

- *How people are equal*
- *Animals do not have souls but can be present in the afterlife*
- *Celebrate all human life*

You are the light. We speak of all of you. You are the expressions of God's presence. You are the evidence to others that God Is. You are the hands and feet and heart and voice of God. You are the energy. You are the force. You are the presence of God. Each of you is all these things according to your individual capacities to share them with others.

You are the hand of God, but you may not be able to offer your hand to another at all times. You are the heart of God, but you may not feel loving at all times. Regardless of what you see to be your varying capacities to reflect God at any given moment, you still are all of these.

Every human being has these capacities, these forms of energy within, but of course not everyone exercises and develops and strengthens and nurtures those capabilities. It is nevertheless true that every human being contains those characteristics, whether or not they are offered to others or even acknowledged, for as we say so often, every human being is equal. You're equal in the characteristics that you innately have as a reflection of God.

A person may have the potential to contribute to society on many different levels and in many different directions, and yet that person may feel unable to contribute anything that is considered meaningful by others. How often you discover people who become aware of talents quite by accident, but there they are, waiting to be explored, waiting to be fed, nurtured, and strengthened. Those talents were there all along. It was the awareness that was missing. You see a perfect stranger who may be successful in a business adventure and have great potential for contributions in a totally unrelated field, yet that person may proceed through life never knowing of that residing potential.

The fact that you are all equal means that you are all equal in the capacities that lie within. The differences come as you observe which talents emerge and see the light of fruition, the light of accomplishment, the light of being present. It is not God's intention that all human beings act upon all of the talents, all of the potentials that are contained within that human life, for you are shaped in your response to life around you by events that take place—events of childhood, events of adulthood. All that you experience shapes your willingness to explore new aspects of your own lives.

Sometimes it is witnessing a tragic event that awakens an expression of compassion. That compassion was there all along but had never been observed, acknowledged, and acted upon. We can say all human beings have that ability to be compassionate. Even a child who does not survive until adulthood has the capacity for compassion. It may not have awakened, but God's compassion is that child's

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compassion, and whatever awareness the child has of such reality as compassion, being nonjudgmental, acceptance of all is still a gift. What is exercised is not just the gifts that one has, but merely the gifts one knows of.

We urge, of course, each of you to be loving—loving in your presence, loving in your concerns. We ask you to be compassionate. We ask you to see patience, but these urgings from us are not that you somehow must discover compassion elsewhere, that you must discover love elsewhere. Rather, these urgings are that you discover the compassion within, the loving spirit that is within, the patience that resides within.

All of what we encourage you to consider resides already within you. It is part of what the soul brings to your life, and as you become more aware of your soul, you become more aware of those capabilities of spirit. You are never asked to be something you are not. You are always asked to be who you are. You're asked, you're challenged to seek what lies within, because it is what lies within, and only what lies within, that is of importance, and it is what lies within that can be radiated outward toward others. You don't learn what it means to be loving. You are loved, so you know what being loved can mean. But without having been loved, all the talk of being loving falls on deaf ears. You cannot be to others what you are not inside, and yet you can hold within that which is not shared with others.

The gifts of the spirit are distributed, are shared, and sent outward equally to all souls. Your soul has no more compassion than another. It is only your acknowledgment of that compassion that can differ from another. We often say you are a part of who God is, and there is an absolute truth to that statement. We do not say all act in a godly manner, but all have the same gifts of the essence of all that God is. You all have those gifts, those talents of spirit, so it is not that you must seek something that does not exist within, but rather that you must free all that is within. Therein lies the greatest challenge, for when you consider the presence of God, you consider the presence of love, the healing that comes from love, the expression of that love—the compassion, the listening, the being. All souls therefore share those same echoes of what God is. All share in that energy of God.

You asked about the soul as it relates to other forms of life and other inanimate forms of God's creation. All that has been created by God is sacred. That you know. Human beings have souls, for souls are a part of that which created them. The rocks of the soil are a part of God's creation and are therefore equal in value, but rocks do not have a soul as you think of what a soul really is. There is not that sense of a connection to God, but that connection is still there.

The rock contains its own collection of colors. Human beings consist of a collection of colors. The colors of human life are no more important than the colors of inanimate life or other life-forms. All lights are different but equal.

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We return to the analogy of the bouquet. Some flowers are red, some are yellow and some are green. Some life-forms have a spirit or a soul as you identify that energy. Other life-forms do not. Their energy, their color is equally important but different.

