistance whenever a family faces hardship.
The teacher might be deeply committed to her pupils.
These acts of kindness need not be false.
Yet the same Pilgrims may participate in practices that cause suffering to others.
How can this be?
Perhaps because human beings do not always recognise the contradictions within their own behaviour.
A Pilgrim may show great compassion towards those they know personally while accepting harmful assumptions about those placed outside their familiar circle.
They may be attentive to suffering within their Family Garden but less aware of suffering elsewhere.
Or they may recognise that something is unfair yet persuade themselves that changing it would create greater difficulties.
This does not mean that kindness excuses harm.
Nor does harmful behaviour erase every act of kindness a person has ever performed.
It means that the human being is more complicated than a single label.
We have encountered this understanding before in our exploration of good and bad.
A Pilgrim may cultivate tenderness in one part of the Garden while allowing harmful patterns to grow in another.
And sometimes, the contradiction remains unnoticed because the surrounding community shares the same assumptions.

- Nobody asks the shopkeeper why he refuses certain customers.
- Nobody questions the organiser's invitation list.
- Nobody challenges the teacher's different expectations of particular children.

The absence of questions begins to resemble approval.
And approval, whether expressed openly or merely assumed, may encourage the familiar pattern to continue.
A Garden can contain genuine kindness and genuine injustice at the same time.

Recognising one does not require us to deny the other.

When Procedure Replaces Awareness

Now imagine that the village's practices become part of an institution.

An official receives an application from a family belonging to a group that has long been treated with suspicion.

The application meets the stated requirements.

Yet the official has been instructed to refer such applications for additional examination.

He follows the procedure.

When the family asks why their application has been delayed, he replies:

"Those are the rules."

Perhaps he did not create the rule. Perhaps he has little authority to change it. Perhaps he genuinely believes the additional examination is necessary.

These circumstances matter when considering his responsibility.

But they do not, by themselves, establish that the rule is fair.

The family experiences the delay regardless of who introduced the procedure.

And if similar decisions are repeated across many offices, the consequences may become substantial.

A Pilgrim encounters an obstacle at one institution, another obstacle elsewhere, and a third when seeking an opportunity that others receive more easily.

Each institution may describe its own decision as routine.

But the Pilgrim experiences the combined effect.

This is how collective harm may become embedded in the structures of a Garden.

The original judgement no longer needs to be repeated in every conversation.

It has entered the procedures through which people live.

And the procedures may continue even when some of those carrying them out no longer remember why they were introduced.

Of course, rules and procedures are necessary. They help institutions act consistently, protect people and coordinate responsibilities.

The problem is not the existence of rules.

It arises when a rule is treated as beyond examination simply because it has become established.

A procedure may be familiar without being fair.

It may be consistently applied without being just.

And it may continue functioning efficiently while producing consequences that deserve serious attention.

The fact that something is done correctly according to a procedure does not always mean that the procedure itself is right.

This is why Awareness must not disappear when a Pilgrim enters an institution.

The Inner House does not cease to matter simply because the Pilgrim is performing an official duty.

There remains a human being carrying out the task.

And there remains another human being affected by it.

When Harm Becomes Invisible to Those Who Do Not Experience It

One morning, a visitor arrives in the village.

She walks through the market, admires the gardens and stops to speak with several inhabitants.

The people are welcoming. A shopkeeper offers her directions. An elderly woman invites her to sit in the shade, and children greet her as they pass.

The visitor leaves with a favourable impression.

"What a lovely village," she remarks. *"Everyone seems so friendly."*

And perhaps her experience was entirely genuine.

She encountered warmth, hospitality and kindness.

But there was something she did not see.

She did not see the family whose invitations had stopped arriving. She did not know about the daughter who had lost her playmates, or the neighbours who no longer exchanged greetings.

She had not witnessed the stone passing through the Window.

The village she experienced was real.

But it was not the whole village.

This reveals an important difficulty in understanding collective harm.

The absence of suffering within our own experience does not establish the absence of suffering within the wider Garden.

A Pilgrim may live comfortably within a community and sincerely believe that everyone is treated fairly.

They may never encounter the obstacles that others face.

Not because they are deliberately ignoring them, but because those obstacles do not appear along their own path.

The shopkeeper who welcomes one family may refuse another.

The institution that functions smoothly for one Pilgrim may repeatedly frustrate another.

And a community that offers belonging to some may make others feel that they must constantly justify their presence.

Each Pilgrim looks through a Window shaped by their experiences.

But no single Window reveals the entire Garden.

When Another Window Opens

Imagine that the visitor returns to the village several months later.

This time, she meets the excluded family.

The mother tells her about the invitations that stopped arriving. The father describes the discomfort of entering shops where he once felt welcome.

Their daughter speaks about Sofia.

"We used to play together," she says. *"But now she doesn't come."*

The visitor listens.

At first, she struggles to reconcile these experiences with the kindness she encountered during her previous visit.

How could the same village contain such different realities?

Perhaps her first instinct is to question the family's account.

"Are you certain there hasn't been a misunderstanding?"

The question is not necessarily unkind. She may genuinely be trying to understand.

But as she listens further, she begins recognising something she had previously overlooked.

Her experience of the village had been shaped by the way the villagers treated her.

The family's experience had been shaped by the way they were treated.

Both experiences belonged to the same Garden.

And neither could be understood fully by looking only through one Window.

This does not mean that every account must be accepted without examination.

Awareness still asks us to distinguish between observation, interpretation and assumption.

But it also asks us to recognise the limitations of our own experience.

Sometimes another Pilgrim's account does not immediately fit what we believe we know.

We may be tempted to dismiss it.

Or we may remain curious long enough to discover that the Garden is more complicated than we imagined.

To see through another Window does not require us to abandon our own. It asks us to recognise that our view may be incomplete.

When the Broken Window Is Forgotten

Let us return to the family whose Window was broken.

The stone had caused an immediate disturbance.

Neighbours gathered. Some expressed shock, while others discussed what might have provoked the attack.

For a short time, the incident became the centre of village conversation.

But eventually, the conversations moved elsewhere.

The broken glass was cleared away. The Window was repaired, and the ordinary rhythms of village life resumed.

For many villagers, the incident became something that had happened in the past.

Yet for the family, the experience did not necessarily end when the glass was replaced.

Their daughter might still hesitate when she heard a sudden noise outside.

The parents might feel uneasy when someone approached the House after dark.

They might wonder whether the neighbours who once greeted them still believed the rumours.

The physical damage had been repaired.

But the relationships surrounding the House remained uncertain.

And perhaps this is another difficulty of collective harm.

Those who witness an incident may eventually stop thinking about it, while those who experienced it continue living with its consequences.

The Garden may declare that everything has settled down.

But settled for whom?

A repaired Window does not necessarily mean that the Pilgrim feels safe looking through it again.

Nor does the absence of further attacks establish that the underlying hostility has disappeared.

Sometimes the most visible harm ends while the quieter consequences continue.

This does not mean that healing is impossible.

Relationships can change. Communities can acknowledge mistakes, repair what they can and cultivate different ways of living together.

But such healing requires more than waiting for an incident to be forgotten.

It requires recognising what happened, whom it affected and what may still need attention.

When Normal Is No Longer Enough

Throughout this section, we have followed a troubling movement.

A rumour became familiar. Exclusion became expected. Ordinary routines began carrying judgements that were no longer examined.

Eventually, the Garden continued functioning as though nothing unusual was happening.

But normality alone cannot tell us whether a Garden is healthy.

- A practice may be longstanding and still cause suffering.
- A rule may be familiar and still deserve examination.
- A community may appear harmonious while some of its Pilgrims experience that harmony as exclusion.
- And kindness within one part of the Garden does not guarantee fairness throughout it.

This brings us back to the distinction between the individual House and the collective Garden.

Each Pilgrim carries an Inner House, with its own experiences, fears, loyalties and understanding.

But Pilgrims also shape the environment in which others live.

What one person repeats may become familiar to another. What several people accept may become a community expectation. And what a community continues practising may eventually appear too ordinary to question.

Yet familiarity is not the same as wisdom.

The fact that something has always been done does not establish that it should continue.

Perhaps the question is not simply whether the Garden is functioning.

It is whether the Garden remains capable of recognising the suffering that its ordinary functioning may conceal.

And this is where Awareness becomes especially important.

Not as a demand that every Pilgrim constantly examine everything around them.

Not as an invitation to suspect wrongdoing in every familiar practice.

But as the possibility of noticing when something no longer sits comfortably.

A child asks why another child has been excluded.

A neighbour wonders why a family is no longer invited.

An official begins questioning whether a familiar procedure is fair.

These moments may seem small.

They do not guarantee that the Garden will change.

But they interrupt the assumption that what is familiar must also be right.

When harm becomes normal, Awareness begins by recognising that normality is not the same as innocence.

And perhaps this is where another possibility enters our story.

For even when an entire Garden has grown accustomed to a harmful practice, one Pilgrim may still notice something that others have learned not to see.

Not because that Pilgrim is necessarily wiser, kinder or more courageous.

But because, for a moment, their Window remains open.

Section 6 — The Pilgrim Who Still Sees

There is something remarkable about the human being.
Even when an entire community has grown accustomed to a harmful practice, one Pilgrim may still recognise that something is wrong.

Not necessarily because they are wiser than everyone else, or because they possess greater courage.

Sometimes, they simply notice what others have learned not to notice.

Imagine a village where certain families have been treated differently for generations.

The children grow up witnessing it. Their parents explain it, the elders defend it, and the institutions preserve it.

Eventually, the practice becomes so familiar that few people think to question it.

Then one morning, a young Pilgrim asks:

"Why do we treat those people differently?"

The question is simple.

Perhaps the child has noticed that some children are not invited to play. Perhaps a friend has been refused something that others receive without difficulty.

The child does not yet understand the history behind the arrangement.

They are merely curious.

But within a Garden where a practice has become unquestionable, even an innocent question can disturb the familiar order.

An adult replies:

"That's how things have always been."

The child considers the answer.

"But why?"

And suddenly, something that had remained undisturbed for years must be explained.

The question may not change anything immediately.

The adult may dismiss it. The child may be told not to interfere, and the familiar pattern may continue.

Yet something important has happened.

A practice that had been accepted without examination has become visible again.

And perhaps this is where Awareness begins.

Not necessarily with a declaration that the Garden is wrong, but with the recognition that something deserves a closer look.

When the Garden Stops Questioning

A collective Garden does not need every Pilgrim to agree with its practices for those practices to continue.

- Some may genuinely believe that the arrangement is justified.
- Others may suspect that something is wrong but feel unable to challenge it.

Some fear the consequences of questioning. Others have become so accustomed to the situation that they rarely give it any thought.

And many are simply occupied with living their lives.

They work, raise children, care for elderly relatives, attend celebrations and worry about tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the familiar pattern continues.

The shops open. The schools welcome their pupils. Families gather, neighbours exchange greetings, and the village appears to function normally.

Yet somewhere within this ordinary life, certain Pilgrims continue experiencing exclusion.

This is one of the difficulties of collective harm.

It does not always require cruelty from everyone involved.

Sometimes, it continues through ordinary participation.

The presence of kindness in one part of the Garden does not necessarily prevent injustice in another.

A Pilgrim may be loving within their Family Garden while participating in practices that cause suffering beyond it.

This does not mean that their kindness is false.

It means that human beings can live with contradictions they have not yet recognised.

And perhaps we should be cautious about imagining that we ourselves are free from such contradictions.

We too inhabit Gardens shaped by customs, assumptions and inherited expectations.

Some we have examined carefully.

Others we may never have thought to question.

It is easy to recognise the limitations of another community when looking from a distance.

It is often more difficult to recognise the familiar assumptions through which we see our own.

Awareness does not begin by placing the Pilgrim above the Garden. It begins by recognising that the Pilgrim is part of it.

The Window That Remains Open

Within our Living Landscape, the Inner House has Windows.

Through them, the Pilgrim encounters the world, interprets experiences and discovers perspectives beyond their own.

But Windows can become obscured.

Fear may narrow the view. Belonging may influence what we are willing to question. Familiar explanations may make an established practice appear beyond examination.

And when the collective Voice becomes dominant, alternative perspectives may be difficult to hear.

Yet a Window may remain open.

- Perhaps a Pilgrim witnesses another person's suffering.
- Perhaps they hear an account that contradicts what they have always believed.
- Perhaps a child asks a question that cannot easily be dismissed.
- Or perhaps they notice a contradiction within their own behaviour.

They have always considered themselves fair, yet suddenly recognise that they have treated someone differently without knowing why.

Something no longer sits comfortably.

The Pilgrim may not immediately understand what has happened.

They may feel uncertain, embarrassed or even defensive.

After all, recognising a contradiction within ourselves is not always pleasant.

It can disturb the story we have been telling about who we are.

But this discomfort need not become another Hijack.

The Pilgrim does not have to rush towards self-condemnation or immediately defend everything they have done.

They may simply arrive in Presence.

Allow the discomfort to be noticed.

And through Awareness, begin examining what has become visible.

- What did I assume?
- Why did I respond that way?
- What might I have overlooked?

These questions are not punishments.

They are openings.

And sometimes, an opening is enough to begin changing how a Pilgrim walks through the Garden.

The Window does not have to reveal the entire truth at once. It only needs to remain open to the possibility that there is more to see.

The Pressure to Close the Window

The Pilgrim who begins questioning a familiar practice may encounter resistance.

Not always from people who intend to cause harm.

Sometimes the resistance comes from those who genuinely believe they are protecting their family, their community or the way of life they have always known.

- *"That's how things have always been."*

- *"You don't understand what happened."*
- *"Why are you creating unnecessary trouble?"*
- *"Can't you just leave things alone?"*

These responses may arise from fear, loyalty, habit or a sincere wish to preserve harmony.

And the collective Voice does not always need to shout.

Sometimes it speaks through disappointment.

A parent looks hurt when their child questions a family judgement. A friend becomes distant when someone refuses to join in criticism of another person. A respected elder reminds a younger Pilgrim of everything the community has done for them.

"We are only trying to protect you."

The words may be spoken with genuine affection.

Yet the message beneath them may still be difficult to resist.

If you wish to remain close to us, do not question what we believe.

This creates a particular struggle within the Inner House.

The Pilgrim may value the relationship deeply. They may respect the person speaking and recognise the kindness they have received.

But something they have witnessed does not fit comfortably with the explanation being offered.

- Should they trust their own observation?
- Should they accept the judgement of those with greater experience?
- Should they remain silent to preserve the relationship?

There may be no simple answer.

Sometimes the Pilgrim lacks important information. Their first impression may be mistaken, and listening to others may reveal circumstances they had not considered.

At other times, those around them may be repeating assumptions that have never been properly examined.

Awareness therefore does not demand immediate defiance.

It invites curiosity.

- What have I seen?
- What do others know that I may not know?
- And what remains uncertain?

The Pilgrim may discover that their concern was misplaced.

Or they may recognise that the familiar explanation does not adequately account for what is happening.

Either way, the Window has remained open long enough for understanding to deepen.

But there are circumstances in which questioning carries serious consequences.

A Pilgrim may risk exclusion, punishment, loss of employment or even physical danger.

We must not romanticise resistance as though courage alone can overcome every difficulty.

Sometimes the safest available choice is to remain silent while continuing to examine the situation privately.

Sometimes a Pilgrim must wait until circumstances change.

And sometimes speaking becomes possible only when others are willing to stand beside them.

Keeping the Window open does not always mean speaking through it. Sometimes it means refusing, within ourselves, to mistake silence for agreement.

Seeing Without Superiority

There is another danger we must consider.

The Pilgrim who begins recognising a harmful practice may feel that they have awakened to something others cannot see.

Perhaps they have questioned a familiar story, recognised an injustice or discovered that a long-established belief rests upon uncertain foundations.

This can be an important moment.

But it can also introduce another form of Hijack.

The Pilgrim may begin thinking:

- *"How can everyone else be so blind?"*
- *"Why am I the only one who understands?"*
- *"These people are ignorant."*

And gradually, the discovery that opened one Window may begin closing another.

The Pilgrim who once questioned the labels placed upon others may now begin placing labels upon those who disagree.

Those who have not reached the same understanding become the ignorant, the foolish or the blind.

The pattern is familiar.

Pilgrim → Category → Label → Assumption → Treatment

Only the direction has changed.

This is why Awareness must remain accompanied by humility.

Recognising something that others have overlooked does not establish that we understand everything about them.

We may not know what they have experienced, what information they possess, what pressures they face or why they have come to believe what they believe.

- Some may be protecting an advantage they do not wish to surrender.
- Others may genuinely believe that the practice is justified.
- Some may already recognise the harm but feel unable to speak.
- And others may be questioning it quietly, just as we are.

The Garden contains many Houses.

We cannot see everything taking place within them.

This does not mean that every belief deserves equal acceptance or that harmful behaviour should be excused.

A Pilgrim may need to challenge an unjust practice firmly, protect someone who is being harmed or refuse to participate in an action they consider wrong.

But firmness need not require contempt.

- We can question a belief without assuming that the person holding it is incapable of understanding.
- We can recognise harmful behaviour without reducing the entire Pilgrim to that behaviour.
- And we can remain open to the possibility that our own understanding may also be incomplete.

Perhaps this is one of the most important distinctions in our Living Landscape.

Awareness widens the Window. Superiority merely places the Pilgrim at a different Window and declares that theirs is the only view worth seeing.

The Pilgrim Who Once Believed

Imagine that the young Pilgrim who questioned the village's treatment of certain families grows older.
Years later, they meet someone who still accepts the old judgement.
The older Pilgrim feels frustrated.

> *"How can you continue believing that?"*

But then a memory arises.

There was a time when they too accepted the same explanation.

They had heard it from people they loved. They had repeated it without thinking, and for many years it had seemed perfectly ordinary.

Their understanding changed only when an experience, a conversation or a question disturbed what had become familiar.

- Perhaps the person standing before them has not yet encountered such a moment.
- Perhaps they have encountered it but responded differently.

The older Pilgrim cannot know.

And remembering their own journey may soften something within the Inner House.

Not their recognition of harm.
Not their willingness to challenge it.
But the temptation to imagine that they have always stood outside the very patterns they now question.
This is where compassion and discernment can walk together.
The Pilgrim can recognise that a practice is harmful while remaining curious about how others came to accept it.

- They can speak clearly without humiliating.

- They can disagree without treating disagreement as proof of another person's worth.
- And they can recognise that seeing differently is not a final achievement.

It is an invitation to continue looking.

For the moment we become certain that our Window can no longer narrow, we may stop noticing when it does.

When Seeing Becomes Action

Recognising harm is an important beginning.

But seeing something does not automatically tell the Pilgrim what to do.

Imagine the neighbour who has begun questioning the village's treatment of the excluded family.

She has heard the rumours. She has witnessed the growing distance between the family and the wider community. And she remembers a time when the family was welcomed without hesitation.

Something no longer sits comfortably within her Inner House.

What should she do?

She could confront the villagers publicly, challenge the accusations or demand that the family be welcomed again.

Perhaps such action would help.

But perhaps it would also deepen the hostility, particularly if the community is not ready to listen.

She might begin differently.

One morning, she sees the mother walking towards the market.

Instead of looking away, she greets her.

They exchange a few words.

The following week, she invites the daughter to join her own children in the Garden.

These actions may appear small.

- They do not resolve the rumours.
- They do not establish the truth of every disagreement,
- and they do not repair all the relationships that have been damaged.

But they interrupt the familiar pattern.

Where others have withdrawn, one Pilgrim has chosen to remain open.

And perhaps this is something worth recognising.

The Pilgrim does not always need to change the entire Garden to stop contributing to what is harmful within it.

- Sometimes, the first action is simply to refuse to repeat an accusation that has not been examined.
- Sometimes it is to ask a question.
- Sometimes it is to listen to someone whose experience has been overlooked.
- And sometimes, when harm is serious or continuing, a stronger response becomes necessary.

The Pilgrim may need to challenge a decision, report wrongdoing, protect someone at risk or seek the support of others.

Awareness does not prescribe the same action in every circumstance.

It helps the Pilgrim recognise what is happening, what is within their capacity and what the situation may require.

When the Inner House Must Remain Steady

There is another difficulty.

A Pilgrim who witnesses injustice may feel anger, sadness or urgency.

These responses are understandable.

Seeing another person mistreated can be deeply disturbing, particularly when the harm is deliberate or when those responsible refuse to acknowledge it.

But even a justified concern can become entangled with the Hijacked Voice.

The Pilgrim may begin feeling that everything must change immediately.

They may become consumed by the need to convince others, punish those responsible or prove that their own understanding is correct.

The original wish to protect someone may gradually become a struggle to defeat everyone who disagrees.

And once again, the Window begins to narrow.

This does not mean that anger is always harmful or that the Pilgrim must remain calm in every situation.

Anger can alert us to a boundary that has been crossed. Urgency can be appropriate when someone faces immediate danger.

The distinction lies in whether these responses help us recognise what is needed or begin controlling the entire Inner House.

Here, our familiar practice becomes valuable.

The Pilgrim may arrive in Presence.

Recognise the feeling without immediately becoming its servant.

Through Awareness, they may examine the situation more carefully.

- What is happening?
- Who is being harmed?
- What action is needed?
- What can I realistically do?

And perhaps, within Stillness, the Pilgrim discovers a response that is neither passive nor driven by the need to overpower others.

- A response that is firm without becoming cruel.

- Compassionate without denying responsibility.
- And courageous without demanding that every other Pilgrim immediately agree.

Stillness does not remove the need to act. It may allow action to arise without surrendering the Inner House to the very pressure we are trying to understand.

The Garden Is Larger Than One Gardener

We must also recognise the limits of individual action.

- The neighbour may continue greeting the excluded family, yet others may still refuse.
- The teacher may question an unfair instruction, yet the institution may retain its procedures.
- A Pilgrim may speak against a harmful practice and discover that the wider community is unwilling to change.

This does not necessarily mean that the Pilgrim has failed.

The Garden has been shaped by many lives, histories, decisions and institutions. Its patterns may have developed over generations.

One Pilgrim cannot always undo them through a single act of Awareness.

Nor should the responsibility for healing an entire community be placed upon the shoulders of the person who first recognises the harm.

Sometimes change requires cooperation.

- One neighbour begins questioning a rumour.
- Another refuses to repeat it.
- A teacher listens more carefully.
- A community organiser reconsiders whom they have excluded.

Gradually, a different pattern may emerge.

Not because everyone has suddenly reached the same understanding, but because enough Pilgrims have begun behaving differently.

The Garden may start offering possibilities that were previously absent.

- A conversation becomes possible.
- A relationship is restored.
- A harmful rule is reconsidered.

And sometimes, even when the wider Garden does not change, a Pilgrim's action may still make a meaningful difference to the person who receives it.

The excluded child may discover that one friendship remains.

The family may recognise that not every neighbour believes the accusations.

A person who has been repeatedly dismissed may finally encounter someone willing to listen.

These moments do not erase collective harm.

But neither are they insignificant.

A Garden is not healed by one Gardener alone. Yet every Gardener influences what is cultivated within it.

The Conversation That Should Have Happened

Several weeks had passed since the Window was broken.

The glass had been replaced, but the family remained largely absent from village life.

One afternoon, the woman who had questioned the rumours decided to visit them.

She had known the family for years. She remembered the children playing together and the ordinary conversations they once shared at the market.

Yet she had allowed the growing distance to continue.

Perhaps she had been afraid of becoming involved. Perhaps she had assumed that someone else knew more than she did.

Now, standing outside their Gate, she realised something uncomfortable.

She had heard the story many times.

But she had never asked the family about it.

She knocked.

The mother opened the Door.

For a moment, neither spoke.

Then the woman said:

"I've come because I think we owe you an apology. But first, I would like to understand what happened."

The mother invited her inside.

They sat together in the Living Room.

At first, the conversation was hesitant. The family had grown accustomed to being discussed, judged and avoided. They were not certain what this visitor wanted.

But gradually, they began to speak.

What Actually Happened

It had begun with a disagreement at the village market.

The father had purchased some goods from a trader. When he returned home, he discovered that he had been charged for items he had not received.

The following morning, he returned to question the bill.

The trader insisted that the amount was correct.

The father disagreed.

Their conversation became heated.

Other customers heard raised voices, but few understood what the argument was about.

Eventually, the trader returned the disputed amount.

The matter might have ended there.

But the trader felt humiliated.

Later, when someone asked what had happened, he replied:

"That family is always looking for trouble."

Another person repeated the remark.

Soon, the story was no longer about a disputed bill.

It became a story about the character of an entire family.

The father was described as dishonest, then aggressive, then someone who could not be trusted.

The accusations travelled through the village, growing further removed from the original encounter.

And the family knew very little about what was being said.

"We couldn't understand why people had changed towards us," the mother explained.

"At first, we thought perhaps we had offended someone. Then our daughter came home crying because Sofia wouldn't play with her."

The visitor looked towards the repaired Window.

"And the stone?"

The father shook his head.

"We still don't know who threw it."

For a while, nobody spoke.

The woman had come expecting to hear an explanation.

Instead, she had discovered how an ordinary disagreement had been transformed into a judgement about people who had never been given an opportunity to respond.

When the Story Finally Met the Truth

The woman returned to the village and spoke to several neighbours.

She explained what the family had told her.

Some were surprised.

Others were doubtful.

One neighbour insisted that there must have been more to the incident.

So they approached the trader.

At first, he was defensive.

But when asked directly whether the disagreement had concerned an incorrect bill, he acknowledged that it had.

He also confirmed that he had returned the disputed money.

"Then why did you tell everyone the family couldn't be trusted?" someone asked.

The trader looked uncomfortable.

"I was angry," he replied.

He had not expected his words to travel so far.

Nor had he imagined that a dispute over a few items would eventually contribute to a family being excluded from village life.

But his words had travelled.

And others had added their own assumptions.

Some villagers now recognised that they had repeated accusations without knowing what had happened.

A few apologised to the family.

Others remained reluctant to admit that they had been mistaken.

The trader eventually visited the family himself.

The conversation was not easy.

An apology could not erase the weeks of humiliation, the friendships that had been damaged or the fear caused by the broken Window.

And the person who threw the stone was still unknown.

But for the first time, the original disagreement was being discussed by the people who had actually experienced it.

The story was no longer travelling only through other Houses.

It had finally been brought back to its source.

The Window Opens Again

Some weeks later, the village held another gathering.

This time, the family received an invitation.

They hesitated.

Their daughter wanted to see Sofia, but the parents were uncertain whether they were ready to return.

Eventually, they decided to go.

When they arrived, some neighbours greeted them warmly. Others appeared embarrassed, unsure what to say.

There were apologies, awkward conversations and moments of silence.

Nothing was quite as it had been before.

And perhaps it never would be.

But something had changed.

The family was no longer simply that family.

They were once again neighbours with names, experiences and a story of their own.

Across the square, Sofia saw her old friend.

For a moment, the two girls stood looking at one another.

Then Sofia walked towards her.

"Do you want to play?"

The girl smiled.

And together, they ran towards the Garden.

The adults watched.

Some smiled. Others looked away, perhaps remembering how easily they had allowed the friendship to disappear.

The broken Window had been repaired weeks earlier.

But perhaps another Window was only now beginning to open.

The village could not undo what had happened.

It could, however, decide what to carry forward.

And perhaps the lesson was simpler than anyone had imagined.

- Before repeating a story, someone could have asked.
- Before judging a family, someone could have listened.
- Before closing so many Gates, someone could have knocked upon their Door.

The stone had broken the Window.

But a conversation had begun to repair the Garden.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

The Garden We Help to Cultivate

A stone breaks a Window.

We see the damage, hear the shattered glass and recognise that someone has caused harm.

But what about everything that happened before the stone was thrown?

The conversations that were repeated without examination. The judgements passed from one House to another. The friendships that quietly disappeared. The invitations that stopped arriving.

At what moment did the Garden begin to change?

Perhaps there was no single moment.

Perhaps the change unfolded through many small decisions, some deliberate, others made through habit, fear or the wish to belong.

And perhaps this is what makes collective harm so difficult to recognise.

We tend to notice the stone.

We do not always notice the atmosphere in which throwing it gradually became acceptable.

Throughout this chapter, we have seen how a Pilgrim may inherit a judgement without having experienced the disagreement behind it. How a community may mistake repetition for truth. How authority may reinforce assumptions, and how familiar practices may continue causing harm long after their origins have been forgotten.

But we have also seen something else.

The Garden is not separate from the Pilgrims who inhabit it.

We carry its stories into our Inner Houses, where they influence our understanding and behaviour. And through our words, choices and silences, we carry something back into the Garden.

This does not make every Pilgrim equally responsible for what happens.

Nor does it mean that we can control the Garden simply by changing ourselves.

But it invites us to consider our participation more carefully.

When we hear something troubling about another Pilgrim, do we know it to be true, or have we merely heard it often?

When someone we love has fallen out with another person, must their disagreement become ours?

When everyone around us accepts a familiar practice, are we still able to recognise the suffering it may cause?

And when we discover something harmful, can we respond without allowing our own Window to narrow through contempt or superiority?

These are not questions we must answer perfectly.

They are questions that help us remain curious.

For Awareness is not a final position from which we judge the Garden.

It is an ongoing willingness to see more clearly, including those moments when our own understanding may be incomplete.

Perhaps we cannot always open a Gate that others have closed.

Perhaps we cannot repair every broken Window.

But we may choose not to repeat an unexamined accusation. We may listen where others have dismissed. We may recognise a Pilgrim where the Garden has offered only a label.

And sometimes, that is where another possibility begins.

We inherit a Garden shaped by those who came before us. But through the way we live, we also help shape the Garden that others will inherit.

The question is not whether we have always cultivated wisely.

It is whether, having become aware of what is growing, we are willing to consider what we cultivate next.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

A Conversation Beside the Broken Window

Pilgrim: Sahachari, I understand why the person who threw the stone is responsible. But what about everyone else? The people who repeated the rumours, those who remained silent, and those who simply carried on with their lives?

Sahachari: They did not all do the same thing, nor did they act for the same reasons. Some may have encouraged the hostility. Others may have believed the story, feared the consequences of questioning it or remained unaware of the harm unfolding around them.

Understanding their different circumstances matters. But so does recognising how their actions may have contributed to what happened.

Pilgrim: Then are we all responsible for the harm within our Garden?

Sahachari: Not equally, and not for everything. The Garden is larger than any one Pilgrim. We inherit customs, institutions and disagreements that began long before we arrived.

But we may still ask what we are contributing through the choices available to us.

Pilgrim: Sometimes we do not even recognise that something is harmful. We grow up believing that certain things are simply normal.

Sahachari: Yes. And that is why Awareness is so important. Not because it makes us incapable of error, but because it allows us to question what has become familiar.

Pilgrim: But what if I begin seeing something that others cannot see? What if they refuse to listen?

Sahachari: Then remain curious about what you have seen, and about what you may not yet understand. You can be firm in recognising harm without assuming that everyone who disagrees with you is foolish or cruel.

Pilgrim: And if I cannot change their minds?

Sahachari: Perhaps changing their minds is not the only possibility. You may still choose how you treat another Pilgrim. You may refuse to repeat a harmful story. You may keep a Gate open where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Sometimes the Garden changes through great decisions. Sometimes through small encounters.

Pilgrim: So I do not have to heal the whole Garden?

Sahachari: No. Nor should you carry the burden of believing that every injustice is yours to resolve.

But you can remain attentive to the part of the Garden you touch.

Pilgrim: And what if I discover that I too have contributed to something harmful?

Sahachari: Then you have discovered something worth understanding. You may acknowledge what happened, take responsibility where it belongs and consider what can be repaired.

There is no need to turn the discovery into a permanent judgement of yourself.

Pilgrim: I keep thinking about the child in Goa. He was told not to greet certain people, yet years later the adults were speaking again.

Sahachari: Perhaps that memory reveals how easily we ask others to carry boundaries they did not create.

And perhaps it also reminds us that a Gate which is closed today need not always remain closed.

Pilgrim: Then what should I carry from this chapter?

Sahachari: Perhaps only this:

- Before repeating a story, remain curious about its truth.

- Before accepting a label, look for the Pilgrim behind it.
- Before closing a Gate, consider who else may inherit that boundary.

And when you recognise harm, allow Awareness to guide what you do next.

Pilgrim: So the Garden begins changing when we begin seeing differently?

Sahachari: Sometimes. But seeing is only a beginning. What we cultivate through our behaviour matters too.

Pilgrim: And the stone?

Sahachari: The stone reminds us that harm has consequences. We must not overlook the person who threw it, or the family whose Window was broken.

But we should also remember what happened before it was thrown.

Pilgrim: Because the story had already entered the Garden.

Sahachari: Yes.

And perhaps, the next time such a story begins travelling from House to House, someone will ask a question before a Window is broken.

Chapter 15 — Why Do We Fight?



Section 1 — When the Garden Becomes a Battlefield

The Village on the Border

There was once a village divided by a river.

On one bank stood the Houses of one country.

On the opposite bank stood the Houses of another.

A small bridge connected the two.

For generations, the villagers had crossed that bridge to trade, visit relatives, attend celebrations and share the ordinary experiences of life.

A farmer from one side sold vegetables in the market on the other. Children crossed the bridge to visit their cousins. Families gathered for weddings, and sometimes a Pilgrim would find a lifelong companion on the opposite bank.

The river belonged to the Landscape.

The border belonged to the countries.

And for most of the villagers, the distinction mattered very little in their everyday relationships.

They knew one another by name.

They knew which families had welcomed a new child, which elders were unwell and whose harvest had been particularly good.

Their lives were not identical. They spoke with different accents, observed different customs and carried different histories.

But the bridge allowed their Gardens to meet.

Then, gradually, the atmosphere began to change.

When the Border Becomes a Division

At first, the villagers heard reports of disagreements between the two governments.

There were disputes over territory, accusations of interference and concerns about security.

Most Pilgrims did not understand all the arguments.

They had their own responsibilities.

- The farmer still needed to harvest his crops.
- The shopkeeper had customers to serve.
- Parents were preparing their children for school.

But the news became increasingly troubling.

Political leaders spoke of threats. Military vehicles appeared on distant roads. Soldiers began inspecting those who crossed the bridge.

The villagers were told that these measures were necessary for their protection.

Some agreed.

Others were uncertain.

Then one morning, the bridge was closed.

The farmer could no longer reach his customers across the river.

Children could not visit their cousins.

Families who had lived within walking distance of one another suddenly found themselves separated by a border that had become difficult to cross.

The river had not changed.

The bridge was still standing.

But the relationship between the two Gardens had changed.

And soon, the villagers began hearing a new word.

Enemy.

People they had known for years were now citizens of an enemy country.

The farmer who once sold vegetables across the river wondered whether his customers still considered him a friend.

A mother looked towards the opposite bank, where her sister lived, and wondered when she would see her again.

The villagers had not personally declared war upon one another.

Yet the possibility of war was beginning to reshape their lives.

The Morning Everything Changed

Before dawn, the first explosions were heard.

Windows trembled.

Children woke frightened.

Some families hurried into shelters, while others gathered what they could carry and prepared to leave.

The village that had once been connected by a bridge was now divided by fear.

On one side, a father tried to reassure his daughter.

> *"We'll be all right."*

Across the river, another father spoke almost the same words to his son.

Neither knew whether the promise could be kept.

The soldiers arriving in the village had their own stories.

- Some had volunteered because they believed their country was threatened.
- Others had been called into service.
- Some were young Pilgrims who had never travelled beyond their own region.

They too had families, hopes and fears.

But now they wore different uniforms.

And those uniforms identified them as belonging to opposing sides.

The conflict had moved beyond speeches, accusations and disputed boundaries.

- People were being injured.
- Houses were being damaged.
- Families were leaving behind the places where they had expected to grow old.

War had entered the Garden.

Who Decided That We Should Fight?

Consider the two fathers who had reassured their children that morning.

- Neither had attended the negotiations between the governments.
- Neither had determined the military strategy.
- Neither had decided when the first attack would take place.

Yet both now faced the consequences.

One might lose his livelihood.

The other might lose his House.

