The Wave and the Garden

Atmadeva's Reflection — The Mystery of Life and Returning

As I have grown older, I have found myself wondering about many things.

- Life.
- Death.
- Love.
- Suffering.
- Healing.

Why certain people become part of our lives.

Why some experiences leave such deep impressions.

Why particular questions return, sometimes after many years, inviting us to look again.

I do not claim to know the answers.

In truth, the older I become, the more comfortable I have grown with not knowing.

Yet there is an image that has accompanied me for some time.

The image of a wave.

The Wave and the Sea

When I stand beside the sea and watch the waves arriving, I notice that no two are exactly alike.

- Each rises differently.
- Each follows its own movement.

Each meets the shore in its own way.

- Some arrive gently.
- Some arrive with great force.
- Some travel far across the water.

Others seem to disappear almost as soon as they appear.

Yet all arise within the same sea.

And all return to it.

Over the years, I have sometimes wondered whether human life might be a little like this.

- Not as a certainty.
- Not as a belief I expect others to share.

Simply as an image through which I contemplate my own journey.

Perhaps each life is a wave.

- Unique.
- Temporary.

A particular expression of something much larger than itself.

For a time, the wave takes shape.

- It receives a name.
- A body.
- A family.
- A story.
- An Inner House in which experience unfolds.
- A Garden in which relationships grow.
- A horizon towards which life continues.

And then the pilgrimage begins.

- The wave laughs.
- The wave loves.
- The wave encounters suffering.
- The wave learns.
- The wave forgets.
- The wave remembers.
- The wave changes.

Sometimes it heals.

Sometimes it carries wounds that remain.

And through it all, life continues unfolding.

Until one day, as happens to every wave, its familiar form comes to an end.

What follows?

I do not know.

The Wisdom of the Garden

There is another image that has helped me contemplate life's changing forms.

The Garden.

A gardener understands that life is never entirely still.

- Leaves fall.
- Flowers fade.
- Branches die back.
- Seasons come and go.

What once flourished may gradually return to the earth.

And from the earth, new growth may emerge.

The fallen leaf becomes part of the soil.

The soil nourishes other living things.

The Garden continues, even as its individual forms change.

Of course, this does not tell us what happens to human consciousness after death.

That remains a mystery.

But the Garden reminds me that life is deeply interconnected.

What has lived can continue to influence what comes afterwards.

A kindness may remain in someone's memory.

A word of encouragement may shape another person's choices.

A lesson may travel from teacher to student, and then onwards to people the teacher will never meet.

Perhaps something of what we give continues to ripen beyond our own lifetime.

The Garden receives what life has offered, and life continues.

The Questions We Carry

When I look back upon my own life, I sometimes wonder about the people who have shaped it.

- My family.
- My teachers.
- My friends.

Those who loved me.

Those who challenged me.

Those who helped me grow.

And those whose actions brought pain or confusion.

There were times when I asked:

- *Why this family?*
- *Why these experiences?*
- *Why this particular path?*

I still do not know the answers.

But over time, my questions have changed.

Instead of asking only why something happened, I sometimes find myself asking:

- *What have I come to understand through this experience?*
- *What remains unsettled within me?*
- *What part of my Garden now needs attention?*
- *What might I choose differently as I continue?*

These questions do not make every experience meaningful or every suffering necessary.

Nor do they excuse the harm people sometimes cause.

But they allow me to relate differently to what has already happened.

I cannot rewrite every chapter of my life.

Yet I may discover another way of carrying its story.

And perhaps that, too, is part of healing.

The Possibility of an Invitation

There is another thought that occasionally visits me.

What if life contains possibilities we do not yet understand?

What if there is something more to our journey than the circumstances we can see?

Sometimes I have wondered whether, before a life begins, there might be something resembling an intention.

Not a rigid script.

Not a fixed destiny.

Perhaps simply a direction.

An openness to experience.

A possibility of becoming.

I cannot say whether such an intention exists.

Nor would I suggest that anyone has chosen their suffering, their losses or the harm they have endured.

Those are not conclusions I can draw.

But the question remains interesting to me.

Perhaps some of life's invitations become visible only after we have lived through them.

- A conversation may awaken an old memory.
- A book may give language to something we have felt but never understood.
- An unexpected encounter may change the direction of our thinking.

- A quiet moment may allow us to recognise something we had overlooked.

And sometimes what we call guidance is simply a gentle movement of understanding within us.

- Not a command.
- Not a demand.
- A whisper.

Something we may consider without being compelled to follow.

Whether there is a greater intention behind life, I do not know.

But I can remain curious about what life places before me.

Tending the House, the Lamp and the Garden

There are things I do not know.

And there are things I can attend to.

- I can care for the House in which my experiences unfold.
- I can tend the Lamp that symbolises my Inner Flame.
- I can notice the condition of my Garden and the relationships growing within it.
- I can recognise when something needs nourishment.

When something needs space.

When something may need to be released.

And when something simply needs time.

I do not need to understand the whole mystery of existence before participating in the life I have been given.

Perhaps that is enough.

- To live.
- To experience.
- To remain curious.
- To allow understanding to ripen.

And, where possible, to offer something of what has ripened to others.

Returning to the Sea

As I sit with these reflections, I notice that my questions about life and death have become softer.

- Less urgent.
- Less demanding.

I no longer feel the same need to know exactly where every wave comes from.

Or exactly where every wave goes.

The sea remains a mystery.

And perhaps I can allow it to remain so.

For mystery need not be the enemy of peace.

Sometimes peace begins when we stop demanding that every mystery be resolved.

Today, when I stand beside the sea, I simply watch.

- A wave rises.
- A wave travels.
- A wave meets the shore.

And its familiar shape disappears into the water.

I find something beautiful in that movement.

- For a while, the wave had a form of its own.
- For a while, it could be recognised.
- For a while, it belonged to a particular moment in the life of the sea.

And then that form was no longer there.

The water remained.

What this means for human life, I cannot say.

But the image invites me to contemplate belonging, impermanence and the mystery of returning.

For a while, I inhabit this life.

- I carry a name.
- I live within my Inner House.
- I tend my Garden.
- I encounter others.
- I receive.
- I experience.
- I offer what I can.

And one day, this familiar life will come to an end.

What happens to the Inner Flame beyond that moment remains unknown to me.

I do not know exactly what life is.

I do not know exactly what death is.

Yet when I watch the waves, I find myself a little more at ease with both.

- A wave rises.
- A wave travels.
- A wave returns.
- And the sea remains.

Perhaps, for now, I do not need to know more.

Atmadeva Devatma

The Living Wisdom of Arriving