James Returning Home

Returning What Was Borrowed

James had lived a life.

He had known laughter and disappointment, affection and loneliness, certainty and confusion.

He had loved.
He had made mistakes.
He had experienced moments of joy and others that had left their marks upon him.

Like every Pilgrim, James had arrived in this world with nothing of his own.

Yet Mother Earth had welcomed him.

She had lent him a body through which to experience life.

She had offered him air to breathe, water to drink, food to nourish him and the materials from which to build his surroundings.

- Through his eyes, James had discovered colours.
- Through his ears, he had received the sounds of the world.
- Through his hands, he had touched, held, created and comforted.
- His feet had carried him along countless paths.

- And through this borrowed body, he had experienced the world and gradually shaped the landscape of his Inner House.

For much of his life, James had spoken of these things as his own.

- *My body.*
- *My home.*
- *My possessions.*
- *My life.*

But perhaps ownership was never quite what it appeared to be.

Mother Earth had not given James these things to possess forever. She had entrusted them to him for the duration of his human journey.

And now, that journey was drawing to a close.

The Final Breath

James was growing tired.

His breathing became slower.

The familiar sounds around him seemed increasingly distant.

Those who loved him could remain beside him. They could offer their presence, their tenderness and the warmth of their hands.

But they could not breathe his final breath for him.

There was nothing more James needed to achieve.

Nothing more he needed to gather.

Nothing more he needed to hold.

And then, quietly, James breathed for the last time.

His body became still.

The human life through which he had encountered the world had come to an end.

Returning to Mother Earth

The time had come for James to return what Mother Earth had lent him.

His body, which had carried him through life, would return to the elements of the Earth.

The air he had breathed, the water that had sustained him and the nourishment he had received had all come from her.

His possessions — his clothes, furniture, books, belongings and the home he had occupied — were made from materials Mother Earth had provided.

He could take none of them with him.

Some would pass into other hands.

Others would gradually wear away, change form or return to the Earth from which their materials had come.

Even the garden he had tended would continue growing without him.

The trees would receive sunlight.

The flowers would open.

The birds would sing.

Life would continue.

James had to return his physical body and everything he had borrowed from Mother Earth, including the material possessions he had gathered throughout his life.

Nothing material could accompany him beyond his final breath.

But there was something our pilgrimage had always distinguished from the material world.

His Inner Flame.

And the Inner Flame?

In *The Living Wisdom of Arriving*, the Inner Flame symbolises Individual Consciousness.

It is not James's personality.

It is not his memories, beliefs, thoughts or emotions.

Nor is it something he accumulated throughout his life.

The Inner Flame symbolises the possibility of individual experience — the mysterious light through which James's life could be experienced.

His Inner House had been shaped by the world he encountered.

His body had allowed him to participate in that world.

But the Inner Flame was not described as something borrowed from Mother Earth.

And now?

What happens to consciousness when the body dies?

Does anything of individual consciousness continue?

Here, our philosophy becomes quiet.

We do not know.

We can witness the final breath.

We can recognise the stillness of the body.

We can return what belongs to Mother Earth.

But we cannot claim to know what lies beyond the ending of human life.

And so, in the language of our pilgrimage, we imagine James's Inner Flame rising gently towards the horizon.

Not as proof of another existence.

Not as certainty about what follows death.

But as a symbol of the mystery that remains.

Its imagined journey towards the Universal Home belongs to the next reflection.

For now, we remain with James's last breath.

The Pilgrim Who Remains

The Pilgrim sits quietly beneath the tree.

He does not attempt to follow the Flame.

He does not try to explain its destination.

He remembers James.

His laughter.

His kindnesses.

His imperfections.

The ordinary moments they had shared.

Some memories bring warmth.

Others bring sadness.

And perhaps some remain unfinished.

The Pilgrim allows them to be.

For although James's human journey has ended, the experiences shared with him continue to live within those who remain.

The Pilgrim looks towards the horizon.

He knows that one day, he too will return his body and possessions to Mother Earth.

But that day has not yet arrived.

For now, he is still breathing.

Still experiencing.

Still living.

And perhaps James's departure has quietly reminded him of something worth remembering.

Nothing I have borrowed from Mother Earth can remain mine forever.

What matters is how I live while it is entrusted to me.

Sahachari's Whisper

Mother Earth lent James a body.

She offered him a world to experience.

At his last breath, his earthly journey ended.

His body and possessions would return to her.

But his Inner Flame?

The mystery remains.

The Living Wisdom of Arriving

Atmadeva Devatma

Ubuntu, Ubuntu.

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