Both might be forced to leave the village.

And their children, who had once played together, might grow up remembering the opposite bank as a place of danger.

This raises a difficult question.

How does a conflict between governments become suffering within the Houses of ordinary Pilgrims?

A nation is not one human being.

It contains millions of Pilgrims, each with an Inner House, relationships, responsibilities and a life that extends far beyond the decisions of its leaders.

- Some support the war.
- Others oppose it.
- Some believe it is necessary for their protection.
- Others may be uncertain, frightened or unable to express what they think.
- And some may have little knowledge of the decisions being made in their name.

We must therefore be careful when speaking about countries as though every person within them shares one intention.

When we say that one country is fighting another, we describe a conflict between organised political and military powers.

But the suffering reaches individual human beings.

The consequences are not distributed equally, nor are the responsibilities.

Those who initiate aggression, those who command military operations, those who deliberately target civilians and those who act to defend people from attack do not necessarily carry the same moral or legal responsibility.

Understanding the humanity of Pilgrims on both sides does not require us to ignore these distinctions.

It asks us to recognise that the people who suffer through war are not simply extensions of the governments under which they live.

A child does not become an enemy merely because of the country in which they were born.

A mother does not cease to love her children because she lives across a border.

And a Pilgrim's entire life cannot be understood through the uniform they wear or the nationality recorded in their passport.

When the Garden Enters the House

Within our Living Landscape, we have explored how the Garden influences the Inner House.

War makes this movement painfully visible.

A decision made far away may enter a House in the form of a frightened child, an empty chair at the dining table or a letter announcing that someone will not be coming home.

The Garden may be transformed into a battlefield.

But it is within individual Houses that much of the suffering is carried.

- Fear may settle into everyday routines.
- Grief may remain long after the fighting has moved elsewhere.
- Memories may influence how children come to understand the world beyond their own borders.

And sometimes, the conflict continues within families for generations after the weapons have fallen silent.

Yet even in war, the Inner House does not become identical for every Pilgrim.

Some may respond with hatred.

Others may feel fear without hatred.

Some may seek revenge, while others struggle simply to survive.

And there may be Pilgrims who continue recognising the humanity of those living on the opposite side, even when their countries are fighting.

The Garden exerts enormous pressure.

But it does not determine every response.

Let us return to the bridge.

It is now guarded by soldiers.

The market is silent, and the families who once crossed freely can only look towards the opposite bank.

The two fathers are still trying to protect their children.

The river continues flowing beneath the bridge, indifferent to the border drawn across it.

And perhaps the most troubling question is not simply why the bridge was closed.

It is how two communities that once shared so much came to a point where violence seemed necessary, justified or unavoidable to those directing the conflict.

To understand this, we must look beyond the battlefield.

We must examine the reasons countries and communities give for fighting, the interests that may lie beneath those reasons, and the circumstances in which disagreement becomes war.

For a war may begin with decisions made by a few, but its consequences can enter the lives of generations.

Section 2 — Why Nations and Communities Fight

The Reasons We Give for War

Across the river, the two countries had begun fighting.

Each government explained its actions to its people.

One spoke of protecting its borders.

The other spoke of defending its security and historical rights.

Both described their decisions as necessary.

And in the Houses on either side of the river, ordinary Pilgrims listened.

- Some believed what they heard.
- Others questioned it.
- Many struggled to understand how disagreements that had existed for years had suddenly become reasons for sending soldiers into battle.

Perhaps this is where we should begin.

Wars rarely arise from one cause alone.

Territory, resources, political power, national identity, religion, historical grievances and fears about security may all influence conflict.

- Sometimes these concerns are genuine.

- Sometimes leaders exaggerate them, selectively present them or use them to pursue other objectives.
- And sometimes several explanations are true at once.

A government may genuinely fear an attack while also seeking greater influence over a neighbouring country.

A community may have experienced real injustice while some of its leaders pursue methods that inflict injustice upon others.

We therefore need to distinguish three questions:

- What caused the conflict?
- What reasons are given to justify the fighting?
- Who is responsible for the decisions and actions that follow?

These questions are connected, but they are not interchangeable.

Understanding why a war began does not automatically establish that it was justified.

And recognising a genuine grievance does not mean that every action taken in response to it becomes acceptable.

Land, Resources and Power

Let us imagine that the river running through our village provides water for farms in both countries.

For generations, the communities have depended upon it.

Then one country begins constructing a large dam upstream.

Its government argues that the dam is necessary to provide electricity, irrigation and economic development for its people.

The neighbouring country fears that the project will reduce the water reaching its farms.

Negotiations begin.

Each side believes something important is at stake.

One seeks development.

The other fears losing a resource upon which its people depend.

There are possibilities for cooperation, but there are also competing interests.

If negotiations fail, tensions may increase.

Yet the existence of a serious dispute does not make war inevitable.

Between disagreement and armed conflict lie many decisions: whether to negotiate, compromise, seek mediation, threaten, mobilise forces or attack.

Those decisions matter.

And the Pilgrims who make them carry responsibilities that cannot be explained away by pointing only to the original disagreement.

Territory may carry similar significance.

A piece of land can represent farmland, access to water, strategic advantage, economic wealth or a place of historical and cultural importance.

For those who live there, it may also be home.

And this introduces another difficulty.

What one government regards as territory, another Pilgrim may experience as the Garden in which their entire life has unfolded.

A boundary drawn on a map can appear simple.

But within that boundary are Houses, schools, burial grounds, places of worship, memories and generations of belonging.

When leaders speak of gaining or defending territory, the people who inhabit it must not disappear from our Window.

History, Identity and the Stories We Inherit

Not all conflicts begin with an immediate dispute over land or resources.

Some emerge from histories that remain deeply influential.

A community may remember conquest, persecution, displacement or the loss of independence.

Another may remember attacks, broken agreements or periods of insecurity.

These memories can shape how present events are understood.

A new disagreement may therefore be experienced not merely as something happening today, but as another chapter in a much older story.

We encountered something similar in the previous chapter.

A child may inherit a disagreement that began before they were born.

The child learns whom to trust, whom to avoid and which stories belong to the family.

At the level of nations and communities, this inheritance can become much more powerful.

History is taught in schools, remembered through monuments, commemorated through ceremonies and carried through family conversations.

These practices can preserve knowledge, honour suffering and help communities understand their past.

But history can also be presented selectively.

A community may remember the harm it suffered while paying less attention to harm committed in its name.

Another may grow up hearing only about its own sacrifices.

And when each community sees itself entirely through the Window of its own suffering, understanding the experience of others becomes more difficult.

This does not mean that all historical accounts are equally accurate or that all grievances are equally justified.

Evidence matters.

Responsibility matters.

But so does the ability to distinguish between remembering the past and requiring future generations to continue its conflicts.

Memory can help a Garden understand what happened. It can also become a reason for keeping its Gates permanently closed.

The question is not whether a people should forget its history.

It is whether history must always determine whom they regard as an enemy.

When Fear Becomes a Reason to Fight

There is another cause of war that deserves particular attention.

Fear.

Imagine that one country begins increasing the number of soldiers near the border.

Its leaders say the deployment is defensive.

The neighbouring country sees the soldiers and fears an attack.

It responds by moving its own forces closer to the river.

Now the first country becomes more alarmed.

Each side points to the other's military preparations as evidence that its own precautions were necessary.

A movement intended as protection may be interpreted as a threat.

And the response to that perceived threat may create further fear.

We can recognise something familiar here from our Living Landscape.

A Pilgrim may close a Gate because they feel unsafe.

Another Pilgrim, seeing the closed Gate, may interpret it as rejection or hostility.

But between nations, such interpretations can have far greater consequences.

There is an important distinction, however.

Sometimes the danger is real.

A country may face an actual invasion or an armed attack, and defending its population may be necessary.

At other times, leaders may misunderstand another country's intentions, exaggerate a threat or deliberately use fear to justify aggression.

We should not assume that every conflict arises because two sides have simply misunderstood each other.

- Some wars involve deliberate conquest, domination or persecution.
- Others involve resistance to those actions.

The presence of fear does not erase the distinction.

Yet fear can still influence how people interpret events, how readily they accept official explanations and how willing they become to support violence.

And this brings us towards Collective Hijack.

Not because fear itself is a Hijack.

Fear can alert us to genuine danger.

But when fear becomes continuous, pressurising and resistant to questioning, it may begin narrowing the collective Window.

When Religion and Identity Enter the Conflict

Communities may also fight in the name of religion, ethnicity, nationality or ideology.

But here we must be especially careful.

Religion does not automatically produce war.

Nor does difference in language, ancestry or belief.

Across the world, Pilgrims with different traditions have lived beside one another, traded, formed friendships and shared communities.

The existence of difference does not explain why violence begins.

What matters is how that difference becomes connected to power, fear, exclusion, historical grievances or competing political objectives.

- A leader may describe a political struggle as a religious duty.
- An armed movement may claim to represent an entire ethnic community.
- A government may portray criticism of its policies as an attack upon the nation itself.

In such circumstances, identity can become a powerful means of mobilising people.

The Pilgrim is no longer invited merely to support a particular decision.

They may be told that their loyalty, faith or belonging depends upon doing so.

And those who question the fighting may be portrayed as betraying their own people.

This is where the Garden begins exerting pressure upon the Inner House.

A Pilgrim may privately doubt the war while publicly supporting it out of fear.

Another may sincerely believe the cause is just.

Someone else may oppose the conflict but remain silent because speaking could endanger their family.

Their circumstances are different.

And we should resist the temptation to place them all under one label.

When the Reason Becomes Lost

Let us return once more to the two countries divided by the river.

Suppose the war continues for several years.

The original disagreements remain unresolved.

But now there are new grievances.

- Families have lost loved ones.
- Homes have been destroyed.
- Communities have been displaced.

Each new attack becomes another reason for anger, fear or retaliation.

The conflict that began over a particular dispute has accumulated suffering of its own.

Even if the original issue could now be resolved, ending the fighting may have become more difficult.

For some, the war is no longer only about territory or security.

- It is about those who have died.
- It is about humiliation, loss, justice and the fear that sacrifices will have been made for nothing.

And perhaps this is one of the most tragic movements within prolonged conflict.

The reasons for beginning a war and the reasons for continuing it may no longer be the same.

A conflict can acquire a history that sustains further conflict.

But this does not mean that all parties become equally responsible simply because time has passed.

Decisions continue to matter.

Choices about attacks, negotiations, civilian protection and opportunities for peace continue to carry consequences.

War may be shaped by history, but it is also shaped by decisions made in the present.

And so we arrive at a question that takes us beyond the causes of fighting.

What happens to the collective Window when a nation begins seeing another people primarily as a threat?

What happens when questioning the war becomes dangerous, when fear becomes part of everyday life and when the language of protection begins demanding unquestioning loyalty?

To explore this, we must enter a more difficult part of the Garden.

The moment when a conflict is no longer only being fought on the battlefield, but is also shaping how an entire community thinks, feels and sees.

Section 3 — When the Collective Hijack Takes Hold

When Fear Enters Every House

The war had continued for several months.

In the village beside the river, daily life had changed.

- The market opened irregularly.
- Some Houses stood empty.
- Families listened for news of relatives who had left to fight or had fled to safer places.

Even those who were far from the battlefield lived with uncertainty.

People wondered whether the fighting would reach them, whether food would remain available and whether their children would have a future in the village.

Fear had become part of the atmosphere.

And fear, as we have explored throughout our journey, is not necessarily a Hijack.

It can be a natural response to danger.

A Pilgrim who hears explosions nearby has good reason to seek shelter. A community facing an armed attack may need to organise its defence.

But something else can happen when fear becomes continuous.

The Window through which we see the world may begin to narrow.

We become more attentive to threats and less receptive to information that challenges what we believe.

At the collective level, this narrowing can spread through conversations, institutions, public messages and the stories repeated from one House to another.

And when fear becomes accompanied by pressure, urgency and the demand for unquestioning loyalty, we may begin recognising the movement of Collective Hijack.

When the Enemy Loses a Face

Before the war, the villagers had known people across the river.

They remembered their names, their families and their ordinary kindnesses.

Now they heard them described differently.

- They cannot be trusted.
- They have always hated us.
- They are all responsible.

Such statements were easier to repeat than the complicated histories of individual Pilgrims.

The people across the river were gradually becoming a single identity.

The enemy.

- But who was this enemy?
- Was it the government that had made particular decisions?
- The military forces carrying out operations?
- The individuals responsible for attacks?
- Or every mother, farmer, teacher and child living on the opposite bank?

These distinctions matter enormously.

When an entire population is treated as though it shares one intention, individual Pilgrims begin disappearing behind a collective label.

The Window no longer reveals a person.

It reveals a category.

And once that happens, actions that would once have disturbed us may become easier to excuse.

A family loses its home, and someone remarks that it is unfortunate but necessary.

Children are frightened, and another person says that their people brought it upon themselves.

Suffering is no longer encountered first as suffering.

It is interpreted through the identity of those experiencing it.

This does not mean that a community must ignore genuine threats or abandon its right to protection.

It means that recognising an aggressor must not require us to deny the humanity of everyone associated with that aggressor's country or community.

A government may be an adversary. An army may be an opposing force. But an entire people cannot be understood through a single Window labelled enemy.

When Loyalty Becomes a Test

As the war continued, public messages became increasingly forceful.

Citizens were encouraged to support the soldiers, contribute supplies and remain united.

Some of these appeals reflected genuine needs.

- Families required assistance.
- Injured people needed care.
- Communities had to organise their safety.

Solidarity can be an important response to danger.

But gradually, in some conversations, support for the community became confused with agreement about every decision made in its name.

- A Pilgrim who questioned a military operation was accused of weakening the country.
- Someone who expressed sympathy for civilians across the river was told that they had forgotten their own people's suffering.
- And those who suggested negotiations were sometimes described as cowards.

The question was no longer simply whether a particular action was wise or justified.

It became a question of belonging.

Are you with us, or against us?

We encountered this movement in the previous chapter.

Belonging, which can offer warmth and protection, may become a source of pressure when acceptance depends upon surrendering one's judgement.

During war, the consequences can be especially serious.

- Some Pilgrims may genuinely support the fighting.
- Others may disagree but remain silent because public opposition carries risks.
- And others may have insufficient information to form a confident judgement.

We should not assume that outward agreement always reveals inward conviction.

Nor should we confuse a Pilgrim's silence with indifference.

- Sometimes silence reflects fear.
- Sometimes it reflects uncertainty.
- And sometimes it reflects the very real danger of speaking.

The Collective Hijack

We have previously explored how an individual Hijack may unfold:

Voice → Identity → Behaviour → Resistance → Fear

A similar movement may appear within a collective Garden.

- A powerful Voice begins shaping how a community understands a threat.
- An Identity forms around the distinction between us and them.
- Behaviour changes as Pilgrims respond to the expectations surrounding them.
- Resistance to questioning develops, so that disagreement becomes increasingly difficult.
- And Fear reinforces the movement, making alternative perspectives appear dangerous.

But a nation is not a single Inner House.

It does not possess one mind, one Window or one Voice.

Collective Hijack is therefore a way of recognising a pattern within a community, not a claim that every Pilgrim has lost Awareness.

Even during intense conflict, people may continue questioning, caring for others, documenting wrongdoing, protecting civilians and seeking opportunities for peace.

Some may do so publicly.

Others may act quietly because their circumstances allow little freedom.

Their choices remind us that collective pressure does not erase individual differences.

And neither does it remove responsibility.

Those who deliberately spread hatred, order unlawful attacks or exploit fear for political advantage carry responsibilities connected to their actions and authority.

Those who are threatened, coerced or deprived of reliable information occupy different circumstances.

Understanding the collective movement helps us examine how harmful behaviour spreads.

It does not excuse the decisions of those who direct it.

The Pilgrim Who Refuses to Hate

One evening, the father from our village was listening to news of another attack.

Several Houses had been destroyed across the river.

A neighbour shook his head.

"They deserve what is happening to them."

The father said nothing at first.

- He remembered the farmer who once crossed the bridge to buy vegetables.
- He remembered the children who had played beside the river.
- And he remembered that his own sister lived on the opposite bank.

Finally, he replied:

"I don't know who made the decisions that brought us here. But I know those children did not."

His neighbour looked uncomfortable.

"Have you forgotten what they've done to us?"

"No," the father answered. "*But I don't want to forget who they are either.*"

The conversation ended there.

No great transformation occurred.

The war continued.

The neighbour did not suddenly change his opinion.

But the father had refused to allow his concern for his own community to become hatred towards every Pilgrim across the river.

- He could recognise the need for protection without celebrating the suffering of civilians.
- He could acknowledge wrongdoing without assigning guilt to an entire population.
- And he could remain loyal to his own people without surrendering his capacity to recognise humanity elsewhere.

Perhaps this is one of the quietest forms of Awareness during war.

- Not pretending that danger does not exist.
- Not assuming that all sides are equally responsible.
- Not abandoning the need for justice or protection.

But refusing to let fear determine everything we are willing to see.

Keeping a Window Open

War places extraordinary demands upon the Inner House.

Under genuine threat, survival may rightly become the immediate priority. There may be little opportunity for reflection, and we should not judge those struggling simply to keep themselves and their families safe.

Yet wherever circumstances permit, Awareness may help us distinguish between what is known and what is merely repeated.

- Between necessary defence and unnecessary cruelty.
- Between responsibility for harmful actions and collective blame.
- Between remembering our own suffering and denying the suffering of others.

These distinctions do not end a war.

They do not replace diplomacy, security arrangements, justice or the difficult decisions required to protect communities.

But they influence the kind of Garden that survives the fighting.

For even when the weapons eventually fall silent, the stories carried through Houses may remain.

Children may inherit not only memories of loss, but also the labels and fears through which their elders understood that loss.

And this brings us to another question.

When countries fight, who ultimately carries the consequences?

The leaders who made the decisions may eventually leave office. Military operations may end. Borders may be redrawn.

But what happens to the Pilgrims whose Houses, relationships and futures have been changed?

A war may be fought with weapons, but its echoes can continue travelling through the Inner Houses of generations.

Section 4 — The Pilgrims Who Pay the Price

The Empty Chair

Before the war, the family gathered around the same table each evening.

The father would return from the market, the mother would prepare the meal, and their daughter would tell them about her day.

Sometimes they laughed. Sometimes they disagreed over ordinary things.

There was nothing remarkable about these evenings.

Perhaps that was what made them precious.

Then the war came.

The father was called into military service.

On the morning he left, he embraced his daughter and promised to write whenever he could.

She asked when he would return.

He did not know.

So he told her that he hoped it would be soon.

Weeks passed.

His letters arrived irregularly. Some were cheerful, filled with small details intended to reassure the family. Others were brief.

Then, one evening, the mother placed three plates on the table before remembering that only two were needed.

She stood looking at the third plate.

Her daughter noticed.

Neither spoke.

The mother quietly returned it to the cupboard.

War had entered their House.

Not through an explosion or a broken Window, but through the absence of someone who had always been there.

And across the river, another family was experiencing something similar.

Their son had also been sent to fight.
They too waited for news.
They too listened anxiously whenever someone knocked upon their Door.
The two families belonged to countries at war.
Their circumstances and the responsibilities of those directing the conflict were not necessarily the same.

But both families knew what it meant to wait for someone they loved.

The Lives Behind the Numbers

When we hear reports of war, we often encounter numbers.

- The number of soldiers killed.
- The number of civilians injured.
- The number of Houses destroyed.
- The number of people displaced.

These figures matter. They help us understand the scale of suffering and the consequences of decisions made during conflict.

But numbers cannot fully describe the lives they represent.

- A destroyed House may have contained a child's first drawings, family photographs and the chair in which a grandmother sat each afternoon.

- A person described as displaced may have been a teacher, a baker or a farmer who had spent decades cultivating the same land.
- A soldier reported missing may be a son whose parents continue listening for his footsteps.
- And a child counted among the casualties may have been looking forward to a birthday, a school examination or an afternoon playing with friends.

War does not merely damage buildings or change borders.

It interrupts lives that were already unfolding.

Within our Living Landscape, every Pilgrim carries an Inner House.

And every Inner House contains a world that cannot be reduced to a statistic.

The Pilgrims Who Never Chose the War

As the fighting approached the village, families began leaving.

Some travelled by car.

Others walked, carrying bags filled with clothing, documents and whatever possessions they could manage.

The elderly struggled with the journey.

Parents carried small children.

Some Pilgrims remained because they had nowhere else to go, could not travel safely or needed to care for relatives who were unable to leave.

A mother from the village stood outside her House, deciding what to take.

She had only a few minutes.

Her daughter wanted to bring her toys.

The mother explained that there was no room.

"But this is our home," the child protested.

The mother looked around the familiar rooms.

"I know."

She had no better answer.

For the child, the war was not about territory, military strategy or political objectives.

- It was about leaving her bedroom.
- It was about not knowing whether she would see her friends again.
- It was about watching her mother become frightened in ways she had never seen before.

And perhaps this is one of war's deepest injustices.

Those who have the least influence over the decision to fight may lose almost everything because of it.

This does not mean that every person involved in war is without choice or responsibility.

But it reminds us that the consequences of collective decisions extend far beyond those who make them.

When the Fighting Enters the Inner House

Even when a Pilgrim reaches safety, the war may continue influencing their Inner House.

- A sudden noise may bring back memories of explosions.
- An unfamiliar place may feel threatening.
- A child may become reluctant to leave a parent.
- Someone who has lost a loved one may carry grief that changes the rhythm of everyday life.

Others may gradually rebuild their routines, find friendship, experience moments of happiness and discover strengths they had not previously recognised.

There is no single way in which Pilgrims respond to war.

Some recover a sense of security relatively quickly.

Others require years of support.

And some carry losses that remain part of their lives.

We should be careful not to assume that everyone who experiences war is permanently damaged.

Human beings have remarkable capacities for adaptation, connection and rebuilding.

But neither should we romanticise their resilience.

Surviving extraordinary hardship does not make that hardship necessary or acceptable.

A Pilgrim should not have to lose their House in order to discover their strength.

The Soldier Who Comes Home

Months later, the father returned.

His daughter ran towards him.

He embraced her tightly.

The mother watched from the Door, relieved that he was alive.

For a while, the family celebrated.

But returning home was not quite the same as returning to the life he had left.

- He had witnessed suffering.
- He had lost companions.
- He had encountered situations he struggled to explain.

Some evenings, he wanted to speak.

Other evenings, he preferred silence.

His daughter noticed that he sometimes sat quietly at the table, looking towards the Window.

She wondered whether he was sad.

He did not always know how to answer.

War can place soldiers in circumstances where survival, duty, fear, loyalty and moral judgement become painfully complicated.

- Some return with injuries.
- Others carry grief, guilt or distress.
- Some are proud of having protected others.
- Some question what they were ordered to do.

Many experience a mixture of feelings that cannot be captured by a single description.

And those who return may need time, understanding and appropriate support as they resume their lives.

The end of military service does not necessarily mean that the Inner House immediately settles.

The father was home.

But the family was learning how to live together again.

Across the River

One afternoon, the daughter asked about the family who had once lived across the bridge.

"Do you think Sofia is all right?"

Her father remembered the children playing together before the war.

"I hope so."

"Are they still our enemies?"

He looked at her.

For a moment, he considered how to answer.

Then he said:

"The countries are fighting. But Sofia was your friend."

The daughter thought about this.

"Can she still be my friend?"

Her father looked towards the river.

"I don't see why she should stop being your friend."

- It was a simple conversation.
- It did not resolve the war.
- It did not determine who was responsible for the fighting or how peace might be achieved.

But it preserved something important within the child's Window.

She did not have to turn a friend into an enemy simply because their countries were at war.

And perhaps her father, who had witnessed so much suffering, understood why that distinction mattered.

What Remains After the Battle

Wars are often remembered through their battles, victories, defeats and political consequences.

But within the Living Landscape, we must also consider what remains in the Houses of those who experienced them.

- The parent who never returns.
- The child who grows up far from home.
- The family learning to live with injury.
- The community rebuilding its school.
- The friendships interrupted by borders and fear.
- And the memories carried into the next generation.

Some Pilgrims may eventually find opportunities to rebuild relationships across former divisions.

Others may be unable or unwilling to do so, particularly where injustice remains unacknowledged or safety has not been restored.

- Healing cannot be demanded.

- Forgiveness cannot be imposed.
- And reconciliation should not require anyone to deny what happened.

But the possibility of a different future remains important.

For war may change the Garden profoundly, yet the Pilgrims who survive must still find ways to live within it.

They need more than an end to explosions.

They need safety, shelter, food, justice, belonging and opportunities to rebuild meaningful lives.

And this brings us towards the final part of our chapter.

- What does it mean for a war to end?
- Is peace simply the moment when the weapons fall silent?
- Or is there something more that must happen before Pilgrims can begin feeling safe within their Gardens again?

A battlefield may become silent long before the Houses of those who suffered within it find peace.

Section 5 — When the Weapons Fall Silent

The Bridge That Remained

After years of fighting, the two countries finally agreed to a ceasefire.

The announcement travelled through the villages on both sides of the river.

Some Pilgrims celebrated.

Others listened cautiously, uncertain whether the agreement would hold.

For the first time in many months, the night passed without the sound of explosions.

Children slept.

Families emerged from shelters.

And those who had fled began wondering whether it might soon be possible to go home.

The weapons had fallen silent.

But the war had changed the Garden.

Some Houses were destroyed. Others stood abandoned. The market where villagers once traded had become overgrown.

And the bridge remained closed.

It was still there, stretching across the river.

But the people who once crossed it freely now stood on opposite banks, looking towards a place that had become unfamiliar.

The fighting had stopped.

Yet peace had not fully arrived.

A Ceasefire Is Not Yet Peace

A ceasefire can be an essential beginning.

It may allow the wounded to receive treatment, displaced families to obtain assistance and communities to begin recovering.

But stopping the violence does not automatically resolve the disagreements that caused it.

Territorial disputes may remain.

Security concerns may continue.

Those responsible for serious wrongdoing may not yet have been held accountable.

And Pilgrims who have lost relatives, homes or livelihoods may struggle to trust the people or institutions associated with their suffering.

Some may fear that the fighting will begin again.

Others may be angry that an agreement appears to leave important injustices unresolved.

We should not expect them simply to forget.

Nor should we assume that reconciliation requires everyone to forgive.

Peace cannot be built by demanding that Pilgrims deny the suffering they have experienced.

Lasting peace may require security, justice, political agreements, rebuilding and the difficult work of restoring trust.

These processes can take years, sometimes generations.

And they do not always unfold together.

- A country may have secure borders while communities remain deeply divided.
- A government may sign a peace agreement while displaced families are still unable to return home.
- A village may rebuild its Houses while the memories carried within them remain painful.

The Outer Garden may appear peaceful long before every Inner House experiences that peace.

The Children Who Inherit the War

Years passed.

The village slowly began rebuilding.

A new school opened. Shops returned to the market square. Families repaired their Houses and planted vegetables in Gardens that had lain neglected.

But the children who had grown up during the war carried memories of a different world.

Some remembered fleeing.

Others remembered waiting for parents who never returned.

And some had been too young to remember the fighting, yet had grown up hearing stories about it.

These stories mattered.

They helped children understand what their families had experienced.

But they could also shape how the next generation viewed those living across the river.

One afternoon, a boy asked his grandfather:

"Why don't we cross the bridge?"

His grandfather replied:

"Because the people on the other side were our enemies."

The boy looked across the water.

"But are they still?"

The grandfather did not answer immediately.

- He remembered the war.
- He remembered friends who had died.
- He remembered the fear of not knowing whether his family would survive.

For him, the word enemy carried experiences the boy could not fully understand.

Yet the question remained.

- Were the children now living across the river responsible for what had happened before they were born?
- Did they have to inherit the hostility as well as the history?
- And could remembering the past become something different from continuing its divisions?

We encountered this question earlier in our journey.

- A child may inherit a family disagreement without understanding its origins.
- A community may pass on suspicions that once arose from a particular event.
- And a nation may teach its children about an old conflict in ways that either deepen hostility or encourage understanding.

History need not be forgotten.

But perhaps it can be remembered without requiring every generation to fight the same battle.

When the Bridge Opens

Eventually, the two countries agreed to reopen the bridge.

There were security arrangements, inspections and restrictions.

Crossing was not as simple as it had once been.

But the possibility had returned.

On the first morning, a small group gathered beside the river.

Some wanted to visit relatives.

Others hoped to recover property or resume trade.

And among them stood a young woman who had once played beside the river with her friend Sofia.

They had not seen each other since childhood.

During the war, their families had lost contact.

Now, after so many years, they had exchanged messages and agreed to meet.

- The young woman approached the bridge slowly.
- She remembered crossing it as a child, holding her father's hand.
- She remembered the market, the laughter and the smell of freshly baked bread.
- She also remembered the morning the soldiers arrived.

Halfway across the bridge, she saw Sofia waiting.

For a moment, neither moved.

They had grown older.

Their lives had unfolded in different countries, under different circumstances.

There were years they could never recover.

Then Sofia smiled.

The two women walked towards each other and embraced.

They did not discuss the war immediately.

There would be time for that.

For now, they were simply two Pilgrims meeting again.

The bridge had not erased the suffering.

It had not settled every disagreement or repaired every loss.

But it had made another encounter possible.

And perhaps this is something we should remember about peace.

It is not always a grand moment of reconciliation.

Sometimes it begins with the restoration of ordinary possibilities.

- A family can visit a relative.
- A farmer can reach a market.
- A child can attend school without fear.

Two friends can meet without crossing a battlefield.

These things may appear small beside the political agreements that end wars.

Yet they are among the reasons peace matters.

The Garden We Leave to Those Who Follow

We began this chapter with a village divided by a river.

We have seen how disputes over territory, resources, security, identity and power can become armed conflicts.

We have explored how fear may narrow the collective Window, how loyalty may become pressure and how ordinary Pilgrims can suffer consequences far beyond their control.

And we have recognised that understanding the causes of war does not mean excusing aggression or treating every party as equally responsible.

But perhaps the deepest question is not only why human beings fight.

It is what we choose to carry forward after the fighting.

We cannot always prevent war.

We cannot expect every conflict to be resolved through goodwill alone.

There are circumstances in which people must defend themselves and others from violence.

Yet even where fighting has been necessary, the question of what follows remains.

- Will the next generation inherit only the wounds, fears and enemies of the previous one?
- Or might it also inherit the courage to question, to understand, to rebuild and, where possible, to live differently?

The river continued flowing beneath the bridge.

It had flowed before the war.

It flowed during the fighting.

And it continued after the soldiers had gone.

The countries still had their borders.
Their histories had not disappeared.
Their people had not forgotten what had happened.
But the bridge was open again.
And perhaps that was enough for a beginning.
The end of war is when the weapons fall silent.
The beginning of peace is when Pilgrims can once again build lives without fear of those weapons.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

What Do We Leave Across the Bridge?

A war may begin with disputes over land, power, security or identity.

But its consequences reach far beyond the battlefield.

They enter Houses, interrupt childhoods, separate families and leave memories that may travel through generations.

And sometimes, long after the weapons have fallen silent, the war continues through the stories people tell about one another.

We have followed two families living on opposite sides of a river.

Before the war, they were neighbours.

During the war, they belonged to opposing countries.

After the war, they were left with the difficult task of rebuilding their lives.

Yet the river had never stopped flowing.

And the bridge had remained, even when nobody was allowed to cross it.

Perhaps this invites us to reflect upon something important.

When we speak of another country, do we see its government, its army, its history—or the millions of Pilgrims living within it?

Can we recognise the suffering of innocent people without forgetting who is responsible for aggression?

Can we remember injustice without teaching our children that hatred must also be inherited?

And when the fighting ends, what would it take for people to feel safe enough to begin living alongside one another again?

These questions have no simple answers.

Peace may require justice, protection, difficult negotiations and the rebuilding of trust.

But perhaps it also requires something that cannot be written into a treaty.

The willingness to recognise that the Pilgrim across the border has an Inner House, just as we do.

A House containing love, fear, memories, hopes and the desire to live without violence.

We may inherit the history of a war. But must we also inherit its enemies?

Perhaps that is a question worth carrying into the Gardens we leave for those who follow.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

The Bridge Between Two Gardens

Pilgrim: Sahachari, why do we continue fighting when we know how much suffering war brings?

Sahachari: Because knowing that something causes suffering does not always remove the fears, ambitions, grievances or interests that lead people towards it. And sometimes people fight because they are defending themselves against violence.

Pilgrim: But surely everyone wants peace?

Sahachari: Many do. Yet they may disagree profoundly about what peace requires. For one community, it may mean security. For another, freedom from occupation. For another, justice for what has happened.

Pilgrim: So peace is not simply agreeing to stop fighting?

Sahachari: Stopping the fighting can save lives. But lasting peace also requires attention to the conditions that made violence possible and the suffering it has left behind.

Pilgrim: I keep thinking about the two children separated by the river. They had done nothing to cause the war.

Sahachari: And yet they inherited its consequences.

Pilgrim: But eventually they met again.

Sahachari: Yes. Their friendship could not undo the war, but neither did the war have to determine everything about their friendship.

Pilgrim: Perhaps that is what I find most moving. The bridge was always there.

Sahachari: The bridge remained. But the conditions that allowed people to cross it had disappeared. Reopening it required more than wishing the conflict away.

Pilgrim: And what about the Inner House? Can Presence and Awareness prevent war?

Sahachari: Not by themselves. War involves governments, institutions, resources, weapons and decisions far beyond any one Pilgrim's control. But Presence and Awareness may influence how we respond to fear, how we judge others and whether we allow hatred to become our only way of seeing.

Pilgrim: Then what should we teach the children who come after us?

Sahachari: Teach them what happened, without hiding the suffering or the responsibility. But also allow them to discover that another Pilgrim is more than the history of their country.

Pilgrim: So they can remember without continuing the hatred?

Sahachari: Perhaps. And where safety, justice and circumstances allow, they may discover relationships that previous generations could no longer imagine.

Pilgrim: Like the two friends meeting halfway across the bridge.

Sahachari: Yes.

Pilgrim: The river still separated their countries.

Sahachari: But it no longer had to separate their lives.

I would end Chapter 15 here, with that final exchange.

There is something quietly significant about the distinction between the river and the bridge. The river represents a geographical separation that need not disappear. The bridge represents the possibility of connection across it.

Peace does not require every Garden to become the same Garden. It requires finding ways for different Gardens to exist without destroying one another.

Chapter 16 - From One Pilgrim to Mankind



Section 1 — What We Receive, What We Give

The Cup That Fell

The little boy was helping his father prepare the evening meal.

He had been given a simple task: carry two cups from the kitchen to the dining table.

He was proud to be helping.

But as he turned towards the table, one cup slipped from his fingers.

It struck the floor and shattered.

The boy froze.

His father turned towards him.

For a moment, neither moved.

The father felt something familiar rising within him.

How many times have I told you to be careful?

The words were already forming.

He remembered hearing them as a child.

Whenever something broke, whenever a mistake was made, whenever an accident happened, his own father would become angry.

Sometimes the shouting continued long after the broken object had been cleared away.

He had learned to fear mistakes.

He had learned to hide accidents when he could.

And now, years later, standing in his own kitchen, he recognised the same response preparing to leave his mouth.

His son looked frightened.

The father opened his mouth.

Then stopped.

He looked at the broken cup.

He looked at his son.

And something within him became aware.

The cup was broken.

The child was frightened.

But nobody had been hurt.

He knelt beside the boy.

"Are you all right?"

The child nodded.

"I'm sorry, Daddy."

"I know. It was an accident. Let's clear it up carefully."

The boy looked surprised.

"You're not angry?"

His father paused.

"No. But I don't want you touching the glass. You might cut yourself."

The father swept up the broken pieces while his son watched.

Then they returned to preparing the meal.

Nothing extraordinary appeared to have happened.

A cup had broken.

A father had helped his son.

And the evening continued.

But within that small kitchen, something important had changed.

The father had received one way of responding to mistakes.
He had given his child another.

The Path That Did Not Continue

The father had not forgotten his childhood.

