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- *God compared to a river*
- *Praying for health*

The God to whom each of you turns is fully aware of all that creates tension and discord. The God to whom you pray is filled with a constant love for all that exists, for all that has existed, and all that is yet to exist. When you pray to God, it is not to a vast emptiness. It is also not to a human figure, for the God that you acknowledge as a power in life exists in a far different form of energy than can be described in human terms.

We, as your guides, of course use human terminology because that is what is most understood. When we say that God wishes or wills or forbids something, we use those human terms, and yet it is not to be thought of fully as human in which God says in so many words, "I want this to happen," or "I will prevent that from happening." God, the Spirit Center, whatever name you assign to this presence, exists beyond a sense of will.

To understand this God of whom we speak, it is important to think beyond the human condition, the human response. Perhaps thinking of God's presence in your lives as a kind of force of nature, something that exists far beyond the limitations of what human beings wish to assign it, may bring you closer to an understanding of what or who God is.

We can say that God is a natural force. God is kind of like a massive river, and each of you in your own ways encounter the river. Some try to cross it. Others try to tame it to their own desires. Human beings can divert the river. They can move it to a different location. They can try to change its characteristics, but the forces that create the river endure. The river may exist because of the weather or disappear because of the weather, but there is an energy that exists even beyond the river itself that causes it to appear and disappear. The river is a manifestation of that great presence, the energy of nature, the energy that surrounds the earth with its own kinds of rules, its own behavior.

Yes, human beings can impact temporarily the consequences of that presence, but that presence is still there. The energy that creates the river is still there, and your encounters with the river will go through their own transformations. Just as the river has an energy of its own, we can say that that energy is a natural energy. It belongs. It is part of an enormous covering of energy that shapes the earth. That same energy is involved in all aspects of the universe that you are learning more about and universes that are beyond any understanding by human beings. The energy is there.

As human beings, you can find ways to move with that energy, to act in consonance with that energy. If we say it is God's will that such and such is how you should behave, as loving beings for example, what we are implying by referring to God's will is an acknowledgment of this energy to which all of you belong. When you move with that energy, there is a greater sense of concord. There is a sense of belonging. There is a feeling of rightness. There is peace. When you choose to move in opposite directions from this natural energy, there is conflict and pain. There is suffering.

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We speak often of the importance of balance in life and that all forms of life ultimately seek and find a balance, a spiritual balance, a physical balance. This balance is finding the flow, enjoining that flow.

The question came up about events that can be serving as catalysts. There is great truth in that, for when you move in the opposite direction from the flow of that river, from the flow of the energy that generates the river, there come moments when you become aware that indeed the flow of justice, the flow of unconditional love, the flow of compassion is clearly moving in a direction that is different from where you are currently headed on your own paths. It is then that you become more acutely aware of what needs to be done to achieve that balance.

The catalysts can be new ideas that have not been seriously considered. The catalysts can be events that make it clear to all that the flow of spirit is not the direction you are headed in. You then have a choice. You can choose to recognize the diverging directions, the direction of the river and the direction of your current path, and be responsible for moving to achieve that balance, or you can decide to ignore the clear direction and purpose of the river and continue on your own pathway for reasons that seem justified. The presence of those catalysts are essentially reminders of the river, its force, its own direction. It is an acknowledgment of the energy that created that river and what that river may become.

Considering God more as an energy that creates, nurtures, and provides balance and harmony is a more realistic understanding of the reality that is God than thinking of some human-like presence that you pray to in order to encourage that God to respond in ways that you determine are best. Wishing that the wind blew in another direction does not change the wind. The wind has its own energy and its own behavior, and that behavior is always in response to other forces. You can move with the wind and be carried and lifted by it. You can use the wind for your benefit, or you can put up barriers. You can deny that the wind is really present. You can pray that the wind will stop. Those prayers will not stop the wind. The prayers may, however, alter your response to the wind that is present.

You pray for health, and you ask God to make you or someone else fully healthy, but what happens is not that God says in effect, "Okay, I've been asked to make this person or these people healthy, and so I'll do it." That's a human response. That's not God's response. So you might ask why pray for health if God is not going to jump into action and bring about that health. The purpose of that prayer is actually to understand more fully and to see more clearly the presence of the energy and its impact on your responses to issues of health and to the responses of others to the issue of health concerns.

God does not come down from heaven and decide health will prevail, but praying for health is praying for balance. It is in effect committing your own energies to do what can be done to bring about the health that is sought. That issue of bringing about good

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health is actually a recognition of what it means to be healthy and how that health is defined. Is it defined as you wish it to be defined, or is it defined as determining what is in keeping with the creative forces and energies that belong to all that exists?

In praying, you are connecting to the presence. You are not engaging the presence. You may ask for the engagement, for God to step in and rescue, but in actuality you are enabling yourself to find the direction of the river and to become part of that creative force, that creative energy.

We say that God is love, but love can be defined in more understood terms if you acknowledge that love is a recognition that all belong in that flow of spirit, that flow of energy. You all belong to that river, and when you are all moving together in that river, you are becoming that river, and there is harmony. There is consonance. There is balance, for the balance we speak of is a balance of belonging, not resisting that spirit presence.

How do you know if you are moving on a daily basis together with the river or in opposition to it? You begin to recognize that through the vision of the heart. This vision allows you to see evidence around you that God is indeed present. It does not mean that you close your eyes to tensions and difficulties, fears and anxieties, for those are part of your experience as human beings. But it is saying in effect, "Despite all of these difficulties, what can I observe that shows me that the energy that is God is indeed present?" What is the signpost that reminds you of the direction of that spiritual energy? That's the rock you stand upon and look down upon the river. You see from whence it came, and you see where it is headed. It is then you can make a conscious commitment, not to cross to the other side and continue on your way, but to be part of that river, to be part of that energy, to be part of the creative Spirit Center that you call God.

This is far more than just praying that God will intervene. God does not intervene. It is you, each of you, all of you rather, who join that spirit energy. You join the river. You become a part of what God is. So often we have said that you are the hands, arms, eyes, and heart of God, that it is through your efforts, not only individually but collectively, that God's will is done. What is meant is that it is through your efforts, insight, and heart vision that allow you and others with whom you interact to become part of that flow, part of the river. Look, therefore, to find evidence that there is a river, and it has a direction, and even though you may be walking in a barren desert and in great discomfort and concern, there is a source of refreshment. There is a source of nourishment, the river, and that is God's presence.

Be open to the catalysts for action. Be open for that vision that makes you think aha! This is where we must go. This is what is truly loving. This is what affirms all within the river. It is an acknowledgment that the river and all that it contains is a single entity. There is no molecule of any substance in the river that is more important than another. You all belong in the flow of that spiritual energy. Look for opportunities to be part of that. There are of course moments when you catch upon a rock and may feel tossed out of

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that river, but in those moments when you don't feel a close connection to that spiritual flow, it is at that moment that you must think of those times in your lives when you felt indeed within the river of spirit.

We, who are your guides, spend our full existence only within the river. We are a part of that flow, and we are moving closer to the source of that energy, but in our movement along the course of that river, we call out to you, and we urge you to find ways of coming close to the edges of the river and being part of it and being carried on your spiritual journeys with the assurance that all in that flow are moving without interruption of any consequence toward a full union with the great Spirit Center, the I Am of all that exists.

Rely on the vision of your heart and have the courage to follow as your vision reveals God's presence, and you will find harmony. You will find the peace you pray for. You will find the health you pray for. You will find the love that you pray for, and you'll be empowered to expand that love as the river becomes a muddy reservoir and a natural force that responds to God's energy belonging at the center of all that is.

Amen.