

October 15, 2000

- *Welcome conflict and adversity*
- *Be God in action*

God your Creator looks upon each of you with love and peace and with the light that gives you great strength.

Conflict is an essential ingredient to living. It forms a part of the tapestry, the framework, which provides meaning and direction in your spiritual journey. Perhaps it is strange to be asked to welcome conflict, for conflict by its very nature is not pleasant, is not viewed as positive by most individuals, and is actively avoided by practically all. Conflict, you must understand, serves an important purpose in your lives. Without conflict, you are not challenged. Without conflict, you are not brought to a recognition and realization of the potential for God-directed response. Without conflict, peace is less clearly defined. As we have said before, without the darkness, light has no meaning.

Each of you faces conflict. You face conflict in your own personal lives. You face conflict in your understanding of the world. You face conflict within your own emotions and thoughts. Conflict belongs in life. It is very easy for us to say conflict is good. It is an entirely different matter for you to embrace that concept. Conflict implies an absence of peace, but it is through conflict and one's approach to conflict that meaningful peace may be achieved.

Humankind is not by nature structured around the absence of conflict or the rejection of differences. That environment is reserved for the planes of spiritual life. Human life requires the presence of conflict. You are given human life as a means of providing a platform from which you can launch your own spiritual journey. This platform from which you leave consists of conflict accompanied by anxieties, worries, illness, jealousies—all of the negatives that you can perceive. It is from such a platform of negatives that you ultimately emerge, strengthened in your receptivity to guidance, clear in your view of God's presence. You move ahead because of the growth that is achieved through adversity. In this sense, conflict, the difficulties of being human, are to be welcomed.

The state of health has particular effect on all who relate to the pain of illness. Achieving health fosters much joy and relief of anxiety, the elimination of worry. You can only experience that summation of positives if you have experienced the negatives as well. By having experienced the unbridled joy of health, you know what it means to pray and be engaged in the building of health in another. You are empowered by your illness; so it is with conflict. You are empowered by the negative forces that you endure and observe and are more able to spread the joy that comes in overcoming the negatives. The joy that is experienced by having overcome what is negative forms an important component of your spiritual growth.

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No one lives a life free of difficulty, free of frustration, worry, anxiety, anger, disagreement. That would not be a human life. At times it is easy to feel that one is the only individual who experiences such combinations of negatives. In truth, all experience that. You do grow through adversity. You gain strength through the recovery from an injury. You gain hope from having endured despair. You gain capacity to love from the experience of feeling unloved. You appreciate the light by having endured the darkness. You are strengthened by persevering through difficulty. Muscles become stronger because of the struggle against the effects of weight and resistance. The body grows and becomes firmer and more capable of exercising the benefits of that achieved state of strength. You become stronger through resistance. Your lives take on meaning after experiencing what seems to be meaningless.

The conflicts that surround world events are of course painful. Many suffer, many die, but in God's design for humankind, one becomes stronger as one learns to accommodate those discomforts of suffering. We are not for a moment suggesting complacency. We are not for a moment suggesting you accept what is clearly wrong, knowing that somehow it will all work out. That is not our intention, and that is not the lesson to be learned. But in recognizing the conflict, you are motivated to find ways of reflecting God in response to that conflict. It is precisely those responses that serve as the hands and feet and eyes of God throughout the land.

You are called by God to become God. It is God's will that you become godly. It is God's will that you become whole, that you become strong, and that you become fully committed to responses that reflect your understanding of God. That can only be achieved through challenge, that can only be achieved by your recognition of the need for a response. Your responses to the world around you become, in fact, God's response. You, collectively, become God within the conflict.

God does not create the conflict. It is not God's intention that individuals suffer and experience sadness. But God intends to be placed in the middle of the conflict through you. It is you collectively, it is all humans, who are actually responsible for God's presence to be found within all corners of the human experience.

God is not a theoretical idea, a hope, a concept. God is really all of you, part of the same overarching energy and presence. You can only live a godly life when you are convinced that each of you is equally part of God, and you collectively become God's presence within the human experience of life.

For those of you who are aware of humanity's presence in the influence of God, there is much responsibility, for you know what it really means to respond as you would perceive God's response to be. If you turn away from your understanding of God's response, you are preventing God's influence from being experienced. You are serving as a barrier to God. For those who are not familiar with God, who do not understand God's presence, there is no barrier. They have yet to learn. But when you know, you have an obligation because of your understanding. It is putting your understanding into action—

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that is the obligation. It is acting out your faith. It is acting out your perception of God. There is no pretending here.

The acting out is a natural expression of your firmly held understandings. That kind of action through commitment to all that you understand is God's response to conflict, God's response to whatever is negative in life. Your views of life become broadened and take on great character. Each of you has this potential, all human beings have this potential, but you are aware of the implications of that potential. You understand what it means to be the hand of God, the heart of God. You know what it means to be God's response.

None of this comes easily. It is only achieved, and we emphasize *only* achieved, through experiencing human life. Your souls are given human life for this very purpose. You may choose to accept the challenge, you may choose to reject it, but ultimately all souls accept it. Ultimately all souls recognize the value of conflict, the value of negativism as experienced in human life, and all souls recognize God's response through them toward the negative, toward the ungodly.

Human life is a great gift. It is the ultimate school, if you wish. There are no winners or losers. You keep on pursuing and then you finish your learning—you achieve the objectives of godliness. It may take one lifetime, it may take more than one, but this is the natural course for all souls to traverse.

Take the challenges that confront you. Accept their necessity in life and be open to draw from those challenges all that can be taken. Allow yourselves to be formed and shaped, molded and strengthened by the challenges of conflict and the presence of negative influences in your lives. You will be blessed by the vision that you will receive. You will be blessed by your understanding of God's response, and in the end God's presence will be fully revealed in its compassion, its brilliant light and overwhelming love.

You are blessed by that light always. Feed from it, be nourished and strengthened, warmed and supported by your vision of that light.

Amen.