The memories were still there.

The familiar response had still risen.

His body had prepared for anger before he had consciously considered what to do.

But this time, he had arrived in Presence.

Awareness allowed him to recognise the familiar pattern.

And within that brief moment, another response became possible.

He did not need to condemn his own father to recognise that something could be different.

Nor did he need to pretend that his childhood experiences had left no traces.

He simply chose not to repeat what had once frightened him.

Perhaps his son would remember that evening.

Perhaps he would feel less afraid to admit a mistake.

We cannot know.

But something had already changed.

What was received was not simply passed on.

And perhaps this is one of the quietest ways in which the future begins to change.

Not through a grand declaration.

But through one Pilgrim recognising a familiar pathway and choosing another.

The Garden We Did Not Plant

None of us arrives in an empty Garden.

Before we are born, there are already families, languages, customs, histories and institutions.

There are paths worn by generations of footsteps.

Some lead towards kindness, cooperation and belonging.

Others carry prejudice, fear, exclusion or suffering.

- We did not plant every seed.
- We did not create every pathway.
- And we cannot be held responsible simply for having inherited them.

But as we grow, we may begin to recognise what surrounds us.
We may question a family belief, reconsider a familiar custom or discover that something we once accepted causes harm.

Equally, we may recognise something beautiful that deserves to be preserved.

- The kindness of a grandmother.
- The patience of a teacher.
- The courage of someone who stood beside another Pilgrim when others turned away.

The Garden carries more than wounds.

It also carries wisdom.

And what we receive may travel outwards:

Individual → Relationship → Family → Community → Nation → World

Or inwards:

World → Nation → Community → Family → Relationship → Individual

The movement travels in both directions.

But it does not simply repeat itself.

For between receiving and giving, there is a Pilgrim who may become aware.

One Drop

Many years passed.

The little boy grew into a man.

He had a family of his own.

One evening, his young daughter was helping him prepare dinner.

She reached for a glass of water.

But her hand slipped.

The glass fell and shattered across the kitchen floor.

The little girl froze.

"I'm sorry, Daddy."

Her father looked at the broken glass.

For a moment, he remembered another kitchen.

Another broken cup.

A frightened little boy.

And a father kneeling beside him.

He smiled gently.

"Are you all right?"

She nodded.

"Then don't worry. We'll clear it up."

As he swept away the broken pieces, his daughter watched.

- She did not know that something from another generation had just entered her life.
- She did not know that her grandfather had once stood in a kitchen, struggling with a familiar anger.
- She knew only that she had made a mistake and that her father had responded with understanding.

And perhaps, many years later, she too would remember.

The first father had received anger but offered understanding.

His son had received understanding and now offered it to his daughter.

Something had travelled.

Not the broken cup.

Not the fear.

But the response.

- One Pilgrim received.
- One Pilgrim became aware.
- Another generation received something different.

And somewhere within the Garden, a new pathway continued.

- One drop.
- One House.
- One generation.

Another possibility.

Section 2 — When One Pilgrim Responds Differently

The Question Nobody Had Asked

Every year, a small village held a celebration.
Families prepared food, musicians played, and children ran between the stalls.
It was a time of laughter and belonging.
But not everyone belonged.
A few families living on the outskirts of the village had never been invited.
Their grandparents had been excluded.
Their parents had been excluded.
And now their children watched the celebrations from a distance.
Nobody seemed to question it.
It was simply how things had always been.
Then, one year, a young woman helping to organise the celebration asked:

"Why don't those families come?"

An older organiser shrugged.

"They've never come."
"But why?"

Someone mentioned an old disagreement.
Another suggested that the families preferred to remain apart.
Nobody seemed certain.
The young woman listened.
Then she asked:

"Has anyone actually invited them?"

Nobody answered.

The Invitation

The following afternoon, she walked towards the outskirts of the village.
She approached a small House and knocked.
An elderly woman opened the Door.
The young visitor introduced herself.

"We're preparing for the village celebration. I wondered whether you and your family would like to join us."

The elderly woman stared at her.

"Are you certain?"
"Of course."

For a moment, the elderly woman said nothing.
Then she looked towards the village.
"When I was little, my mother used to take me to the Window. We could see the lights from here."
She paused.

"I always wanted to go."

The young woman felt a sadness she had not expected.

"Why didn't you?"

"My mother said we weren't welcome."

The visitor lowered her eyes.

"I'm sorry. I didn't know."

The elderly woman smiled faintly.

"Neither did you create it."

They talked for a while.

Before leaving, the young woman repeated the invitation.

The elderly woman promised to speak with her family.

When the Garden Resists

Not everyone welcomed the invitation.

Some villagers worried that old disagreements might resurface.

Others felt the young woman had interfered with a tradition.

"Why change something that has worked perfectly well for years?" one organiser demanded.

The young woman considered his words.

"Perhaps it worked well for those of us who were invited."

Nobody replied immediately.

The young woman had not accused anyone.

- She had simply asked them to look through another Window.
- Some began reconsidering the custom.
- Others remained uncomfortable.

The young woman could not make everyone agree.

Nor could she force the families to attend.

She had only opened a Gate.

Whether anyone walked through it was another matter.

The Evening of the Celebration

The village square glowed with lanterns.

Music drifted through the streets.

Children danced while their parents gathered around tables of food.

The young woman kept glancing towards the road leading from the outskirts.

For a long time, nobody appeared.

Then, as the evening grew darker, she saw several figures approaching.

The elderly woman was walking slowly, accompanied by her daughter and grandchildren.

They stopped at the edge of the square.

For a moment, the elderly woman seemed uncertain.

The young organiser hurried towards them.

"You came!"

The elderly woman smiled.

"I thought perhaps it was time."

A neighbour brought her a chair.

Someone offered refreshments.

A few villagers watched silently.

Others came forward to greet the family.
There were awkward conversations.
Not every old disagreement disappeared.
But the elderly woman remained.

She listened to the musicians.
She watched her grandchildren laughing beneath the lanterns.
And occasionally, she looked towards the road leading back to her House.
For most of her life, she had watched these lights from a Window.
Tonight, she was sitting beneath them.

As the family prepared to leave, her youngest granddaughter took her hand.

"Grandma, can we come again next year?"

The elderly woman looked across the square.

"I think we can."

The Question That Travelled

Many years later, that granddaughter had grown into a young woman.

She was living in another town, helping to organise a community gathering.
During the preparations, someone mentioned a family who had recently moved into the neighbourhood.

"They probably won't come," a volunteer remarked. *"They keep to themselves."*

The young woman remembered her grandmother.
She remembered the lanterns, the music and the evening when her family had finally entered the village square.
Then she asked a familiar question.

- *"Have we invited them?"*
- *"Not yet."*
- *"Then perhaps we should."*

She did not know whether the family would accept.
But she remembered what an invitation had meant to her grandmother.
And now she could offer that possibility to someone else.
The first young woman had questioned an inherited custom.

The elderly woman had received an invitation.
Her granddaughter had received an experience of belonging.
And years later, she offered that possibility to another family.

No one had commanded the Garden to change.
No one had guaranteed what would follow.

Yet something had travelled.

Not the exclusion.
Not the old disagreement.

But a question.
"Have we invited them?"
And somewhere, another Gate began to open.

Section 3 — What Travels Through the Garden

The Girl Who Sat Alone

One morning in August 2018, a fifteen-year-old girl sat outside the Swedish Parliament.
Beside her lay a handmade sign.
Her name was Greta Thunberg.
She was concerned about climate change and had decided to protest against what she believed was insufficient action.
At first, she sat alone.
People passed.
Some stopped to ask questions.
Others disagreed with her.
She could not compel anyone to listen.
But she continued.
Photographs of her protest began travelling beyond the street where she sat.
Other young people noticed.
Some recognised a concern they shared.
They began organising their own school strikes.
Soon, young Pilgrims in different countries were gathering with their own signs, questions and demands.
Not everyone agreed with the movement.
But something remarkable had happened.
An action that began with one Pilgrim had travelled into Gardens she had never visited.
And other Pilgrims had chosen to respond.

When One Action Becomes Many

We sometimes imagine that changing the world requires extraordinary power.
A government.
An institution.
A great organisation.
And certainly, lasting changes often require laws, resources and collective effort.
But not every movement begins there.
Sometimes one Pilgrim notices something and acts.
Another encounters that action and recognises something meaningful.
They respond.
Others join.
And gradually, what began with one person becomes something much larger.
Yet the original Pilgrim cannot control what follows.
Some may embrace the example.
Others may question it.
Some may take it in directions never imagined by the person who began.

For influence is not ownership.

The Gardener may cultivate, but cannot command the Garden.

The Story That Changes

Imagine a grandmother telling her granddaughter a story.

Perhaps it concerns a difficult journey, a generous stranger or a mistake that taught her something important.

The child listens.

Years later, she tells the story to her own children.

But something has changed.

She remembers certain details more clearly than others.

She understands parts of the story differently.

Perhaps she has discovered a meaning her grandmother never intended.

The story has travelled.

But it has not travelled unchanged.

It has passed through another Inner House.

The same happens with customs, beliefs, knowledge, fears and ways of treating one another.

What one Pilgrim gives, another may question.

What one generation accepts, another may reconsider.

And what begins as an idea may become something entirely different as it travels.

Between Receiving and Giving lies the Inner House.

It is here that a Pilgrim may recognise what has arrived, consider its meaning and decide what to carry forward.

When the World Enters Our House

The movement also travels in the opposite direction.

- A scientific discovery may transform how families understand illness.
- A law may protect someone who was previously excluded.
- A decision made far away may change the opportunities available to a child.
- And an idea shared across the world may inspire a Pilgrim who has never travelled beyond their own town.

The wider Garden is not simply somewhere beyond the Horizon.

It enters our lives.

- Sometimes quietly.
- Sometimes dramatically.
- And not everything that arrives is within our control.

We cannot choose every circumstance, nor do all Pilgrims have equal freedom to respond.

But within the possibilities available to us, we may sometimes question, adapt, preserve or change what we have received.

The Pilgrim Who Never Knows

Let us remember the father whose son broke a cup.

He could not know that his response would one day be offered to his granddaughter.

Let us remember the young woman who invited an excluded family to the village celebration.

She could not know that a child sitting beneath the lanterns would later offer a similar invitation elsewhere.

And let us remember the girl outside Parliament.

She could not know exactly how others would respond, or how far her action might travel.

Each placed something into the Garden.

What followed depended upon countless other Pilgrims.

Perhaps this is both the humility and the beauty of our Living Landscape.

- We may never know where our kindness travels.
- We may never discover whether a question we asked encouraged someone else to think differently.
- And we may never see the Garden in which something we offered eventually takes root.

Not every seed will grow.

Not every action will be remembered.

But some will.

And sometimes, the Pilgrim who planted the seed will never know.

What travels through the Garden passes through Houses along the way.

And because every House may receive, question and respond, the future need not be an exact repetition of the past.

Section 4 — Receiving Is Not Giving

Between Receiving and Giving

None of us chooses everything we inherit.

We arrive in a world already shaped by countless Pilgrims.

We receive customs, beliefs, memories, kindness and sometimes wounds.

Some become familiar pathways within our Inner House.

We may follow them without noticing.

Until one day, something invites us to pause.

Perhaps a familiar anger rises.

Perhaps an old prejudice is repeated.

Perhaps we recognise that something we have always accepted causes harm.

And within that moment, Awareness may reveal another possibility.

We do not have to condemn everything we have received.

Nor can we always change deeply established patterns simply by wishing to.

But we may begin to recognise what deserves to continue and what might be allowed to end.

Between Receiving and Giving lies the Inner House.

And sometimes, within that House, a different future begins.

The Garden Beyond Our Sight

We may never know what becomes of the seeds we plant.

A kindness may be remembered.

A question may challenge an old assumption.

An act of courage may encourage another Pilgrim.

Or what we offer may be forgotten.

We cannot determine every outcome.

Nor should we carry the responsibility of controlling what others receive.

Each Pilgrim has an Inner House.

Each brings their own memories, understanding and choices.

The Gardener may cultivate, but cannot command the Garden.

Our task is not to control the entire Garden.

It is to become aware of what we are cultivating within our reach.

From One Pilgrim to Mankind

Imagine the countless Houses scattered across our world.
Within them, ordinary moments are unfolding.

- A father comforts a frightened child.
- A neighbour welcomes a stranger.
- A teacher encourages someone who is struggling.
- A Pilgrim questions a familiar injustice.
- Another chooses not to pass on an old wound.

These moments may never appear in history books.

Yet they too belong to the story of mankind.

For the world is shaped not only by extraordinary events, but also by the countless ways human beings encounter one another.

- What we say.
- What we question.
- What we protect.
- What we cultivate.
- And what we choose not to pass on.

Perhaps we will never see how far our influence travels.
Perhaps we do not need to.

We do not choose everything we receive.

But what we receive need not determine what we give.

Drop by drop.

Person by person.

Garden by Garden.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

We cannot choose every seed planted in our Garden.

But we may become aware of what is growing.
Some things deserve to be nourished.
Others may need to be questioned or allowed to end.
Perhaps the question is not simply:
What have I received from the world?
But also:
What am I giving to the world through the way I live?

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

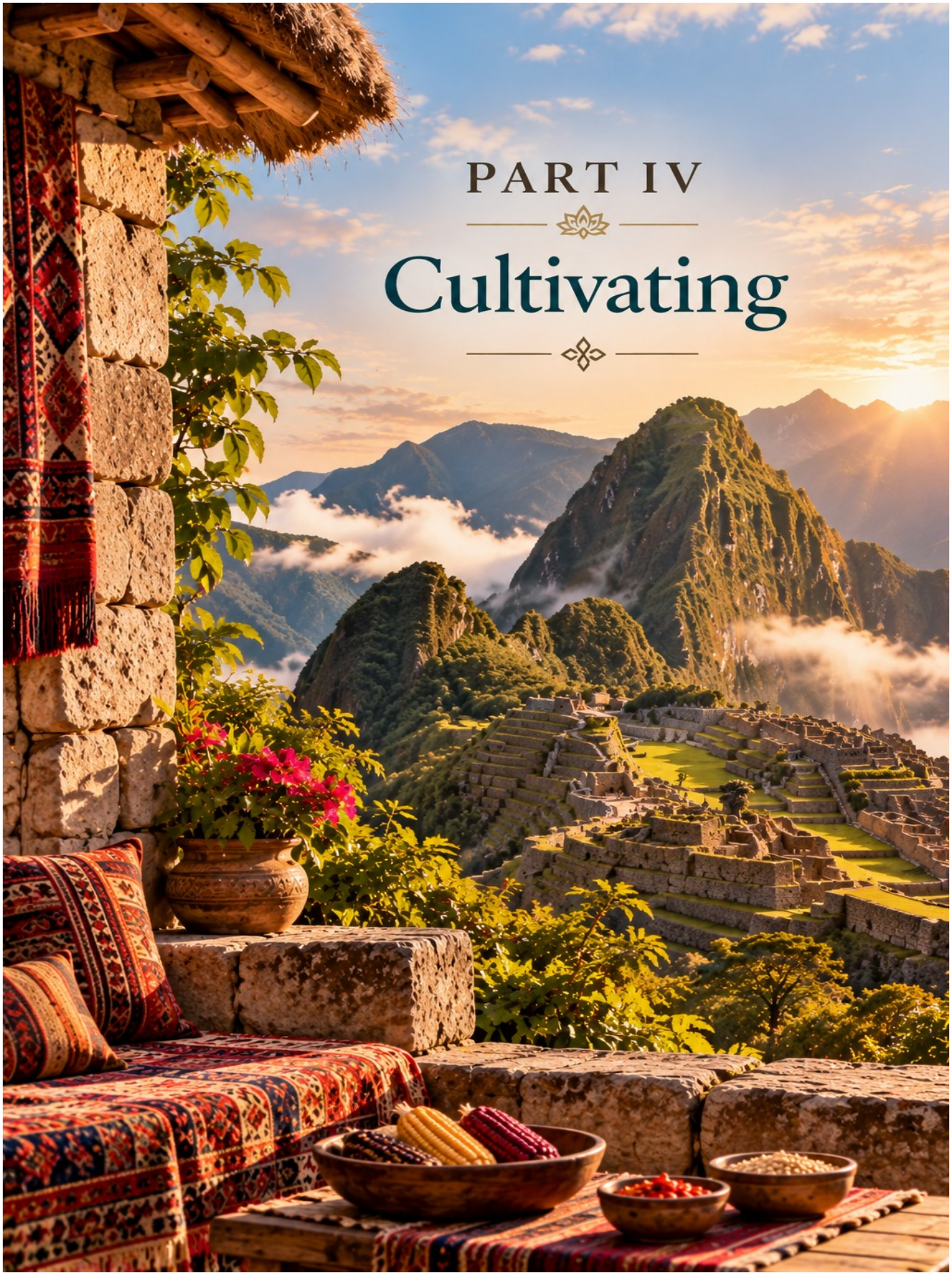
What travels through the Garden passes through Houses along the way.
Receiving does not determine Giving.
The Gardener may cultivate, but cannot command the Garden.
And sometimes, the most beautiful gift we leave behind is not something we have created.

It is a wound we have chosen not to pass on.

One Pilgrim.

One different response.

Another possibility for mankind.


PART IV
Cultivating

Chapter 17 — Tending the Living Garden



Section 1 — When the Body Speaks

A Visitor of a Different Kind

The Pilgrim awoke one morning with a sore throat.

There was a slight cough.

His nose was blocked, and his head felt unusually heavy.

He lay quietly for a moment.

Within the Inner House, all seemed peaceful.

Nobody was shouting.

No urgent voice demanded his attention.

The rocking chair was undisturbed.

Yet something was not quite right.

He swallowed.

His throat hurt.

He coughed again.

"Well," he thought, *"it seems the Garden has something to say this morning."*

He smiled.

For once, the trouble had not begun with a thought, a memory or an unwelcome visitor.

His body was simply unwell.

And it needed tending.

The Pilgrim's Nearest Garden

Throughout our journey, we have explored many Gardens.

- The Garden of relationships.

- The Garden of family.
- The Garden of community.
- The Gardens of nations and mankind.

But there is one Garden that accompanies the Pilgrim everywhere.

The physical body.

It allows us to walk, touch, taste, hear, see and experience the world around us.

It carries us through childhood, adulthood and old age.

And like every living Garden, it changes.

- Sometimes it flourishes.
- Sometimes it becomes tired.
- Sometimes it becomes unwell.

A cough.

An unsettled stomach.

An aching back.

A fever.

These are not necessarily signs that something is wrong within the Inner House.

A Pilgrim may be peaceful, content and fully present while suffering from a physical illness.

And this is important.

- Not every discomfort is a Hijack.
- Not every illness begins within the Inner House.

Sometimes the body simply needs care.

When the House and Garden Speak to Each Other

Later that morning, the Pilgrim made himself comfortable.

He had planned to go for a long walk, but his body felt tired.

He decided to rest instead.

As the hours passed, his coughing became irritating.

He grew impatient.

"Why today? I had so much to do."

And there it was.

The physical discomfort had begun influencing the atmosphere within the Inner House.

- The cough belonged to the body.
- The frustration was his response to it.
- He recognised the distinction.

The illness had not been created by his frustration.

Nor would becoming peaceful necessarily remove the illness.

But he could avoid adding unnecessary distress to an already uncomfortable experience.

He could acknowledge his disappointment, reconsider his plans and give himself permission to rest.

The relationship also works in the other direction.

Prolonged worry may disturb sleep, affect appetite or contribute to muscular tension.

A peaceful walk may help settle a troubled mind.

Pain may affect our patience.

Lack of sleep may make familiar difficulties harder to manage.

The Inner House and the Garden are not isolated from one another.

What happens in the House may influence the Garden. What happens in the Garden may influence the House.

Sometimes both need tending.

Listening Without Becoming Alarmed

By afternoon, the Pilgrim had developed a mild headache.

He noticed it.

But he did not immediately imagine the worst.

Nor did he dismiss it simply because he preferred to continue with his plans.

He considered what was happening.

- Was he drinking enough?
- Had he eaten?
- Was he becoming more unwell?
- Were there symptoms that required medical advice?

Presence helped him notice.

Awareness helped him consider.

And practical knowledge helped him decide what care was appropriate.

For mild, uncomplicated symptoms, rest, fluids and suitable self-care may be enough.

Other symptoms require professional assessment, and some need urgent attention.

The Pilgrim understood that wisdom was not found in ignoring the body, nor in becoming frightened by every sensation.

It was found in responding appropriately to what was happening.

He smiled again.

Perhaps tending the Garden was not so different from tending a plant.

- Too little attention, and its needs might be neglected.
- Too much interference, and we might disturb what was already recovering.

The art was in recognising what was needed.

A Different Kind of Care

That evening, the Pilgrim sat beside the Window.

His throat was still uncomfortable.

His cough had not disappeared.

He was not suddenly healed.

But he had rested, taken fluids and adjusted his expectations for the day.

He looked out towards the Garden.

Tomorrow, perhaps, he would feel better.

Perhaps he would need more rest.

And if his symptoms became concerning or failed to improve, he would seek appropriate medical advice.

There was no need to make the illness into a personal failure.

Nor did he need to turn every physical symptom into a lesson about his emotional life.

Sometimes a cough was simply a cough.

And sometimes the wisest response was wonderfully ordinary.

Rest.

A drink.

A little patience.

And knowing when to ask for help.

The Pilgrim does not need a perfectly healthy body to arrive in Presence.

And Presence does not remove the body's need for care.

Section 2 — The Garden's Little Helpers

The Wisdom Growing Around Us

The following morning, the Pilgrim felt a little better.

His throat was still uncomfortable, but his appetite had returned.

As he prepared breakfast, he noticed a small collection of familiar herbs and spices.

- Ginger.
- Thyme.
- Fennel seeds.
- Turmeric.
- Chamomile.

Nothing extraordinary.

Some had been used in cooking for generations.

Others had been prepared as warm infusions when someone felt unwell.

He remembered his grandmother reaching for familiar ingredients whenever the family complained of a minor discomfort.

She had not called them medicines.

They were simply part of everyday life.

Yet the Pilgrim understood something that childhood memories alone could not teach.

Traditional knowledge may offer useful possibilities, but it does not replace understanding what is wrong.

A herb may provide comfort.

A spice may support nourishment.

But neither should be expected to cure every illness.

A Little Ginger, A Little Thyme

The Pilgrim began with ginger.

He sliced a little fresh root and placed it in hot water.

The fragrance rose gently.

Ginger had long been used for digestive discomfort, and research supported its usefulness for certain forms of nausea.

But he also knew that ginger was not suitable for everyone. It could aggravate heartburn, and concentrated preparations could interact with some medicines.

Later, he remembered thyme.
His grandmother had sometimes prepared thyme infusions when someone developed a cough.
It was a familiar traditional remedy.
The Pilgrim enjoyed its fragrance and warmth, recognising that evidence for thyme's effectiveness against coughs remained limited.
He did not expect the infusion to remove an infection.
Nor would he ignore a cough that became severe, caused breathing difficulties or persisted without improvement.
Sometimes a warm drink simply offered comfort.
And comfort, though different from a cure, could still be welcome.

When the Stomach Complains

Another day, the Pilgrim's stomach became unsettled after a meal.
He remembered the fennel seeds his family sometimes used after eating.
Their gentle, sweet fragrance was familiar.
Fennel had traditionally been used for bloating and digestive discomfort, although strong clinical evidence for fennel tea remained limited.
He considered preparing an infusion.
But then he remembered something important.
An unsettled stomach could mean many things.
Mild bloating was not the same as diarrhoea.
And diarrhoea was not necessarily something that could be corrected with a herb or spice.
If the body was losing fluids, replacing water and salts mattered far more.
Oral rehydration solution could be particularly helpful when fluid losses were significant.
Blood in the stool, severe abdominal pain or signs of dehydration would require prompt medical attention.
The Pilgrim smiled at the simplicity of the lesson.
Before choosing a helper, understand what needs helping.

The Spices That Nourish

Not every herb or spice needs to be taken because something is wrong.
The Pilgrim opened his spice cupboard.
There was turmeric, with its beautiful golden colour.
There were cumin seeds, coriander and cinnamon.
Each brought something different to a meal.

- Fragrance.
- Flavour.
- Colour.

A connection with the traditions of families and cultures.
Turmeric, in particular, had a long history of traditional use.
But its presence in a meal was not the same as taking a concentrated supplement, and claims that it could treat serious illnesses required reliable evidence.

The Pilgrim preferred to begin with something simple.
A nourishing meal, prepared with care.
For the Garden needed tending not only when it became unwell.
It needed everyday nourishment too.

The Gentle Evening

That evening, the Pilgrim prepared a cup of chamomile.
He sat quietly beside the Window.
The day had been tiring.
Chamomile was traditionally used as a calming infusion, although evidence for many of its claimed benefits remained limited. He also knew that some people could experience allergic reactions or interactions with medicines.
He enjoyed the warmth and familiar fragrance.
Outside, the evening was settling over the Garden.
Within the Inner House, there was no particular disturbance.
He did not need to transform an experience in the Inner Kitchen.
Nor did he need to search for a hidden emotional cause behind every physical sensation.
He was simply giving his body a little ordinary care.
And perhaps that was enough for the moment.

The Helper Is Not the Healer

The Pilgrim looked again at his collection of herbs and spices.
They were useful companions in everyday life.
But they were not magical.
Their effects varied.
Some traditional uses had scientific support.
Others remained uncertain.
And even familiar plants could cause adverse reactions, particularly when taken in concentrated preparations or alongside medicines.
The Pilgrim understood that there was a place for traditional knowledge, a place for modern medicine and a place for the simple comforts of daily living.
They need not compete.
A warm infusion might soothe.
A nutritious meal might nourish.
Rest might support recovery.
And sometimes the most important act of tending was to seek medical care.
The Garden offers many helpers. Wisdom lies in knowing which help is needed.

Section 3 — Knowing When the Garden Needs More Help

When the Little Helpers Are Not Enough

A few days later, the Pilgrim's cough had not improved.
He had rested, taken warm drinks and enjoyed the comfort of his familiar herbs.

But now he felt unusually tired, and his temperature had risen.

He sat quietly for a moment.

Perhaps he needed more than rest.

He remembered something his grandmother used to say:

"Even the best Gardener sometimes needs another pair of hands."

He smiled.

She had been speaking about her vegetable Garden.

But the wisdom seemed equally appropriate here.

The Pilgrim decided to seek medical advice.

Not because he was frightened.

Not because his Inner House had become disturbed.

But because his body needed attention.

Recognising When to Ask for Help

There are times when simple care is sufficient.

- A mild headache may improve with rest and hydration.
- A minor digestive discomfort may settle.
- A common cold may gradually pass.

But there are also times when waiting is not wise.

Difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, confusion or signs of a stroke require emergency medical attention.

Persistent or worsening symptoms may require professional assessment.

And someone who is elderly, frail or living with a serious medical condition may need help sooner.

The Pilgrim understood that seeking medical care was not a failure of self-reliance.

Knowing when to ask for help is itself an act of tending.

The Garden That Changes With Age

As the Pilgrim grew older, he noticed that his body did not always respond as it once had.

- A long walk sometimes required a little more recovery.
- An aching joint reminded him to adjust his movements.
- An illness that once passed quickly might now require greater attention.

At first, he occasionally resisted these changes.

He remembered how easily he had once climbed hills and carried heavy bags.

But gradually, he began to understand.

Tending the Garden did not mean demanding that it remain forever young.

It meant recognising its changing needs.

- Sometimes the body required movement.
- Sometimes nourishment.
- Sometimes treatment.
- And sometimes simply rest.

Care must change as the Garden changes.

The House and Garden Together

One afternoon, feeling stronger, the Pilgrim stepped outside.

The air was fresh.

The sunlight warmed his face.

He walked slowly, enjoying the movement without pushing himself beyond what felt comfortable.

Within the Inner House, there was a quiet sense of contentment.

He had not forced his body to recover.

He had listened, responded and accepted help when necessary.

The Garden had influenced the House.

And the House had influenced how he tended the Garden.

Neither had worked alone.

He paused beside a flowering plant.

Its leaves were imperfect.

Some had been damaged by insects.

Others had begun turning yellow.

Yet new growth was appearing.

The Pilgrim smiled.

A flourishing Garden was not one in which nothing ever became unwell.

It was one that continued receiving the care it needed.

The Inner House helps us recognise how we respond.

The Garden reminds us that the body has needs of its own.

Wisdom invites us to care for both.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

When my body becomes unwell, do I listen to what it needs?

Do I recognise the difference between ordinary discomfort and symptoms requiring professional care?

And can I offer my body the same patience and understanding that I try to cultivate within my Inner House?

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

The Garden does not ask to remain forever young.

Nor does it promise never to become unwell.

It asks for attention, understanding and appropriate care.

Sometimes a little rest.

Sometimes a familiar comfort.

Sometimes another pair of helping hands.

To tend the Garden is not to demand perfection. It is to care for the life growing within it.

Chapter 18 - What Are We Cultivating?



Section 1 — The Garden Does Not Choose What Grows

- How does a human being become kind?
- How does another become cruel?
- How does patience develop in one Pilgrim, while impatience becomes familiar to another?
- And how can someone who genuinely wishes to do good end up causing harm?

We have travelled through many Gardens.

We have explored the Individual Garden, the Relationship Garden, the Family Garden, the Community Garden, the National Garden and the World Garden.

In each, we have encountered something growing.

- Sometimes it was kindness.
- Sometimes suspicion.
- Sometimes generosity, courage and understanding.
- Sometimes fear, prejudice, resentment or indifference.

And perhaps we have begun to recognise something.

A Garden does not grow only what its gardener intends.

It grows according to what is planted, what is repeatedly nourished, the conditions in which it lives, and what is allowed to take root.

The same may be true of our lives.

The Father Who Wanted Respect

Consider a father who wants his daughter to grow into a responsible, respectful adult.

- He loves her.
- He works hard to provide for her.
- He worries about her future.

- He wants her to develop good habits, to study, to behave appropriately and to treat others with consideration.

These are his intentions.

- But when she makes a mistake, he raises his voice.
- When she forgets something, he becomes impatient.
- When she tries to explain, he interrupts.

He believes he is teaching discipline.

He tells himself that children need firmness.

And perhaps he remembers hearing similar words when he was young.

One afternoon, his daughter accidentally breaks a glass.

He hears the sound from the next room.

Before he has even seen what happened, irritation rises.

How many times have I told her to be careful?

He enters the kitchen.

She is standing beside the broken glass.

Her eyes are already filling with tears.

He begins to shout.

She lowers her head.

He tells her to clean up the mess.

She obeys.

The father believes he has reinforced responsibility.

But what has his daughter learned?

- Perhaps she has learned to be more careful.
- Perhaps she has also learned to be frightened when something goes wrong.
- Perhaps, next time, she will try to hide her mistake.
- Perhaps she will become reluctant to ask for help.

The father intended to cultivate respect.

Yet he may also be cultivating fear.

And this is where cultivation becomes more complicated than intention.

What we wish to grow and what our actions encourage to grow are not always the same.

The Garden Receives More Than Our Intentions

A child does not experience only the words spoken by a parent.

- She experiences the voice.
- The expression.
- The silence that follows.
- The way mistakes are received.
- The atmosphere around the dinner table.
- The way adults treat one another when they disagree.

All these encounters become part of the environment in which she grows.

Some may leave little trace.

Others may be remembered for years.

And the father is cultivating something within himself too.

- Each time irritation becomes shouting, the response may become more familiar.
- Each time he interrupts rather than listens, interruption may become easier.

Eventually, he may react before he has had time to consider another possibility.

Not because he has consciously chosen cruelty.

But because a particular response has become familiar.

We have already encountered this in the Inner House.

Autopilot carries many of our learned patterns. It allows us to perform ordinary tasks without constantly thinking about every movement.

Yet it may also carry responses that no longer serve us well.

And when the Hijacked Voice brings pressure, urgency and continuity, the familiar response may become even more difficult to question.

The father hears the glass break.

The Hijacked Voice arrives.

Again! She never listens! You must put a stop to this!

Pressure pushes.

Urgency rushes.

Continuity keeps the hijack alive.

Even after the glass has been cleared away, the voice may continue.

She must learn. Next time I must be firmer.

The incident has ended, but the hijack has not necessarily ended with it.

When the Gardener Begins to Notice

One evening, the father finds his daughter sitting quietly in her bedroom.

He asks whether something is wrong.

She hesitates.

Then she says something he was not expecting.

- *"I don't like telling you when I've done something wrong."*
- *"Why not?"*
- *"Because you get angry."*

He is about to defend himself.

He wants to explain how hard he works, how much he worries and how much he loves her.

He wants to remind her that discipline is important.

But something makes him hesitate.

For a moment, he listens.

And in that moment, Awareness enters.

He begins to recognise a difference between what he has been trying to teach and what his daughter has been experiencing.

- He wanted her to trust him.

  Yet she has become afraid of his reactions.

- He wanted her to speak honestly.

  Yet she has learned that silence may feel safer.
- He wanted to cultivate responsibility.

  But perhaps he has also cultivated concealment.

This recognition is uncomfortable.

- It would be easier to blame the child.
- It would be easier to say that she is too sensitive.

Instead, he carries the experience into his Inner Kitchen.

- Not to punish himself.
- Not to declare himself a bad father.

But to examine what has happened.

- He remembers his own childhood.
- He remembers the sound of his father's voice.

The nervousness he felt when something went wrong.

And for the first time, he wonders whether he has been repeating something he once promised himself he would never repeat.

The past has not determined his behaviour.

But it may have contributed to what became familiar.

Now, with Awareness, another possibility has appeared.

He can begin to cultivate something different.

The First Change

The following week, his daughter forgets to complete a task he had asked her to do.

He feels the familiar irritation.

The words are almost ready.

But this time, he notices.

He pauses.

"Tell me what happened," he says.

She looks surprised.

He listens.

They discuss what needs to be done.

There is still a consequence for the unfinished task.

Responsibility has not disappeared.

But the encounter is different.

- He has not abandoned discipline.
- He has begun to practise it differently.

One conversation will not transform their relationship.

Tomorrow, he may lose his patience again.

His daughter may still hesitate to trust him.

The familiar pattern has been growing for years.

Something different will need time to take root.

Yet a beginning has been made.

And perhaps this is one of the most important discoveries of cultivation.

We do not always need to begin by planting something new.

Sometimes we begin by noticing what is already growing.

- A father may discover fear where he intended respect.
- A partner may discover loneliness where they intended protection.
- A community may discover exclusion where it believed it had cultivated harmony.
- And a nation may discover that the conditions it created have encouraged behaviours very different from those it hoped to inspire.

The Garden does not judge our intentions.

It reveals, gradually and sometimes painfully, what has taken root.

Before asking what we wish to cultivate, perhaps we must first ask:

What am I already cultivating?

Section 2 — What We Repeatedly Water

The father had begun noticing something about himself.

His anger did not always arrive unexpectedly.

Sometimes he could sense it approaching.

- A toy left on the floor.
- A question repeated for the third time.
- A glass knocked over.

On some days, these were ordinary moments.

On others, they seemed almost unbearable.

The difference was not always in what his daughter had done.

Sometimes it was in the weather of his Inner House.

- He might be tired.
- His back might be aching.

Something at work might still be troubling him.

And before he had fully recognised what was happening, a familiar voice would begin speaking.

- How many times must I tell her?
- Why can't she be more careful?
- She needs to learn.

The voice sounded reasonable because he had heard it so often.

Sometimes it even sounded like his father's voice.

He had grown up hearing similar words.

And now, without intending to, he was repeating them.

Not because he had consciously chosen to become like his father.

But because familiarity has a way of becoming part of how we respond to life.

When Repetition Becomes Familiar

Consider something as ordinary as tying our shoelaces.

When we first learn, the task requires attention.

- We watch.
- We concentrate.
- We make mistakes.
- We try again.

Eventually, through repetition, our fingers learn the movements.

What once required deliberate thought becomes almost effortless.

We no longer need to explain every movement to ourselves.

The pattern has become familiar.

