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- *Personal and spiritual growth requires change*
- *Those who do harm are still growing*
- *When a life is cut short*
- *The spokes on God's wheel*

Your God, your Creator, the center of All That Is, your Spirit Center, your life center, your love center, surrounds each of you with that incredible light that we so frequently try to describe.

You speak of coincidences, you speak of synchronicities, you speak of unexplained events that you experience from time to time, and you wonder about their significance. You are right in trying to be confident that there is no coincidence, a coming together of random events. Nothing, and we emphasize nothing in your lives, is random, yet nothing is predetermined except the most important event which is simply growth. You grow physically, you grow emotionally, but most importantly you grow spiritually.

All grow spiritually, even those who deny the existence of a God, even those who deny the reality of some kind of existence beyond their own ability to perceive. Those who do great harm to others and deny what you hold to be good are growing, and they are growing not away from God but toward God. Those who are ill-spirited, those who seem to exude negativity in so many directions, are growing.

Nothing that exists is static. All things, all materials, all humans, everything you can imagine that exists is in the process of movement, of growth, of change. Change that leads to growth is never a straight line. Change that leads to a union of love does not proceed in a single direction.

Each of you has made many mistakes. Each of you will continue to make mistakes, but that does not mean you are not growing, for growing is a process of discovery. By making mistakes and reflecting upon those mistakes, you discover something about yourselves, and that discovery is a component of growth.

Those who are responsible for massive suffering are growing as well. Those actions that are not supportive nevertheless belong to the experience of being human. Neither we nor God condone the infliction of injustice, but God and we understand that the agony of growth includes what creates and what may destroy.

Think for a moment about survival instincts in the wild. Some animals survive because they are actively engaged in what is seen by many as being destructive, as being opposed to life. Indeed your own physical growth requires that you consume something that has been created. In doing so, you destroy at one level and you create and develop at another. You are engaged in a transformation of energy. This is a transformation of energy that may reside in another animal or another plant, but that energy is never destroyed. It is only changed.

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So growth requires change. Personal growth requires a giving up of previous perceptions. In a way it is the dying of those perceptions that provides the fuel for new understandings. So it is when you view acts of destruction, acts which bring emotional pain as well as physical pain. Those actions belong in part to the process of growth.

You are given human life for one purpose only, and that is to experience human life, to recognize that through the experience you grow, you develop, you become stronger. This growth, this transformation can only occur when experiencing, when encountering what belongs to the human experience, to human life. This transformation is a product of what happens and your response to what happens. It is not a praising of what is evil in your eyes, but it's a recognition that whatever is evil still has a place.

If experiencing such challenges as you face were of no value, there would be no reason to endure. You have observed those who have endured much. You have not applauded the challenge, but you have applauded the response. Challenge is an integral part of what you experience personally or what you witness around you. Everyone is intensely aware of extensive trauma in some place around the world. Some individuals focus in one area, others bring their attention to different areas, but there is no one alive who is engaged fully in life around them who is immune from such awareness.

Are you meant as people, human beings, to suffer? No. You are meant to rise above. You are meant to find meaning. You are meant to recognize grace. You are meant to see yourselves in others. You are meant to relate to others who suffer. You are meant to stand for what you believe. You are meant to change where you stand when your understandings are transformed. You are meant to be flexible. You are meant to be compassionate. You are meant to be loving. You are meant to be forgiving. All of these characteristics require an encounter with another kind of energy that asks you to be more than you see in yourselves. That challenge is why you are given the life you experience.

There are many whose lives are cut short, not from their own fault, but by forces beyond their control. So you may wonder what purpose their lives served when they were so short. For many, the purpose that was served was that they were present. The parent who loses a young child mourns that loss, relates to the child, loves the child, cherishes the memory of that child, caresses the vision of the child, feels enormous compassion for the child. The child's life ultimately deepens the perspective of the lives of those who feel that loss. That child's life was not wasted. It was not truly lost but served as a radiant presence in some form for others to cherish.

Growth took place for the spirit of that child. The spirit grew through the love it was given. It may be that that spirit will again benefit from human life, but the spirit was never lost. The experience of life, human life, was not wasted. In the end, much was gained.

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The sadness that is felt is a sadness of loss. It is a missing. You may say that missing is loving. That is of course true, but missing is still missing. Missing is still painful. Missing is still felt as a loss, but it is nevertheless a source of light. When you lose someone you feel close to, you must direct your energies toward what was beautiful, what was cherished. It is not a life wholly lost.

Your lives as human beings are part of a much greater arch, and it is this arch that is illuminated through the experience of human life, life in our form and life in other forms that you know nothing of. Consider your human life as one spoke in the wheel. There are many spokes, and without those spokes there is no wheel. The wheel that joins these spokes together is that Spirit Center, it is the God presence, and it is a unit because of the spokes. Take the spokes away from the wheel—there is no wheel. What was the surface of the wheel is ultimately of no benefit. It is the spokes that give the wheel its strength, its durability.

This is what happens in human life on a smaller scale. Your human life consists of many spokes. Your lives consist of many experiences, and together that life takes on shape, character, function. The lives of all people, whether they are seen as being beneficial to society or destructive to society, beneficial to relationships or destructive to relationships, are all spokes, and those spokes are connected because of the God presence. The spokes form an array where each appears to be heading in a different direction, and yet all are fully united in the entity that is supported by those spokes.

You are connected to one another not because your paths parallel one another. Sometimes they do. Sometimes they cross. Sometimes they go in wholly different directions, but they are in the process of evolving. They are in the process of being and becoming. They are in the process of change, and in that process they reach closer to the rim of the wheel. You cannot therefore say that one spoke is important and another is not. Regardless of the direction they proceed in, they serve a purpose.

We ask you not to be judgmental, because in so doing you are eliminating recognition of the value of another spoke, another life whose path seems far removed from your own. All lives are sacred. All lives have direction. All lives have purpose. All lives ultimately reach the rim of the wheel. All has value. Therefore acknowledge the equality that all share, those who seem ill-spirited, those who seem filled with the spirit as you may define it. Accept the differences among all individuals, and recognize that there is strength to all, and although the directions that are apparent in life may be far different one from another, the true direction is what actually unites every one of you.

Be grateful that you are in that wheel. Be grateful that every spoke has a purpose, has a value, regardless of where it is heading. Your direction is not the only correct one. All directions are seen by God ultimately to be what is best in creation. You are not asked to be like all others, and you cannot ask others to be like you. Accept their paths, and pray that they may accept yours. When there is conflict or disagreement, recognize that those differences are superficial regardless of the immediate outcome,

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and that you all, everyone, all spokes, will reach the rim and in being in that rim will be eternally united.

We affirm to each of you our joy in your searching. We affirm in each of you your strength to grow. We affirm in each of you the path you are on. We affirm for each of you what challenges you encounter. And we affirm in each of you your ability to overcome, to triumph, to reach the goal, the goal of total and absolute Love.

Amen.