

November 13, 2015

[On this date, November 13, 2015, in Paris, France, coordinated terrorist attacks killed 130 people and injured hundreds.]

- *Understanding human-caused suffering*
- *The energy in darkness*

God, who is the Author of Life, the Creator of All That Exists, the Peacemaker, the Balancer, the Source of Light, blesses each of you in your quests.

You have expressed your concerns about all that seems out of control and seek an understanding of where you are in that continuum of apparent endless crises. First we can assure you, as you know, that light expands. Light is a kind of energy. Darkness as you experience it is not imbued with energy, but what is contained in the dark has a kind of energy, a kind of presence. The forest at night can be very dark, but life within that darkness is plentiful. There is lots of energy that is contained. The energy is not the energy of darkness but energy which is contained within it.

We so often affirm that there is energy in light, and there is no energy in darkness. The darkness is the absence of energy, and that is true, for darkness itself, the entity of darkness, has no energy, but the darkness contains within it elements that do have energy. The darkness we speak of is not only a darkness that is perceived by the senses but a darkness that exists that one can somehow feel deep within.

You know that fear is a product of experience, but fear also exists because of capabilities within the body that enable you to feel that fear. What it is you fear certainly is energy. Too often people are motivated by fear. They're not motivated by the darkness, the absence of light, but the fear is a component, is an entity in itself, that thrives in darkness. All that you are aware of that you consider to be negative energy hides, so to speak, within the darkness. All of that negative energy thrives when it is hidden, but it is important to remember that that negative energy cannot survive when fully illuminated in light.

So it is with your human experience. There are what seem to be far too many examples of negative energy in the human experiencing of life. You are reminded of that negative energy in the current tragedies of Paris, the current tragedies in nations around the world that are unaccustomed to such violence, in the current tragedies around the world in areas that have become only too familiar with suffering. You cannot tell those people that there is no energy in darkness, for there are many whose suffering finds a beginning in the cover of darkness. This cover of darkness does not mean necessarily the darkness of the night but a kind of darkness of spirit, a kind of energy-form that seems to thrive within the hidden recesses of human thought and human action.

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There are many tragedies that are caused by a lack of equilibrium within the physical world, but there are many more who suffer because of a lack of equilibrium in the interpersonal world—people versus people, ideas versus ideas, religions versus religions, biases versus biases, interests versus interests, economies versus economies—the list is certainly without end. Most of these conflicts have a basis in a darkness of spirit.

There is no devil. There are those who suffer afflictions of spirit. Those individuals feel they have intentions that are highly justified, and yet when one looks at those intentions dispassionately, one easily sees the fallacy of what is being promoted.

Human life is not permanent. You know your own lives are not permanent. When we speak of human life, the entire cycle of human life, the very existence of human beings as you perceive them will ultimately cease to exist. This does not mean that your lives are meaningless, but only that you are a part of the circle of All That Is. You are a speck on that surface, that circle that surrounds the Center Point. That speck, the speck of human existence, is not insignificant, for everything that exists has a time to thrive and a time to be dormant, but during that phase of human life, many perceive the reality of life only through their own eyes, their own ears. The senses can belie what the truth is. The senses can deceive and confuse, block and obliterate. The senses can create in their own way something that does not exist.

You have all seen or experienced mirages. Mirages can be photographed, easily experienced. They can be so prominent and obvious that the observer is convinced of their actual existence. The truth is, often what is seen as a mirage does not exist.

So it is with the perception of reality when one considers beliefs, dogmas, and traditions. What is held to be correct is not necessarily correct because it is believed to be so by many. Reality is not ruled; reality exists. Reality is not determined by majority; reality exists. Reality is not changed by arguments that are contrary to that existence. Reality persists only because it is real. There are many whose sense of reality is warped or in some way distorted because of previously held beliefs, but for those experiencing it, that reality is not a distortion. It is firmly believed.

The behavior of individuals and groups which results in mass suffering and death is not perpetrated because individuals assume that their own thoughts are lies. Their actions are justified by what they perceive to be truth. Some religions in the world capitalize on the attractiveness of their being the only truth in beliefs, but the actual truth is, of course, that there is not just one path toward truth. You may recognize that there are many paths, but there are many who travel the wrong paths with seeming blinders on that prevent them from being aware of and supporting the validity of other paths of beliefs.

Is there more suffering now than in earlier years, earlier centuries, earlier millennia? The answer is an emphatic “no,” but you are indeed aware of a much wider world than those many who have lived within your own lifespan. The access to

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information expands at a rate far more rapid than the ability to discern the difference between what claims to be true and what is true.

You are never asked to embrace the perspectives of another, but you're always encouraged to explore the perspectives of others. With your heightened awareness of the suffering inflicted among humans, you must be willing to put yourselves for a moment in the shoes of someone with whom you deeply and profoundly disagree. You must come to sense the perspective another brings. You are not asked to agree. You are not asked to affirm but merely to explore.

The suffering that takes place that you are aware of is, in truth, a very small percentage of the suffering and difficulty experienced by so many. Your lives are shielded from some of what becomes great suffering, but your lives are also charged with the responsibility of understanding, not sympathizing, but understanding. In that simple act of trying to understand where others come from and their behavior, you are taking a step closer to the true meaning of compassion.

It is easy to experience love for others who share your perspective, but it is far more difficult to embrace another with loving thoughts when the behavior of that other is filled with seeming hatred or jealousy or suspicion or lack of knowledge. When you experience even more evidence of a lack of human accord, make an effort to understand what is happening.

The expression that "desperate people do desperate things" holds within it an ounce of truth. Human beings are not born into a world in order to become violent toward one another. The need for violence is acquired. It is learned and then refined. It is learned because there is a void that needs to be filled. Some individuals who carry out attacks on so many are actually filled with an emptiness that wishes to be filled with something purposeful. You cannot relate education level between perpetrators and victims, for education is not the defining element that separates the two. Experience can be.

What do you do in the face of apparent chaos toward one another? First, place yourselves in the proverbial shoes of another. Try to understand why another feels certain actions are the only appropriate ones. What has failed in their lives that has generated the actions you witness? You can never fully be in another's shoes, but even asking the questions sensitizes you to the fact that all that is done is done with intention, whether wisely or unwisely directed.

There is no truth to believing that God has no place in this. There is no truth in believing that God created the suffering. But God did create a world in which there will be injustices, there will be moral challenges, there will be times when one society runs in opposition to the beliefs and actions of another society, because it is in finding a resolution to those conflicts that your own lives expand into a reality that is full of value and promise and merit, and are guided ultimately by love and compassion.

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Yes, you are given lives to experience life, but experiencing alone is not enough. You are given lives to reflect upon that experience. You are given lives to find what it means to be compassionate, to be with love, with understanding, with suffering, for what is compassion if it is not suffering with another? And if you suffer with another, you identify yourself in a very powerful way with another, and it is that connection, it is that relationship, it is that compassion that is evidence of God within the stormy seas.

Try to understand. Try to reach out. Try to listen to what others say. Try to comprehend a different perspective. You are never asked to agree with but rather to understand and to have compassion. Suffer with those who are motivated to create the suffering that appalls you. Allow your spirits to reach out and include and embrace the spirits of all. In doing this, you are embracing the God and the godliness that is within all human beings and in all of nature.

You are blessed in your efforts to understand. You are blessed in your efforts to see the energy that is within the darkness, and you are blessed in your efforts to draw apart the curtains that support that darkness to let the light in so that light may warm and comfort, affirm and uplift.

Amen.