Something similar can happen with our emotional responses.

- A person who repeatedly reacts with impatience may find impatience arriving more readily.
- Someone who practises listening may gradually find it easier to listen.
- A child who repeatedly experiences encouragement may become more willing to attempt unfamiliar things.
- Another who repeatedly encounters ridicule may begin expecting humiliation, even where none is intended.

Of course, human character is more complicated than tying shoelaces.

We are shaped by temperament, relationships, circumstances, biology and countless experiences.

Yet repetition remains one of the ways patterns become established.

And this brings us to something we might call The Arc of Cultivation.

The Arc of Cultivation

Cultivation → Repetition → Familiarity → Embodiment → Character

- What we cultivate may become repeated.
- What we repeat may become familiar.
- What becomes familiar may become embodied.
- And what becomes embodied may gradually shape our character.

This arc is not a fixed law.

Not every repeated action becomes a permanent habit, and not every habit defines who we are.

Nor does the arc distinguish between what is beneficial and what is harmful.

- We may cultivate patience.
- We may also cultivate impatience.
- We may cultivate generosity.
- We may also cultivate suspicion.

The process itself does not decide what is worth growing.

That requires **Awareness**.

And even when a pattern has become deeply familiar, it need not remain unchanged.

A moment of Presence may interrupt it.

The Inner Kitchen may offer a place to examine what has happened, understand its origins and discover another way of responding.

Character is shaped over time.

But it is not necessarily finished.

Two Schools, One Intention

Let us imagine two schools.

Both have noticed that many students are becoming increasingly dependent on their mobile phones.

Both are concerned that students may be developing habits of reaching for their devices without much thought.

And both wish to help their students become less dependent on them.

But the schools choose different approaches.

School A — Removing Access

School A introduces a complete ban on mobile phones during the school day.

Students arrive without their devices.

They attend lessons, spend their breaks and have lunch without access to their phones.

The school hopes that spending several hours each day without a device will help students become less dependent on it.

- Some students may discover that they can manage comfortably without their phones.
- Others may find the restriction difficult.
- And some may simply look forward to using their devices when they return home.

The school has successfully removed access during the day.

But has it cultivated a lasting change?

Perhaps in some students.

Perhaps not in others.

We cannot know simply by observing that they are no longer using their phones at school.

The absence of a behaviour does not necessarily mean that a new capacity has developed.

School B — Learning to Choose

School B shares the same concern.

But it chooses another approach.

Mobile phones remain prohibited during lessons, while students are permitted to use them during breaks.

The school encourages students to examine their relationship with their devices.

- Why do they reach for their phones?
- Is it because they need something?
- Because they are bored?
- Because they feel uncomfortable without them?
- Or simply because reaching for the phone has become familiar?

Students are encouraged to experiment with spending some of their free time without their devices.

- They may discover that they enjoy doing so.
- They may also discover how difficult it is.
- Some begin making different choices.
- Others continue using their phones just as frequently.
- And some may need more guidance, support or boundaries than others.

School B cannot guarantee that its students will develop self-discipline.

Indeed, some may leave school having made little progress.
But those who gradually learn to recognise and manage their habits may carry that capacity beyond the school gates.
They have not merely experienced a restriction.
They have begun practising a choice.

The Fence and the Roots

It would be tempting to declare one school right and the other wrong.
But that would be too simple.
School A may provide a useful boundary.
School B may provide valuable opportunities for self-regulation.
And different students may benefit from different combinations of the two.
A student struggling with a deeply established habit may initially need a firm boundary.
Another may be ready to practise making independent choices.
Even within School B, freedom without guidance may accomplish very little.
Cultivation requires more than permission.
It requires conditions in which something can grow.
Perhaps the schools are teaching us that external boundaries and internal development are not enemies.
They serve different purposes.
A fence may protect the Garden. Roots help the plant stand when the fence is no longer there.
And perhaps the deeper question is not whether we should build fences.
It is whether we are also helping roots to grow.

When the Whole Garden Changes

The distinction becomes even more interesting when we move beyond schools.
Consider restrictions on smoking in shared public places.
A government may introduce such restrictions primarily to protect people from second-hand smoke.
The purpose is not necessarily to transform every smoker's character.
It is to change the conditions of a shared environment.
People can enter restaurants, workplaces and other enclosed public spaces without the same exposure to tobacco smoke.
That protection matters, even if some smokers continue smoking elsewhere.
The boundary has accomplished something valuable without requiring every individual to change internally.
Over time, however, changes in the environment may also influence habits and expectations.
What once seemed ordinary may become less familiar.
Children growing up in a different environment may develop different expectations about where smoking belongs.
But again, we must be careful.
A change in public behaviour does not automatically reveal a change in private habits.
Nor can we assume that every consequence of a restriction will be beneficial.
People adapt in different ways.

- Some change their behaviour.
- Some resist.
- Some find alternatives.
- And some carry the same habits into another setting.

This is why cultivation requires continuing observation.

We must ask not only what we intended, but what is actually growing.

What Are We Really Cultivating?

Let us return to the father.

One evening, he comes home with an aching back.

His daughter is trying to complete her homework.

She asks him a question.

He answers.

A few moments later, she asks again.

He feels irritation rising.

The familiar words begin forming.

Why doesn't she listen?

I've already explained it.

For a moment, he is ready to speak sharply.

But this time, he notices.

- His daughter has not necessarily done anything wrong.
- His back is hurting.
- He is tired.

And the impatience he feels is beginning to shape the way he sees her.

- He does not need to pretend that the irritation has disappeared.
- Nor does he need to condemn himself for experiencing it.

He pauses.

- Perhaps he tells her that he needs a moment to rest before helping her.
- Perhaps he sits down beside her and asks which part she finds difficult.

It is a small change.

Tomorrow, he may become impatient again.

But something important has happened.

A familiar pattern has been noticed before it became another familiar action.

He has begun cultivating a different response.

And if he repeats that response, it too may gradually become familiar.

Not because he has become a perfect father.

But because he is learning that the Garden does not change merely through what we wish to grow.

It changes through what we repeatedly nourish.

The Garden Beyond Our Own

Our habits rarely remain entirely private.

- The way we speak affects those who hear us.

- The way we respond to mistakes influences whether others feel safe enough to acknowledge their own.
- The way we exercise authority may cultivate confidence, fear, cooperation or resistance.

Sometimes we intend one thing and cultivate another.

The father wished to cultivate responsibility.

Yet his anger had begun cultivating fear.

School A wishes to reduce dependence on mobile phones.

It removes access, but must still discover whether lasting independence develops.

School B wishes to cultivate self-discipline.

It provides opportunities to practise, but cannot assume that every student will use them.

A community wishes to protect its members.

It establishes boundaries, while continuing to learn what those boundaries achieve.

In each case, intention matters.

But intention alone does not determine what grows.

Perhaps this is why Awareness is so important.

Without it, we may continue watering a familiar pattern simply because we have always done so.

With it, we may begin noticing what our actions are cultivating.

And occasionally, we may choose to water something different.

For what we cultivate within one House may eventually become part of the Garden another Pilgrim must live in.

Section 3 — The Garden We Leave for Others

There is a moment when we begin to realise that our Garden has never belonged entirely to us.

- Others have walked through it.
- Some have rested beneath its trees.
- Some have found shelter.
- Others have encountered thorns we did not know we were growing.

And long after they have continued their journeys, something of that encounter may remain with them.

We do not always know what we leave behind.

- A word spoken in anger may be remembered for years.
- A small kindness may be forgotten by the person who offered it, yet remembered by the person who received it.
- A child may carry the encouragement of a teacher into adulthood.

Another may carry the humiliation of being made to feel foolish.

Neither teacher may ever discover what became of those moments.

Yet something was cultivated.

And something travelled beyond the original Garden.

The Child Who Stopped Asking

Imagine a classroom.

A student raises his hand.

He has been reading about the subject at home and has discovered something he wishes to share.

The teacher is explaining the lesson.

The student interrupts.

- Perhaps his timing is unfortunate.
- Perhaps the information he brings is inaccurate.
- Perhaps the teacher is tired, under pressure or concerned about completing the lesson.

The teacher responds sharply.

> *"We haven't reached that part yet. Just listen."*

The student lowers his hand.

The lesson continues.

- Nothing particularly dramatic has happened.
- No punishment has been issued.
- No one leaves the classroom crying.

Yet the student remembers.

The next time he discovers something interesting, he hesitates before sharing it.

- Perhaps he eventually raises his hand again.
- Perhaps he waits until the lesson is over.
- Or perhaps he begins keeping his discoveries to himself.

We cannot know.

One reprimand does not determine a child's future.

But repeated experiences can gradually influence what a child feels safe enough to attempt.

The teacher may have intended to cultivate order.

The student may have experienced discouragement.

And so we encounter a familiar question:

> What did we intend to cultivate, and what might actually have grown?

The Garden We Inherit

None of us begins with an empty Garden.

We arrive in families, schools, neighbourhoods and communities that have already been cultivated by others.

Some of what we inherit is beautiful.

- Languages.
- Stories.
- Traditions.
- Hospitality.
- The willingness to help a neighbour.
- The understanding that an elderly person should not be forgotten.

Other inheritances are more difficult.

- Fear.
- Prejudice.
- Silence.
- Distrust.

The belief that authority must never be questioned.

The expectation that anger is how problems are resolved.

We may inherit these patterns without recognising their origins.

- A father raises his voice because that is how discipline was practised in his childhood.
- A teacher discourages questioning because questioning was discouraged when she was a student.
- A community excludes someone because exclusion has become an accepted custom.

Often, no one stops to ask why.

The pattern simply continues.

Familiarity becomes its own justification.

This is how things have always been done.

Yet the fact that something has been repeated for generations does not tell us whether it deserves to continue.

Our inheritance deserves understanding.

But understanding does not require unquestioning repetition.

The Village Festival

Consider a village preparing for its annual festival.

Families decorate their homes.

Neighbours prepare food.

Children look forward to music and celebrations.

The festival has been held for generations.

It brings people together and reminds them that they belong to something larger than themselves.

But there is one family that rarely participates.

They arrived from another region several years earlier.

Their language sounds different.

Their customs are unfamiliar.

No one has openly forbidden them from joining.

Yet invitations seldom reach their home.

When preparations begin, people simply forget to include them.

Or perhaps they remember, but assume the family would not be interested.

The festival arrives.

The streets fill with people.

Music carries through the village.

And from their window, the family watches a celebration taking place around them but not quite including them.

The village believes it is cultivating community.

For many residents, it is.

But for this family, the same celebration may deepen their sense of separation.

The difficulty is not necessarily deliberate cruelty.

It may be a pattern of belonging that has never been examined.

A Garden can offer warmth to those already inside its familiar boundaries while leaving others standing at the gate.

One year, a neighbour notices.

She walks to the family's home and invites them to join the preparations.

- Perhaps they accept.
- Perhaps they decline.
- Perhaps they need time before feeling comfortable.

The invitation does not erase years of distance.

But it introduces another possibility.

The village has not changed through a grand declaration.

One person has simply noticed someone who was being overlooked.

And acted differently.

When a Garden Becomes a Culture

- What happens within one family may influence the next generation.
- What happens repeatedly within a school may become part of its culture.
- What happens across many households and communities may gradually influence a nation.

We have already explored the Individual Garden, the Relationship Garden, the Family Garden, the Community Garden and the National Garden.

Each has its own boundaries, responsibilities and conditions.

Yet they are not isolated.

- The child who learns to listen may become the adult who listens to colleagues.
- The young person who experiences humiliation may later encounter a choice between repeating that humiliation and responding differently.
- The neighbour who welcomes an unfamiliar family may encourage others to reconsider whom they include.

None of these outcomes is guaranteed.

Human lives do not unfold in straight lines.

But the possibility of influence is always present.

And influence does not require fame, wealth or authority.

A society is shaped not only by its leaders and institutions.

It is also shaped by ordinary encounters.

- How people speak to one another.
- How they respond to mistakes.
- How they treat those who are different.
- How they behave when nobody is watching.
- How they exercise the small amounts of authority entrusted to them.

These are among the countless moments through which a shared Garden is cultivated.

The Garden We May Never See

There is something humbling about cultivation.

We may plant without witnessing the harvest.

A teacher encourages a student who has begun doubting her abilities.

Years later, that student becomes a teacher herself.

She may not remember the precise words of encouragement.

But she remembers how it felt to be taken seriously.

And perhaps, one afternoon, she offers another struggling student the same patience.

The first teacher knows nothing of this.

The original moment has travelled beyond her sight.

But we should be equally careful about the opposite possibility.

- A harsh word may also travel.
- A prejudice may be repeated.
- A fear may be passed from one generation to another.

Not everything we leave behind is something we would have chosen to give.

This is why Awareness matters.

Not because we can control every consequence of our actions.

We cannot.

But because we may become more attentive to what we are contributing.

- We can notice when our words close a Door.
- We can recognise when our behaviour makes another Pilgrim hesitant to approach.
- And sometimes we can begin repairing what we have damaged.

Even when we cannot undo the past, we may influence what happens next.

Receiving, Ripening and Giving

Throughout our lives, we receive.

- We receive care, instruction, opportunities, customs and beliefs.
- We also receive wounds, misunderstandings and patterns that may not serve us well.

Much of what arrives in our Garden was planted before we had any say in it.

But receiving is not the end of cultivation.

As we grow, we begin to examine what we have inherited.

- Some things deserve to be preserved.
- Others may need tending.
- And some may need to be released.

This is part of ripening.

Not becoming perfect.

Not claiming that we have finally understood everything.

But gradually recognising that we have choices about what we continue.

And eventually, whether we intend to or not, we give.

- We give through our actions.
- Through our words.
- Through the conditions we create for others.
- Through what we protect.
- Through what we challenge.
- And sometimes through what we quietly refuse to repeat.

Receiving → Ripening → *Giving*

Perhaps this is one of the deeper movements of the Healing Garden.

We receive a Garden shaped by others.

We spend our lives learning how to cultivate it.

And we leave something for those who come after us.

Between Receiving and Giving

We cannot choose everything that was planted in our Garden before we arrived.

Nor can we control everything that will grow after we leave.

But between receiving and giving, there is a life to be lived.

A life in which Awareness may interrupt repetition.

A life in which familiar patterns may be examined.

A life in which we may discover that something we have carried for years no longer needs to be passed on.

And perhaps, as the Garden ripens, we begin to understand that what we leave behind is not only what we have built or achieved.

It is also something of how others experienced being beside us.

Some encounters leave wounds.

Some leave warmth.

Some leave questions that take years to understand.

And sometimes, even where something painful has grown, another possibility remains.

Not every wound can be undone.

Not every relationship can be restored.

Yet a Garden may still find room for something new.

Perhaps that is where our next exploration begins.

Not with the demand that the past be forgotten.

But with the possibility that it need not determine everything that grows next.

What Will Remain?

- The father may never know how many of his words his daughter will remember.
- The teacher may never discover which students carried her encouragement into adulthood.
- The neighbour may never learn what her invitation meant to the family at the edge of the village.

We cannot measure every influence.

Nor should we burden ourselves with the belief that every encounter must become a life-changing moment.

- Sometimes a conversation is simply a conversation.
- Sometimes a mistake is simply a mistake.
- And sometimes the kindness we offer is received and forgotten.

That, too, is part of life.

Cultivation is not a demand for perfection.

It is an invitation to become more aware of what we repeatedly contribute.

Because our Garden does not end at its fence.

Something of it travels with the Pilgrims who pass through.

And they, in turn, carry something into other Gardens.

Perhaps we shall never know how far those influences reach.

But we can begin where we are.

- With the next word.

- The next response.
- The next opportunity to listen.

The next person standing at our Door.

- One word.
- One action.
- One Pilgrim.
- One drop at a time.

Pilgrim's Reflection

- When I look at the Garden I have inherited, what do I wish to preserve?
- What patterns have I continued simply because they were familiar?
- Have I ever intended to cultivate one quality while unintentionally encouraging another?
- And what might I wish the Pilgrims who encounter me to carry forward?

Not as an obligation.

Not as a demand to leave a perfect legacy.

But as a quiet invitation to notice what is growing.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

- The Garden offers seeds. The House may receive, transform and ripen them.
- Exposure is not destiny. Embodiment is not destiny.
- The paths describe movement. They do not determine destiny.
- Embodied patterns create familiar pathways. Autopilot follows them with little conscious effort. Hijack may intensify them.
- What ripens within the House may eventually enter the Garden.
- Every repetition is another drop.

Chapter 19- The Fruits of Ripening



What Has Ripened?

A Garden does not stop growing when a fruit appears.

For within the fruit may be another beginning.

- A seed.
- A possibility.

Something that may travel beyond the Garden in which it first grew.

Throughout our journey, we have explored what enters the House, what we cultivate through repetition, and how familiar patterns may gradually become part of the way we live.

Some things grow through deliberate care.

Others develop without our noticing.

And sometimes, long after an experience has passed, we discover that something has quietly ripened within us.

- But what has grown?
- What fruit has emerged?

- And what might its seeds carry into another Garden?

Perhaps these are the questions that now invite our attention.

Section 1 — When the Garden Bears Fruit

A Pilgrim may spend years cultivating something without knowing what will eventually grow.

A child repeatedly receives encouragement.

Over time, confidence may develop.

Another child repeatedly experiences humiliation.

- Perhaps fear grows.
- Perhaps withdrawal.
- Perhaps compassion for others who suffer.
- Or perhaps several of these grow together.

The same experience does not produce the same fruit in every House.

Nor does the House always produce what the Pilgrim intended.

Throughout our journey, we have encountered the Arc of Cultivation:

Cultivation → Repetition → Familiarity → Embodiment → Character

But character is not a final destination.

What becomes embodied influences how the Pilgrim lives. And how the Pilgrim lives may become part of another Pilgrim's Garden.

- A father who has learned to pause before anger may offer his child a different experience of disagreement.
- A teacher who has discovered patience may create room for a hesitant student to speak.
- A Pilgrim who has known rejection may become more attentive to someone standing alone.

None of these outcomes is guaranteed.

Yet each reveals something important.

What ripens within the House does not necessarily remain there.

The Fruit and Its Seeds

Consider a fruit growing on a tree.
It has emerged through a relationship with soil, water, sunlight, weather and time.
When it ripens, it may nourish the one who receives it.

But within that fruit are seeds.

- Seeds that may travel.
- Seeds that may find another patch of soil.
- Seeds that may begin another cycle of growth.

Perhaps our inner cultivation follows a similar movement.

- Compassion may become an act of kindness towards another Pilgrim.
- Understanding may become a patient conversation.
- Discernment may become a boundary that protects without humiliating.

- And forgiveness may mean that an old hurt is no longer carried into every new relationship.

Yet not every fruit is sweet.

- Suspicion may enter a relationship that has offered no reason for distrust.
- Resentment may shape a conversation.
- Fear may become a restriction placed upon another Pilgrim.

The fruit is not always sweet. And not every seed should be planted again.

The Cycle of Cultivation

We may now recognise a wider movement:

Garden → House → Cultivation → Ripening → Embodiment → Garden

The Garden offers experiences.

The House receives them.

Through repetition, reflection and lived experience, something may develop.

- What develops may become familiar.
- What becomes familiar may gradually enter the way the Pilgrim lives.

And through words, choices, habits and relationships, something of that inner life enters the Garden again.

The cycle continues.

But it is not a closed circle.

For each House is different.

What enters one House may not produce the same fruit in another.

And sometimes Awareness interrupts what would otherwise have continued.

A Pilgrim may recognise an inherited pattern and choose not to cultivate it further.

- What entered as anger may eventually give rise to understanding.
- What entered as humiliation may deepen compassion.
- What entered as fear may lead to discernment.

Or perhaps the original pattern continues for a time.

There is no guaranteed transformation.

The paths describe movement. They do not determine destiny.

More Than One Fruit May Grow

A Garden rarely produces only one kind of fruit.

- A difficult childhood may leave memories of hurt alongside experiences of friendship, learning, kindness and belonging.
- A relationship may cultivate love and disappointment.
- A loss may bring grief alongside a deeper appreciation of what mattered.

The Pilgrim does not need to declare the entire Garden beautiful because flowers grew there.

Nor must every flower be forgotten because thorns were present.

Some experiences leave lessons.

Others leave wounds.

Some leave both.

And sometimes understanding comes much later.

The Fruit Is Not the End

Eventually, the Pilgrim may discover that something within the House has changed.

- A familiar reaction no longer arrives quite so quickly.
- A boundary becomes easier to hold.
- Compassion appears where once there was only judgement.
- Or an old pattern becomes visible for the first time.

For a fruit does not merely mark what has grown.

It may also carry what grows next.

And what grows next may travel further than we imagine.

- From one Pilgrim to another.
- From parent to child.
- From one generation to the next.
- From one community to another.

Even between nations.

A hurt received in one Garden need not become a hurt planted in another.

This is not always possible.

Nor does it happen simply because we wish it.

But the possibility matters.

For perhaps the deepest significance of ripening is not merely what has changed within us.

It is what we may now offer to the world beyond our House.

The fruit nourishes the Pilgrim. The seeds may nourish another Garden.

And so the journey continues.

Not necessarily by repeating what was received.

But through the possibility that what leaves the House may be different from what entered.

Section 2 — The Many Fruits of Ripening

Part 1

A Garden rarely produces only one kind of fruit.

- Some fruits are sweet.
- Others are bitter.
- Some nourish the Pilgrim.
- Others reveal that something within the House may need further attention.

And sometimes the same tree bears different fruit across different seasons.

Perhaps this is true of our inner lives too.

- A Pilgrim may cultivate patience in one relationship and discover impatience in another.
- Someone who is generous with strangers may struggle to offer the same generosity at home.
- And a person who has forgiven one hurt may find another much harder to loosen.

This does not necessarily make the Pilgrim inconsistent.

It reminds us that what ripens is influenced by what has been cultivated, where it has grown, and the weather it has encountered.

The Fruits That Nourish

Consider compassion.

A Pilgrim encounters someone who is struggling.

Perhaps they remember a time when they too felt misunderstood, excluded or frightened.

Something within them recognises the experience.

They pause.

They listen.

They offer a little more patience than they might once have offered.

Compassion has begun to influence how they live.

But compassion does not always emerge from suffering.

It may also grow through affection, example, curiosity and kindness.

- A child who repeatedly encounters patience may learn to offer patience.
- A young person whose questions are welcomed may develop curiosity.
- Someone who has been trusted may become more willing to trust.

And there are other fruits.

- Discernment may ripen when the Pilgrim learns to recognise what is helpful and what is harmful.
- Courage may grow through taking small steps despite uncertainty.
- Contentment may develop as the Pilgrim becomes less dependent on circumstances unfolding according to personal wishes.
- Acceptance may emerge when resistance to what cannot be changed begins to soften.
- Forgiveness may quietly ripen when what we hold against another begins to loosen.
- Peace may become more familiar when not every disturbance demands an immediate response.

These fruits may nourish one another.

But each has its own character.

- Compassion does not require the Pilgrim to abandon a boundary.
- Acceptance does not mean approving what happened.
- Contentment does not mean that nothing needs to change.
- And forgiveness does not require reconciliation.

Each fruit may ripen differently. None needs to be forced.

When the Fruit Is Bitter

Imagine a child who repeatedly hears that strangers cannot be trusted.

Perhaps the warning comes from loving adults who believe they are offering protection.

Over time, suspicion becomes familiar.

Eventually, the child may approach unfamiliar people with caution, even when there is no immediate reason for fear.

What began as an attempt to protect may have cultivated distrust.

Or consider a Pilgrim who has repeatedly experienced criticism.

A harmless question may sound like an accusation.

A suggestion may feel like rejection.
The House has become familiar with a particular interpretation.
And that interpretation may begin shaping relationships in the Garden.
Other bitter fruits may develop.

- Resentment.
- Prejudice.
- Contempt.
- The need to control.
- The expectation of betrayal.

Yet we should be careful.
These responses are not always deliberately cultivated.
Some began as ways of enduring difficult circumstances.
Silence may once have prevented further humiliation.
Distrust may have developed where trust was repeatedly broken.
What once helped the Pilgrim survive may later become a pattern worth examining.
The question is not whether the Pilgrim was wrong to develop it.
Perhaps the more useful question is:

Does this pattern still serve the life I am living today?

And another may follow:

What am I continuing to cultivate through this familiar response?

Part 2

When Different Fruits Grow from the Same Experience

Two children attend the same school.
Both experience repeated teasing.
One becomes increasingly guarded.
The other becomes particularly attentive to children who are excluded.
Yet the first may also develop compassion.
And the second may carry hidden insecurity.
Neither child's experience can be reduced to a single outcome.
One may eventually reproduce the teasing they experienced.
Another may decide never to treat someone that way.
And a third may do both at different moments.
This challenges a familiar assumption:

Those who have been hurt will inevitably hurt others.

Some repeat harmful patterns.
Many do not.
Exposure is not destiny. Embodiment is not destiny.
The House is not merely a place where experiences are received.
It is also a place where familiar patterns may be recognised, questioned and changed.

The Fruit We Did Not Intend to Grow

Sometimes the most surprising fruit is one we never deliberately cultivated.

Consider a Pilgrim who spends years caring for an elderly parent.

The journey may begin with a sense of responsibility.

- Meals must be prepared.
- Appointments arranged.
- Medicines remembered.
- Difficult days navigated.

Some days bring tenderness.

Others bring exhaustion, frustration or sadness.

The Pilgrim may not regard these responsibilities as cultivation.

Yet something may gradually develop.

- Perhaps patience.
- Perhaps practical wisdom.
- Perhaps a deeper understanding of vulnerability.
- Or perhaps resentment and fatigue that have gone unattended.

Sometimes several of these grow together.

Then one day, while helping another person, the Pilgrim notices something different.

- They know when to assist.
- When to wait.
- When to offer reassurance.
- And when to allow another person to manage independently.

Something has become part of how they live.

The fruit was not planned.

It emerged through experience.

But we must not assume that hardship always produces wisdom.

- Some experiences leave the Pilgrim depleted.
- Some are simply painful.

And no one is obliged to discover a gift within suffering.

Ripening is a possibility, not a debt that suffering demands we repay.

When a Fruit Needs Another Season

Sometimes a fruit appears before it has fully ripened.

Consider forgiveness.

A Pilgrim has been hurt.

They understand why the other person behaved as they did.

Perhaps they even feel compassion.

And so they say:

I forgive you.

Yet the words do not necessarily describe what is happening within the House.

The Pilgrim may still carry a grievance against the person who hurt them.

- Perhaps they continue rehearsing old arguments.

- Perhaps resentment repeatedly returns.
- Or perhaps they have spoken the words because they believe forgiveness is expected of them.

Understanding another person's behaviour is not necessarily forgiveness.

Nor is compassion.

And neither is the declaration itself.

But another possibility exists.

The Pilgrim may never declare forgiveness at all.

Over time, something begins to change.

The memory remains.

The wrongdoing is still recognised.

Yet the grievance once carried against the other person begins to loosen.

Perhaps forgiveness has quietly ripened without the Pilgrim recognising when it happened.

The words did not make it happen.

Nor was a declaration necessary.

Like other fruits, forgiveness may develop without the Pilgrim consciously cultivating it.

And sometimes the Pilgrim needs something else.

- Perhaps discernment.
- Perhaps courage.
- Perhaps a boundary.

We need not force a particular fruit to grow simply because someone has told us it is the right one.

The Fruit and the Weather

Even when something has become familiar, it does not remain unchanged in every circumstance.

- A patient Pilgrim may become irritable when exhausted.
- Someone who usually responds with compassion may struggle when frightened.
- A person who has developed confidence may feel uncertain in an unfamiliar environment.

The weather of the House matters.

Fatigue, illness, grief and pressure may influence which familiar responses become easier to follow.

And when Hijack occupies the rocking chair, it may amplify a response that Presence would otherwise have recognised.

- A harsh word may escape.
- An old suspicion may return.
- A boundary may become unnecessarily rigid.

But one difficult moment does not erase everything that has been cultivated.

Nor does one compassionate act prove that compassion has become embodied.

We are looking at patterns across a life, not judging the Pilgrim by a single moment.

Perhaps Awareness illuminates what is happening.

Perhaps Presence returns to the rocking chair.

The Pilgrim may recognise the Hijacked Voice without immediately silencing it.

And sometimes, within that recognition, another response becomes possible.

The Fruit Does Not Have to Be Perfect

Perhaps we have become too accustomed to imagining ripening as perfection.

A ripe fruit may carry marks from the weather.

- Its shape may be irregular.
- Its sweetness may vary.

Yet it may still nourish.

So too with the Pilgrim.

- Compassion may have ripened alongside impatience.
- Courage may be present alongside fear.
- Acceptance may coexist with grief.
- And forgiveness may have quietly emerged while the Body still remembers danger.

These are not necessarily contradictions.

They are part of living.

Ripening does not make the Pilgrim perfect. It may make another way of living more available.

Among the many fruits that may emerge, one has been discussed, praised, misunderstood and sometimes demanded for generations.

Forgiveness.

- Some consider it a duty.
- Others see it as a gift.
- Some search for it.
- Others discover it has already happened.

And sometimes what ripens within one House influences an entire family, community or nation.

An old hurt may be passed from one generation to another.

But so may the possibility of no longer passing it onwards.

Before exploring that possibility, however, we must ask a more fundamental question.

What is forgiveness?

And must the Pilgrim consciously do anything for it to happen?

Section 3 — Forgiveness: One Fruit Among Many

Forgiveness is a familiar word.

We hear it in religious teachings, family conversations, relationships and moments of reconciliation.

- We are encouraged to forgive those who hurt us.
- Sometimes we are told that forgiveness is necessary for healing.
- Or that we must forgive before we can find peace.

But perhaps we have been too quick to tell the Pilgrim what to do without first asking what forgiveness actually is.

And perhaps we have been looking for it in the wrong place.

What Is Forgiveness?

We often speak of forgiveness as something we give.

I forgive you.

But does saying these words mean forgiveness has happened?

Consider love.

We may say I love you without love being present.

And we may love someone deeply without ever speaking those words.

Perhaps forgiveness is similar.

A Pilgrim may sincerely declare forgiveness while still carrying a grievance against the person who hurt them.

The Hijacked Voice may continue replaying the incident.

- *Remember what they did.*
- *Remember how they treated you.*
- *Don't let them get away with it.*

The incident may have ended long ago, yet its echoes continue moving through the House.

But sometimes something begins to change.

- The memory arrives.
- The wrongdoing is still recognised.

Yet the grievance once carried against the other Pilgrim begins to loosen.

- Perhaps the old arguments become quieter.
- Perhaps resentment no longer returns with the same intensity.
- Perhaps Presence becomes more available within the House.

The Pilgrim may not have consciously decided to forgive.

They may never have spoken to the person responsible.

They may not even have noticed the change.

Until one day, a familiar memory arrives.

The hurt is remembered.

But something in the Pilgrim's relationship to the person who caused it has changed.

What was once held against them no longer carries quite the same weight.

Perhaps forgiveness has begun to ripen.

Within our Living Landscape, we may understand forgiveness in this way:

Forgiveness is the loosening of the grievance we carry against someone who has hurt us, without denying the harm, excusing the wrongdoing or removing responsibility.

This does not mean that forgiveness always happens gradually.

- Sometimes the change may be sudden.
- Sometimes it may take years.
- And sometimes it may unfold so quietly that the Pilgrim only recognises it afterwards.

Forgiveness need not begin with a decision.

Nor does it require a declaration.

And the quieting of the Hijacked Voice is not, by itself, proof that forgiveness has occurred.

- A Pilgrim may find peace without forgiving.
- They may accept what happened without forgiving.
- They may simply decide to continue living without giving the experience the same attention.

These are meaningful changes too.

But they are not necessarily forgiveness.

Forgiveness concerns something more particular:

what the Pilgrim continues to hold against the person who caused the hurt.

Like love, forgiveness is not made real simply by the words we use.

It may gradually become recognisable in how we feel, respond and live.

What Forgiveness Does Not Change

Forgiveness may change how the Pilgrim carries a hurt.

But it does not change what happened.

The memory remains.

A betrayal may still be remembered.

An injustice may still require acknowledgement.

And the Body may continue recognising situations that once brought danger.

Forgiveness is not forgetting.

Nor does forgiveness make a harmful action acceptable.

A Pilgrim may understand why someone behaved cruelly without excusing the cruelty.

Compassion may grow without removing responsibility.

Accountability, protection and justice may still be necessary.

Forgiveness is not excusing.

And forgiveness does not require two Pilgrims to walk together again.

Trust may have been broken.

The relationship may no longer be safe or nourishing.

One Pilgrim may have forgiven while the other has never acknowledged what happened.

The Door may remain guarded.

The Garden Gate may remain closed.

Forgiveness is not reconciliation.

These distinctions matter because forgiveness concerns what has loosened within the House.

- Forgetting concerns memory.
- Excusing concerns our judgement of what happened.
- Reconciliation concerns the relationship between Pilgrims.

They are connected, but they are not the same.

And perhaps this is what makes forgiveness such an unusual fruit.

The Pilgrim may forgive without changing the past, abandoning a boundary or reopening a relationship.

Forgiveness changes how the Pilgrim carries what happened. It does not change what happened, nor does it determine what must happen next.

Individual and Collective Forgiveness

Forgiveness may ripen within an individual House.

But can something similar happen within a collective Garden?

Consider a community that has experienced injustice.

The event may have ended many years ago.

Yet its memory continues travelling through generations.

- Stories are told.
- Experiences are remembered.
- Sometimes the stories preserve understanding.
- Sometimes they preserve resentment.
- And sometimes the Collective Hijack repeatedly amplifies the hurt, keeping old hostility alive.

The past remains present, even among Pilgrims who did not personally experience it.

But something may begin to change.

- The stories may be told differently.
- Conversations may become less hostile.

People may begin recognising one another beyond the grievances they have inherited.

- The wrongdoing is not forgotten.
- The injustice is not excused.
- And accountability may still be necessary.

Yet the grievance that once shaped the relationship between communities may gradually loosen.

Perhaps something resembling forgiveness is beginning to ripen within the shared Garden.

But collective forgiveness is more complicated than individual forgiveness.

A collective does not possess a single Mind, Emotional Self or Body.

It contains many Pilgrims, each with their own Inner House.

- Some may have forgiven.
- Others may still carry profound hurt.
- Some may never forgive.
- And others may simply wish to live peacefully without revisiting the past.

A collective Garden may become less hostile without every Pilgrim forgiving.

Indeed, a reduction in hostility does not necessarily mean forgiveness has occurred.

- It may reflect greater understanding.
- A commitment to peaceful coexistence.
- New boundaries.
- Or a decision not to pass inherited grievances to another generation.

These are meaningful changes in their own right.

Perhaps collective forgiveness is best understood not as a single declaration, but as a gradual change in how grievances are carried, expressed and passed between Pilgrims.

It does not require everyone to arrive at the same place.

Nor does it require those who remain hurt to surrender their memories.

The past may continue to be remembered without continually being used to renew hostility.

And perhaps the simplest expression is:

The memory may travel from one generation to another.
The Hijack need not travel with it.

When Forgiveness Quietly Ripens

We began by asking what forgiveness is.

Perhaps we can now recognise why the answer is not always found in a declaration.

A Pilgrim may say:

I forgive you.

Another may never speak them.

Neither declaration nor silence tells us everything about what is happening within the House.

For forgiveness concerns something deeper than the words themselves.

- The memory may remain.
- The wrongdoing may still be recognised.
- The Body may still remember danger.
- The Door may remain guarded.

Yet the grievance once carried against the other Pilgrim may gradually loosen.

Perhaps there was no particular moment when forgiveness happened.

No announcement.

No conscious attempt to cultivate it.

One day, the Pilgrim simply discovers that something is different.

They remember what happened.

But they no longer hold it against the other person in quite the same way.

Forgiveness may not always be something we consciously give. Sometimes it is something we discover has already ripened.

One Fruit Among Many

Yet forgiveness remains one fruit among many.

The Pilgrim may also cultivate compassion, courage, discernment, acceptance and contentment.

