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- *The soul's identity*
- *Interdependence among souls*
- *Making the right choices*

You are all held in the light of God. You are each embraced in the Spirit of God, and you are blessed in your understanding of God.

The journeys you have engaged in are journeys of the body and of the spirit. Each of you has embarked on an effort to find meaning and beauty and love and understanding in the life you experience and the life that surrounds you. Your soul also occupies a place in its own journey, and for a period of time, as you measure it, as a companion on the path that each of you travels.

Your travels were full of unexpected turns—some welcome, some not so welcome. But any journey has such paths. The life that each of you experiences also encounters what seems to be dead ends, and yet with effort and a vision and a curiosity and an openness there is always a path. There is always a means of moving from where you are to where you feel you next belong.

The souls that join you on your journey also experience through your lives unexpected moments, unexpected opportunities. Your lives provide a means of growth for both your own soul and the souls of others. The soul that is your mate on your journey remains with you, but a soul is a different kind of entity from human life. The soul is a combination of many and varied spiritual experiences. There is no boundary to your soul. Because there is no boundary, there is no real sense of “this is me/that is not me.” The human condition is reminded constantly that “this is me/that is not me; this is human/that is not human; this I can control/that I cannot control; this gives pain/that provides pleasure.” A human experience is generally one of categorizing, sorting through the experience and placing a kind of identity on all that is encountered. This is not the case with your soul, for soul has an identity of sorts, but that identity is not one of limits, but rather of focus.

The soul's identity is a view of the Spirit Center—God, if you wish—not so much a clear view of seeing God, but a clear view of the presence of God. That is the sense of identity. Your soul does not feel separate from the soul of your neighbor. For your soul, the neighbor's soul is the same. There is a sense of complete bonding, one with another, and therefore no definition of “this is me, and that is not me.” It is an identity of direction, an identity of purpose, not an identity of place or position or commitment. Since all souls are aware of this shared identity, there is not a sense that part of one soul evolves more rapidly than another. A soul grows in many ways, in love, in light, in peace. A human being has an infinite number of other measurements by which growth can be identified.

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Your soul therefore evolves as you evolve, grows as you grow, but is never entirely surrounded by a limitation that says, "I am your soul, but I'm not someone else's." There is a commonality, this direction toward God, that connects all souls into a kind of single entity together. It is the drop in the ocean analogy: a drop falls into the ocean and becomes a part of that ocean, not separate from it, and the ocean consists of an infinite number of drops, and yet the ocean exists as a single entity with enormous variety within that entity. The ocean in one part of the world appears to be different than the ocean experienced elsewhere, but it is still the ocean. It is still water. There is more that connects the drops that form one ocean than separates the character of one ocean from another.

When your physical lives cease, your spirit center, your own soul, is free and rejoins the body of spirit, at which time an assessment is made. This is not a judgment, for there is no judge. But the consciousness of soul understands what is missing, what is needed in spiritual growth, and the soul ultimately chooses when and with whom to reincarnate. That choice is not made according to predetermined variables, but there is a sense that certain souls have of a connectedness to those who begin their human journey, and that connection is then established. The soul may be joined by other souls.

You are aware of the reality of your guide, but your guide is not operating in isolation. Your guide is connected to all souls. Your guide is connected to the souls of others for whom you pray. That guide is connected to the souls of previous generations. The guide can benefit and learn from the souls of previous generations. But this learning, this growth of the soul, extends far beyond the concept of generational attachment. There is no set rule whereby a soul remains within the same "family," as you might identify it, but because the soul is connected to all other souls, there is much that can be learned from that association.

Your soul that you accept as your own is merely the connection point between your human lives and the collection of spirits that is comprised of all souls. It is your connection to a network of spiritual instruction, spiritual enlightenment, spiritual growth.

Each of you wonders about the impact of yourself on your perception of spirit and of God. You are human beings and as a consequence, your sensitivity to issues of spirit is a human sensitivity, for it is your willingness as human beings to be open to guidance that in fact allows you to be open. When you ask for guidance, you're given guidance. When you don't ask for guidance, that guidance is still there, but seeking it opens you more fully to benefit from what is already there. It is never too mundane to ask guidance for anything. You are who you are, and what you ask for is important to who you are at this moment in your development. It is therefore very natural and very appropriate to ask for what you seek. As we said earlier, the very asking is the acknowledgment which is so important for your growth, the growth of your own soul, and thereby the growth of *souls*. Your own soul grows when your neighbor prays for his or her own soul. Your soul grows as a result of other souls growing.

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There is an interdependence that is central, crucial to our development. We don't exist independently. We thrive because of our interdependence. It is, of course, our hope that when you grow as human beings, you grow because others grow. You do not grow because you think only of yourself, your own development. That is not growth—it is rather isolation.

Your efforts for peace, for world understanding, for understanding between countries and neighbors and family members, are successful when those efforts are not strictly self-directed. You pray to do what is in the *highest good*. When you ask for peace, it is not your own peace. It is for a state of peace in which you evolve with all others. When you pray for understanding, it is not for your own understanding in competition with another. It is for collective understanding. When you pray for healing, it is for collective healing. When you pray for peace, it is collective peace. When you pray for a greater sense of God, it is a collective, shared greater sense of God. You grow as all other spirits grow, and conversely all other spirits grow as you grow.

Understanding the importance of spirit, the importance of soul, is of course crucial for all life, all human life, but such understanding does not occur at the same time for all human beings. For some, learning about the soul is achieved through meditation. For others, it is achieved through reading of sacred texts. For still others, it is achieved through corporate, combined worship. There are many ways of reaching the goal. The growth of spirit is never linear. It does not follow a specific order or progression. Any organization that seeks a spiritual foundation must also provide for multiple paths in reaching that goal. For some individuals on some paths, the goal will not be reached in this lifetime. For others, such understanding comes more readily.

All human beings, and we emphasize *all* human beings, seek an understanding of “why life.” Some cast off answers that affirm there is a reason, and just say “life is, and when it stops, it stops.” Others have a more spirit-centered approach as to “why life” at all. The truth, however, is that both paths ultimately point toward a spiritual foundation for life. Every individual arrives at that destination by whatever route is taken, and that is true for each of you. There is no one right route. There is a route you take now that is appropriate now. There is a route that you may take in the future that is much different, and will be absolutely appropriate then, but not now.

There is often concern about making the right choice to do this or do that. We have frequently said, and it is important to underscore, that if you pray to be given direction, you will make the right choice because you are open to appropriate alternatives. Each alternative has its value and can be seen as the right choice. Each alternative can also be seen as the wrong choice, but in truth, through prayer there is no wrong choice. There is only a choice among appropriate routes to follow. They will lead you, they will nurture you in the direction that is best for you.

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Your lives are not predetermined. Your choices are not predetermined. Your lives are not punished because you make a choice. The choice you make will have its own obstacles and opportunities, but these choices are nevertheless correct choices. The consequences of every choice are different, but from each set of consequences, there is learning and growth that are within. No choice has benefit in total absence of consequences. You must travel your path with a confidence that you will see what needs to be seen, and that journey requires patience, openness, a willingness and desire to be surprised, for it is in the surprise that you are directed on a journey that is not entirely of your own creation. You create your vision, but allow the magic of surprise to be part of that journey.

You are each blessed on your path. You are each blessed when you pray for choice, and you're each blessed in the surprises that reach you. Be confident that as your life continues to unfold, those choices will become richer, more meaningful, and more focused on a Spirit Center that is the goal for all of creation.

You are blessed in the light. You are the light.

You are the giver. You are the receiver.

Amen.