The animals that you are aware of often are the subject of questions of spirit. Do the animals, other than human beings, contain a soul as you know it to be? They don't contain a soul, but they contain other strengths, capabilities, and characteristics which make them vital, and that otherness is equal to yours. It is just different but not less.

Human beings have a consciousness about themselves that questions, not just reacts to, life around it. Other life-forms know something of their environment and yet may not question the meaning of that relationship. The relationship simply is. But though many animals will have other levels of consciousness that are unavailable to human cognition, their levels of awareness are not greater than or less than human beings. They are merely other. That otherness is part of the explanation of why human beings have souls and other forms of existence do not.

And yet when you join us on our side of the equation of life, if there was something you experienced in your human life that would help express what is sacred within you, then your awareness of that is fulfilled. If you have a much loved pet, and you then transition to our life-form, and you miss that pet dearly, that pet will be such that you are again aware of it. Why? Because in your loving that animal, you were expressing a part of the gifts you had as a human being that belonged to the energy that is God, that energy being love.

You can love another animal. You can love another person. You can love a tree. You can love an animal that you know only something about but have never seen. You can love the ocean and its beauty. You can love the meaning of the ocean and its importance to your life yet never see the ocean. You love it nevertheless, and if you had a love for the ocean, and that is a means of expressing what God has given you, then as you join us you will be aware of that which you love—the ocean, the trees, the plants, other animals, other life-forms.

It is important to acknowledge that there are differences in gifts, but there is only equality in gifts. No two individuals can be compared as one being gifted and another being not so gifted. You can only compare and say one person demonstrates a particular gift; another person does not demonstrate that particular gift but may have other gifts that are more readily shared.

There is no difference between you and a stone. Sure, you have a soul, a spirit, and a stone has none, but the stone has other gifts of reality that human beings do not have. It is not unusual for you to see a stone that may be many hundreds of thousands of years old. That stone has changed in that time, changed in appearance, changed in characteristics, but that stone is still there. In that same frame of time as you measure it, your characteristics have also changed, but you will not be visible as the stone is visible. There is a permanence. The stone did not begin as a stone. It began as a fluid and was

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transformed into being a stone. You begin in spirit form, and you are transformed into human form, and you will return to a life of spirit. The stone, too, will change over time, but that time measured in human terms would seem to be practically nonexistent, for it would be so extensive. The stone reflects the evolution of the earth, the evolution of the stars, the evolution of the planets, the evolution of your particular universe. All that is in the stone.

In many ways, therefore, the stone could be considered to be more reflective of the constancy of God than the human form of energy which is so temporal. Both reflect a component of God. You reflect through your soul the nature of God's capacity to be loving. The stone reflects the transformation of energy that has occurred over an extended and extensive period of time as you measure it. The stone in human perspective is considered merely permanent by many, but human beings are never viewed as permanent. Both are the same; both are very different. Both reflect God; both contain within them part of that total creation that is God.

So it is when you see and compare yourself with others, comparison is never healthy. The only appropriate way of encountering another is in the most profound way a celebration. You may not find you can celebrate another's behavior, but you can celebrate the reality of another. You can celebrate what you may learn from another. You can celebrate what you can give to another. You can celebrate your equality as you experience the human form of life. You can celebrate your belonging to the totality of God. There is too much to celebrate to allow for comparison, for comparison intimates more value/less value, more worth/less worth. There is nothing to compare in human life. There is only what can be celebrated.

You are aware of others who suffer greatly from wars, famine, other natural events, and you may consider yourself to be fortunate not to be encompassed by strife, but that does not mean in any way that you are in a better position than another, that you somehow deserve what you have. You can only celebrate that in its most fundamental way you are experiencing life, and you are to learn from that experience. Someone else experiences a very different life and will learn from those experiences.

By celebrating all human life, you encounter others more lovingly, with more compassion, with more patience. Compassion is a recognition of being loving. It is a recognition of what binds you together, and it is that bond that is celebrated. You are not asked to celebrate the suffering that another may be going through but to celebrate how you are the same, how you share the gift of life.

You are blessed as we are blessed. You are blessed with human life. We are blessed for our spirit form, our spirit energy. We are your future, for each of you becomes full spirit, so we are equal. We are the same. We celebrate your lives. You celebrate ours. You celebrate ours through your prayers, through your thanksgivings, and we celebrate your lives through our prayers for you and our thanksgivings for the open arms with which we are greeted.

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God's blessings are yours. God's blessings are ours. It is the light from those blessings that is the bond uniting us all.

Amen.