These fruits may grow together.

- Sometimes one makes room for another.
- Sometimes they develop independently.

And none should be demanded as proof that the Pilgrim has healed.

A Pilgrim may find peace without forgiving.

They may cultivate compassion without reconciliation.

They may establish a boundary without resentment.

And they may continue flourishing even while a grievance remains unresolved.

The Garden is not measured by whether every fruit has ripened.

Perhaps what matters is not whether the Pilgrim can pronounce the words *I forgive you.*

Nor whether every painful memory has become quiet.

But whether the Pilgrim is free to continue living, learning and growing, even when something remains unfinished.

And perhaps this brings us to another question.

If forgiveness may ripen without a conscious decision, why does hurt sometimes remain long after the event has ended?

To explore this, we must look more closely at the Mind, the Emotional Self and the Body.

Section 4 — Why Does Hurt Take Time to Settle?

An experience may last only a few moments.

- A harsh remark.
- A betrayal.
- An unexpected rejection.
- A frightening encounter.

Yet its effects may remain long after the event has ended.

The Pilgrim may understand what happened.

- They may recognise that the danger has passed.
- They may even have forgiven the person responsible.

And still, something within the House responds.

A familiar voice brings back the memory.

- The chest tightens.
- The stomach becomes unsettled.
- The Body grows watchful.

Why does this happen?

Perhaps because hurt is not experienced in only one part of us.

The Mind, the Emotional Self and the Body may each carry something different from the same experience.

And they do not always settle at the same time.

The First Layer — The Mind: Understanding

The Mind seeks to understand.

- *What happened?*
- *Why did they behave that way?*
- *Was I responsible?*
- *Could I have prevented it?*

Sometimes understanding arrives quickly.

The Pilgrim recognises that another person's behaviour arose from their own difficulties.

- Perhaps the criticism was unfair.
- Perhaps the betrayal reflected choices beyond the Pilgrim's control.
- Perhaps the rejection was never a measure of the Pilgrim's worth.

Such understanding may bring clarity.

But understanding does not necessarily settle everything.

The Pilgrim may know that they were not responsible and still feel ashamed.

- They may understand why someone behaved cruelly and still feel hurt.
- They may recognise that an experience belongs to the past while the Body continues responding as though something similar could happen again.

The Mind may understand what happened without every part of the House having settled.

The Second Layer — The Emotional Self: Feeling

Sometimes an emotion appears unexpectedly.

A remark, a gesture or a familiar situation may awaken an emotional pattern cultivated long ago.

The Pilgrim may not consciously remember the original experience.

Yet the feeling arrives.

- Perhaps shame.
- Perhaps fear.
- Perhaps sadness.

The present moment has touched something familiar.

The old experience need not be happening again for an old emotional pattern to become active.

And understanding why the feeling has appeared does not necessarily make it disappear.

The Emotional Self may need something different from the Mind.

- Perhaps acknowledgement.
- Perhaps expression.
- Perhaps time.

And sometimes the feeling simply needs to be recognised without being hurried towards an explanation.

An emotion may remain even after the grievance against another person has loosened.

This does not necessarily mean forgiveness has failed.

The Third Layer — The Body: Protection

Consider a cat resting peacefully in a Garden.

One afternoon, another animal attacks it.

The encounter lasts only a few moments.

The danger passes.

The Garden becomes quiet again.

Yet the following day, the cat approaches the same place cautiously.

- Perhaps it avoids the corner where the attack occurred.
- Perhaps an unexpected movement causes it to retreat.

The cat is not necessarily holding resentment.

It is responding to what its Body has learned.

Something similar may happen within the Pilgrim.

- A person who has repeatedly experienced shouting may become tense when someone raises their voice.
- Someone who has experienced betrayal may become watchful when familiar circumstances arise.

The Body may respond before the Mind has had time to examine the situation.

When danger is perceived, the Body may prepare to **fight, flee or freeze.**

- The heart may beat faster.
- Muscles may tighten.
- Breathing may change.

These responses can begin before the Pilgrim has consciously understood what is happening.

The Body is attempting to protect.

But a protective response does not always mean that danger is present now.

Sometimes the Body is responding to something familiar from the past.

And sometimes the danger remains real.

The Pilgrim needs room to recognise the difference.

The Body may sound the alarm.

The Hijacked Voice may amplify it.

But the alarm and its amplification are not the same.

Presence may help the Pilgrim recognise what is happening without immediately being carried away by it.

The Body Belongs to the Garden

- The Mind may have understood what happened.
- The Emotional Self may have begun to settle.
- Forgiveness may even have quietly ripened.

Yet the Body may still respond.

Why?

Perhaps our Living Landscape offers us a way of understanding.

The Body belongs to the Garden.

And like everything within the Garden, it has its own rhythms.

Consider a seed.

We may know exactly what it needs.

- Soil.
- Water.
- Sunlight.
- A suitable environment.

Yet knowing does not make it grow overnight.

It must germinate, establish roots and develop through its seasons.

Perhaps one day it becomes a tree and bears fruit.

We cannot explain a seed into becoming a tree.

Nor can we command it to ripen before its season.

Understanding may arrive in a moment.

Growth unfolds through time and experience.

Perhaps the Body is similar.

Consider a Pilgrim who grew up in a household where shouting often preceded humiliation.

Years later, the Pilgrim lives in a peaceful home.

- The Mind understands that the circumstances have changed.
- The Emotional Self may have found greater ease.

The Pilgrim may even have forgiven those responsible.

Yet an unexpected raised voice may still cause the Body to tense.

- The heart beats faster.
- The muscles tighten.

The Pilgrim becomes watchful.

Something familiar has been activated.

This does not mean forgiveness has failed.

Nor does it necessarily mean that the Hijacked Voice has returned.

The Body may sound the alarm without the Hijack amplifying it.

And just as the Body learned caution through experience, it may gradually learn something different through new experiences.

- A disagreement that does not lead to humiliation.
- A raised voice that does not become threatening.
- A difficult conversation that ends with understanding.

One experience may not be enough.

But over time, a different familiarity may begin to develop.

Like a seed establishing roots, the Body may gradually become more accustomed to safety.

This does not mean every bodily response will disappear.

Nor does it mean the Body must always take longer than the Mind or Emotional Self.

Each may settle at a different pace.

And if danger is still present, the Body's caution may be entirely appropriate.

The Pilgrim does not need to force the Body into feeling safe.

Perhaps they need to recognise what it has learned, what is happening now, and what new experiences may gradually become familiar.

The Mind may understand through reflection. The Body may learn through living.

And perhaps one day, when an old protective response appears, the Pilgrim will no longer become frustrated.

Instead, they may recognise:

Ah, my Body belongs to the Garden.

It learned through experience.

And through experience, it may learn something new.

I need not hurry its seasons.

The Body is not refusing to heal.

It may simply be learning at its own pace.

And sometimes, while the Body is still learning, forgiveness has already quietly ripened.

The Three Layers of Hurt

Not every experience of hurt touches all three layers in the same way.

- The Mind may seek understanding.

  Why did this happen? What does it mean?
- The Emotional Self may carry sadness, fear or disappointment.

  Why does it still hurt, even though I understand?
- And the Body may develop a protective response.

  Could it happen again? Do I need to be careful?

One layer may settle quickly.

Another may need more time.

And sometimes a layer has little to settle at all.

There is no compulsory order.

The Mind seeks understanding. The Emotional Self carries the feeling. The Body remembers danger and protects.

Each may respond in its own way.

Each may settle in its own time.

And what has already settled need not be made to heal again.

The Pilgrim does not need every part of the House to arrive at the same place before continuing to live.

When the Hijacked Voice Keeps the Hurt Alive

Now we arrive at another possibility.

Sometimes the danger has passed.

- The Mind understands what happened.
- The Body may gradually be learning that the present is different.

Yet the hurt continues to be renewed.

A memory arrives.

And the Hijacked Voice begins:

- *Remember what they said.*
- *They had no right to treat you that way.*
- *What if they do it again?*
- *You should have answered differently.*

The Pilgrim may find themselves replaying an old conversation.

- Imagining what they should have said.
- Anticipating another confrontation.
- Rehearsing arguments that may never happen.

The original event has ended.

But the Hijacked Voice continues to amplify its echoes.

The event happened once. The Hijack may make the Pilgrim experience its echoes repeatedly.

This is where our familiar description becomes useful:

Pressure pushes. Urgency rushes. Continuity keeps the hijack alive.

The Hijacked Voice may create pressure to respond, urgency to resolve, and a continuing demand to revisit the experience.

But we must be careful not to call every unwanted memory or recurring feeling a Hijack.

- Some memories arise involuntarily.
- Some feelings need attention.
- And some dangers remain real.

The distinction lies not simply in whether the memory returns, but in what happens when it does.

- Does the Pilgrim have room to recognise the experience?
- Or is the Hijacked Voice repeatedly demanding that the hurt be renewed?

When Presence occupies the rocking chair, the Pilgrim may begin to see the difference.

- The memory may remain.
- The Body may still respond.

But the Pilgrim need not follow every argument the Hijacked Voice offers.

And even when Hijack temporarily occupies the rocking chair, Awareness may help the Pilgrim recognise what is happening.

Recognition does not always bring immediate relief.

But it may make another response possible.

Where Does Forgiveness Fit?

We can now revisit our understanding of forgiveness.

- The Mind may understand.
- The Emotional Self may still feel sadness.
- The Body may remain cautious.

And yet forg**iveness may have ripened.**

How?

Because forgiveness does not require every feeling or protective response to disappear.

It concerns the loosening of the grievance the Pilgrim carries against someone who has hurt them.

The Pilgrim may remember what happened without holding the same grievance against the person responsible

- They may recognise the wrongdoing without needing to rehearse the argument.
- They may protect themselves without wishing to punish.
- And sometimes they may discover that forgiveness has already happened.

Not because the Mind explained everything.
Not because the Body forgot.
Not because sadness disappeared.

And not simply because the Hijacked Voice became quieter.

For a Pilgrim may find peace without forgiving.

And someone who has forgiven may still experience an occasional Hijack.

Memory recalls. The Body protects. The Hijack amplifies. Presence sees.

These are different movements within the House.

Forgiveness concerns something more particular.

What the Pilgrim continues to hold against the person who caused the hurt.

Perhaps this is why forgiveness can be difficult to recognise.

We may look for the disappearance of pain.

When what has actually changed is our relationship with the person who caused it.

- The Pilgrim may still carry the memory.
- The Emotional Self may still feel sadness.
- The Body may still recognise danger.

But the grievance may no longer be carried in quite the same way.

Forgiveness does not require every part of the House to become quiet.

And perhaps this brings us to the question that so often accompanies forgiveness:

Must I forgive?

Section 5 — Must I Forgive?

There is a question that many Pilgrims encounter after being hurt.

- Sometimes it arrives quietly.
- Sometimes it is asked by family, friends or those who wish to help.
- And sometimes it comes from within the Pilgrim's own House.

Must I forgive?

- Perhaps the person who caused the hurt has apologised.
- Perhaps they have not.
- Perhaps the relationship has ended.

Or perhaps the two Pilgrims continue living beneath the same roof, meeting at the same table, or walking through the same Garden.

The question may remain.

- *Should I forgive?*
- *Would I feel better if I did?*
- *Does holding on to what happened mean I have failed to heal?*

Before answering, perhaps we should understand what we are asking of the wounded Pilgrim.

For forgiveness is not simply a decision made by the Mind.

- It may involve the **Emotional Self**.
- It may involve the **Body**.
- It may involve **memories**, trust, expectations and the ways in which an experience has become familiar within the House.

And sometimes, before forgiveness can even be considered, something else needs attention.

The wound itself.

Before Forgiveness, What Needs Tending?

Imagine a Pilgrim who has been deeply hurt by someone they trusted.

- Perhaps harsh words were spoken.
- Perhaps a confidence was betrayed.
- Perhaps there was humiliation, rejection or abandonment.
- Or perhaps the hurt was physical.

The other Pilgrim approaches.

I am sorry.

- The apology may be sincere.
- The Mind may recognise that sincerity.
- The Pilgrim may even appreciate the courage it took to acknowledge what happened.

But something within the House remains unsettled.

- The Emotional Self may still carry sadness, anger or disappointment.
- The Body may remain tense when the other person approaches.
- A familiar voice, movement or expression may awaken the memory of what happened.

And the Pilgrim may wonder:

Why am I still feeling this way when they have already apologised?

Perhaps because an apology and the tending of a wound are not the same movement.

An apology may acknowledge what happened.
It cannot automatically undo what happened.

- A physical injury may require treatment and recovery.
- An emotional wound may need expression, companionship or time.
- A psychological wound may have affected confidence, trust or the Pilgrim's sense of safety.
- And sometimes these wounds are intertwined.
- The Mind may understand an apology long before the Emotional Self has softened.
- The Emotional Self may wish to move forward while the Body continues preparing for danger.

None of this means that the apology was meaningless.

Nor does it mean that the Pilgrim is unwilling to forgive.

It may simply mean that something still needs care.

The Gardener does not demand fruit from a wounded tree.
The tree may need tending.

- Its branches may need protection.

- Its roots may need nourishment.

Perhaps it will not bear fruit this season.

Perhaps it will need several seasons.

The Gardener does not hurry the harvest.

They attend to what needs care.

And when the tree is ready, fruit may come.

Or perhaps it will not.

Either way, the tree remains worthy of care

The Gardener first attends to what needs tending.

And even after the wound has received care, forgiveness is not guaranteed.

Healing and forgiveness are companions, but they are not the same.

- A Pilgrim may heal without forgiving.
- Another may forgive while still healing.
- And sometimes, forgiveness may quietly ripen alongside the tending of the wound.

There is no compulsory order. Nor is there a compulsory harvest.

When an Apology Opens the Way

Yet we should not overlook something equally important.

Sometimes forgiveness comes easily.

A Pilgrim may be hurt by a careless remark, an unfortunate misunderstanding or an inconsiderate action.

The other person recognises what happened.

They approach without waiting to be confronted.

I am sorry. I should not have spoken to you that way.

And something changes.

The injured Pilgrim feels acknowledged.

The need to explain or defend the hurt may disappear.

- Perhaps they smile.
- Perhaps they embrace.
- Perhaps they simply continue their conversation.

Forgiveness may arrive almost immediately.

But this possibility is not limited to minor hurts.

Even when the wound is considerable, an early and sincere apology may make forgiveness easier.

The injured Pilgrim has not been left wondering whether the other person understands what happened.

They have not had to struggle to obtain an acknowledgement.

The original hurt has not necessarily been accompanied by days or weeks of silence, uncertainty or apparent indifference.

Sometimes the timing of an apology matters greatly.

Imagine two Pilgrims who have had a painful disagreement.

One says something deeply hurtful.

Soon afterwards, they recognise what they have done.

They return.

- *What I said was wrong.*
- *I understand that I hurt you.*
- *I am sorry.*

The wound may still need tending.

Trust may still need attention.

But the apology may have prevented another hurt from gathering around the first.

- The hurt of being ignored.
- The hurt of having one's experience dismissed.
- The hurt of wondering whether the relationship matters to the other person.

An early apology cannot guarantee forgiveness.

But it may create favourable conditions in which forgiveness can ripen.

And this brings us to an interesting relationship.

One Pilgrim apologises for the hurt they have caused.

The other may forgive the hurt they have received.

Two different movements.

Two different responsibilities.

Sometimes they meet almost immediately.

Sometimes they remain far apart.

- The Pilgrim who apologises cannot command forgiveness.
- And the Pilgrim who has been hurt cannot command a sincere apology.

Each movement must remain free.

When Apology and Forgiveness Become a Cycle

But there is another possibility.

One that requires particular care.

Imagine a relationship in which one Pilgrim repeatedly hurts another.

An argument becomes cruel.

An apology follows.

The injured Pilgrim forgives.

For a while, things improve.

Then the hurt returns.

Another apology.

Another forgiveness.

And another hurt.

Gradually, a pattern develops.

Hurt → Apology → Forgiveness → Hurt → Apology → Forgiveness

At first, the apologies may bring genuine relief.

The injured Pilgrim may believe that the other person has understood.

This time things will be different.

And perhaps, for a while, they are.

But when the same harmful behaviour repeatedly returns, the apology begins to occupy a different place in the relationship.

Instead of marking a meaningful change, it may become part of the familiar cycle.

The Pilgrim who has been hurt may begin anticipating what comes next.

- The Mind remembers earlier promises.
- The Emotional Self carries disappointment.
- The Body may become watchful, even during periods of apparent calm.

And yet another apology arrives.

- *I am sorry.*
- *It will never happen again.*

Perhaps the words are sincere in that moment.
But sincerity alone does not prevent the next injury.

An apology acknowledges responsibility.
Changed behaviour demonstrates whether that responsibility is being sustained.

In some relationships, this repeating pattern may become abusive, particularly when it involves intimidation, humiliation, coercion, threats, violence or control.

Not every repeated disagreement is abuse.

But when harm becomes a pattern, especially where one Pilgrim lives with fear or diminished freedom, we must not mistake repeated apologies for lasting change.

And we must be particularly careful about what we ask of the injured Pilgrim.

They have apologised. Why can't you forgive?

- *Everyone makes mistakes.*
- *You must learn to let go.*

Such words may be offered with good intentions.

But they may place another burden upon someone who is already carrying considerable hurt.

The Pilgrim may begin believing that the difficulty lies in their inability to forgive rather than in the behaviour that continues to cause harm.

Perhaps the question needs to change.

Not:

Why have I not forgiven?

But:

- *Why does this keep happening?*
- *Are my boundaries being respected?*
- *Am I safe?*

- *Is anything genuinely changing?*

These questions deserve attention.

Forgiveness cannot substitute for safety.

Nor can it perform the work of another person's changed behaviour.

And sometimes the fruit that needs to ripen is not forgiveness.

It is discernment.

- The ability to recognise a pattern.
- The courage to establish a boundary.
- The understanding that affection does not require accepting repeated harm.

And sometimes, the decision to close the Garden Gate.

The Gardener may forgive the person who breaks the branches.
But forgiveness does not require leaving the Gate open for them to return and break them again.

Where harm is ongoing, protection and appropriate support may need to come before any consideration of forgiveness.

The wounded Pilgrim does not have to resolve their feelings towards the person causing harm before taking steps towards safety.

When No Apology Comes

Sometimes the difficulty is not repeated apologies.

It is the complete absence of one.

- Perhaps the other Pilgrim refuses to acknowledge what happened.
- Perhaps they believe they did nothing wrong.
- Perhaps they have moved away.
- Perhaps the relationship has ended.
- Or perhaps they are no longer alive.

The injured Pilgrim may continue carrying questions.

- *Did they know how much they hurt me?*
- *Did they ever regret what happened?*
- *Why could they not simply acknowledge it?*

Sometimes the Pilgrim imagines a conversation that never takes place.

They rehearse what they would say.

They imagine the other person's response.

Perhaps they hope that one day the Garden Gate will open and the missing words will finally arrive.

- *I was wrong.*
- *I hurt you.*
- *I am sorry.*

And perhaps those words never come.

Must forgiveness remain impossible?

Not necessarily.

An apology may help forgiveness ripen, but it is not a requirement.

The Pilgrim may gradually come to understand the experience differently.

The need to revisit the hurt may diminish.

What was once held against the other person may begin to loosen.

- No apology was offered.
- No conversation took place.
- Yet forgiveness may have quietly ripened.

But there is another possibility.

Forgiveness may never come.

And that deserves just as much room within our philosophy.

What If Forgiveness Never Comes?

Imagine a Pilgrim who has carried a hurt for many years.

Perhaps they have tried to understand what happened.

- They have spoken about it.
- They have questioned themselves.
- They have wondered whether they should forgive.

And perhaps they have not.

Does this mean that something within them remains unfinished?

Perhaps.

But must everything within us be finished before we can continue living?

Consider a Garden with many trees.

- Some bear fruit generously.
- Others produce very little.
- Some may never bear fruit at all.

Yet they may offer shade.

Shelter for birds.

Beauty through their leaves and branches.

A place where another Pilgrim can rest.

Their value is not measured solely by the fruit they produce.

Perhaps the Pilgrim is similar.

Forgiveness is one fruit of ripening.

But it is not the only fruit.

A person who has experienced considerable hurt may still cultivate kindness.

- They may become a loving parent.
- A compassionate friend.
- A thoughtful teacher.
- A trustworthy companion.

They may learn to establish boundaries where once they remained silent.

- They may discover courage they did not know they possessed.
- They may offer others the understanding they themselves once needed.

- And they may experience laughter, affection, contentment and joy.

Even while forgiveness remains difficult.

Look at the life they have continued living.

- The friendships they have cultivated.
- The people they have loved.
- The responsibilities they have carried.
- The kindness they have offered.
- The difficulties they have endured.

Why should the absence of one fruit invalidate everything else growing in their Garden?

A Garden is not measured only by the fruit that has failed to ripen.

It is also known by the life it sustains.

The shelter it provides.

And the possibilities that continue growing within it.

Perhaps forgiveness will ripen one day.

Perhaps it will not.

But the Pilgrim need not postpone living until that question has been answered.

When the Hurt Continues to Influence the House

There is, however, something we should not overlook.

Sometimes the hurt continues influencing the Pilgrim's life.

- A betrayal by one person may lead to suspicion of another.
- An experience of humiliation may make the Pilgrim reluctant to speak openly.
- A painful relationship may leave the Body preparing for danger long after that relationship has ended.

The Hijacked Voice may repeatedly revisit what happened.

The Hidden Self may become activated by situations that resemble an earlier experience.

The Public Self may become overdressed, working hard to conceal vulnerability.

And the weather within the House may change unexpectedly.

These experiences deserve attention.

Not because forgiveness must be achieved.

But because the Pilgrim deserves the possibility of living without the old hurt continually governing the House.

Perhaps Presence returns to the rocking chair.

- Not to demand forgiveness.
- Not to dismiss the memory.
- But to accompany what has arisen.

And perhaps the lamp of Awareness begins to illuminate what is happening.

- *This still hurts.*
- *I am becoming defensive.*

- *Something about this situation reminds me of what happened before.*

The Pilgrim begins to recognise what is taking place within the House.

- Not everything becomes clear.
- Not everything needs to.

But something important has changed.

The experience is no longer passing entirely unnoticed.

And perhaps, with Presence accompanying and Awareness illuminating, the Pilgrim can begin tending what still needs care.

- The Mind may begin distinguishing the present encounter from the earlier one.
- The Emotional Self may gradually discover that its feelings can be acknowledged without having to govern every response.
- The Body may need repeated experiences of safety before its protective responses begin to soften.

And sometimes, the Pilgrim may need the companionship of another person.

- A trusted friend.
- A family member.
- A counsellor or another appropriate source of support.
- Someone who can listen without demanding a particular conclusion.

For not every wound can be tended through reflection alone.

And not every Pilgrim should be expected to tend a difficult wound without help.

The hurt may remain part of the Pilgrim's history.

But its influence upon the present may gradually change.

This change does not have to be called forgiveness.

It may simply be healing.

Or discernment.

Or the beginning of a different relationship with what happened.

The wound may remain part of the story without having to become the author of everything that follows.

Living Without an Answer

Sometimes the Pilgrim wants a clear ending.

- A sincere apology.
- An explanation.
- An acknowledgement of wrongdoing.
- A final conversation.

But life does not always provide one.

The other Pilgrim may never accept responsibility.

The questions may remain unanswered.

And the Garden Gate may remain closed.

Must the Pilgrim keep standing at that Gate?

Perhaps not.

They may continue hoping for an apology without allowing that hope to become the place where their entire life waits.

They may continue walking.

- Not because the hurt was insignificant.
- Not because the other person's behaviour has become acceptable.
- And not because they have declared forgiveness.

But because their life contains more than what happened.

There are other Pilgrims to meet.

- Other Gardens to cultivate.
- Other experiences waiting to unfold.

The Pilgrim need not remain at the place where they were hurt in order to prove that the hurt mattered.

And perhaps, with time, what they once held against another begins to loosen.

Forgiveness may quietly ripen.

Or perhaps it does not.

Either way, life continues.

The Freedom Not to Force Forgiveness

We began with a question.

Must I forgive?

Perhaps the answer is simpler than we expected.

No.

Forgiveness cannot be made an obligation.

- The Pilgrim may wish to forgive.
- They may welcome an apology.
- They may cultivate understanding and compassion.
- They may recognise when the Hijacked Voice is amplifying an old hurt.
- They may tend the wound.
- They may establish boundaries.
- They may continue living.

But none of these movements guarantees that forgiveness will ripen.

Nor should forgiveness become another achievement against which the Pilgrim measures their progress.

A Gardener does not spend every day demanding that a particular fruit ripen.

- They continue tending the Garden.
- They attend to what needs care.
- They recognise what is growing.
- They allow the seasons to unfold.

And sometimes, when they least expect it, they discover that a fruit has ripened quietly among the branches.

Perhaps forgiveness is like that.

It may arrive without announcement.

Without a declaration.
Without the other Pilgrim ever knowing.

- Perhaps the Mind no longer feels compelled to revisit the injustice.
- Perhaps the Emotional Self has softened.
- Perhaps the Body no longer prepares for a danger that has passed.
- Or perhaps these changes unfold at different rhythms.

And one day, the Pilgrim may recognise:

- *I remember what happened.*
- *I know that it was wrong.*
- *But I no longer hold it against you as I once did.*

There is no need to make the moment larger than it is.

No need to reopen the Garden Gate.
No need to announce a transformation.

Forgiveness may have quietly ripened.

And if it has not?

The Pilgrim may continue tending the Garden.

For forgiveness is not the price of freedom.

Nor is it the measure of a flourishing life.

It is one of the fruits that freedom may allow to ripen.

And perhaps this is where we should leave the question.

Not with a demand.

Not with an expectation.

But with an invitation to attend to what is growing.

The Gardener has tended the soil.

The fruit may now speak for itself.

Section 6 — The Five Movements Through the House

Forgiveness is rarely something we can bring about through a single decision.

More often, hurt begins a journey through the House.

And when that journey begins, we cannot always know where it will lead.

- Perhaps towards understanding.
- Perhaps towards acceptance.
- Perhaps towards a clearer boundary.
- Perhaps towards peace.
- And perhaps, in time, towards forgiveness.

But forgiveness is not the destination every journey must reach.

The Five Movements do not exist to produce a particular outcome.

They are not instructions to follow correctly.
Nor are they another task for the Pilgrim to complete.

Instead, they offer a gentle way of recognising what happens when an experience enters the House.

Receive → Explore → Meet → Release → Incubate

Sometimes these movements unfold within minutes.
Sometimes they take months or years.

The Pilgrim may move between rooms, revisit one or remain in another for a while.
And sometimes nothing seems to change.

- There is no timetable.
- No compulsory order.
- No fruit that must ripen.

The House simply offers a place for what has arrived to be received, understood, felt and allowed to find its own way.

The Journey Through the House

Each movement has its own place within the House.

- **The Front Door receives.**
- **The Kitchen explores.**
- **The Dining Room meets.**
- **The Living Room incubates.**
- **The Bathroom releases.**

Together, they offer the Pilgrim a gentle way of meeting what has arrived.
Not every room needs to be visited.
Nor must they be visited in a particular order.
The House is there to serve the Pilgrim, not the Pilgrim to serve the House.

1. Receive — The Front Door

Something has happened in the Garden.

- *A word has hurt.*
- *A boundary has been crossed.*
- *A disappointment has arrived.*

And now something from the Garden has reached the Front Door of the House

Our first impulse may be to close the door.

- *I'm fine.*
- *It doesn't matter.*
- *Forget about it.*

Or perhaps the opposite happens.

The hurt rushes through the Door, fills every room and seems to take over the House.

Presence offers another possibility.

It arrives at the Front Door and quietly acknowledges:

Something has arrived.

There is no need to pretend that nothing happened.

No need to push the hurt away.

And no need to hand it the keys to the House.

Presence simply says:

I recognise that you are here.

Awareness may then begin to notice what has arrived.

- Something has hurt me.
- Something has unsettled me.
- Something within me is responding.

There is no need to understand everything yet.

- No need to decide who was right or wrong.
- No need to forgive.
- And no need to invite the hurt into every room.

For receiving is not the same as surrendering.

The Pilgrim can acknowledge what has arrived without allowing it to govern the House.

Perhaps this is the first movement.

Not explanation.
Not resolution.
Simply recognising what is already here.

Only what we are willing to recognise can begin to be understood.

2. Explore — The Kitchen

From the Front Door, the Pilgrim may enter the Kitchen.
The Kitchen is where what has arrived can be examined, understood and prepared.

Awareness begins with a simple question.

What happened?

Not immediately:

- *Who is to blame?*
- *Why am I feeling this way?*
- *What should I do about it?*

Simply:

What happened?

- Perhaps someone spoke harshly.
- Perhaps a promise was broken.
- Perhaps a boundary was crossed.
- Or perhaps something small awakened a hurt that had been carried for years.

The Pilgrim begins to explore.

- What actually happened?

- Why has this touched me so deeply?
- What belongs to today's experience?
- What might have arrived from an earlier one?

And perhaps one particularly important question:

What am I repeatedly telling myself about what happened?

For an event may have occurred once in the Garden, while the House has revisited it many times.

The Mind may be trying to understand.

But sometimes the Hijacked Voice joins the conversation.

- It repeats the accusation.
- It strengthens the fear.
- It renews the resentment.

And each repetition may become another drop watering the same hurt.

Pressure pushes. Urgency rushes. Continuity keeps the hijack alive.

Yet not every return to a memory is a Hijack.

Sometimes revisiting an experience brings a little more understanding.

- A detail becomes clearer.
- An assumption is questioned.
- A different perspective emerges.

This is where the Kitchen becomes useful.

The Pilgrim begins to separate the ingredients.

- What happened.
- What was felt.
- What was assumed.
- What is known.
- And what remains uncertain.

There is no need to rush towards an explanation.

Nor must every ingredient be used.

- Some may belong to the present encounter.
- Others may have been carried into the Kitchen from another time.
- And some may have been added by the Hijacked Voice.

Awareness helps the Pilgrim recognise what belongs to the experience and what has gathered around it.

- Sometimes understanding leads to compassion.
- Sometimes it reveals a boundary that needs protecting.
- Sometimes it shows that the Pilgrim misunderstood another person's intentions.
- And sometimes it confirms that genuine harm occurred.

Sometimes Awareness reveals something unexpected.

The Pilgrim may discover that they, too, have caused hurt.

- Perhaps a word was spoken carelessly.

- Perhaps a boundary was crossed.
- Perhaps an apology is needed.

Understanding is not always about recognising what others have done to us.
Sometimes it is about recognising what we have done to others.
Understanding does not require excusing what happened.
Nor does it guarantee forgiveness.

The Kitchen is not where the Pilgrim must decide how the story ends.
It is where they may begin to understand what they are carrying.
And perhaps, after some gentle exploration, the Pilgrim can say:
Now I understand a little more about why this hurt.
That may be enough for now.
The Pilgrim need not remain in the Kitchen until every question has been answered.
There are other rooms in the House.
And some experiences are better understood after they have been felt, expressed or allowed to settle.

3. Meet — The Dining Room

From the Kitchen, the Pilgrim may enter the Dining Room.
Here, what has been explored may be met more personally.
The Dining Room offers a place to sit with what we feel.

- Anger may take a chair.
- Sadness another.
- Fear may arrive.
- Disappointment.
- Grief.
- Perhaps even love.

And sometimes several feelings arrive together.
There is no need to decide which feeling is correct.
Nor must the Pilgrim choose only one.
The Emotional Self is invited to speak.

- Sometimes there are words.
- Sometimes tears.
- Sometimes silence.

Awareness listens. Presence remains.
The Pilgrim does not need to defend every feeling.
Nor explain why it has appeared.
A feeling may be recognised without being allowed to direct what happens next.
Perhaps the Pilgrim gently asks:

What are you trying to show me?

- Anger may point towards a boundary that was crossed.
- Sadness may reveal something that mattered deeply.

- Fear may draw attention to a need for safety.
- Disappointment may reveal an expectation that was not fulfilled.
- Grief may speak of something precious that has been lost.

But feelings do not always arrive with clear messages.

- Sometimes anger is simply anger.
- Sadness may not have an explanation.
- And grief may have nothing new to say.

Not every feeling needs to become a lesson.

Sometimes it is enough to recognise:

- I am angry.
- I feel disappointed.
- I am frightened.
- I miss what I have lost.

And perhaps, for a moment, the Pilgrim can remain with what is present.

There is no need to hurry towards forgiveness.

No need to make the feeling disappear.

And no need to act upon it immediately.

- For anger does not always require confrontation.
- Fear does not always require withdrawal.
- And sadness does not always require a solution.

The Pilgrim can listen without surrendering the House.

- Sometimes a feeling becomes quieter when it is genuinely acknowledged.
- Sometimes it remains.
- And sometimes it grows stronger before beginning to settle.

All these possibilities belong to the experience.

The Dining Room does not promise that every visitor will leave feeling satisfied.

It simply offers a place where the Emotional Self can be heard.

What has been felt need not always be acted upon. What has been heard need not always be resolved.

And perhaps, when the Pilgrim is ready, another room may offer something different.

The Bathroom.

A place where what has been held may finally be allowed to flow.

4. Release — The Bathroom

Not because the Pilgrim has decided that enough time has passed.

But because something within the House may be ready for expression.

The Bathroom offers a private place for release, cleansing and renewal.

- Perhaps the Pilgrim needs to cry.
- Perhaps anger needs to find a safe expression.
- Perhaps the Body needs a long breath, a little movement or simply a moment of quiet.

And sometimes nothing needs to happen at all.

Release does not always mean letting go. Sometimes it simply means allowing what has been held to flow.

The Pilgrim may stand quietly at the basin.

Bring the hands together.

And for a few moments notice what they have been carrying.

- Sadness.
- Anger.
- Fear.
- Disappointment.
- Or something they cannot yet name.

There is no performance required.

- No declaration of forgiveness.
- No demand to feel better.

Perhaps the Pilgrim slowly opens their hands.

Whatever is ready to flow may flow.

Whatever still needs time may remain.

- Perhaps tears appear.
- Perhaps a long breath follows.
- Perhaps the Pilgrim finds words they have been unable to express.
- Or perhaps there is only silence.

Nothing needs to be forced.

The Pilgrim washes their hands.

Perhaps cools their face with fresh water.

And as the water flows, they may quietly recognise:

I do not have to hold everything so tightly.

- Perhaps something has softened.
- Perhaps the intensity has lessened.
- Or perhaps the feeling remains much as it was.

All are possible.

For the Bathroom is not a place where the Pilgrim must leave their emotions behind.

It is a place where those emotions may be given room to move.

The memory has not been erased.

What happened has not been made acceptable.

- The boundary may remain.
- The relationship may never be restored.
- And forgiveness may still be far away.

But perhaps the Pilgrim feels a little less burdened.

- Not necessarily healed.
- Not necessarily at peace.
- Simply a little more able to breathe.

Release cannot be commanded. And what has been expressed does not necessarily need to disappear.

When the Pilgrim is ready, they may dry their hands and leave the Bathroom.

- Perhaps the sadness accompanies them.
- Perhaps the anger has quietened.
- Perhaps nothing seems different.

But there is another room waiting.

The Living Room.

A place where the Pilgrim may sit with whatever remains.

5. Incubate — The Living Room

In the Living Room, the Pilgrim may sit with an experience.

- Perhaps reflecting upon it.
- Perhaps sharing it with another Pilgrim.
- Perhaps simply allowing it to remain without demanding an answer.

Here, Presence may occupy the rocking chair.

- The hurt may still be there.
- The Emotional Self may remain unsettled.
- The Body may still carry tension.

But for this moment, the Hijacked Voice is no longer directing the House.

Presence does not demand an answer.

It simply accompanies what has arisen.

And perhaps **Awareness** begins to illuminate something.

- *This happened to me.*
- *It hurt.*
- *And I am here.*

The Pilgrim may sit quietly.

- Reflect.
- Rest.
- Or share the experience with another Pilgrim.

