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- *Souls returning to earthly life compared to the cycle of falling rain and evaporation*
- *What is an old soul?*
- *When seemingly miraculous things happen*

God's presence falls upon each of you as the gentle rains fall on the earth. You are given your lives for the primary purpose of growing in spirit, growing in love, growing in your capacity to be loving, growing in your willingness to be vulnerable, for in that growth and willingness, you are the forest's soils that welcome that gentle rain.

The rain that nourishes the earth is supplied by the moisture, the water, that belongs to the earth. It is a kind of returning to the source. The water leaves the oceans, the energy of that water is transformed, and in that transformation, it is disseminated around the earth. It returns and nourishes and recycles to again create yet more nourishment.

These gentle rains are in their way a kind of representation of what spiritual development means in its purest essence. You, your spirit, originate from the Spirit Center, from the God whom you identify. The energy of the water in the ocean is changed. The energy that is your spirit also changes, and in that changing of energy, that developing of character, depth of love, it rotates from a presence with God to a presence with other forms of life, only to return to God and then to be reformed with additional kinds of energy, which then emerge from the God center and give life in many forms, your human form being only one such form. But each time that the soul, the spirit, engages in this cycle originating with the central spiritual presence in expanding outward and then returning, there is an evolution of spirit. There is an evolution of energy that ultimately becomes the purest form of love. It is, we could say, a kind of refinement of spirit.

This cycle of emerging from God and returning to God is not unending, but it is essential. Some souls experience knowing life-forms such as the human form many times. Others connect themselves to knowing life-forms less often. You have an expression of someone being an old soul. It may be hard to define, but it is easier to recognize, for the question invariably comes up, "What is it to be an old soul? What is old? How old is old? How many times has a soul cycled again?" These questions are common to ask and yet ultimately of little use to answer, because what does one do with an answer? You know old souls because there is something about the life that you observe that reflects that presence.

Making an analogy between a gentle rain and a returning of spirit is an intentional relationship that is being described, for when rain falls, it starts as large droplets or the smallest of moisture presences, and yet they all provide nourishment. There is no single drop of rain that is more important to the earth than another. All can nourish. Of course, you experience patterns of weather systems when the rain does not nourish but destroys. It transforms, and in those transformations, it is interpreted by some or many as being a

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negative force. But those very same drops that come down and can be seen to be destructive return again, and they bring nourishment to life in the fields.

Indeed, human life is not possible without the presence of water. Human beings are comprised of an enormous amount of water, and yet that natural component of water that is part of all tissues is not enough to support long life. It must be replenished. It must be renewed and refreshed.

The presence of spirits associated with human life is very real, and yet the soul of each individual is very different. Those raindrops may be large or small, but they all have the potential to be nourishing. The souls of two different individuals will have very different characteristics, yet despite those differences each soul has the capability of nourishing, of supporting, of giving strength, of guaranteeing life. The journey of your soul is therefore much like the journey of the gentle rain upon the earth.

When you pray for nourishment, you are in effect praying for the presence of those drops of rain. As the plants need that rain, so do you. As your neighbors need the love of others, so do you. Your needs may be different from those of another, but they are no less valid. Your life and the lives of all human beings require nourishment of spirit. The rain falls upon the earth because that is what rain does. You may put a tarpaulin over portions of the earth so they receive no rain, but the rain is still falling. The nourishment is still headed towards where it is needed.

It is the same when we consider the collection of all souls. The great Spirit Center that is referred to as God, the love of the presence of spirit, is always, always with you. You may cover yourselves with a tarpaulin. You may choose to reject that rain of spirit, but the natural energy of that spirit presence is to penetrate, to nurture, to give life, to be supportive, to be loving, to be kind, to have compassion.

You cannot fully stop the rain from falling anywhere in the world. You can make efforts to reduce its effectiveness. You may make efforts to collect and save it so it can be further transformed to other uses. There is much you can do with the rain that falls, but falling from the sky it will always do.

There is much you can do to deny the presence of spirit. There is much you can do to try to collect the presence of spirit. Worshipping with others is one such way of collecting that energy. But just as you cannot stop the rain from falling, you cannot stop the loving presence of spirit from entering your life in one way or another. This constant reality of a "rain down of spirit" is a kind of natural force. It is evidence of God. It exists because all that exists is because of the presence of God's energy. You cannot, therefore, impact the presence of rain in such a way that it is permanently altered. You can impact its meaning. You can impact its influence, but the energies that create rain will continue.

You wonder about the implications of God's response to prayer, God's response to simply living your lives. If there is no human-like intervention, what is it that happens when you are immediately and unexplainably in the presence of a saving force, a rescuing force, a healing force that was not anticipated?

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It is not an intervention in the sense that you asked God to intervene. It's not like saying we need more rain, so give more rain tomorrow. The rain does not respond to simple requests, but the rain is there. God's presence is not a response to a request. The presence of all spirits, all souls, is constant, but you do live your lives through choice. You live your lives through conscious decisions and subconscious realities. Those subconscious realities can in many ways be more powerful than conscious intention.

Human life is not preordained, predetermined, that this will happen and something else will not happen. Lives evolve. Some water that falls as a gentle rain is absorbed by a receptive soil. Some of it runs off because the ground upon which it fell could not absorb.

Your abilities and capacities to be nourished by this rain of spirit is in many ways governed by forces within each of you that are beyond your conscious awareness. Your guides don't make a decision that is analogous to saying a particular individual will escape harm or that individual will succumb. That is not a decision that guides make. The guides surround you with an energy that is present and that is in all ways beneficial to all. But that presence is a presence of understanding, of knowledge, not in a formal sense but in an emotional sense.

Your subconscious life contains a sensitivity to energy that is somewhat analogous to other organisms being sensitive to energies of light that you cannot see with your own eyes, and yet those energies are there. This part of human life is often open and receptive to the loving presence of guidance. As we have said, that guidance is not one of deciding who lives and who succumbs, for that guidance is primarily concerned about what is most needed by the spirit, the soul of the individual. If there is much that is needed by that spirit, then there is great openness to the protective, loving force that is part of a guide's presence.

Some people live long lives and have much to learn. Others' lives seem tragically short, and yet there was growth even then, growth that was necessary. That growth will continue. There will be more engagement with the river until such time as there is a full commitment to life as the river.

God does not come as a result of being asked to be present. It is in the asking, however, that you are consciously enabling yourselves to be receptive to the presence that is there. These seemingly miraculous events that preserve a life are not because God wills that an individual lives any more than someone succumbs because it is God's will that they must succumb. The forces in life occur because all elements of life intercept at one point or another.

There is no life that has not felt pain or loss, great sadness, great joy. All experience in one form or another. It is part of being human.

Our great purpose in your lives is for you to be receptive to the rain that falls gently upon the earth. Express gratitude. Be humble. Be vulnerable. Be willing to acknowledge the needs you experience. Be compassionate. Acknowledge the needs of others. It is in that humility and in that compassion that you are opening up the channel consciously and

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otherwise, so that the gentle rain will provide the nourishment that each of you seeks for yourselves and for all others.

Pray for that openness. Acknowledge when you sense the saving presence of God. Always feel you can ask for healing, for you are asking for openness. Always feel you can ask for balance, for you are asking for openness. Feel you can always ask to be loved and to be more loving, and you are asking for openness.

The rains belong to the energy of God. All souls belong to that same energy. Open your arms and welcome the nourishment. Welcome each drop as it falls upon the earth, for it is in fact your lives touching God's presence.

Amen.