

## **The Man and the Spider**

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It was a cool Friday morning just after midnight. A young man had just finished taking a shower when he had noticed a large long-leg spider creep down beside him. Unfortunately, the spider was beginning to struggle in the water on the shower floor. When the man tried to save the spider, he noticed that the spider was no longer moving. The man decided to lift the spider from the water and onto a towel anyway. He then tried desperately to check for any signs of movement from the spider in the hopes that it would still be alive.

The spider looked lifeless, and its legs looked as though they were curling up after being moved, but were not completely curled. The man could not tell whether the spider was dead, dying or alive. Regardless, he believed the spider to be dying and he felt sorry for it. He rubbed its legs gently with his fingertips hoping that the spider would respond. When it did not move, the man began to weep.

He imagined to himself, what if this was the love of his life that had just died? What if the one he had just desperately tried to save, was actually someone he loved? He was overcome by the grief associated by these thoughts, and continued to cry. And then, it had finally dawned on him, that this experience he had encountered several times before... The cycle had once again repeated itself.

Back then, a large spider - very likely to be female - would always try to get close to him. No matter what species, in fact. But each time, anyone who noticed these spiders would try to kill them or take them away. Other times, these spiders would simply die due to starvation, thirst, or from their surroundings. Somehow it was on this night that it became as clear as day to him, that it were as though these spiders were manifestations of someone he had once knew. Someone very dear to his heart. Could it be? he wondered.

Through understanding that this cycle appeared to be an endless samsara repeating itself, the man was suddenly overcome by a bizarre feeling of happiness and relief that miraculously replaced the guilt and grief he had felt earlier. The man now knew in his heart that he would see a large female spider again one day, as he always did, and that it was only a matter of when.

Finally, after trying to remove the spider from the towel, the man noticed one or more of the spider's legs begin to twitch and move after being stretched. To the man's surprise, it seemed his spider companion could very well still be alive. If so, would it have thanked him for saving its life? he thought to himself. As the man decided to leave the bathroom and allow the spider to rest, only one thought remained on his mind: we *will* meet again.