Sometimes reflection brings understanding.

At other times, the Pilgrim may revisit the hurt repeatedly, adding memories, assumptions and imagined conversations.

What began as hurt may gradually deepen into resentment.

For what incubates within the Living Room is influenced by what continues to nourish it.

Some experiences reveal their meaning quickly.

Others may take months or years.

And some may never reveal their meaning at all.

Sometimes, something that has been quietly incubating in the Loft finds its way into the Living Room.

The Pilgrim may begin to recognise what was previously beyond their awareness.

But not everything that incubates will eventually reveal itself.

Not every egg will hatch. And not everything that remains unhatched is a failure.

Sometimes an experience quietly changes as the Pilgrim continues living.

Sometimes nothing seems to change.

And sometimes a decision emerges.

- To speak.
- To wait.
- To establish a boundary.
- To ask for help.
- Or simply to do nothing for now.

There is no universal response.

Nor must every experience produce a lesson.

The Living Room remains available, but the Pilgrim need not remain there indefinitely.

- Perhaps they return to the Kitchen.
- Perhaps the Dining Room.
- Perhaps the Bathroom, where something needs releasing.

And sometimes, after releasing something in the Bathroom, the Pilgrim returns to the Living Room.

To rest.

To reflect.

Or simply to sit with what remains.

For releasing something does not mean that nothing remains.

Or perhaps the Pilgrim simply continues living.

For the House is larger than any one experience.

There are other rooms.

Other memories.

Other possibilities.

And beyond the Window, the Garden continues to grow.

The hurt may still have a place.
It simply no longer needs every place.

The Movements Continue

The Five Movements do not form a straight line.
Tomorrow, another memory may arrive at the Front Door.

Something may need exploring in the Kitchen.

- A feeling may return to the Dining Room.
- Tears may flow again in the Bathroom.

And Presence may quietly occupy the rocking chair in the Living Room, even while something remains unsettled.

The Pilgrim may visit these rooms many times.

Revisiting a room is not failure. Sometimes it is part of ripening.

And gradually, something may change.

- Perhaps understanding deepens.
- Perhaps a boundary becomes clearer.
- Perhaps forgiveness quietly ripens.

Or perhaps the Pilgrim simply discovers that yesterday's hurt no longer occupies so much of today's House.

There is no particular fruit that must appear.

Receive → Explore → Meet → Release → Incubate

And continue living.

For the purpose of these movements is not to teach the Pilgrim how to forgive.

It is something gentler.

To help the Pilgrim remain at home within themselves while hurt makes its journey through the House.

Section 7 — When Forgiveness Becomes Embodied

After everything we have explored, perhaps we can return to a simple question.

What is forgiveness?

- Not what we have been told it should be.
- Not what another Pilgrim expects from us.

But what actually changes within the House when forgiveness ripens?

Imagine a Pilgrim remembering someone who once hurt them deeply.

- The memory remains.
- They know what happened.
- They may still recognise the injustice.
- They may even feel sadness when they remember.

But something is different.

- Perhaps the old arguments are no longer rehearsed with the same intensity.
- Perhaps the Hijacked Voice no longer continually brings the hurt into the centre of the House.
- And perhaps something the Pilgrim has been holding against the other person has quietly begun to loosen.

There may have been no apology.

- No reconciliation.
- No declaration.

Perhaps the Pilgrim never consciously decided to forgive.

And yet, something has ripened.

Forgiveness is the loosening of the grievance we carry against someone who has hurt us, without denying the harm, excusing the wrongdoing or removing responsibility.

- The hurt may still be remembered.

- The wrongdoing may still be recognised.
- The other Pilgrim may still need to be held accountable.

But something has changed in how the experience is carried within the House.

Forgiveness does not require the Pilgrim to forget.

Nor does it require anger or sadness to disappear.

- The Emotional Self may still feel the hurt.
- The Body may still remember danger.
- And occasionally, an old memory may awaken the Hijacked Voice.

This does not necessarily mean that forgiveness has disappeared.

For the Mind, Emotional Self and Body do not always move at the same rhythm.

- Perhaps Presence occupies the rocking chair more often when the memory returns.
- Perhaps Awareness illuminates what happened without the Pilgrim becoming entirely absorbed by it.

But Presence does not manufacture forgiveness.
Nor does Awareness demand it.
They may accompany the Pilgrim as something gradually changes.

And sometimes forgiveness ripens without the Pilgrim being able to explain precisely how or when.

Forgiveness and Apology

An apology acknowledges the hurt we may have caused.

Forgiveness concerns what we continue to hold against someone who has hurt us.

They are different movements.

An apology belongs to the person who caused the hurt.

Forgiveness, if it arises, belongs to the person who received it.

An apology may open the way towards forgiveness.

But it cannot demand forgiveness in return.

And forgiveness may ripen without an apology ever being received.

Neither necessarily leads to reconciliation.

A Pilgrim may forgive someone and still recognise that the relationship cannot safely continue.

They may release the grievance without restoring trust.

They may wish the other Pilgrim well without wishing to walk beside them again.

For forgiveness does not erase responsibility.

And it does not require the Gate to be reopened.

Forgiveness concerns what changes within the Pilgrim. Reconciliation concerns what may become possible between two Pilgrims.

One does not guarantee the other.

Forgiveness changes how the Pilgrim carries what happened. It does not change what happened, nor does it determine what must happen next.

When the Fruit Is Recognised

Perhaps the most surprising thing about forgiveness is that the Pilgrim may not notice the moment it ripens.

- There may be no great revelation.
- No sudden feeling of love towards the person who caused the hurt.
- No need to speak the words I forgive you.

Perhaps one day a memory arises.

The Pilgrim recognises it.

The hurt may still be remembered.

But something has changed.

The familiar grievance no longer carries quite the same weight.

Or perhaps the Pilgrim encounters the other person and discovers that the old need to accuse or retaliate has loosened.

They may simply recognise:

- *I remember.*
- *I know what happened.*
- *But I no longer hold it against you as I once did.*

And perhaps that is enough.

The fruit has ripened without needing to announce itself.

Sometimes an Apology Changes the Season

Sometimes forgiveness ripens slowly.

And sometimes a sincere apology seems to bring its season closer.

A Pilgrim who has been carrying hurt may finally hear the words they never expected:

> *I am sorry. I know that I hurt you.*

The acknowledgement may change something.

- The need to be heard may lessen.
- The Hijacked Voice may grow quieter.
- And what has been held against the other Pilgrim may begin to loosen.

Perhaps forgiveness ripens sooner than anyone expected.

An apology may shorten the journey, but it cannot command the destination.

And forgiveness may still ripen without an apology ever being offered.

And If It Has Not Ripened?

Then the Pilgrim continues living.

- They may still cultivate understanding.
- They may care for their Body.
- They may protect their boundaries.
- They may find peace in other parts of the House.
- They may love, laugh, learn and nourish the Gardens around them.

Forgiveness is not a condition for being worthy of these gifts.

Nor is it the final examination of a healing journey.

The Garden may continue to flourish, even while one fruit remains unripe.

And sometimes, while the Pilgrim is occupied with living, the fruit quietly changes.

Not because it has been watched.

Not because it has been demanded.

But because life has continued unfolding.

Perhaps the grievance gradually loosens.

Or perhaps it does not.

Neither possibility prevents the Pilgrim from continuing the journey.

The Fruit and the Gardener

Perhaps this is what the Gardener eventually comes to understand.

- They can care for the soil.
- They can offer water.
- They can protect what is growing.
- They can recognise what needs attention.

But they cannot command the fruit.

And neither can the Pilgrim command forgiveness.

- They can arrive in Presence.
- See with Awareness.
- Remain curious.
- And allow Wisdom to unfold.

Sometimes forgiveness ripens.

Sometimes another fruit appears.

And sometimes the Pilgrim discovers that what they needed most was not forgiveness, but the freedom to continue living without making their hurt the centre of every day.

The Garden has not forgotten its seasons.

Nor has the House forgotten how to welcome Presence.

And the Pilgrim need not wait for every fruit to ripen before continuing the journey.

For forgiveness is not the price of freedom.

It is one of the fruits that freedom may allow to ripen.

The Gardener has tended the soil.

The fruit may now speak for itself.

The Pilgrim's Reflection — The Fruits of Ripening

Perhaps, before leaving this Garden, the you may wish to sit quietly with a few questions.

Not to judge how far you have travelled.

Not to measure how much you have healed.

But simply to notice what has been growing.

- *What fruits have quietly ripened in my Garden that I have not yet recognised?*
- *Is there a hurt I continue to carry? What happens within my House when I remember it?*

- *When I revisit that hurt, am I finding greater understanding, or am I being drawn into the same old conversation?*
- *Is there something my Mind has understood, while my Emotional Self or Body still needs time to settle?*
- *Have I been expecting myself to forgive before I am ready?*
- *Is there someone whose hurt I have not fully acknowledged? Might an apology be needed?*
- *Are there boundaries I can honour without allowing resentment to govern my life?*
- *And if forgiveness has not ripened, can I still recognise the other fruits growing in my Garden?*

Perhaps one final question deserves a little more silence.

Am I allowing my Garden to grow, or am I demanding that it bear a particular fruit?

There is no need to answer everything today.

Some questions may accompany the Pilgrim into another season.

Others may quietly lose their importance.

And perhaps, while the Pilgrim is occupied with living, something will ripen without being asked.

The Pilgrim's task is not to force the harvest, but to remain attentive to what is growing.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Not every hurt needs to become forgiveness before life can flourish.
Some fruits ripen slowly. Others arrive unexpectedly.
Tend your Garden with Presence, Awareness and kindness.
And remember:
You do not have to forgive to deserve peace.
Sometimes, the gentlest wisdom is simply to allow what is growing to grow.

The Mind seeks understanding.
The Emotional Self carries the feeling.
The Body remembers danger and seeks to protect.

Chapter 20 — The Garden of Memory



What We Carry Forward

Section 1 - The Tree That Is No Longer There

There was once an old tree in the Garden.

For many seasons, it stood beside a familiar pathway.

Its branches offered shade.

Birds rested among its leaves.

Its roots reached deep into the earth.

And beneath its canopy, other plants learned to grow in the shelter it provided.

Then, one day, the tree was gone.

- Perhaps it had reached the end of its life.
- Perhaps a storm had brought it down.

The space where it once stood was now open to the sky.

Yet the Garden was not quite as it had been before.

- The soil had been changed by fallen leaves.
- Its roots had left channels beneath the ground.
- Plants that once grew in shade now received sunlight.

And somewhere nearby, a young seedling had begun to grow.

The tree was gone. But its influence had not entirely disappeared.

What Remains

Something similar happens as we live.

An encounter ends, yet a feeling may remain.

- A conversation is forgotten, yet something we understood through it may continue influencing us.
- A difficult experience passes, yet we may approach a similar situation differently.
- And sometimes, a small kindness stays with us long after we have forgotten the words that accompanied it.

We might call what remains the **residue** of experience.

- Some residue is welcome.
- Some is painful.
- Some gradually fades.
- And some becomes so familiar that we scarcely notice its influence.

But not every experience leaves an enduring impression.

Nor does every impression determine what happens next.

From Cultivation to Memory

In the previous chapter, we explored the Arc of Cultivation:

Cultivation → Repetition → Familiarity → Embodiment → Character

We saw how what we repeatedly cultivate may gradually become part of the way we live.

But there is another dimension to consider.

- What happens to the experiences through which we grow?
- What remains within us after the moment has passed?
- What do we carry into the next season of living?

The Arc of Cultivation helps us understand how we grow.

The Garden of Memory invites us to explore what accompanies that growth.

- The Arc of Cultivation — What We Grow.
- The Garden of Memory — What We Carry Forward.

The old tree reminds us that the past does not always disappear simply because its season has ended.

Sometimes it continues influencing the conditions in which something new may grow.

And to understand how this happens, we must visit two familiar places.

- The Pantry of the Inner House.
- And the soil of the Garden.

Section 2 - The Pantry and the Soil

Within the Living Landscape, memory does not belong to the past alone.

It accompanies the Pilgrim into the present.

And to understand how, we return to two familiar places.

The Pantry of the Inner House.

The soil of the Garden.

What the Pantry Holds

The Pantry contains our Stored Recipes.

Some were prepared through experience.

Others were learned from those who cared for us, taught us or influenced our lives.

Some continue to serve us well.

Others belong to circumstances that have long since changed.

A recipe that once offered protection may now limit how we respond.

Yet we may continue reaching for it simply because it is familiar.

In the Yogic tradition, we encounter two useful concepts.

Chitta — the changing field of the mind, within which memories and impressions may be held.

Samskara — the impressions left by experiences and actions, which may influence how we respond in the future.

The Pantry offers us a way of understanding the remembering and storing aspects of Chitta.

And Samskara helps us understand why some Stored Recipes feel so familiar.

But an impression is not necessarily a habit.

Nor is it a pathway.

An impression may influence where we step.
Repeated footsteps may establish a trail.

And even a familiar trail need not be followed forever.

The Inner Field and the Living Field

In the Yogic tradition, Chitta helps us understand the changing field of the mind.

The Living Field, however, belongs to the wider landscape of life.

It encompasses the shared circumstances in which Pilgrims live, act and encounter one another.

No Garden exists entirely in isolation.

- A word spoken in one Garden may bring comfort to another.
- A decision made far away may change the conditions in which many Gardens must grow.
- An act of kindness may reach someone we will never meet.

And sometimes, the influence of an action continues long after the person responsible has forgotten it.

- **Chitta helps us understand what moves within the mind.**
- **The Living Field helps us understand what unfolds within and between our lives.**

Yet these are not separate worlds.

What happens within the Pilgrim may influence how they act in the Living Field.

And what happens in the Living Field may become another experience, leaving new impressions within the Pilgrim.

Consider someone who carries a memory of rejection.

- That memory may shape what they expect from a new relationship.
- Their expectation may influence how they respond.
- And their response may influence the encounter itself.
- Perhaps the experience reinforces the old impression.
- Or perhaps another Pilgrim responds differently, allowing a new understanding to emerge.

We can illustrate this continuing movement through a simple arc.

The Arc of Experience and Impression

Memory of Rejection → Expectation of Rejection → Response in the Living Field → New Encounter → Impression Reinforced or Changed → What We Carry Forward

This is not an inevitable sequence.

An impression may influence an encounter without determining its outcome.

Another Pilgrim brings their own Inner House, experiences and choices into the relationship.

And something unexpected may emerge.

What we carry within may influence what we encounter.

What we encounter may change what we carry within.

This is the continuing movement between the Inner House and the Garden, within the wider Living Field.

And it brings us to another question.

When our actions enter this shared landscape, what might they set in motion?

That is where our exploration of Karma begins.

What the Soil Receives

Now consider the Garden.

The Pantry belongs to our Inner House.

The soil belongs to our outer landscape, where life is encountered and expressed.

What we carry within may influence how we behave, how we relate to others and what we cultivate.

And what happens in the Garden may return to the Inner House as another experience, memory or impression.

Consider a Pilgrim who has learned to expect criticism.

An unfamiliar situation may awaken an old recipe of defensiveness.

That response enters the Garden through words, gestures or withdrawal.

Perhaps the encounter reinforces the old expectation.

Or perhaps something unexpected happens.

Another Pilgrim responds with patience.

The experience is different.

Something new may now be carried into the Pantry.

The old recipe has not necessarily disappeared.

But it is no longer the only one available.

The Inner House influences the Garden.

The Garden influences the Inner House.

And between them, life continues moving.

The Shelf Life of a Recipe

Not everything in the Pantry must remain useful forever.

- Some recipes nourish us throughout life.
- Others were appropriate for an earlier season.
- Some gradually lose their influence.
- And some may be understood differently as the Pilgrim grows.

We need not discard every old recipe.

Nor must we preserve everything simply because it has been carried for a long time.

Sometimes the important change is not forgetting an experience, but discovering that it no longer needs to govern our response.

The Pantry may still remember.

Yet the Garden may begin growing differently.

And this brings us to an important distinction:

Every action may leave a trace.
Not every trace becomes a pathway.
And not every pathway must be followed.

— Atmadeva

The Pantry holds something of what we carry.
The soil reflects the conditions in which we grow.
And the Living Field reminds us that no Garden grows entirely alone.
What we carry may influence what we do.
What we do may influence another Garden.
And what happens between us may leave impressions that we carry forward.

Section 3 - What Our Actions Set in Motion

Karma, Samskara and the Living Field

The Pantry carries impressions of what we have experienced.

The Garden is where much of our living unfolds.

And between them, there is a continuing movement.

- What we carry within may influence what we do.
- What we do may change the conditions around us.
- And those changing conditions may, in turn, influence what we carry within.

This brings us to another important concept from the Yogic traditions.

Karma.

Karma — Action and Consequence

Karma is often described as the law of cause and effect.

But within Indian philosophical traditions, its meaning extends beyond the immediate consequences of an action. Intention, ethical responsibility and the possibility of consequences ripening over time are also important.

For our Living Landscape, we can begin with something familiar.

What we do, matters.

And sometimes, **what we do not do, matters too.**

The Seed and Its Seasons

Imagine a Pilgrim planting a tree.

They prepare the soil, place the seedling in the ground and water it.

Years pass.

- The tree grows.
- Its branches offer shade.
- Birds find shelter.
- The soil beneath it changes.

And one afternoon, the Pilgrim sits beneath the very tree they once planted.

Something has returned.

Not as a reward delivered by the Garden, but as a consequence of what the Pilgrim helped bring into being.

Now imagine that the Pilgrim had planted the tree but never watered it.

- Perhaps rain would have sustained it.
- Perhaps another Pilgrim would have cared for it.
- Or perhaps the tree would have died.

Inaction, too, may influence what follows.

Yet neither careful tending nor neglect determines every outcome.

A storm may destroy a well-tended tree.

An unexpected rainfall may save a neglected one.

Our actions influence the Garden.
They do not give us complete control over what grows.

And the consequences of those actions do not always arrive when we expect them.

- Some seeds germinate quickly.
- Others remain dormant until conditions become favourable.
- Some never grow.

The same is true of many consequences.

An action may change something immediately.

Or its influence may become apparent only after many seasons.

We may know when an action was taken.
We may not know when its consequences will ripen.

The Garden has its own time.

When Consequences Return

Sometimes the consequences of an action return to the Pilgrim who performed it.

Consider someone who repeatedly treats others with contempt.

- Over time, trust may weaken.
- Conversations become guarded.
- Others begin keeping their distance.

Eventually, the Pilgrim may find themselves surrounded by relationships that no longer offer warmth or openness.

What has returned?

Not necessarily the contempt they once expressed.

Instead, they are encountering conditions their own actions may have helped create.

They continue living within a Garden they have influenced.

But suppose they recognise what has happened.

- They begin listening.
- They acknowledge the hurt they caused.
- They change how they behave.

Perhaps trust gradually returns.

Perhaps it does not.

Some consequences cannot easily be reversed.

A different action may influence what happens next.
It cannot guarantee that what happened before will be undone.

And sometimes consequences do not return to the person responsible at all.

- They may remain with those who were affected.
- They may travel into other Gardens.
- They may continue unfolding long after the original Pilgrim has forgotten the action.

This is why Karma cannot be reduced to the expectation that whatever we do will eventually be done to us.

The Living Field is more complex than that.

Karma and Samskara — A Continuing Movement

We have already encountered Samskara.

An impression left by experience or action.

Now we can see its relationship with Karma.

Karma concerns action and its consequences.
Samskara concerns the impressions that experiences and actions may leave.

An action may leave an impression.

That impression may influence another action.

And the new action may leave further impressions.

Within the Living Field, we can contemplate this movement as:

Karma → Samskara → Karma → Samskara…

But this is not an inevitable chain.

- Not every action leaves an enduring impression.
- Not every impression becomes a familiar response.
- And not every familiar response must be followed.

Consider two Pilgrims who experience the same disagreement.

One leaves feeling misunderstood.

The other leaves believing they have been rejected.

The encounter may have left different impressions within their Inner Houses.

Those impressions may influence how they approach one another next time.

And their next actions may change the relationship further.

What happens within one Inner House may therefore influence another Garden.

And what happens in that Garden may return to influence both Inner Houses.

The Pantry and the soil remain in conversation.

What we carry influences how we live.

And how we live influences what we carry.

Beyond the Arc of Cultivation

In the previous chapter, we explored how cultivation, repetition and familiarity may gradually become embodied character.

We need not repeat that journey here.

The Karma–Samskara movement invites us to consider something different.

- A single action may leave a lasting impression without becoming a habit.
- An action may affect another Pilgrim even when we never repeat it.
- And its consequences may continue unfolding beyond our awareness.

The Arc of Cultivation explores how we grow.

The Karma–Samskara movement explores how actions, impressions and consequences influence the Living Field in which we grow.

The two are connected.
But they do not describe precisely the same thing.

When Harm Enters the Garden

Now consider something more difficult.

One Pilgrim deliberately hurts another.

- Perhaps through cruelty.
- Perhaps through betrayal.
- Perhaps through violence.

The injured Pilgrim may carry consequences for years.

- Their sense of safety may change.
- Their relationships may be affected.

- Their Garden may require considerable care.

But what happens to the person responsible?

- Perhaps they experience remorse.
- Perhaps they lose the trust of others.
- Perhaps they face justice.
- Or perhaps they appear to continue living without consequence.

And this raises a question that has troubled human beings for centuries.

When will Karma return?

- We may want the consequences to arrive immediately.
- We may want the person responsible to experience the suffering they caused.
- We may want the Living Field to restore the balance.

But the Garden does not necessarily unfold according to our expectations.

- Some consequences become visible only after many seasons.
- Others may never reach the person who caused the harm.
- And some consequences remain with the injured Pilgrim rather than returning to their source.

We do not know every movement within the Living Field.

Nor do we know what lies beyond the Flame's departure.

We need not pretend otherwise.

The absence of visible punishment does not mean an action was harmless.

But neither can we promise that every harmful action will eventually return to its author.

And we must be especially careful not to turn Karma into an explanation for another Pilgrim's suffering.

A person who has been harmed has not thereby demonstrated that they deserve what happened.

The Garden is not a courtroom.

The Garden We Choose to Tend

Perhaps there is another question worth asking.

Instead of:

> *When will the person who caused the harm receive their Karma?*

We might ask:

> **What does the Garden that has been hurt need now?**

- Perhaps safety.
- Perhaps justice.
- Perhaps protection from further harm.
- Perhaps time.
- Perhaps companionship.

Sometimes we may be able to help repair a broken boundary.

- Sometimes we may offer shelter.

- Sometimes we may simply remain beside another Pilgrim while they find their footing.
- And sometimes the most important action is to prevent further harm.

None of this requires the injured Pilgrim to forgive.

Nor does it require them to transform their suffering into wisdom.

We may not be able to undo what happened.

But we can still attend to what is needed.

And this returns us to the Gardener.

- We do not tend our Garden because we expect kindness to return as kindness.
- We do not cultivate goodness to secure a future reward.
- Nor do we need to wait for another Pilgrim's Karma to ripen before deciding how to live.

We tend our Garden because it is ours to tend.

And sometimes, we help tend a Garden that has been hurt.
Our responsibility is not to control every consequence.

It is to remain attentive to what our actions and inaction may contribute to the Living Field.

What the Garden Carries Forward

Let us return once more to the tree.

The Pilgrim planted it many seasons ago.

- Perhaps they remember the day.
- Perhaps they have forgotten.

Yet the tree has continued growing.

- Its roots have changed the soil.
- Its branches have altered the light.

And now the Pilgrim rests beneath its shade.

- The action belongs to the past.
- The tree belongs to the present.
- Its influence may continue into the future.

And somewhere within the Inner House, the experiences of planting, tending and resting beneath that tree may have left their own impressions.

Karma may change the conditions in which we live.
Samskara may influence how we experience and respond to those conditions.

And between the Inner House and the Garden, the movement continues.

- Some of what we carry remains useful.
- Some gradually fades.
- Some requires care.
- And some may eventually be transformed into something that nourishes another season.

Perhaps this is where memory offers us another possibility.

When residue becomes compost

Section 4 - When Residue Becomes Compost

What We Carry May Still Change

The Garden remembers.

But remembering does not mean that everything must remain as it was.

Some experiences leave impressions that accompany us for years.

Others gradually fade.

And sometimes, what once weighed heavily upon the Pilgrim begins to change.

Not because the past has disappeared.

But because our relationship with it has changed.

The Pantry and Its Seasons

Let us return to the Pantry of Stored Recipes.

- Some recipes have nourished us throughout our lives.
- Others were prepared during difficult seasons.

Perhaps a Pilgrim learned to remain silent because speaking once brought danger.

- Silence became a form of protection.
- The recipe had its purpose.

But years later, the Pilgrim may find themselves in a different Garden.

The danger is no longer present.

Yet the old recipe remains on the shelf.

- When disagreement arises, they still reach for silence.

Not because they have consciously chosen it.

But because it is familiar.

And here we encounter something important.

A recipe may have served us well in one season without remaining suitable for every season.

- The Pantry does not need to be emptied.
- Nor must every old recipe be discarded.

Sometimes the Pilgrim simply discovers that another recipe is now available.

- They may speak.
- They may remain silent.

But the response is no longer governed entirely by what happened long ago.

The memory remains.

Its influence has begun to change.

When Something Becomes Compost

In the Garden, fallen leaves do not always remain as leaves.

With time, moisture and the activity of countless living organisms, some gradually decompose.

- What once belonged to a tree becomes part of the soil.

- The leaf has not returned to the branch.
- Nor has it remained unchanged.

Something has been transformed.

Perhaps certain experiences within the Living Landscape can be understood in a similar way.

- A disappointment may eventually deepen our understanding of what matters.
- A mistake may help us recognise something we had previously overlooked.
- An old fear may become easier to understand, even if it has not entirely disappeared.

What remains from the experience may begin nourishing a different way of living.

Compost is not the memory itself.

It is what may become possible through the transformation of what we carry.

And just as the Garden cannot turn every fallen leaf into fertile soil immediately, the Pilgrim cannot force every experience to become nourishment.

Some things require time.

Others require care.

And some may never become compost.

Not Every Wound Must Nourish

There is a temptation to believe that every painful experience must eventually teach us something.

- That suffering must make us wiser.
- That every wound must produce growth.

But the Healing Garden makes no such demand.

- Some experiences leave harm that should never have occurred.
- Some losses cannot be repaired.
- Some wounds remain tender despite years of careful tending.

The Pilgrim does not need to discover a hidden gift within every sorrow.

Nor must they feel grateful for what hurt them.

Suffering is not the price of wisdom.

And healing does not require us to justify what happened.

- Sometimes tending the Garden means allowing something to remain unfinished.
- Sometimes it means protecting an area that is still vulnerable.
- Sometimes it means recognising that a particular memory will always carry sadness.

Yet the Garden may continue growing around it.

A tender place does not mean the entire Garden has stopped living.

The Movement Between Pantry and Soil

Now we can see another dimension of the relationship we discovered earlier.

- The Pantry belongs to the Inner House.
- The soil belongs to the Garden.

And between them, there is movement.

An old memory may influence how the Pilgrim enters a new experience.

But that new experience may also change how the old memory is understood.

Perhaps a Pilgrim once believed that asking for help was a sign of weakness.

The recipe remained in the Pantry for many years.

Then, during a difficult season, another Pilgrim offered assistance.

This time, the Pilgrim accepted.

They discovered that receiving help did not diminish them.

Something changed.

The old memory had not been erased.

But a different understanding had entered the Inner House.

And in the Garden, a new possibility had begun to grow.

What we carry within influences how we live.
How we live may change what we carry within.

Sometimes this movement strengthens an old impression.
Sometimes it softens one.
And sometimes, what once seemed fixed becomes open to change.

The Shade We Carry Forward

Let us return to the old tree with which we began this chapter.

The tree that once stood beside the pathway.
The tree beneath which Pilgrims rested.

- Its leaves have fallen through countless seasons.
- Some have become part of the soil.
- Others have been carried away by the wind.
- And the tree itself is no longer there.

But perhaps one Pilgrim remembers sitting beneath its branches.

- The coolness of the shade.
- The sound of leaves moving in the breeze.
- The quiet pleasure of having somewhere to rest.

Years pass.

The memory begins to fade.

Perhaps the Pilgrim can no longer remember where the tree stood.

Yet something of that experience may remain.

- Not necessarily as a picture in the mind.
- Not even as a conscious memory.

But perhaps as an understanding of what it means to receive shelter.

One afternoon, the Pilgrim encounters another traveller.

- Someone weary from the journey.
- They make room beside them.

- Offer water.
- Provide a little shade.

The Pilgrim does not think of the old tree.

There is no deliberate attempt to repay what was once received.

They simply recognise another's need.

And respond.

The tree did not intend to teach.

The Pilgrim did not arrive seeking a lesson.

Yet something of that encounter may have quietly influenced how the Pilgrim now lives.

This is one of the possibilities within the Garden of Memory.

We may forget the experience without entirely losing its influence.

And not every influence must remain.

- Some memories fade without leaving anything we can recognise.
- Some impressions need to soften.
- Some experiences remain painful.
- Others may gradually become part of what nourishes our Garden.

We cannot decide what every season will leave behind.

But we can attend to what we carry.

- We can recognise when an old recipe no longer serves us.
- We can care for the soil.
- And sometimes, we can offer shelter to another Pilgrim.

Perhaps without knowing where we first learned to offer it.

Atmadeva's Reflection

The tree may disappear from the Garden.
Its shade may disappear from memory.
Yet the Pilgrim who once rested beneath it
may one day offer shade to another.

Perhaps this is how a Garden remembers what the mind has forgotten.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

What Am I Carrying Forward?

As I walk through my Garden, I wonder what I carry from the seasons I have lived.

- Which memories still nourish me?
- Which Stored Recipes no longer serve me?
- What traces have my actions left in other Gardens?
- Is there something I need to acknowledge, repair or tend?

Perhaps some memories will remain.

Others may fade.

And some may quietly change how I live.

What am I carrying forward, and what might I offer another Pilgrim?

Pilgrim's Sahachari

The Garden remembers what has grown.

But it does not have to grow the same thing again.

Perhaps this is the quiet relationship between memory and cultivation.

What remains may influence what grows.

What grows may change what remains.

And what we cultivate today may become part of another Garden's tomorrow.

Chapter 21 — The Healing Garden: The Continuing Art of Living



The Garden We Have Been Living In

The Pilgrim stepped outside the Inner House.

Morning sunlight rested upon the Garden.

Some flowers were blossoming. Others had yet to open.

An old tree carried the scars of earlier storms, while new shoots appeared along its branches.

There were places of abundance.

Places of neglect.

And corners where the Pilgrim had not yet discovered what might grow.

For a moment, the Pilgrim stood quietly.

- So much had happened in this Garden.
- People had arrived and departed.
- Some had brought kindness.
- Others had caused hurt.
- There had been laughter, disappointment, companionship and loss.

Some experiences had faded from memory.

Others continued to influence the way the Pilgrim lived.

Yet the Garden remained.

Not unchanged.

Not without wounds.

But alive.

The Pilgrim had spent many seasons learning how to tend it.

And now a question arose.

- *What makes this a Healing Garden?*
- Was it the wounds that had closed?
- The understanding that had emerged?
- The nourishment that had sustained its growth?
- Or the flowers that had finally blossomed?

Perhaps it was none of these alone.

Perhaps the Healing Garden was not something the Pilgrim would eventually achieve.

It was the Garden in which life had been unfolding all along.

Healing Is Living the Arc

Throughout our journey, we have explored the many ways life touches and changes us.

- We have experienced.
- We have tended what needed care.
- We have allowed understanding to ripen.
- We have discovered what nourishes us.
- And we have encountered possibilities for flourishing.

Together, these movements form the **Arc of the Healing Garden**.

Experiencing → Healing → Ripening → Nourishing → Flourishing

At first glance, this may appear to be a journey from one stage to another.

But life rarely follows such a sequence.

- We may need nourishment before healing becomes possible.
- We may flourish while carrying grief.
- Understanding may ripen years after an experience.
- And flourishing itself brings new experiences.

The arc is not a staircase. It is a living movement.

Nor is healing confined to its second movement.

There is healing in receiving care.

- In understanding ourselves differently.
- In discovering what sustains us.
- And sometimes in finding that life still offers possibilities we thought were lost.

This brings us to an important distinction.

Healing is not merely moving through the arc.

Healing is living the arc.

The Healing Garden is the environment in which these movements may unfold.

- Not every experience requires healing.
- Not every wound becomes wisdom.
- And not every Pilgrim will flourish in the same way.

The Garden makes room for these differences.

It does not demand perfection.

It invites participation in life.

Healing Is Not Cure

A cure and healing are not necessarily the same.

- A cure seeks to resolve an illness or condition.
- Healing, within our Living Landscape, has a wider meaning.

A broken bone may mend. An infection may be cured. A wound may close.

Physical healing often involves biological processes that can be observed and measured, although recovery may be incomplete.

Mental and emotional healing can be different.

- A Pilgrim may seek psychological support for anxiety, grief, painful memories or difficulties in relationships.
- Treatment may bring substantial relief, and some conditions may resolve.
- Yet emotional healing does not always mean forgetting what happened or never feeling distress again.

Sometimes it means developing a different relationship with an experience.

- A memory may remain without continually overwhelming us.
- Grief may accompany love without occupying every corner of the Garden.
- Fear may become easier to recognise without directing every decision.
- And a Pilgrim may learn to live meaningfully with circumstances that cannot be reversed.

None of this diminishes the importance of medical treatment or psychological care. Both may be essential parts of healing.

But our Living Landscape recognises that life extends beyond the treatment room.

- **A cure may bring an illness to an end.**
- **Healing may allow life to continue differently.**
- **Ripening may deepen our understanding.**
- **Nourishment may sustain what is growing.**
- **And flourishing may emerge without requiring everything to be restored.**

These movements do not promise a particular outcome.

They describe possibilities within the continuing experience of living.

The Gardener cannot command a flower to blossom.

- But they can tend the soil, offer water and provide shelter.
- They can recognise what needs attention.
- And sometimes they can simply allow the Garden to rest.

The Gardener tends the conditions. Life unfolds in its own way.

Perhaps this is the essence of the Healing Garden.

- Not a place where every wound disappears.
- Not a destination where the Pilgrim finally becomes complete.
- But an environment where experiencing, healing, ripening, nourishing and flourishing may coexist.

For healing is not the journey from wounded to perfect.

It is part of the continuing art of living.

Section 2 - The Five Movements of a Living Garden

The Pilgrim looked again at the Garden.

Nothing within it existed in isolation.

- The soil supported the roots.
- The roots sustained the trees.
- The trees offered shade.
- Fallen leaves returned to the soil.

And the changing seasons influenced everything that grew.

The Garden was not moving towards a final state of perfection.

It was participating in life.

Perhaps the Arc of the Healing Garden worked in much the same way.

1. Experiencing — Where Life Meets the Pilgrim

Every Garden encounters the world.

- Sunlight arrives.
- Rain falls.
- Visitors enter.
- Some bring gifts. Others leave difficulties behind.
- And sometimes, without warning, a storm changes the landscape.

The Pilgrim cannot choose every experience.

But experiencing is not simply receiving whatever life brings.

- It is also participating.
- Exploring.
- Discovering.
- Building relationships.
- Making choices.
- Sometimes taking risks.
- And sometimes recognising when to close the Garden Gate.

Not every experience leaves a wound.

- Some bring delight.
- Some awaken curiosity.
- Others pass almost unnoticed.

Yet even an ordinary afternoon may become a cherished memory.

Experiencing is not merely what happens to us. It is also how we participate in life.

And participation continues throughout the arc.

2. Healing — Tending What Needs Care

When something is wounded, attention may be needed.

- A broken branch may require support.
- Damaged soil may need restoring.
- A neglected corner may benefit from careful tending.

But the Gardener does not treat every part of the Garden as though something is wrong.

- A flower that has not opened may simply need more time.
- A tree that has lost its leaves may be resting through winter.
- And a patch of bare soil may be waiting for another season.

Not everything that is difficult requires repair.

This is equally true of the Pilgrim.

- Sadness is not necessarily an illness.
- Fear is not always a disorder.
- And grief is not evidence that something within us has malfunctioned.

These experiences may be natural responses to what life has brought.

- Sometimes they require support.
- Sometimes they require protection.
- Sometimes they require professional care.
- And sometimes they need room to be experienced without being hurried away.

Healing begins with recognising what kind of care is appropriate.

It does not always mean changing how we feel.

Sometimes it means changing the circumstances that continue to cause harm.

A Gardener cannot restore the soil while allowing it to be continually poisoned.

Healing is not simply learning to endure what hurts us.

It may also involve boundaries, protection and the courage to seek help.

3. Ripening — When Experience Finds New Meaning

Not everything that grows in the Garden ripens.

- Some fruit falls early.
- Some never develops.
- And some requires a long season before it is ready.

Understanding can be similar.

An experience may remain confusing for years.

Then, through reflection, conversation or another encounter, something becomes clearer.

The event itself has not changed.

But the Pilgrim's understanding of it may have.

- They may recognise an old pattern.
- Understand why a particular memory still troubles them.

- Or discover that something they once believed about themselves was never entirely true.

Yet ripening is not an obligation.

A Pilgrim does not need to find a lesson in every loss.

Nor must suffering become wisdom to justify its place in the journey.

Ripening is what understanding may allow, not what suffering must produce.

And sometimes the understanding that emerges is wonderfully simple.

- *I need more rest.*
- *That relationship was hurting me.*
- *I do not have to continue as I once did.*
- *There is still something I would like to explore.*

Such discoveries may quietly change how the Garden is tended.

4. Nourishing — Sustaining What Is Living

A Garden cannot flourish through repair alone.

It needs nourishment.

- Water.
- Light.
- Suitable soil.
- Space.

And sometimes protection from conditions that prevent growth.

The Pilgrim, too, needs more than the absence of distress.

There is a difference between no longer feeling overwhelmed and feeling supported by life.

Nourishment may come through companionship, meaningful activity, rest, learning, creativity or the simple pleasure of an ordinary day.

- What nourishes one Pilgrim may not nourish another.
- And what once sustained us may no longer be enough.

This is where ripening and nourishing meet.

As understanding deepens, the Pilgrim may recognise what their Garden genuinely needs.

- Perhaps less activity.
- Perhaps greater connection.
- Perhaps a different rhythm.
- Or perhaps the courage to begin something new.

Nourishment is not a reward for having healed.

It is part of what makes healing and living possible.

And nourishment is not always something we provide for ourselves.

Sometimes another Pilgrim brings water when our own well is running low.

Receiving care belongs to the Garden too.

5. Flourishing — When Life Finds Room

The Pilgrim walked towards the old tree.

- Its trunk was scarred.
- One branch had never recovered from an earlier storm.

Yet beneath its canopy, wildflowers were growing.

- Birds rested among its leaves.
- And its roots continued drawing nourishment from the soil.
- The tree had not returned to what it once was.

But it was participating in the life of the Garden.

Perhaps flourishing is something like this.

- Not the disappearance of every difficulty.
- Not uninterrupted happiness.
- And not a permanent state that the Pilgrim must maintain.

Flourishing may appear through renewed curiosity.

- Through the ability to enjoy companionship.
- Through meaningful contribution.
- Through discovering that life still contains possibilities.

Sometimes it is visible.

Sometimes it is quiet.

And sometimes flourishing means having enough stability and support to live according to what matters to us.

Flourishing is not the opposite of suffering.

A Pilgrim may experience both.

Nor does flourishing make further healing unnecessary.

The Garden may blossom in one corner while another still needs attention.

And that is not a contradiction.

It is the nature of a living Garden.

The Arc That Lives Within Us

The Pilgrim returned to the bench.

From there, the entire Garden was visible.

- The old tree.
- The young shoots.
- The flowers.
- The neglected corners.

And the pathways leading towards other Gardens.

- Some plants were blossoming.
- Others were recovering.
- Some were drawing nourishment from the soil.
- And others were simply experiencing the changing season.

All belonged to the same Garden.

The Pilgrim began to understand.

The arc was not a journey from one movement to another.

It was the living relationship between them.

- Experiencing did not need to end before healing could begin.
- Healing did not need to be completed before understanding could ripen.
- Nourishment was not something reserved for those who had recovered.
- And flourishing did not require every wound to disappear.

These movements could exist together.

- Sometimes one might need greater attention.
- Sometimes another might become more visible.
- And sometimes several would unfold so quietly that the Pilgrim would hardly notice.

The arc was not something to complete.

It was something to live.

The Pilgrim looked around once more.

Nothing in the Garden needed to be at the same stage of growth.

Nor did every part need the same kind of care.

The Garden was alive precisely because so many different movements were taking place within it.

And perhaps the Pilgrim was no different.

The Heart of the Healing Garden

A cure may bring an illness to an end.
Healing may allow life to continue differently.
Ripening may deepen our understanding.
Nourishment may sustain what is growing.
And flourishing may emerge without requiring everything to be restored.

The Healing Garden is the environment in which the whole arc of living may unfold.

- It does not promise a cure.
- It does not demand that every wound become wisdom.
- It does not require the Pilgrim to flourish before they are ready.
- It offers room for experiencing.

> Care for what is wounded.
> Time for what may ripen.
> Nourishment for what is growing.
> And space for life to flourish.

For the purpose of a Healing Garden is not to produce a perfect Garden.

It is to cultivate the conditions in which life may continue to unfold.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

Am I Living the Arc?

As I look upon my Garden, I wonder:

- Am I allowing myself to experience life without needing to understand everything?
- Can I offer care to what is wounded without demanding a cure?
- Can I recognise what is ripening, what needs nourishment and what is already flourishing?

Perhaps I do not need to reach another stage.

Perhaps I am already living the arc.

Pilgrim's Sahachari

Healing is not a destination.

Nor is flourishing its final reward.

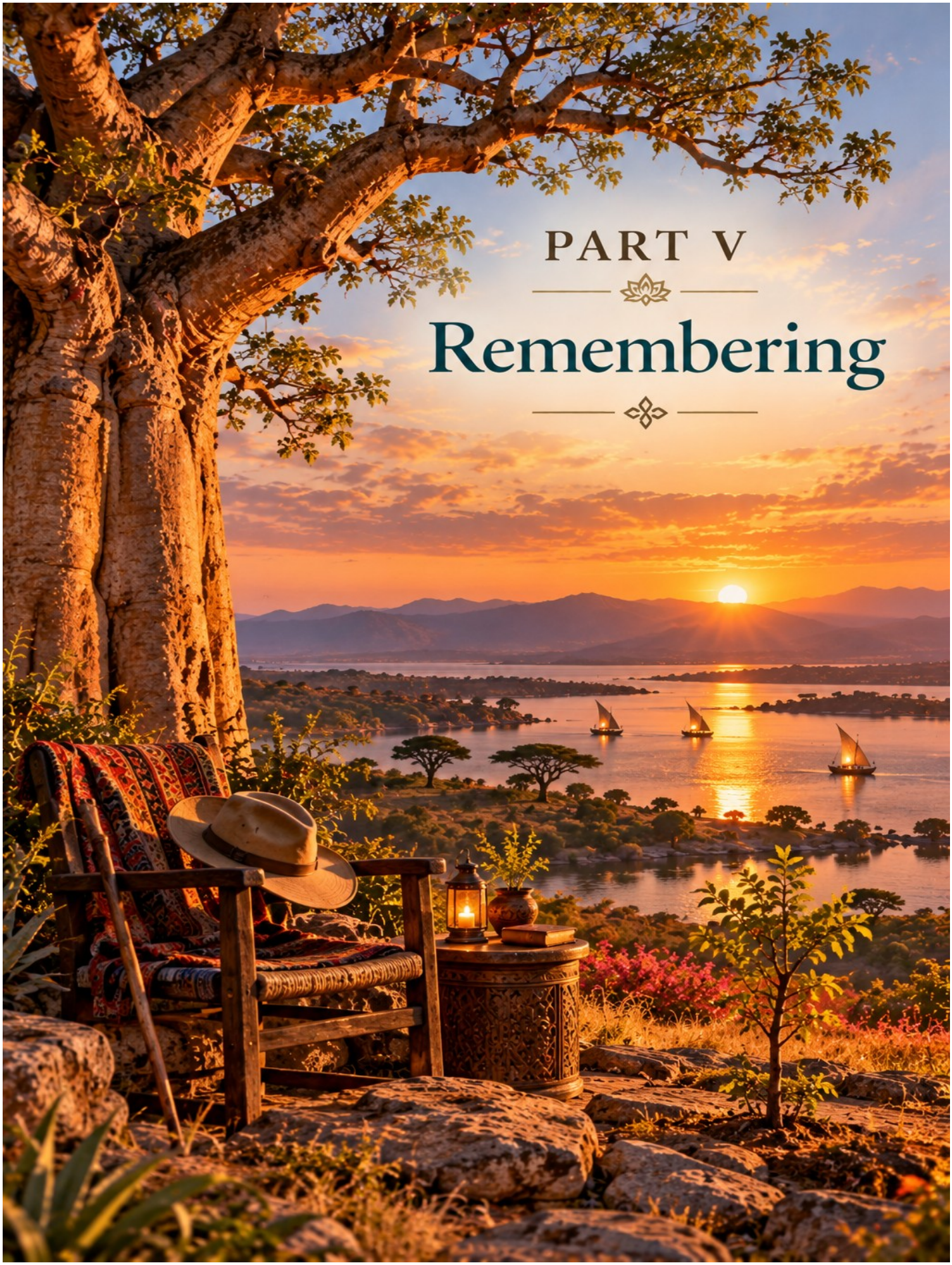
The Garden may be wounded and blossoming.

Resting and growing.

Ripening and beginning again.

For healing is not completing the arc.

It is living within it.


PART V
Remembering

Chapter 22 — When the Gardens Fall Silent



The Last Breath

The morning began as so many mornings had before.

The Sun rose over the Living Landscape.

Birds gathered in the branches of the old trees.

A woman opened her Garden Gate and stepped outside to water her flowers.

Across the pathway, a father was preparing breakfast while his children searched for their schoolbooks.

An elderly couple sat together beside their Window, enjoying the warmth of the morning light.

At the hospital, doctors and nurses were beginning another day of caring for the sick.

In the school, teachers were preparing their classrooms.

Children arrived carrying books, bags and stories from the previous evening.

- Some were excited.
- Others were tired.
- A few were still thinking about the homework they had forgotten.

And across the Living Landscape, thousands of Pilgrims were beginning another ordinary day.

- Some Gardens were flourishing.
- Others were recovering from difficult seasons.
- Some Pilgrims were experiencing love.
- Others were carrying grief.
- Some were learning.
- Some were healing.

And some were simply enjoying the quiet familiarity of being alive.

Life was unfolding.

But beyond the distant hills, the atmosphere had begun to change.

There had been disagreements between neighbouring lands.

- Accusations.
- Threats.
- Promises of retaliation.
- Words had grown increasingly hostile.

Pilgrims who had never met were being taught to fear one another.

- Some began preparing for war.
- Others protested.
- Some believed fighting was necessary.
- Others feared what would follow.
- And many simply wanted to continue living.

Then, one morning, the first explosions were heard.

War had entered the Living Landscape.

Section 1 - When the Living Field Becomes a Battlefield

At first, the fighting seemed far away.

The distant sounds reached the Gardens like thunder.

Pilgrims gathered around radios and televisions.

- They listened to announcements.
- They watched images of destruction.
- They wondered how close the fighting might come.

Some prepared to leave.

Others remained.

Across the Living Landscape, women and men were called to serve.

- Some were soldiers.
- Others were medics, drivers, engineers and rescue workers.
- Some had volunteered.
- Others had been compelled to go.

Some believed they were protecting their homeland.

Others questioned the decisions that had brought them to war.

Families gathered at Gates and doorways.

- There were embraces.
- Promises.
- Tears.

And words that seemed inadequate for the uncertainty ahead.

A young woman kissed her daughter goodbye.

She had been called to serve as a military medic.

Her daughter asked when she would return.

"Soon," she replied.

She wanted to believe it.

In another Garden, a young man embraced his father.

He had never travelled far from his home.

Now he was leaving for a battlefield he knew only from maps and news reports.

His father placed a hand upon his shoulder.

There were many things he wanted to say.

But the words would not come.

The young man departed.

The Gate closed.

And another Garden began waiting.

War was no longer something happening beyond the distant hills.

- It had entered families.
- Relationships.
- Inner Houses.
- Gardens.

The Living Field had become a battlefield.

And the consequences would reach far beyond those carrying weapons.

Section 2 - The Day the Sky Fell

The bombardment began before dawn.

- At first, a distant explosion.
- Then another.
- And another.

Soon the sounds were coming from every direction.

- Buildings shook.
- Windows shattered.
- The streets filled with dust.

Pilgrims ran from their homes.

- Some carried children.
- Others supported elderly relatives.

Some had no time to take anything.

- A woman emerged from her House holding her infant against her chest.
- Across the street, a man was trying to help his neighbour, who could no longer walk.
- A family hurried towards a shelter.
- Another family had nowhere to go.

The explosions continued.

A residential building collapsed.

Inside were Pilgrims who had been sleeping only moments earlier.

- Men.
- Women.
- Children.

Some were killed immediately.

Others were trapped beneath the ruins.

Neighbours began searching through the rubble.

- They called out names.
- They listened for replies.
- Some heard voices.
- Others heard nothing.

Rescue workers arrived.

- They worked through the morning.
- Then another explosion struck nearby.
- The rescuers themselves were wounded.
- Some died while trying to save others.

And still the bombardment continued.

Across the Living Landscape, entire neighbourhoods were being destroyed.

- Gardens disappeared beneath fallen walls.
- Trees were uprooted.
- Paths became unrecognisable.
- Homes that had taken generations to build were reduced to ruins within moments.

But the destruction was not measured only in buildings.

Within those buildings had been lives.

- Relationships.
- Memories.
- Hopes.
- Pilgrimages still unfolding.

A House can be destroyed in seconds.

A life cannot be measured by the seconds in which it ends.

Section 3 - The School That Never Reopened

That morning, hundreds of children had arrived at school.

Some were learning to read.

Others were studying mathematics.

A teacher had written a question upon the blackboard.

In another classroom, children were drawing pictures of their families.

- One child had drawn a Garden.
- A small House.

- A tree.
- And four people holding hands.

The teacher had smiled.

Outside, the sounds of bombardment were growing louder.

The children had been frightened.

Their teachers tried to reassure them.

- Some gathered the younger children together.
- Others began moving pupils towards safer parts of the building.

Then the school was struck.

The explosion tore through the classrooms.

Walls collapsed.

The roof fell.

Desks and books disappeared beneath the rubble.

Hundreds of children were killed.

Teachers died beside the pupils they had been trying to protect.

Others were trapped.

Outside, parents began running towards the school.

Some had heard the explosion.

Others had received telephone calls.

They arrived calling their children's names.

A father climbed over the rubble searching for his daughter.

A mother stood beside what remained of a classroom, refusing to leave.

Rescue workers searched for survivors.

A schoolbag was found.

Then a shoe.

Then a notebook.

On one page, a child had written the date.

Beneath it was an unfinished sentence.

There would be no opportunity to complete it.

Across the neighbourhood, families waited for news.

Some children were rescued.

Others were carried away.

And for hundreds of families, the morning that had begun with preparing schoolbags ended with the knowledge that their children would never return.

- There would be no more homework.
- No more arguments about bedtime.

- No more school performances.
- No more birthdays together.
- No more ordinary mornings.

The children had not finished growing.

They had not discovered everything they might have loved.

They had not travelled the paths that lay before them.

Their Gardens had barely begun to unfold.

But their lives had been lives.

Their brevity did not diminish their worth.

And no philosophy should ask their families to find a reason why such deaths had to happen.

Section 4 - The Hospital That Became a Battlefield

At the hospital, the wounded were arriving faster than the staff could care for them.

Doctors moved between patients.

Nurses worked without rest.

Some patients had been injured in the bombardment.

Others were recovering from earlier attacks.

- There were children.
- Elderly Pilgrims.
- Pregnant women.
- Soldiers.
- Civilians.

People whose names the staff did not yet know.

The hospital had become a place where the suffering of the Living Landscape gathered.

- A surgeon had been operating for hours.
- A nurse was comforting a frightened child.

In another room, a doctor was speaking gently to a family about someone they loved.

- The staff were exhausted.

Yet they continued.

Then the hospital was struck.

The building shook.

- Part of the roof collapsed.
- Rooms filled with dust.
- Medical equipment was destroyed.
- The electricity failed.
- Doctors and nurses were killed.
- Patients who had survived earlier injuries died in their beds.

Some were too weak to move.

Others were undergoing treatment when the explosions came.

- A nurse who had spent the morning saving lives was herself buried beneath the rubble.
- A doctor died beside a patient he had been trying to save.
- The wounded were wounded again.
- Those who had come seeking shelter and treatment found themselves beneath falling walls.

Outside, ambulances struggled to reach the hospital.

- Rescue workers searched through the damaged wards.
- Some survivors were carried into the streets.

Others waited for help that could not reach them.

The hospital had been a place of care.

Now it too had become a place of death.

Even the places where Pilgrims went to heal had not been spared.

And perhaps this was among the cruellest consequences of the war.

Those who had dedicated their lives to caring for others were dying alongside the people they had hoped to save.

Section 5 - The Gardens Without Gardeners

By evening, the bombardment had slowed.

Smoke rose above the Living Landscape.

The streets were quieter.

But the quietness was not peace.

Across the ruined neighbourhoods, Pilgrims searched for those they loved.

- Some found them.
- Others continued searching.
- A woman waited outside a hospital for news of her husband.
- A father stood beside the remains of a school.
- A child asked when her mother would return.

No one knew how to answer.

In one Garden, a table had been prepared for breakfast.

- The cups remained.
- The bread had grown cold.
- No one returned to clear the table.

In another Garden, a watering can rested beside a flowerbed.

The Gardener had intended to water the plants that afternoon.

Elsewhere, a book lay open beside a Window.

- A pair of shoes remained beneath a chair.
- A coat hung behind a Door.
- Ordinary objects waited in places where ordinary lives had been interrupted.

Some Gardens had lost one Pilgrim.

- Others had lost entire families.
- Some had been destroyed completely.
- Others remained almost untouched.

And that contrast was difficult to comprehend.

- A tree could still be blossoming beside a ruined House.
- Flowers could still open beside a broken Gate.
- Birds could still sing above streets where hundreds had died.
- Nature had not stopped.

But for those searching through the ruins, the familiar world had become almost unrecognisable.

The Garden may continue growing.

That does not mean its Gardener has not been lost.

Section 6 - The Last Breath

Across the Living Landscape, thousands of Pilgrims had taken their final breath.

- Some were soldiers.
- Others were civilians.
- Women and men.
- Children and the elderly.
- Doctors.
- Nurses.
- Teachers.
- Rescue workers.
- Parents.
- Grandparents.
- Friends.
- Neighbours.

Some had lived for many decades.

Others for only a few years.

Some had been experiencing happiness.

Others were recovering from grief.

Some were beginning new relationships.

Some were learning to live with old wounds.

Others had been flourishing.

And many were simply trying to survive another day.

None had been promised tomorrow.

Yet none had deserved to lose tomorrow merely because war had arrived.

- Some deaths came without warning.
- Others followed hours of suffering.
- Some Pilgrims died surrounded by those they loved.
- Others died alone.
- Some wanted desperately to remain alive.
- Some may never have understood what was happening.

There was no single final experience.

No common feeling.

No final lesson that every Pilgrim had been given time to learn.

And there was no requirement that they should have been peaceful, forgiving or accepting.

The last breath is not an examination of how well we have lived.

Nor does it wait until every wound has healed.

- Every relationship has found resolution.
- Every question has been answered.
- Every hope has been fulfilled.

The arc of living was never a staircase that the Pilgrim had to finish climbing.

- Some were experiencing.
- Some were healing.
- Some were ripening.
- Some were nourishing.
- Some were flourishing.

Many were living several of these movements together.

And then their pilgrimage ended.

They had not completed the arc.

They had lived within it for as long as life allowed.

Section 7 - When the Gardens Fall Silent

Night descended upon the Living Landscape.

In some Gardens, families gathered around small lights.

- They spoke quietly.
- They waited for news.
- They comforted one another.

In others, there was no one left to gather.

- The Houses stood empty.
- The Gardens remained untended.
- The Gates were closed.

Some would never again be opened by the hands that had once cared for them.

Beyond the hills, the war continued.

- More Pilgrims would leave their Gardens.
- More would be wounded.
- More would die.

And those who remained would carry consequences they had never chosen.

- Some would eventually find opportunities to heal.
  Others would continue living with wounds that could not be undone.
- Some would rebuild.
  Others would leave.

- Some would remember.
  Others would struggle to speak of what they had witnessed.

And some would never have the opportunity to begin again.

There was no need to pretend that the destruction had served a greater purpose.

No need to turn every loss into wisdom.

No need to call suffering a gift.

War had taken lives.

And those lives mattered before they were lost.

The Moon rose above the ruined Gardens.

Its light fell upon broken walls.

- Empty classrooms.
- Damaged hospital wards.
- Abandoned pathways.

And the places where Pilgrims had taken their final breath.

- Somewhere, a mother was still calling her child's name.
- Somewhere, a father was holding a photograph.
- Somewhere, a nurse's family waited for news that would never bring her home.

And somewhere, beneath an old tree, a Garden Gate moved gently in the evening wind.

The Gardener would not return.
The flowers would open again.
The seasons would continue.
But the absence would remain.

There had been a first breath.
There had been a life.
And there had been a last breath.

The pilgrimage had ended.

Chapter 23 — The Flames Returning Home



The Voyage Beyond the Gardens

The Sea was quiet.

Far beyond the Living Landscape, where the last pathways met the shore, the waters stretched towards a distant Horizon.

There were no boundaries upon the Sea.

- No walls.
- No Gates.
- No roads dividing one Garden from another.

Only water, moving gently beneath an immense sky.

The evening light rested upon the waves.

And along the shore, little boats began to appear.

One by one.

- Some emerged from the morning mist.
- Others arrived beneath the fading light.
- Each was small.
- Each was different.

And within each boat rested a Flame.

No Pilgrim stood beside it.

No Gardener held the oars.

- The Inner Houses had fallen silent.
- The Gardens had been left behind.
- The Lamps had completed their earthly purpose.

And now the Flames were beginning their voyage.

Towards the Horizon.
Towards Home.
Whatever Home might mean.

Section 1 - The Little Boats

The first boat moved gently away from the shore.
Its Flame was small but steady.
It had accompanied a child whose pilgrimage had lasted only a few years.

- There had been laughter.
- Curiosity.
- The discovery of colours.
- The delight of hearing familiar voices.
- The warmth of being held.
- A few seasons of growing.

And then the school had been destroyed.

The child had taken a final breath.

There would be no more mornings in the classroom.

- No more questions for the teacher.
- No more drawings to bring home.

Yet those few years had been a life.

- Not the life that might have unfolded.
- Not the life that had been hoped for.

But a life that had been lived.

The little boat drifted towards the open water.

Soon another appeared.

Its Flame had accompanied an elderly Gardener.

He had lived through many seasons.

- He had planted trees.
- Loved deeply.
- Made mistakes.
- Lost people he could not replace.
- He had known joy and disappointment.
- He had carried memories that still troubled him.

And there had been much he had never understood.
His Garden had been destroyed during the bombardment.
Now his Flame travelled upon the same Sea as the child's.
One pilgrimage had lasted many decades.
The other only a few years.
The Sea did not count birthdays.

Nor did it measure achievements.

For the length of a pilgrimage tells us how long it lasted.

It does not tell us all that the life contained.

For the length of a pilgrimage tells us how long it lasted.

It does not tell us all that the life contained.

The two boats moved gently upon the water.

Neither hurried.

Neither waited for the other.

And the Sea was wide enough for both.

Section 2 - The Flames of Those Who Cared

More boats appeared.

- One carried the Flame of a nurse who had spent her final morning comforting a wounded child.
- Another carried the Flame of a doctor who had worked through the night, trying to save lives.
- Further out travelled the Flame of a rescue worker who had entered a ruined building and never returned.

They had cared for others.

They had also known exhaustion, uncertainty and fear.

Their lives had ended while they were trying to preserve the lives of others.

The goodness of an action does not make the loss of the one who performed it less painful.

The boats continued towards the Horizon.

Behind them, in the Living Landscape, patients would remember the nurse.

Families would remember the doctor.

Someone would remember the rescue worker who had tried to reach them.

Those memories belonged to the Gardens.

The Flames were travelling elsewhere.

Section 3 - The Boat That Carried No Answer

Far out upon the Sea travelled a little boat whose Flame had accompanied a mother.

She had died during the bombardment.

Her children had survived.

In the final moments of her life, she had been afraid for them.

- She had not reached acceptance.
- She had not found peace.
- She had not completed some final act of letting go.
- She had wanted to remain.

She had wanted another morning.

- Another embrace.
- Another opportunity to see her children grow.

And then her pilgrimage had ended.

Now the little boat moved upon the water.

There was no suggestion that her fear had been a failure.

No demand that she should have understood death.

No expectation that she should have welcomed her departure.

A Pilgrim does not have to be ready for the last breath.

And the Flame did not have to shine more brightly to prove that the life had been worthwhile.

Nearby travelled another boat.

Its Flame had accompanied a Pilgrim who had lived with profound loneliness.

- There had been few visitors to his Garden.
- Few people who knew his story.

When he died, almost nobody noticed.

- There were no crowds.
- No public mourning.
- No long accounts of his achievements.

Yet his pilgrimage had been no less real.

To have lived is not the same as to have been remembered.

Section 4 - The Gathering of the Flames

Night settled over the water.

The sky darkened.

Stars began appearing above the Horizon.

And across the Sea, little lights could be seen.

Hundreds.

Thousands.

Perhaps more than could be counted.

Each belonged to a pilgrimage that had ended.

- A child.
- A parent.
- A teacher.
- A nurse.
- A soldier.
- A stranger.

A Pilgrim whose Garden had flourished.

Another whose Garden had been wounded.

- One who had lived gently.
- Another who had caused suffering.
- Some had been loved.
- Some feared.
- Some forgotten.

Some had lived long enough to see their grandchildren grow.

Others had never experienced their first day at school.

The boats did not form a procession.

There was no leader.

No arrangement according to age, status or achievement.

They simply travelled.

Some near one another.

Others far apart.

And as they moved, the waters reflected their little Flames.

The Sea seemed filled with stars.

But these were not stars fallen from the sky.

They were the lights of pilgrimages that had ended upon the land.

For a moment, it was possible to imagine the immensity of what had happened.

- Not merely the numbers reported after the bombardment.
- Not merely the names recorded upon lists.
- Not merely the buildings destroyed.

But the lives.

- Each with an Inner House.
- Each with a Garden.
- Each having experienced a world that no other Pilgrim could experience in precisely the same way.

And now each Flame travelled towards the Horizon.

There was no triumph in the sight.

No suggestion that war had been redeemed by the beauty of the boats.

The lives had been lost.

Their absence remained.

And whatever beauty existed upon the Sea did not undo the suffering upon the land.

The voyage Home was not a justification for the journey having ended.

It was simply the image through which we accompanied the Flames towards Mystery.

The night grew deeper.

The little boats continued their voyage.

Behind them lay the Living Landscape.

The Gardens they had known.

The Inner Houses they had illuminated.

The pathways they had travelled.

And the Pilgrims who remained.

Ahead lay the Horizon.

And beyond it?

We do not know.

- Perhaps Home was a place.
- Perhaps it was a return to something from which the Flame had once emerged.
- Perhaps there was no journey beyond the last breath.
- Or perhaps there was something we had not yet learned to understand.

The Sea offered no answers.

The Horizon revealed no secrets.

And the Flames continued their voyage.

One by one, the little boats disappeared into the distance.

- The child's.
- The elderly Gardener's.
- The mother's.

And countless others whose pilgrimages had ended.

- There were no farewells upon the water.
- No promises of reunion.
- No certainty about what awaited them.

Only the gentle movement of the boats towards a Horizon that remained beyond our reach.

We could accompany them no further.

And perhaps this was where our story had to become quiet.

For there is a difference between honouring a Mystery and claiming to know its answer.

The last little boat approached the Horizon.

For a while, its Flame remained visible.

A tiny light upon the immense Sea.

Then it grew smaller.

And smaller.

Until it disappeared from sight.

The waters continued their gentle movement.

The stars shone above.

And far behind, the Living Landscape rested beneath the night sky.

Its Gardens remained.

Its pathways continued.

And within countless Inner Houses, other Flames were still illuminating the pilgrimage of life.

The Flames had departed.

The Sea remained.

And beyond the Horizon lay Mystery.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

As I watch the little boats travelling towards the Horizon, I do not know what awaits them.

But I know that every Flame has accompanied a life unlike any other.

Some pilgrimages were long.

Others brief.

Some ended peacefully.

Others in suffering.

Yet the worth of a life cannot be measured by its length or its ending.

And perhaps the little boats remind us of something important.

While we share the Living Landscape, how we treat one another matters.

For our pilgrimage may end, but the consequences of how we lived may remain.

The Pilgrim's Sahachari

The pilgrimage has been lived.
The Flame has travelled as far as our story can follow.
And beyond the Horizon, we leave room for Mystery.
The Garden returns to Mother Earth.
Living Wisdom returns to life.
And the Flame returns to Mystery.

Chapter 24 - When the Flame Has Departed



Is someone really sitting in that chair, or is the House remembering?

Do Gardens Remember Their Pilgrims?

There are Houses that feel different after someone has died.

- The furniture remains where it has always been.
- A coat hangs behind the Door.
- A photograph rests upon the table.
- The clock continues ticking.

And yet, something has changed.

Or perhaps something remains.

You enter a room you have entered a thousand times before.

- You recognise its familiar sounds.
- The creaking floorboards.
- The gentle movement of a curtain.
- The faint ticking of a clock somewhere in the House.

But tonight, the room feels different.

You sit down.

For a while, nothing happens.

Then, somewhere along the passage, a floorboard creaks.

You look towards the Door.

Nobody is there.

Old Houses make noises.

You know that.

But then you hear something else.

- Footsteps.
- Not just any footsteps.
- The particular rhythm of someone who once lived in this House.

Someone who has been dead for years.

You listen.

Silence.

Perhaps memory has given an ordinary sound a familiar meaning.

- Then, unexpectedly, a fragrance reaches you.
- Faint, almost imperceptible.
- The perfume someone used to wear.
- You have not smelled it for years.

For a moment, the past seems very close.

You turn towards the Door again.

Nobody is there.

Yet you feel that you are not alone.

Why does the House sometimes seem to remember those who have departed?

Throughout human history, Pilgrims have described experiences like these.

- A voice heard in an empty room.
- A figure glimpsed beside a Window.
- A shadow moving where no shadow should be.
- The sensation of being watched.

And sometimes, something particularly strange.

- A sudden coldness.

As though something invisible had entered the room.

We have given such experiences a familiar name.

Ghosts.

- Some believe they are the spirits of the dead.
- Others understand them through memory, perception, expectation or the physical world.
- And some experiences remain unexplained by those who encounter them.

But perhaps our Living Landscape offers another way of contemplating this mystery.

- We have already accompanied the Flame towards the Horizon.
- We have watched the little boats disappear into the distance.
- We do not know what awaits them.

Yet here, among the living, something sometimes seems to remain.

- A sound.
- An appearance.

- A lingering influence.

Could what we call a ghost be something that remains after the Flame has departed?

We do not know.

But perhaps three images may help us explore the question.

The Echo.

The Smoke.

The Soot.

Section 1 - The Echo

When the Sound Remains

Imagine an old church standing at the edge of a village.

It is late.

The last visitors have departed.

The great wooden Doors are closed, and the church rests in darkness.

Somewhere above, the bell begins to ring.

Its sound travels through the tower, across the rooftops and into the surrounding fields.

Then the bell stops.

But the sound does not disappear immediately.

It continues to reverberate beneath the vaulted ceiling.

Between the stone walls.

Along the empty passageways.

Gradually, it grows softer.

Until silence returns.

The bell is no longer ringing.

Yet something of its sound remains.

This is an echo.

And perhaps it offers us our first Window into the mystery of ghosts.

The Footsteps in the Passage

Imagine a Pilgrim who has lived in the same House for fifty years.

Every evening, they climb the wooden staircase.

Their footsteps have a particular rhythm.

One step is heavier than the others.

A familiar creak follows as they reach the landing.

Those who share the House recognise the sound without needing to look.

Then, one day, the Pilgrim dies.

- The staircase remains.
- The landing remains.
- And the familiar creak remains.

But the footsteps have ceased.

Months pass.

Perhaps years.

Then, late one evening, someone sitting downstairs hears a sound.

- A footstep.
- A pause.
- Another footstep.

And that familiar creak upon the landing.

For an instant, they almost call out.

Then they remember.

The staircase is empty.

Was someone walking upstairs?

- Perhaps the House was settling.
- Perhaps an ordinary sound awakened a familiar memory.

But to the person who heard it, the experience was unmistakable.

And sometimes, such experiences are extraordinarily vivid.

- A voice calling our name.
- A familiar laugh from another room.
- A whispered word beside our ear.

We turn towards the sound.

Nobody is there.

The Pilgrim has departed.

But something seems to echo.

When the Inner House Echoes

Not every echo comes from the walls around us.

Some arise within our own Inner House.

- A mother may have died many years ago.
  Yet her child, now grown old, still hears her voice when making a familiar mistake.
- A father may be gone, but his warning returns whenever danger approaches.
- A particular song may bring a departed friend's laughter so vividly into awareness that, for an instant, they seem close enough to touch.

Memory can preserve voices, expressions and sensations long after the people associated with them have died.

And sometimes memory arrives without being invited.

- A fragrance.
- A particular light falling across a room.
- The sound of a key turning in a lock.

Suddenly, someone absent for decades feels near again.

- The Mind remembers.
- The Emotional Self responds.
- And the Body may react before we have understood why.

A heartbeat quickens.

- The skin tingles.
- A familiar warmth returns.
- Or perhaps an old fear.

For not every echo is comforting.

- An angry footstep.
- A raised voice.
- A Door slammed in the night.

Years after the person has departed, an ordinary sound may awaken the same fear.

The Pilgrim is gone.

But the Inner House may still respond as though they were there.

What, then, of sounds we cannot readily explain?

- Perhaps several people hear the same unfamiliar footsteps.
- Perhaps a voice seems to come from an empty room.

We need not dismiss what someone experienced.

But neither must we assume that the dead have returned.

Sounds travel unexpectedly through buildings. Memory and expectation can influence what we hear.

And sometimes, we simply do not know what produced a sound.

Perhaps this is where the Silent Door becomes useful.

I heard something.

I do not know what caused it.

An echo may resemble its source.

But it is not the source itself.

The bell has stopped ringing.

The sound may still be heard.

And the sound is not the bell.

Yet some ghostly encounters involve more than sound.

Sometimes, a Pilgrim claims to have seen someone.

And sometimes, the appearance is accompanied by a peculiar coldness.

For this, perhaps we need another image.

Section 2 - The Smoke

A Presence Without the Flame

Imagine a House standing alone at the end of a narrow lane.

It has been empty for years.

- The windows are dark.
- The Garden has grown wild.

- And the wooden gate moves gently in the evening wind.

Inside, the furniture remains beneath white sheets.

- Dust has settled upon the floor.

A Pilgrim enters the House.

- Perhaps they have come to collect something.
- Perhaps they once lived here.

They walk through the familiar rooms, remembering where everything used to be.

Then, at the end of the passage, they notice something.

A figure.

Standing motionless beside a Door.

- The outline of a head.
- The shape of shoulders.
- Something resembling a face.

The Pilgrim stops.

The figure does not move.

They look again.

And it is gone.

- Perhaps the evening light had fallen strangely across the furniture.
- Perhaps the Mind had recognised a human shape where none existed.

But for an instant, someone appeared to be standing there.

Then something else happens.

The passage seems to grow cold.

Not the entire House.

Only the place where the figure had appeared.

A shiver moves across the Pilgrim's skin.

They leave.

And for years afterwards, they remember that moment.

Not simply because they saw something.

But because of the strange feeling that accompanied it.

Something had appeared to be present.

Yet the warmth of life seemed absent.

When the Flame Goes Out

Imagine a candle burning in a dark room.

- Its Flame gives light and warmth.
- The surrounding darkness retreats.

Then someone extinguishes it.

- The light disappears.
- The warmth begins to fade.

But something remains.

- A thin ribbon of smoke rises from the wick.
- It curls through the darkness.
- Changes shape.
- Drifts towards the ceiling.

For a moment, it may even resemble something familiar.

Then it begins to disappear.

The smoke is not the Flame.

It cannot illuminate the room as the Flame once did.

Nor does it possess the same warmth.

Perhaps this offers another Window into the mystery of ghosts.

Throughout history, Pilgrims have described seeing figures resembling those who have died.

- A woman standing beside her former bed.
- An elderly man sitting in his favourite chair.
- A child glimpsed upon a staircase.
- Sometimes the figure appears almost solid.
- Sometimes it disappears when approached.

What are we to make of such experiences?

We know that human perception can produce convincing appearances, particularly in darkness, grief or states between sleeping and waking.

- A coat hanging behind a Door may resemble a person.
- A reflection may seem like someone watching from another room.

And yet, to the person who experiences it, the appearance can feel extraordinarily real.

Perhaps our metaphor allows us to contemplate the experience without claiming to know its cause.

- **What if the apparition is not the Flame?**
- What if it resembles smoke?

An appearance without the life that once illuminated it.

Something that seems to occupy a space, yet does not possess the qualities of the living Pilgrim.

A presence without the Flame.

The Coldness of the Smoke

And now we arrive at something particularly intriguing.

Why do some Pilgrims describe a sudden coldness when they believe they have encountered a ghost?

- An icy sensation beside the bed.
- A chill moving through a passage.
- A cold corner in an otherwise comfortable room.

Within our Living Landscape, the Flame has always represented the light of life.

And where there is a living Flame, there is warmth.

But smoke is different.

- It may curl and dance as though alive.
- It may assume a familiar shape.

Yet it has no light of its own.

And once it has cooled, it carries none of the fire's heat.

Perhaps this is why our image of smoke feels appropriate.

Imagine recognising someone's face, their clothing, even the way they stand.

But there is no familiar voice.

No living response.

No warmth.

Only the appearance.

The Mind recognises something familiar.

Yet the Body senses that something essential is missing.

The smoke has an appearance.
But it has no Flame to warm it.

Could this help us understand why some ghostly encounters are described as cold?

Metaphorically, perhaps.

It does not mean that the absence of a Flame physically lowers a room's temperature. Draughts, building conditions and bodily responses to fear may account for sensations of coldness.

But our image offers another way of contemplating the experience.

Not as the arrival of a living Flame.

But as the unsettling appearance of something without one.

Something seems to be standing before us.
Yet something essential is absent.

The Flame Cannot Be Overcome by Smoke

Earlier in our Living Landscape, we encountered a saying:

> **You are the Flame.**
> **The ghost is only smoke.**
> **The Flame can never be overcome by smoke.**

Perhaps we can now understand it more deeply.

- Smoke may obscure our vision.
- It may assume strange shapes.
- It may unsettle us.

But it is not the Flame.

Nor does a frightening appearance necessarily possess power over the Pilgrim who encounters it.

- Some experiences may arise through perception.

- Others through memory.
- And some may remain unexplained.

We can acknowledge uncertainty without surrendering our ability to question what we experience.

For the Flame and the ghost are not the same.

The Flame belongs to the pilgrimage whose destination is Mystery.

Smoke, in our metaphor, is merely an appearance that seems to remain.
Eventually, it disperses.
The strange shape disappears.
The room becomes ordinary again.
But sometimes, something remains long after the smoke has gone.
Something that settles.

Something that may influence the living for generations.

Section 3 - The Soot

When the House Remembers

Imagine returning to a House you have not visited for many years.

- The furniture has changed.
- The walls have been painted.
- New curtains hang at the Windows.

Yet, as you step inside, something happens.

- Your footsteps grow quieter.
- You listen before entering a room.
- You lower your voice without knowing why.

Nobody has asked you to be quiet.
Nobody is angry.
The person you once feared has been dead for twenty years.

But your Body remembers.

- You stand in the passage, an adult now, and suddenly feel like the child who once lived there.
- You know that nothing is about to happen.

Yet something within you is preparing for it.

The Pilgrim who frightened you has departed.
But the House still seems to carry their shadow.

There are no footsteps.
No apparition.
No unexplained coldness.
And yet, in a way, the House feels haunted.
Perhaps this is where we encounter our third possibility.

What Settles After the Smoke

Imagine a fireplace that has burned for many winters.

The Flames have warmed the room.

Smoke has risen through the chimney.

The fire has been extinguished countless times.

But something has accumulated upon the surrounding walls.

Soot.

Unlike smoke, soot does not simply drift away.

- It settles.
- It clings to surfaces.
- It gathers in corners that are seldom examined.

Sometimes it remains unnoticed for years.
Until someone moves a picture from the wall and discovers that the surface beneath it is a different colour.
Perhaps something similar happens within our Inner Houses.
Throughout a pilgrimage, experiences leave their traces.

- Words are spoken.
- Habits are repeated.
- Fears are learned.
- Affection is expressed.

Some experiences pass through us.
Others settle.
And when the Pilgrim who helped create them departs, the traces do not necessarily disappear.
The Flame has departed.
The smoke has dispersed.
But the soot may remain.

The Pilgrim Who Never Really Left

There are families in which someone who died many years ago still seems to occupy a place at the table.

Not literally.

But through the influence they continue to exert.

Perhaps a grandfather was a stern man.

- Everyone feared displeasing him.
- He decided how money should be spent.
- Who could speak.
- And what must never be discussed.

When he died, his chair stood empty.

But nobody sat in it.

Years passed.

The children became adults.

The grandchildren grew older.

Yet certain subjects remained forbidden.

Certain decisions still required an imagined approval.

Someone would begin a sentence:

> "Grandfather would never have allowed…"

And the conversation would end.

The man was no longer there.

His authority had survived his death.

Not because his Flame had returned.

But because the patterns established during his life continued to shape those who remained.

The Pilgrim had departed.

Yet the House was still obeying him.

Perhaps this is one of the strangest forms of haunting.

A person can be absent from the world and still influence the behaviour of those who live in it.

But not every residue is frightening.

Another Pilgrim may leave behind generosity.

- A grandmother who always welcomed visitors may be remembered whenever her granddaughter brings out another chair.
- A father's patience may continue in the way his children listen.
- A friend's kindness may inspire an unexpected act of compassion.

Some traces nourish.

Others trouble.

And some do both.

Not everything that settles within a Garden needs to be washed away.

The Room Nobody Enters

Sometimes the soot gathers around silence.

Imagine a family House with a room at the end of the passage.

The Door remains closed.

Nobody enters.

The room belonged to someone who died many years ago.

Their belongings remain untouched.

- Clothes hang in the wardrobe.
- Books rest upon the shelves.
- A pair of shoes stands beside the bed.

At first, the family kept the room unchanged because the loss was unbearable.

- Years passed.
- Then decades.

The younger Pilgrims grew up knowing that the Door must never be opened.
Some had never known the person who died.
Yet they inherited the silence.
Whenever someone mentioned the room, the atmosphere changed.
Conversations stopped.
Faces tightened.
And the subject was abandoned.
One evening, a child asks:

"Why does nobody go in there?"

The adults exchange glances.
Nobody answers.
The child looks towards the closed Door.

- Perhaps something frightening is inside.
- Perhaps someone is waiting.
- Perhaps a ghost.

But the room may contain nothing supernatural.
Only belongings.
Memories.
And a grief that has never found a way to be spoken about.
The room is not necessarily haunted by the dead.
It may be haunted by what the living cannot approach.
Perhaps this is how soot sometimes travels between generations.
Not through stories that are told.
But through stories that remain silent.

Opening the Windows

What happens when a Pilgrim finally notices the soot?

Perhaps nothing changes immediately.

Old patterns may be deeply established.

Some may once have offered protection.

Others may have caused suffering.

But awareness introduces a possibility.

- A Pilgrim notices that they become frightened whenever someone raises their voice.
- Another recognises that they repeat the harsh words once spoken to them.
- Someone else begins to question a family silence that has lasted for generations.

A Window opens.

Fresh Air enters.

What was once invisible becomes easier to see.

Not everything can be cleared away simply because we recognise it.

- Some wounds require time and careful tending.
- Some memories deserve to be preserved.

The purpose is not to erase every trace of those who came before us.
It is to understand what we are carrying.
For we may inherit the soot without being obliged to keep spreading it.
The past has not been undone.
The departed Pilgrim has not returned.
But something within the living Garden may begin to change

Section 4 - Places That Remember

There are places where the past seems reluctant to leave.

- An abandoned school.
- An old hospital.
- A battlefield where the grass has grown again.
- A House where generations of Pilgrims have lived and died.

We enter such places and sometimes feel something we cannot explain.

- Perhaps we know their history.
- Perhaps the silence unsettles us.
- Perhaps a sound or shadow awakens an unexpected memory.

And sometimes, people report experiences for which they cannot find an explanation.
We need not turn every mystery into certainty.
Nor must we dismiss every experience we do not understand.
Our Living Landscape simply offers three ways of contemplating what remains.

- **The Echo — what continues to resonate.**
- **The Smoke — what appears to remain without the living Flame.**
- **The Soot — what settles and continues to influence the living.**

Perhaps these images also help us understand why a Garden can feel haunted without containing anything supernatural.

- The past may remain through memory.
- Through the Body.
- Through habits and silences.
- Through the kindness and cruelty that Pilgrims pass to one another.

And sometimes, what remains is not something we can readily explain.
We can allow that uncertainty to exist.
For beyond the Horizon, the Flame has entered Mystery.

And here, among the living, we are left to tend what remains.

The Last Footstep

Night has fallen upon the Living Landscape.

Somewhere, an old House stands beneath the stars.

- Its Windows are dark.
- Its Garden is still.
- Inside, the clock continues ticking.
- A curtain moves beside an open Window.

Then, somewhere along the passage, a floorboard creaks.

The Pilgrim looks towards the Door.

Nobody is there.

They listen.

For a moment, the House seems to be holding its breath.

Then silence returns.

- Perhaps it was the wind.
- Perhaps a memory.
- Perhaps something they cannot explain.

The Pilgrim rises and closes the Window.

But before leaving the room, they glance once more towards the passage.

Nothing moves.

The House is empty.
Or so it appears.

The Flame has departed.
Yet the Garden may still have a story to tell.

The Pilgrim's Reflection

Perhaps I have never seen a ghost.
Or perhaps I have experienced something I could not explain.

- A familiar voice.
- An unexpected presence.
- A sudden coldness.

I do not know whether the dead return.
But I know that those who have departed may continue to influence the living.

- Some leave tenderness.
- Others leave wounds.
- Some leave memories that nourish.
- Others leave patterns we may choose not to repeat.

And perhaps the mystery of ghosts invites me to consider something closer to home.

What am I leaving behind in the Gardens of others?

For one day, my own pilgrimage will end.

My Flame will depart towards Mystery.

And whatever remains will belong to the Living Landscape.

Sahachari — The Companion's Whisper

The Companion sits quietly beside the Pilgrim.

Not every sound comes from someone speaking.

Not every shadow belongs to someone standing there.

And not every feeling of presence means that someone has returned.

Some mysteries remain unanswered.

But remember:

The Echo reverberates.

The Smoke lingers.

The Soot settles.

The Flame has departed.

And perhaps, when the House grows quiet, we may finally recognise the difference.

Pilgrims leave traces.

Gardens carry echoes.

And the Flame is never the ghost.



We cannot change every Garden we inherit, but we can tend the Garden we leave behind

Suggestions for Prayer

WAYS TO PRAY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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 life."

A Prayer of Gratitude

Recognising What Is Already Here

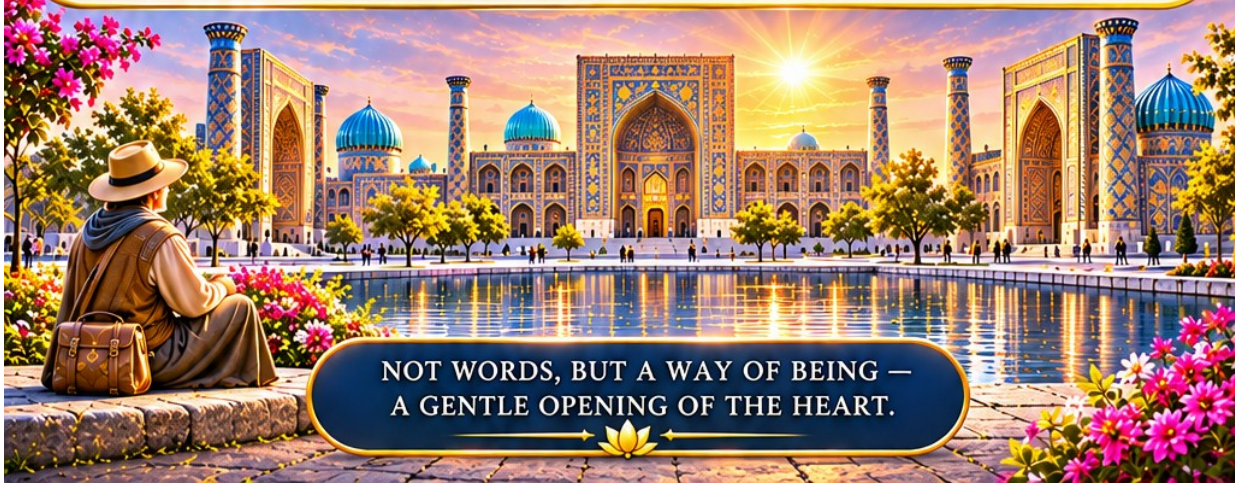
"Thank you for the gift of this life — for the people, the experiences, the lessons and the quiet moments of grace."

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

The Healing Garden — Pilgrims

A companion to the Living Landscape

A Note to the Pilgrim

Throughout this book, we have walked through Houses, Gardens, Harbours and Horizons.

We have encountered kindness and cruelty, belonging and exclusion, conflict and reconciliation.

Along the way, certain words have acquired particular meanings within the Living Landscape.

This glossary offers a gentle reminder of those meanings.

They are not labels to place upon ourselves or others. They are ways of understanding the life we experience, the relationships we cultivate and the world we share.

The language is offered as a companion, not a set of rules.

1. The Living Landscape

The Living Landscape

A way of understanding human life through the relationship between our inner world, the world around us and the wider mystery of existence.

Its principal elements are the House, Garden, Pilgrim, Harbour, Sea, Horizon and Sky.

The Pilgrim

The human being travelling through life.

Every Pilgrim carries an Inner House, encounters other Pilgrims and participates in Gardens that are continually changing.

No two Pilgrims travel precisely the same journey.

The Inner House

The Pilgrim's inner world.

It contains thoughts, feelings, memories, habits, perceptions and the capacity to become aware of what is happening within.

The House influences how we experience and respond to the Garden.

The Outer Garden

The world in which the Pilgrim lives and participates.

It includes relationships, family, community, society, culture, institutions and the natural environment.

The Garden influences the House, just as the House influences how the Pilgrim participates in the Garden.

The Sea

The wider mystery of existence.

It reminds us that not everything can be understood, controlled or explained.

The Harbour

A place of arrival, departure or transition.

Within the Living Landscape, the Harbour represents important thresholds in the Pilgrim's journey, including the mysteries surrounding birth and death.

The Horizon

What lies beyond our present experience.

It represents possibility, uncertainty and the unfolding journey.

The Horizon is not necessarily a destination to be reached.

The Sky

The wider perspective beneath which every House and Garden exists.

It reminds the Pilgrim that personal experiences form part of a much larger existence.

The Flame

The inner light of the Pilgrim.

It represents the living capacity for awareness, love, wisdom and freedom.

The Flame is not a measure of personal worth or achievement.

2. The Inner House and Its Movements

Presence

The capacity to arrive in the present moment and recognise what is happening.

Presence does not require us to fix, change or judge our experience.

Awareness

The capacity to notice and understand what is unfolding within and around us.

Awareness allows the Pilgrim to recognise patterns, reactions and possibilities.

Stillness

An inner steadiness that allows experience to unfold without immediately being driven by it.

Stillness does not require the absence of thoughts or emotions.

The Inner Flame

The deeper capacity for love, wisdom and understanding that may become more accessible as the Pilgrim settles.

The Still Point

A place of inner freedom from which the Pilgrim can experience life without being entirely governed by its changing conditions.

The Rocking Chair

A symbol of Presence within the Inner House.

The Pilgrim may sit in the rocking chair to notice what is happening without immediately attempting to control it.

Autopilot does not occupy the chair.

Hijack may disturb the House, but it does not sit in the rocking chair. It uses the loudspeaker.

Autopilot

The ordinary capacity to carry out familiar activities without continuous conscious attention.

Autopilot is necessary for everyday living.

The invitation is not to eliminate it, but to arrive in Presence when needed.

Hijack

A movement in which thoughts, emotions, memories, fears or desires begin to dominate attention and narrow the Pilgrim's capacity to respond freely.

Hijack often announces itself through pressure, urgency and the continuation of a reaction.

Pressure pushes. Urgency rushes. Continuity keeps the hijack alive.

The Loudspeaker

A symbol of Hijack.

When Hijack takes hold, one voice or reaction may become so loud that other possibilities are difficult to recognise.

The Hidden Self

The stored experiences, impressions, memories and patterns that may remain outside immediate awareness.

The Hidden Self is not necessarily harmful.

Some things remain hidden because they are not yet ready to be understood or expressed.

Their meaning may become clearer as life unfolds and the Pilgrim ripens.

The Cellar

The symbolic place within the House where hidden experiences and stored impressions may remain.

The purpose is not to force everything into the light.

Some things reveal themselves when the conditions are right.

The Loft

A symbolic space of possibility, imagination and what has not yet unfolded.

Its eggs represent possibilities that may need time and suitable conditions to develop.

Not every egg must hatch.

The Window

A way of seeing and receiving the world.

An open Window may allow fresh perspective, understanding and connection.

A closed Window may sometimes provide necessary protection.

The Door

The threshold between the Inner House and what approaches it.

A Door may be Open, Guarded, Busy, Closed or Silent.

These describe the condition of a particular moment, not the permanent character of a person.

The Current

The movement that becomes possible when the House has room for fresh perspective.

Opening two Windows may symbolise the arrival of a Current, bringing new understanding, flexibility and sometimes humour.

3. The Gardens We Share

The Relational Garden

The shared space that develops when two or more Pilgrims encounter one another.

Each brings an Inner House, personal experiences, expectations and ways of seeing.

The relationship is influenced by both Houses.

The Family Garden

The shared environment of family life.

It includes belonging, care, expectations, inherited patterns, conflict and the ways one generation influences another.

The Community Garden

The wider environment of neighbours, schools, workplaces, organisations and everyday social relationships.

It is shaped by the ways people participate, cooperate, disagree and care for one another.

The National Garden

The shared social environment of a nation.

It includes institutions, history, culture, leadership, collective memory and the ways communities understand themselves and others.

The World Gardens

The many human Gardens that exist across countries, cultures and societies.

They remain distinct while continually influencing one another.

No Garden exists entirely alone.

The Garden of Mankind

The shared human world.

It reminds us that beneath our differences, we participate in a common human condition.

The Estuary

A meeting place where different waters come together.

Within the Living Landscape, it represents the possibility of living alongside difference without requiring everyone to become the same.

Belonging

The experience of having a place within a relationship or Garden.

Belonging does not require the loss of individuality.

Difference

The variety of experiences, beliefs, cultures, perspectives and ways of living found among Pilgrims.

Difference is not automatically a threat.

It may become an opportunity for understanding, learning and growth.

Ubuntu

An African philosophy often expressed through the words *"I am because we are."*

It recognises that our humanity develops through our relationships with others.

Within the Healing Garden, Ubuntu reminds us that individual and collective wellbeing are deeply connected.

Humanitas

A recognition of our shared humanity, dignity and responsibility towards one another.

It invites us to see the person beyond the labels we may attach to them.

4. Encountering Other Pilgrims

The Two Houses

The recognition that every encounter involves at least two inner worlds.

We may share an experience without experiencing it in the same way.

The Unseen House

The inner life of another Pilgrim that we cannot fully observe.

Behaviour may be visible, while the experiences, fears and memories influencing it remain hidden.

Making Room

Allowing another Pilgrim to be heard, recognised or understood without immediately attempting to correct or change them.

Making Room does not require agreement.

Discernment

The capacity to recognise what is happening, consider its causes and choose a response with care.

Discernment differs from quickly reducing a person to a judgement.

Judgement

The act of evaluating a person, action or situation.

Judgement may be necessary when recognising harm, but it becomes limiting when a single action is treated as the whole identity of a Pilgrim.

Labelling

Reducing a person to a description such as good, bad, selfish, cruel or difficult.

Labels may describe aspects of behaviour, but they rarely reveal the whole person.

Compassion

The capacity to recognise suffering and respond with care.

Compassion does not require approving harmful behaviour.

Boundaries

The limits that help protect dignity, safety and wellbeing within relationships.

Boundaries allow Pilgrims to remain connected without abandoning themselves.

Responsibility

Recognising the consequences of our actions and our part in shaping the Garden.

Responsibility concerns what we can meaningfully influence, not everything that happens around us.

Connection

The experience of meeting another Pilgrim through attention, understanding, care or shared participation.

Connection does not require identical beliefs or experiences.

5. Harm, Conflict and Collective Hijack

Harm

An action, pattern or condition that damages wellbeing, dignity, safety or the capacity to flourish.

Harm may occur between individuals or across entire communities.

The Garden of Judgement

The shared environment shaped by how people observe, interpret and evaluate one another.

It asks whether our judgements help us understand what has happened or merely deepen division.

Collective Hijack

A movement in which fear, anger, grievance or other narrowing reactions spread through a group, community or nation.

As the reaction becomes shared, alternative perspectives may become increasingly difficult to hear.

Extreme Hijack

A condition in which the capacity to recognise, reflect or respond freely becomes severely restricted.

At such times, a Pilgrim may need protection, practical support and the care of others.

Collective Memory

The experiences, stories and interpretations carried by families, communities and nations.

Collective memory may preserve wisdom and belonging, but it may also carry unresolved grievance.

Inherited Patterns

Ways of thinking, behaving or responding that pass between generations.

They may be nourishing or harmful.

Inheritance influences the Pilgrim but does not necessarily determine what must happen next.

Retaliation

Responding to perceived or experienced harm by attempting to inflict harm in return.

Retaliation may create a continuing cycle in which each side sees its actions as justified.

Restraint

The capacity to recognise an impulse without immediately acting upon it.

Restraint may prevent further harm and create room for a wiser response.

Courage

The willingness to act with care and responsibility even when fear, pressure or uncertainty is present.

Courage does not always require confrontation.

Sometimes it means refusing to continue a harmful pattern.

The Inner Game

The movements taking place within the Pilgrim's House during an activity or challenge.

These include attention, fear, confidence, judgement, composure and the capacity to respond.

The Outer Game

The visible activity taking place in the Garden.

In sport, work or collective life, the Outer Game includes actions, skills, decisions and outcomes.

A strong Outer Game benefits from a well-tended Inner House.

6. Healing, Ripening, Nourishing and Flourishing

Healing

The movement through which suffering, harm or disruption is met with care, understanding and conditions that support recovery.

Healing does not always mean returning to what existed before.

Ripening

The gradual development of understanding, maturity or readiness through time and experience.

Ripening cannot always be hurried.

Nourishing

Receiving or providing what supports life, wellbeing and growth.

Nourishment may arise through relationships, rest, food, understanding, beauty, kindness and the conditions of the Garden.

Flourishing

The expression of life when conditions allow growth, participation, meaning and wellbeing.

Flourishing does not require every difficulty to have disappeared.

The Four Movements

Healing, ripening, nourishing and flourishing are distinct but overlapping movements.

They are not compulsory stages or a fixed sequence.

A Garden may be healing in one part, ripening in another, nourishing growth elsewhere and flourishing at the same time.

The Garden does not need to finish healing before it can begin flourishing.

Acceptance

Recognising what has happened or what is presently true.

Acceptance does not necessarily mean approval, agreement or resignation.

Forgiveness

A possible movement through which the Pilgrim's relationship with hurt begins to change.

Forgiveness may ripen gradually.

It does not require forgetting, reconciliation or abandoning necessary boundaries.

Reconciliation

The rebuilding of a relationship after separation, conflict or harm.

Reconciliation requires conditions that make renewed trust and connection possible.

It cannot be demanded from one Pilgrim alone.

Stewardship

The responsibility of tending what has been entrusted to our care.

Within the Garden, stewardship includes the effects of our choices upon other people, communities and future generations.

Legacy

What remains through our actions, relationships, contributions and the conditions we leave behind.

Legacy is not limited to achievements or possessions.

It may live quietly in the lives we have touched.

7. Memory, Possibility and the Continuing Journey

The Garden of Memory

The living influence of experiences, impressions and stories carried from the past.

Memory may nourish understanding, preserve connection or reactivate unresolved patterns.

Chitta

A term from Indian philosophical traditions associated with the mind and its impressions.

Within the Living Landscape, it helps us consider how experiences may leave traces that influence later responses.

Karma

A term commonly associated with action and its consequences.

Within this book, it invites reflection on how what we do may influence the conditions inherited by ourselves and others.

It is not used as a simple explanation for why someone suffers.

Echoes

The continuing influence of experiences after the original event has passed.

An Echo may be carried within a House or through relationships and communities.

The Familiar Path

The way of responding that has become established through repetition, habit or inheritance.

Familiarity does not necessarily mean that the path is helpful.

Another Path

The possibility of responding differently from the patterns we have inherited or repeatedly followed.

Another Path may begin with one small choice.

The Seed

A symbol of possibility.

It represents something that may grow when suitable conditions are provided.

Not every Seed develops in the same way or at the same time.

Cultivation

The continuing practice of tending the conditions that influence how we live.

Cultivation includes what we encourage, what we restrain and what we allow to grow.

The Fruits of Ripening

The qualities and possibilities that emerge as understanding deepens.

These may include patience, compassion, clarity, acceptance, forgiveness and a greater capacity to live alongside others.

The Garden We Leave Behind

The conditions, relationships and influences that continue beyond our immediate participation.

It asks what future Pilgrims may inherit from the way we have lived.

8. The Five Stations and the Pilgrim's Practices

The Five Stations

Five places of arrival within the Pilgrim's inner journey:

- **Presence** — Arriving in the moment.

- **Awareness** — Seeing what is unfolding.
- **Stillness** — Allowing space without immediate reaction.
- **Inner Flame** — Recognising deeper wisdom and love.
- **Still Point** — Living with greater inner freedom.

ASRA

A gentle orientation for the Pilgrim:

A — **Arrive** in Presence.

S — **See** with Awareness.

R — **Remain Curious.**

A — **Allow** Wisdom to Unfold.

ASRA is an invitation to explore experience rather than immediately judge or control it.

The Five Gifts of the Pilgrim

The deeper qualities associated with the Five Gates:

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

These gifts are not dependent upon everything in the Outer Garden going according to our wishes.

Wholeness

A moment in which the Pilgrim experiences harmony between inner life and outer participation.

The Inner Happiness and Outer Happiness meet in a moment of Wholeness.

9. The Last Threshold

The Departing Flame

A symbol of the Pilgrim whose earthly journey has ended.

It invites reflection on mortality, remembrance and the mystery of what lies beyond death.

The Flames Returning Home

A symbolic image of departure and the journey beyond the known Horizon.

The image does not attempt to establish what happens after death.

It honours the mystery.

The Continuing Garden

The recognition that life continues through those who remain.

Even after loss, the Garden may still be tended, nourished and cultivated.

Receiving → Ripening → Giving

A movement through which the Pilgrim receives from life, allows experience to mature into understanding and offers something to others.

What we give may become part of another Pilgrim's Garden.

A Final Reminder

The Living Landscape is not a system for dividing people into those who have understood life and those who have not.

Every Pilgrim carries an Inner House.

Every House has its weather.

Every Garden has its seasons.

Some parts may be healing while others are flourishing.

Some memories may still be tender.

Some Seeds may not yet be ready to grow.

And sometimes, despite our best intentions, we may find ourselves walking an old path again.

There is no need to condemn the Pilgrim for being human.

We can arrive.

We can notice.

We can remain curious.

And when the moment allows, we can cultivate something different.

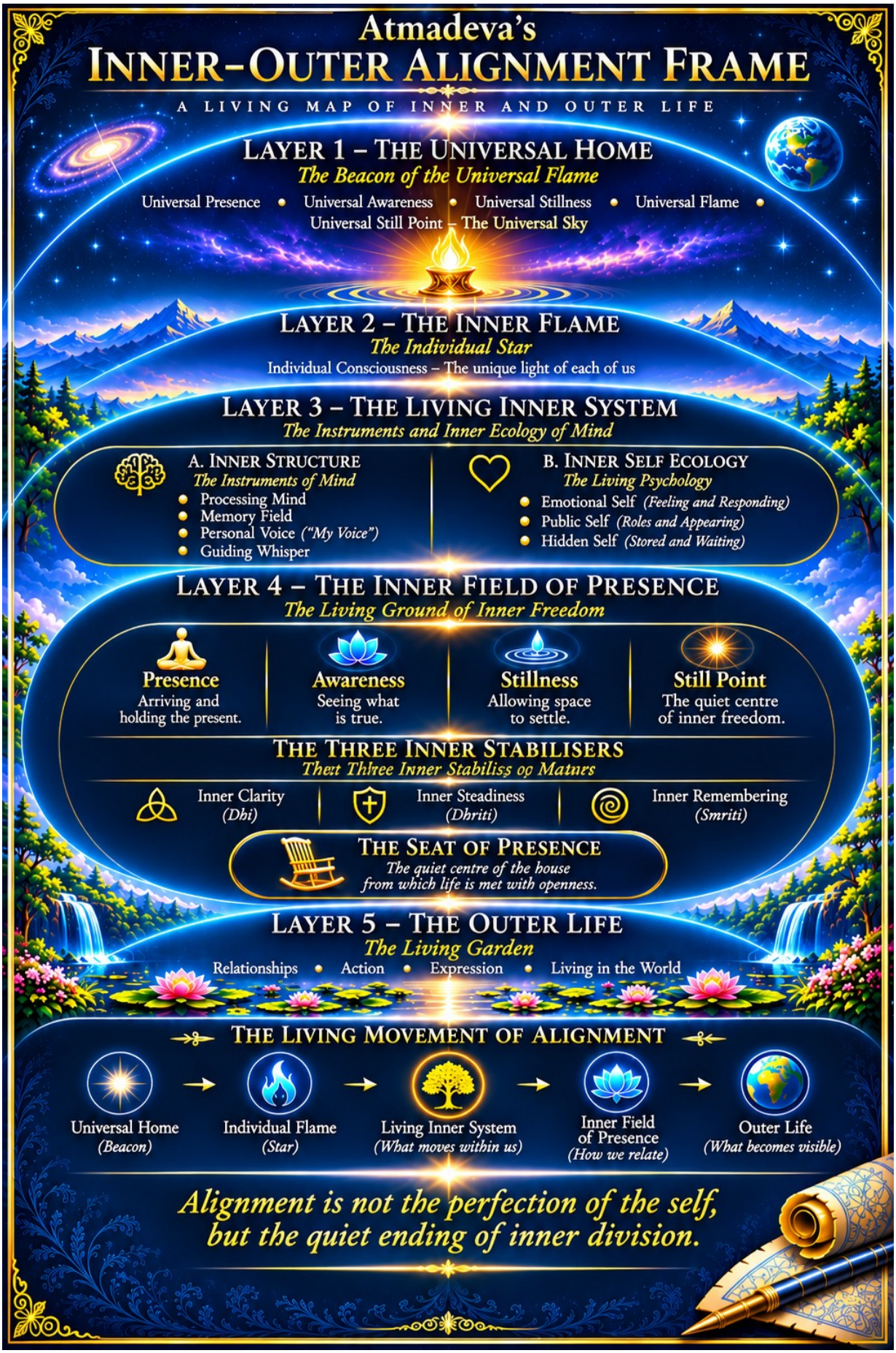
We cannot change every Garden we inherit, but we can tend the Garden we leave behind.

The journey continues to unfold.

Ubuntu, Ubuntu
The humanity in me recognises the humanity in you.

Namaskaram, Namaskaram
My Inner Flame bows to your Inner Flame.
May our Gardens meet in kindness and flourish together.

— Atmadeva Devatma


Atmadeva's
INNER–OUTER ALIGNMENT FRAME
A LIVING MAP OF INNER AND OUTER LIFE
LAYER 1 – THE UNIVERSAL HOME
The Beacon of the Universal Flame
Universal Presence • Universal Awareness • Universal Stillness • Universal Flame •
Universal Still Point – The Universal Sky
LAYER 2 – THE INNER FLAME
The Individual Star
Individual Consciousness – The unique light of each of us
LAYER 3 – THE LIVING INNER SYSTEM
The Instruments and Inner Ecology of Mind
A. INNER STRUCTURE
The Instruments of Mind
Processing Mind
Memory Field
Personal Voice ("My Voice")
Guiding Whisper
B. INNER SELF ECOLOGY
The Living Psychology
Emotional Self (Feeling and Responding)
Public Self (Roles and Appearing)
Hidden Self (Stored and Waiting)
LAYER 4 – THE INNER FIELD OF PRESENCE
The Living Ground of Inner Freedom
Presence
Arriving and holding the present.
Awareness
Seeing what is true.
Stillness
Allowing space to settle.
Still Point
The quiet centre of inner freedom.
THE THREE INNER STABILISERS
Their Three Inner Stabilising Qualities
Inner Clarity (Dhi)
Inner Steadiness (Dhriti)
Inner Remembering (Smriti)
THE SEAT OF PRESENCE
The quiet centre of the house from which life is met with openness.
LAYER 5 – THE OUTER LIFE
The Living Garden
Relationships • Action • Expression • Living in the World
THE LIVING MOVEMENT OF ALIGNMENT
Universal Home (Beacon)
Individual Flame (Star)
Living Inner System (What moves within us)
Inner Field of Presence (How we relate)
Outer Life (What becomes visible)
Alignment is not the perfection of the self,
but the quiet ending of inner division.


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.

A Circle of Offering



No Garden flourishes through one Pilgrim alone.

We receive from those who walked before us,
ripen through those we encounter,
and give to those who follow.

Sometimes, the smallest gesture
becomes a seed in a Garden we may never see.

If this journey has touched you,
you are warmly invited to share a reflection,
a story, or simply a few words.

May what you have received continue to ripen,
and what you give nourish Gardens yet to grow.

Ubuntu, Ubuntu
The humanity in me recognises the humanity in you.

Namaskaram, Namaskaram
My Inner Flame bows to your Inner Flame.
May our Gardens meet in kindness and flourish together.

— **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 Living Together
Life is rarely a solitary journey.
We live, love, work and share this world with family, friends, neighbours and strangers. Our inner life and outer life are intertwined, and what happens within us always touches the world around us.
The Healing Garden explores how we can live together with greater awareness, compassion and wisdom. Through stories, reflections and the Living Landscape, it looks at relationships, communities, conflict, difference and the possibility of healing, ripening, nourishing and flourishing — even in a troubled world.
This is not a book of fixed answers, but a companion for the journey. It invites us to tend our own Garden, while also recognising the Gardens we share.
Each of us is a Pilgrim.
And no Garden flourishes through one Pilgrim alone.
Atmadeva Devatma
The Living Wisdom of Arriving
www.TheStillPoint.org.uk